

**An Assessment of Collaborative Governance
in a Network for Sustainable Tourism:
The Case of RedeTuris**

Peter J. Robertson
Associate Professor
School of Policy, Planning, and Development
University of Southern California
Los Angeles, CA, USA

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Abstract

This paper presents the results of a case study of a cross-sectoral network of organizations, called RedeTuris, that was created in 2008 to promote sustainable tourism in the state of Rio de Janeiro. We first discuss the notion of sustainable tourism, identifying key characteristics of a sustainable approach to local tourism development. We then introduce the concept of collaborative governance, which reflects the recent trend towards greater use of interorganizational, cross-sectoral networks to formulate policies and/or implement practices to address issues of interest to multiple diverse stakeholders and, thus, the general public. A brief description of RedeTuris follows, along with an explanation of the methods used for this research. Findings are discussed in terms of three general themes: 1) the type of network RedeTuris is, assessed according to criteria identified in the collaborative governance literature; 2) aspects of the network formation and development process, focusing on four key features: field complexity, program rationale, interdependence, and management capacity; 3) particular features of the Brazilian context that may be significant in terms of shaping the development of RedeTuris and its likelihood of success. We conclude the paper with a brief comment on the role of public managers in collaborative governance networks that they are not in charge of.

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Tourism has been promoted as a major development option because it can offer a unique combination of features that provide opportunities to meet established guidelines for sustainable development. In particular, sustainable tourism can have an important positive impact on the quality of life of the poor in developing countries, offering possibilities for poverty reduction as well as social and human development. In contrast to other development options available, tourism is a relatively environmentally clean and renewable alternative that benefits from a symbiotic relationship with the ecosystems on which it depends for its viability. It has been promoted as a “smokeless industry” and for its utilization of free natural (e.g., sun, sea, sand, wildlife), historical, social, and cultural resources. Such assets are typically abundant in less developed countries, particularly among the poor segments of the population.

International entities have been exploring ways to promote and assess progress towards sustainable development in the tourism sector. These efforts have included such features as focusing on social and human development along with economic development goals, recognizing the uniqueness of each country’s indigenous culture, and acknowledging the limits imposed by natural resources and the environment. Such efforts have further reflected growing recognition that development processes, to be successful, need to integrate both well-functioning government institutions and free-market mechanisms through the use of cross-sectoral partnerships and networks that enhance the level of stakeholder participation in relevant decision-making processes.

The topic of cross-sectoral networks with broad stakeholder participation has emerged recently as an important theme in the public management literature. At present, a considerable

amount and array of public-oriented activities take place in the context of cross-sectoral networks of diverse individuals and organizations who have information or interests relevant to the agenda that is the focus of that network. Given the importance of diverse entities working together to accomplish common objectives and produce public value, such systems have been identified as comprising a new form of “collaborative governance.” While the considerable literature on the topic of networks in public management provides much useful information about how collaborative governance systems can be designed and managed so as to function effectively, there is still much to be learned from studying a diverse array of these systems to better understand how they function and what it takes for them to be successful.

This paper focuses on an interesting example of collaborative governance recently initiated to promote sustainable tourism in the state of Rio de Janeiro, Brasil. In the summer of 2008, two founding organizations announced the formation of RedeTuris, a cross-sectoral network of stakeholders that was being organized to engage in collaborative activities that would increase the number of domestic and international visitors to Rio while advancing the human, social, cultural, and environmental goals of sustainable development. This network presents an interesting example of collaborative governance in that the basic purpose of the system clearly has a public good or public value quality to it, and there is considerable potential for win-win outcomes if the network is able to generate efficiencies and/or synergies. Yet RedeTuris is essentially a private-sector initiative, and most stakeholders can be presumed to be involved primarily to promote their own particular interests. While public sector actors are involved, some formally as partners in the network, it remains to be seen whether relevant public officials will adopt a more competitive or collaborative stance in their interactions in this network.

This research on RedeTuris is essentially a case study, relying on archival and interview

data to draw conclusions about the origination and initial development of this network and to identify key management issues that must be addressed to facilitate its continued development. In addition to contributing to the literature on networks and collaborative governance in general, some findings may reflect particular features of Brazilian culture, and thus the research can contribute to a better cross-cultural understanding of network development and dynamics. Furthermore, because this network represents a somewhat paradoxical situation of a private-sector initiative with a public-oriented focus, the study draws attention to the role of public managers in collaborative governance systems such as these.

Sustainable Tourism

A sustainable approach to tourism development reflects the primary purpose of contributing to the improvement of the overall well-being of the local population (Coccosis & Nijkamp, 1995), while avoiding doing unnecessary harm to the natural and cultural environments. Sustainable tourism recognizes the limitations imposed by the natural environment and by the capacity of the local culture to absorb a large number of tourists. Tourism, as a development option, uniquely depends on natural resources to allow it to prosper and grow, and these should be protected and restored (UNDP, 1994) in order to allow both current and future generations to meet their needs and improve their standard of living. Likewise, sustainable tourism is expected to help preserve and sustain the “culture, traditions and value systems” (Sharpley & Telfer, 2002: 227) of the indigenous population (UN, 2001; CEC, 1999). Conserving and protecting indigenous cultural resources while permitting local tourism development is a purpose agreed to by many international conventions including the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Ramsar Treaty, the World Heritage Convention, Man and Biosphere Program, the Rio Declaration, and Agenda 21 (CEC, 1999).

The basic mission of sustainable tourism, then, is to administer a tourist destination's resources so that economic, social, and human development goals can be reached by operating within shared principles of preserving its cultural and ecological integrity. Economic goals have always been considered to be the most important aspect of development, and tourism offers significant economic multiplier effects compared to other development options because it requires the consumer (tourist) to travel to the tourism location (Bennett, Roe, & Ashley, 1999). Large numbers of travelers impact the local economy (Tisdell & Roy, 1998) by demanding a broad base of other products and services from economic sectors involving a wide variety of other suppliers (Bennett et al., 1999; Edgell, 1990), typically small and medium-sized enterprises (UNEP, 2002).

As tourism development projects have expanded to involve, respond to, and be accountable to those who are directly impacted by their implementation, social and human development goals have been given greater consideration (Kingsbury, Remenyi, McKay, & Hunt, 2004). As a result, the goal of sustainable tourism is to adapt more readily to the unique features of the local context and culture. This locally-oriented approach to development takes better advantage of the extensive talents and experiences of the local community (Kleymeyer, 1992; UN, 2001) as well as the interactions and collaboration in existing social networks (UNDP, 1996). This can help to strengthen the local community's cohesion, shared past, and history of participation in social actions during times of uncertainty and change (Jermyn, 1995).

To achieve economic, social and human development goals, many diverse stakeholders from the public, private, and non-profit sectors must overcome their conflicting interests and instead work together to insure that everyone benefits from the tourism development process. Individuals and groups of stakeholders in a community, working collaboratively in an

idiosyncratic local institutional context, can more successfully identify the strategies and changes needed to achieve the type of tourism development desired by that community (Robertson & Speier, 1998; Robinson, 1999). The local population's intimate knowledge of the challenges they face (Kleymeyer, 1992), coupled with their empowerment through involvement in the decision, can raise their self-reliance and allow them to take ownership (Binswanger & Aiyar, 2003) and accountability of the tourism development process. This in turn increases the likelihood that the solutions they generate are locally supported and implemented (Buchy & Race, 2001).

Recognizing the strategic importance of involving local communities in their own development, there has been a movement in Brazil recently to decentralize or 'municipalize' the development of various sectors of the economy, among them tourism. In 1991, this theme was first explicitly indicated in the National Plan for Tourism and, in 1994, formalized in the National Program to Municipalize Tourism (NPMT). According to Ana Maria Marcondes Machado, the coordinator of the NPMT, it was time to "(b)ring together the people of each municipality to discuss tourism and try, through a specific methodology that focuses on participation, to sensitize them so that they could become the levers of the tourism phenomenon" (Embratur, 2002, as cited in Bartholo, Delamaro, & Badin, 2005: 248). Although the NPMT was discontinued at the federal level with the arrival of a new administration in 2002, the process for the decentralization of the management of tourism evolved into the Regionalization Program for Tourism. Along with the new National Plan for Tourism (2007-2010), this regionalization effort now encourages collaborative networks of public, private and not-for-profit organizations to come together at the municipal and state levels to coordinate their decisions and actions.

Tourism is of undeniable importance for the state of Rio de Janeiro, as it is a principal

industry comprising about 20% of the state's economic base. Furthermore, the city of Rio is considered one of the main ports of entry for foreign tourists visiting Brazil and is the second largest international tourist destination in the country (after São Paulo), attracting approximately 16% of the total number of tourists (Embratur, 2008). In the state of Rio de Janeiro, movement towards the development of a collaborative governance system began as far back as 1998, starting at the local level in the city of Cabo Frio (Bartholo et al., 2005). It has continued to expand as it attempts to grow into a decentralized, coordinated, and integrated management model of public policy to diversify, expand, and structure the supply of tourism as well as promote the development of sustainable tourism throughout the state (Lima, 2009).

Collaborative Governance

It is clear that the institutions of modern public administration are in the midst of a period of significant transformation. Over the last 30 years, governmental systems around the world have been under pressure to make important changes in their institutional frameworks so as to improve their overall efficiency and effectiveness. To enact this process of transformation, public organizations have been called upon to change the way they are designed and managed. As a result, over a quarter-century of devolution, decentralization, downsizing, and debureaucratization coupled with privatization, contracting out, and the adoption of business management techniques has slowly yet inexorably been reconfiguring the organizational systems through which public interests are being served.

A general theme underlying the reforms initially advocated most frequently was that public organizations should debureaucratize and decentralize their operations (Barzelay, 1992), by streamlining rules and regulations and providing more discretion to lower levels of the organization. These goals were implemented through such management fads as total quality

management (Cohen & Brand, 1993; Schmidt & Finnigan, 1992) and re-engineering (Linden, 1994). A number of relevant recommendations were synthesized into the “reinventing government” movement (Brudney, Hebert, & Wright, 1999; Kamensky, 1996; Moon & deLeon, 2001; National Performance Review, 1993; Osborne & Gaebler, 1992), which espoused various approaches to reform that would make government more mission-driven and results-oriented.

Subsequently, this program of governmental reform came to be labeled the “new public management” (NPM) (Barzelay, 2001; Ferlie, Ashburner, Fitzgerald, & Pettigrew, 1996; Lane, 2000; Lynn, 1998). The reform agenda advocated by NPM adherents includes an efficiency-oriented aspect stressing productivity and managerial control, a market-oriented aspect stressing competition and contracting, and a user-oriented aspect stressing service quality and responsiveness (Clarke & Newman, 1997). Five core principles underlying these reforms include: 1) downsizing – reducing the size and scope of government; 2) managerialism – using business protocols in government; 3) decentralization – moving decision making closer to the service recipients; 4) debureaucratization – restructuring government to emphasize results rather than processes; and 5) privatization – directing the allocation of government goods and services to outside firms (Hays & Kearney, 1997).

Most recently, a significant trend in the field of public administration is the broadening of its focus, with attention now being given to the more expansive notion of governance in contrast to the field’s primary emphasis historically on the more limited issues of government (Bingham, Nabatchi, & O’Leary, 2005; Kettl, 2000; Milward & Provan, 2000; Peters & Pierre, 1998). This shift reflects heightened interest in the last decade in the study of networks and network governance (Agranoff, 2003; Bogason & Musso, 2006; Goldsmith & Eggers, 2004; Kickert, Klijn, & Koppenjan, 1997). This has been due to the fact that much of the work in the public

arena now takes place not just by government organizations but through partnerships and networks involving public, private, and non-profit organizations, with greater involvement and/or scrutiny by a wide range of interest groups and concerned citizens. In this context, the tasks of policy-making, implementation, and evaluation become even more complex, and traditional bureaucratic organizations often do not perform very well under these conditions.

Much attention has been given to the kinds of changes that public organizations and managers must make in order to be effective actors in these cross-sectoral, multi-level governance systems (Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006; McGuire, 2002; Milward & Provan, 2006; Page, 2003). An important theme in this literature is the importance of establishing structures and processes that facilitate collaborative dynamics among diverse participants that in turn can enhance the quality of decisions made and implemented (Gray, 1997; Huxham & Vangen, 2005; Mandell, 1999; McGuire, 2006; Thomson & Perry, 2006; Vigoda, 2002). These ideas are now being synthesized into the concept of collaborative governance,¹ which Ansell and Gash (2008: 544) have defined as “(a) governing arrangement where one or more public agencies directly engage non-state stakeholders in a collective decision-making process that is formal, consensus-oriented, and deliberative and that aims to make or implement public policy or manage public programs or assets.” Ultimately, the effectiveness of these collaborative governance arrangements depends “on whether the members of a collaborative network are able to develop new processes that will lead to new ways of working, new structural arrangements and integration of the members into a new whole, which will lead to the accomplishment of innovative solutions” (Mandell & Keast, 2007: 579).

¹ A special issue of *Public Administration Review* in December 2006 focused on the topic of collaborative governance.

Case Context and Methods

In November of 2006, about 180 people representing 110 institutions attended the First Forum for Sustainable Development for the City of Rio de Janeiro, focused specifically on the tourism sector. Named *Rio Turismo + 20*, the discussion at this forum was intended “to seek to converge the demands and proposals of the various sectors of civil society and the productive sector to improve the business environment in the next twenty years.” The Forum was to “contribute to the discussion of sustainable development of the city of Rio de Janeiro based on the strengthening of the productive chain of tourism, and by encouraging the formation of associations between cooperatives, micro and small enterprises and centers of local development linked directly or indirectly to the chain of tourism in the search for solutions that meet common needs.”²

Out of this meeting came the idea of forming a cross-sectoral tourism network (RedeTuris) that would promote sustainable tourism in the region. This led to the First RedeTuris Seminar, held in June, 2008 and attended by about 200 people, across sectors, associated with the tourism industry. The focus of this seminar was to present tourism plan proposals to strengthen and unify the actions that will increase the sustainable development of the sector in the state of Rio. The seminar was promoted by the Conselho Empresarial de Turismo Pró-Rio da Associação Comercial do Rio de Janeiro (Pro-Rio Tourism Business Council of the Trade Association of Rio de Janeiro) which, in partnership with SEBRAE/RJ, then officially launched RedeTuris at the Second RedeTuris Seminar in July, 2008. In short, RedeTuris was created to help integrate the whole production chain of tourism in the state of Rio de Janeiro, including micro and small companies, for the sustainable development of the sector,

² The quotations in this paragraph are translated from material presented on the *Rio Turismo + 20* website (www.rioturismomais20.org).

and form a system of governance that will enable the expansion of partnerships, optimize resources and programs, and articulate the creation of public policies for the sector.

As of May, 2009, thirty-one organizations were identified as official partners of RedeTuris. This list includes two government agencies, nine businesses, seven associations of organizations, five nonprofit/educational organizations, and eight tourist centers in Rio de Janeiro. Notably absent from this list, however, are TurisRio and RioTur, the state and local government agencies responsible for planning and promoting tourism in the area. In addition to these formal partners, the many organizations that participated in the First and/or Second Seminar, and/or who have expressed interest in participating in the network, can be categorized into three groups of participants: 1) associations – entities that represent other organizations (such as the Syndicate of Hotels, Bars, and Restaurants); 2) funders – government agencies, businesses, or individuals who provide resources to support the network; and 3) operators – organizations directly involved in doing things in the tourism sector.³ The idea was to cast a wide net, and generate broad inclusion of and participation by the diverse array of actors engaged in tourism in Rio. A brief mission statement specified for RedeTuris is “development of tourism with involvement.”

The strategic focus of RedeTuris includes the optimization of public resources allocated to tourism; the supply and improvement of tours, reception products and services; development of projects to build professional capacity; extension and certification of the network of lodging establishments; and marketing plans. One founding official stressed that the role of RedeTuris

³ This framework was proposed by the former coordinator of RedeTuris but not officially adopted. His idea was that representatives of the associations would be the voting members of the RedeTuris. Note that these three groups correspond approximately to the three constituent parts of a network identified by Rethemeyer and Hatmaker (2008), namely, the policy, fiscal, and collaborative components.

was not to promote the imposition of actions for any entities, but to induce projects instead.⁴

Goals include helping to consolidate the work of tourism actors around common objectives and actions in the network, creating mechanisms for the development and integrated management of tourism, and promoting the exchange of information, marketing and services in the tourist regions of the area.

Some of the action areas RedeTuris is currently working on include: 1) an infrastructure improvement project to promote the enhancement of the image of the city, enterprises and entrepreneurs, in addition to actions of social responsibility, education and awareness for sustainable development; 2) the InovaTuris project, which aims to prepare Rio for better service in the tourism sector through the implementation of programs directed toward capacity-building and generation of jobs, identifying the demands of forming a professionalized workforce for the tourism sector, raising awareness for participation in training programs, developing of training programs, and thereby providing training and labor for this sector; and 3) the Project of Integration and Development of the Centers of Trade and Tourism, oriented towards promoting synergy between the existing Centers while avoiding overlap of actions, reducing costs, creating and standardizing the calendar of events, and increasing the viability of projects of integrated capacity-building.

Promoters of RedeTuris have identified a number of potential benefits for participants. These include the development of joint projects of major economic impact; shared costs and risks, with a greater degree of commitment; an increase of critical mass in terms of ideas, knowledge, experience and know-how; the possibility of exchange of experiences, avoiding the dispersion of efforts; more information about market opportunities; ease of penetration of new

⁴ Comment made by Sávio Neves, president of the Conselho Empresarial de Turismo Pró-Rio da Associação Comercial do Rio de Janeiro, at the Second RedeTuris Seminar.

markets; ease in finding partners; qualification and improvement of professionals; and diffusion of products and technologies. On the other hand, a concern among some participants is that they will lose some of their current funding from the government if RedeTuris tries to “rationalize” the system by doing a better job of understanding supply and demand issues and in turn recommending different allocations of resources to make things more efficient and effective.

Information about RedeTuris and the broader context within which this network was formed and is intended to operate has been acquired from a variety of sources. First and foremost, the RedeTuris website contains considerable documentation of the forum and two seminars described above, as well as various presentations, news clippings, and other material pertaining to the development of RedeTuris and other tourism-related events taking place in the state of Rio de Janeiro. A second source included a variety of planning documents generated by state and local agencies, outlining objectives and proposals for the future development of tourism in the region. Third, meetings with a few key individuals associated with RedeTuris and the state tourism agency (TurisRio) provided additional information regarding the tourism sector and the efforts underway to coordinate activities of various actors in the sector. Fourth, presentations by numerous individuals (researchers and practitioners) involved or interested in the tourism industry in Rio yielded additional insights into the dynamics of the sector and the challenges associated with developing an effective network to coordinate and integrate the actions of the myriad players operating in this arena.⁵ Finally, interviews with a number of people affiliated with the tourism sector in various capacities provided further perspective on some of the issues addressed in this research.

⁵ These presentations were made to participants in the International Planning and Development Laboratory, a graduate course offered jointly by the University of Southern California School of Policy, Planning, and Development, held at the Fundação Getulio Vargas Brazilian School of Public and Business Administration, from May 25 to June 5, 2009, and co-taught by the authors.

Data acquired from these multiple sources serve as the basis for the analysis presented below. This analysis is essentially descriptive, although the goal is to address a number of interesting questions derived from the collaborative network governance literature. This literature is not lacking in analytic orientations. For example, La Porte (1996) identified three different vantage points from which public organization networks can be examined, namely, within, above, and alongside the network. Provan and Milward (2001) specified three different levels of analysis relevant to the study of networks, including organization/participant, network, and community. A number of network typologies have been proposed (Mandell & Steelman, 2003; Bingham & O’Leary, 2006; Agranoff, 2003; Mandell & Keast, 2007). Likewise, a number of conceptual and theoretical frameworks have been suggested to help clarify the key structures, processes, and contingencies likely to influence network outcomes (Agranoff & McGuire, 1999; Ansell & Gash, 2008; Bingham & O’Leary, 2006; Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006; McGuire, 2006; Provan, Fish, & Sydow, 2007; Provan & Kenis, 2007).

For present purposes, the research foci proposed by O’Toole (1997) serve as a useful guide for the analysis of RedeTuris. He suggested that three fundamental descriptive tasks require sustained attention in the study of networks in public administration: 1) determining what networks, and what kinds of networks, can be found; 2) examining the historical dimension of network formation and development; and 3) exploring the array of networks in a broadly comparative perspective. RedeTuris is an unusual type of collaborative network, different from many other kinds of networks that have previously been the focus of public management research. Since it is in the early stages of formation, it is most appropriate to examine important factors that are likely to be key to its ongoing effective development. Given its location in Brazil, a unique setting in its own right, it provides a good opportunity to examine a

collaborative network in a different cultural context than most of those that have been studied to date. Each of these issues is addressed in greater detail below.

Findings

Type of Network

The first task in this descriptive analysis is to identify more rigorously what type of network RedeTuris is, or at least is intended to be. Scholars have offered a number of ways to differentiate between types of interorganizational networks, so these provide useful guidelines for characterizing the tourism network being developed as RedeTuris. For example, Agranoff (2003) specified four general types of networks informational (participants exchange information and explore solutions); developmental (education enhances participants' ability to implement solutions); outreach (participants create strategies implemented by partner organizations); and action (participants engage in collective action through network-level courses of action). RedeTuris certainly has the potential to incorporate elements from all four types, as each of them in one form or another has been articulated as a goal for this network. To date, it is primarily an informational network, but the action steps being pursued reflect an effort to develop and implement joint strategies among partners. Furthermore, the stated focus on optimizing resource use in the tourism sector will certainly require better network-level collective action than currently exists.

Bingham and O'Leary (2006) identified two dimensions on which collaborative governance networks can vary: they can be intermittent, temporary, or permanent; and they can take the form of informal coordination, partnerships, a coalition, or a formal network. These two factors were blended in Mandell and Steelman's (2003) typology of interorganizational mechanisms: intermittent coordination; temporary task force; permanent or regular coordination;

coalitions; and network structures. In these terms, RedeTuris appears to be a mechanism intended to help create a network structure out of a large, diverse field of actors whose relationships at present reflect many variations of the other four types of mechanisms. The tourism sector is already filled with a variety of associations, federations, syndicates, and other kinds of networks that provide a foundation for all sorts of cooperative and coordinative action. The goal of RedeTuris is to establish a network structure that can enable and facilitate the move towards more collaboration, which is different from cooperation and coordination in that building new types of relationships and ways of working is its central outcome (Mandell & Keast, 2007).

A third distinction made by Bingham and O’Leary (2006) was between networks that are vertical through levels of government and those that are horizontal arrays of public and private actors. However, RedeTuris defies this distinction because it contains elements of both. On one hand, municipal, state, and national governments all have active tourism agencies that play an active role in tourism development decisions in the city and state of Rio de Janeiro. Furthermore, recent efforts by the Ministry of Tourism to “regionalize” the sector has led to the establishment of regional networks geared towards improving the integrated management of tourism across state boundaries (one of these, ADETUR Sudeste -- the association focused on integration of the four-state region in Southeast Brazil that includes Rio de Janeiro – is a partner of RedeTuris). Likewise, many other agencies at all three levels of government have some interest in tourism development in the area (e.g., another partner of RedeTuris is Setrab, the State Secretariat of Work and Income). It is generally recognized that, historically, it has been difficult to get the three levels of government to work together effectively because of personal or political conflicts. At present, however, there is greater affinity among the levels, such that there

is some optimism that it will be easier now to develop better cooperation, coordination, and even collaboration.

While RedeTuris, to be effective, will certainly have to be a vertical, cross-level network, the reality also is that it is essentially a private sector initiative, spearheaded by the Associação Comercial do Rio de Janeiro (ACRJ, the Trade Association of Rio de Janeiro), and in particular its tourism business council. Most of the partners at this point are private sector entities, and while it is clear that they need to involve relevant public sector actors, at least part of the motivation for forming RedeTuris was to get around the barrier that government poses for developing tourism. In addition, there is sentiment among some of the founders that a government tourism agency should not be the orchestrator of the network, since policy orientation changes so readily with administrations. The premise is that RedeTuris could bring stability to the sector and be more successful if it were allowed to operate in a non-partisan manner. It is clear, then, that RedeTuris is intended to be primarily a horizontal network, with the different levels of government presumably serving as equal partners with the myriad private sector actors that are legitimate stakeholders as well.

But this raises the question of whether RedeTuris can in fact be thought of as a collaborative governance network. In defining collaborative governance, Ansell and Gash (2008: 544) specify six key criteria, the first of which is that the network “is initiated by public agencies or institutions.” Since RedeTuris was not initiated by the government but by the private sector instead, does that mean it is not an example of collaborative governance? We contend that this definition is unnecessarily restrictive and that, like RedeTuris, a network that is initiated by non-government actors but focuses on important public policy/management issues can still be considered as an example of collaborative governance. If the goal of a network is to create

public value – i.e., to generate outcomes that have broader benefits than simply for those directly involved in the network, as could be the case for a network oriented towards promoting sustainable tourism – it is not clear why it should matter, from a definitional standpoint, who initiates the network. A more interesting issue, in this case and more generally, is whether and how government actors can play an effective role in a collaborative governance network they did not initiate and do not control.

Network Formation and Development

An assessment of the formation and development of the RedeTuris network requires a better understanding of the context within which this network is being formed. A frequent focus in the collaborative network literature is on the starting or initial conditions (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Bryson et al., 2006), environmental variables (McGuire, 2002), or antecedents (Bingham & O’Leary, 2006; Brass, Galaskiewicz, Greve, & Tsai, 2004) that are likely to influence network development and ultimate effectiveness. A wide array of important contextual conditions has been identified, such that it would not be viable to try to address all of them here. But since RedeTuris is at a very early stage of development, with its structure still being formulated and processes still being established, it would be useful to address a few key issues that will probably have a significant impact on the extent to which this network is able to have positive effects in the tourism sector in Rio de Janeiro and thus pursue its goal of promoting sustainable development in the region. We focus below on four themes: field complexity, program rationale, interdependence, and management capacity.

A first observation simply acknowledges the complexity of the tourism sector in Rio and Brazil more generally. For beginners, as indicated earlier, there is a matrix of government agencies – across levels and areas of responsibility – with some vested interest or useful role to

play in the process of tourism development. At the local level, the Mayor's Office (Prefeitura) and the City Council (Camara dos Vereadores) each has its own entity focused on tourism to help plan and develop appropriate policy proposals. To this add the myriad relevant private sector actors, from a broad array of industries including lodging, bars and restaurants, transportation, recycling, events, arts and crafts, etc., many of which are already organized into existing associations. There are also various nonprofit and other civil society organizations whose interests intersect with those of the tourism sector. This complex field of private players is further complicated by the fact that as much as 40-50 percent of the economy in Rio is informal, with an uncountable number of small and micro businesses, both formal and informal, serving a key function in the overall chain of production of tourism in the region. Finally, it is worth noting that there are other networking mechanisms available in the field operating in parallel to, if not in competition with, the RedeTuris effort. Given the diversity of actors and extent to which relationships and networks already exist among them, it will probably take a tremendous amount of effort in order for RedeTuris to have anything more than just a marginal impact on the system dynamics of the tourism industry in Rio.

A dominant theme in the interorganizational network literature is that there must be some incentive for participants to put any time and energy into a network and its activities (Robertson, 1998). While the particular incentives can vary greatly across organizations and networks (Oliver, 1990), the common assumption is that participants must anticipate some potential benefit to themselves that would justify whatever costs they incur to be involved in the network. In this regard, some scholars have focused on the value of some kind of "program rationale" that can help to build cohesion among network players (Agranoff & McGuire, 1999) and generate commitment to joint action (Mandell & Keast, 2007). With Brazil having recently been named

as the host of the 2014 World Cup, there is now considerable enthusiasm in many quarters for making the kinds of improvements in the tourism sector needed to handle the influx of an anticipated half million visitors coming to Brazil at that time. Given the singular popularity of *futebol* in Brazil, it is reasonable to expect that the shared mission and goals associated with getting the country, state, and city ready for the World Cup can serve as a powerful program rationale to motivate key players to participate in RedeTuris so as to enhance the quality of coordination and collaboration toward their shared objective.

Another factor typically related to participants' motivation to get involved and contribute to a network is the amount and type of interdependence that exists among them (Gray, 1985; Logsdon, 1991). Given the diverse actors and interests in the tourism sector, their relationships undoubtedly reflect a complex pattern of interdependencies that will influence the viability of different actors or groups of actors working together effectively. Overall, however, the interdependence among all these players might best be characterized as pooled (Thompson, 1967), in the sense that the quality of sustainable tourism in the region is in part a function of the separate actions of each actor, and each actor can to some extent pursue the goal of sustainable tourism independent of the actions of others. This type of interdependence is weaker than that found in other collaborative governance networks where actors must work more closely with others in order to pursue their own objectives, and may not be sufficient to motivate the level and quality of interaction required to accomplish the shared goal of promoting sustainable tourism.

On the other hand, there is not necessarily much conflict between the self- and collective interests of the various players in the tourism industry, as they can all stand to benefit if they work together to increase the number of tourists coming to the area and enhance the quality of the tourism experience. In other words, there is considerable room for synergy if these players

are willing to focus more on their common agenda of increasing the number of tourists and tourist expenditures in the Rio region, to coordinate their actions so as to maximize the impact of public and private expenditures, and to collaborate in ways that generate creative and effective solutions to the challenges they face in doing so. Unfortunately, as noted by Huxham (2003), the possibility of achieving this “collaborative advantage” is frequently impeded by some “collaborative inertia” that undermines the likelihood of generating the potential synergy and thus often leads to more disappointing output in reality. This inertia, in the case of RedeTuris as in many other collaborative governance networks in other contexts, stems in part from the primarily self-interested focus of many of the participants. Better recognition, and cultivation, of the reciprocal relationships that exist throughout the tourism sector could help generate the energy needed to hold a network together (Booher & Innes, 2002).

A final issue to be addressed with regards to the formation of RedeTuris focuses on the management capacity of the network, which includes the structures and processes established to enable the enactment of network activities and the accomplishment of network goals. Of the three modes of governance identified by Provan and Kenis (2007), RedeTuris is best described as lead organization-governed, although it was founded jointly by two separate organizations (ACRJ and SEBRAE/RJ). However, when the network was formally launched, a person was hired to serve in the role of coordinator, and his goal was to turn RedeTuris into more of a participant-governed system, albeit with restricted voting rights (see Footnote 3). His plans may not have been acceptable to all participants, however, as he reported that a government tourism agency threatened to pull out of the Second RedeTuris Seminar if he presented his proposed by-laws at the meeting. By April 2009, funding for the coordinator position was no longer available and he vacated the position early that month, apparently leaving a void in terms of there no

longer being a person whose single or even primary responsibility is to carry out the many management tasks required to further the development of the network.⁶

McGuire (2002) provided a useful description of four key sets of behaviors required for the management of networks, and it is reasonable to conclude that RedeTuris is in need of quite a bit of all four of them. Activation behaviors help to identify and incorporate the persons and resources needed to achieve program goals, whereas framing behaviors are used to arrange and integrate the network structure by facilitating agreement on participants' roles, operating rules, and network values. Given the current status of RedeTuris, these two sets of managerial behaviors seem paramount; whereas a number of key participants have already become formally involved, much more work is needed in terms of broadening this involvement, acquiring resources needed to support the network and build management capacity, and clarifying the roles and rules through which the network will function. The other two behaviors, while not unimportant now, are likely to become more critical down the road once the network becomes better established with broader and regular interaction resulting in more joint decisions and actions. At that point, mobilizing behaviors will be needed to develop commitment and support for network processes from network participants as well as external stakeholders, and synthesizing behaviors will help to create an environment and enhance the conditions for favorable, productive interaction among network participants. At present, it appears that little is being done in terms of these latter two categories of managerial behavior.

More generally, there is little evidence that much has been done at this point to address the various process issues that are important for the successful formation and development of a network. For example, Bryson et al. (2006) discuss the importance of such process tasks as

⁶ As of July 2009, the person with managerial responsibility for RedeTuris was the Manager of Core Projects for ACRJ.

forging agreements, building leadership, building legitimacy, building trust, managing conflict, and planning. Likewise, Ansell and Gash (2008) describe the collaborative process as a virtuous cycle of face-to-face dialogue, trust-building, commitment to the process, shared understanding, intermediate outcomes, more dialogue, etc. Many key players in the tourism industry have long-standing personal and professional relationships that help to provide a foundation of trust to serve as a source of “start-up” social capital for RedeTuris. On the other hand, there is the possibility of some distrust between public and private sector actors in the network, as the municipal and state tourism agencies might perceive that RedeTuris is encroaching on their territory. If RedeTuris is to develop into a significant system with meaningful impact on sustainable tourism in Rio, concerted effort will need to be applied to building high-quality relationships, creating a climate of trust and openness, and establishing the conditions for “authentic dialogue” (Booher & Innes, 2002) that provide the basis for collective decision-making and joint implementation (Mandell & Keast, 2007; Provan & Kenis, 2007; Thomson & Perry, 2006).

Collaborative Governance in Brasil

To close the analysis, we adopt a comparative lens by considering the question of which features of the Brazilian context are particularly relevant for understanding RedeTuris and the likely requirements for its success. A first point here addresses what appears to be something of a paradox with regards to network formation in Brasil. On one hand, the institutional environment, certainly in the Rio tourism sector, is well-populated with plenty of associations, federations, cooperatives, and networks already in place – it certainly appears that *brasileiros* are willing and eager to “join up” and become part of some kind of affiliative collective. On the other hand, one of the main challenges associated with improving regional integration of tourism

is the need for “a paradigm shift from ‘me’ to ‘us’” (Lima, 2009). The challenge of overcoming the tendency toward self-interest may be nearly universal, but it remains a bit ironic that actors like the Brazilians who readily form networks would then be reluctant to start thinking in terms of what it would take for the network as a whole to benefit. Taking into account the considerable possibility for synergy in the tourism field, this subtle but significant shift in paradigmatic perspective could lay the foundation for identifying and implementing win-win solutions that simultaneously benefit multiple diverse stakeholders (Fisher & Ury, 1981; Gray, 1997; Nagel, 1997). An important aspect of the “framing” behavior (McGuire, 2002) that is still needed in RedeTuris will be to encourage and facilitate this shift in thinking.

To a considerable extent, the quality of a collaborative governance network and the outcomes it generates are a function of the quality of the discourse and decision-making that take place among network participants (Healey, 2006; Innes & Booher, 1999). A number of features of Brazilian culture are likely to make it difficult for RedeTuris to create a forum or “space” in which diverse participants are able to interact openly and honestly and thus engage in the kind of authentic dialogue needed to develop integrative responses to existing opportunities and challenges. First, official meetings are typically run quite formally, with presentations by high status speakers followed by a question-and-answer period where others can participate briefly; this format allows for little meaningful discussion of key issues. To add to the challenge, the flexibility of “Brazilian time” as well as a common tendency for people to cancel meetings or appearances at the last minute, or to just not show up as scheduled, can make it a challenge merely to get all the key players into the same room at the same time. While Brazilian culture is very social, gregarious even, with lots of verbiage and talking, a typical desire to avoid conflict results in a pattern of communication in which “yes means no” (Novinger, 2003) in many

circumstances, making it difficult to determine when agreements have truly been reached or commitments have actually been made. Finally, a low level of trust tends to underlie *carioca* culture,⁷ such that it may be challenging to establish the baseline level of trust required for actors to participate openly, confront disagreements, and work towards jointly satisfactory solutions. Again, these issues need to be the focus of future managerial behavior oriented towards overcoming the barriers to network effectiveness they present.

Finally, and more optimistically, there is a quality of Brazilian culture that could enhance the ability of participants in RedeTuris to operate effectively in the context of a collaborative governance network. In particular, there is a particular fluidity – an improvisational style, if you will – that manifests in a variety of ways in Brazilian life (music and *futebol* being two obvious examples). In Brazil’s complex institutional environment, where getting tasks accomplished (formally and legally) can be a long, slow, complicated, and/or paperwork-filled process, the concept of *jeitinho* has itself become institutionalized as a way of getting things done. A *jeitinho* is a “skillful, smart, astute way of achieving something, specially something that seems particularly difficult to most people” (Castor, 2002, citing the Houaiss Dictionary of the Portuguese Language). “‘Dar um jeitinho’ means to find any solution at all to an apparently impossible problem or insurmountable difficulty with the help of a flexible and imaginative interpretation of the laws, rules, and regulations” (Castor, 2002: 75). In a sense, then, an improvisational approach to “working the system” is ingrained in the way of doing business in Brazil. This ability to use personal/professional networks to make one’s way through a complex system in order to accomplish desired objectives is, of course, a very useful skill set to have in the context of a collaborative governance network. In other words, *brasileiros* may have a cultural advantage of being able to operate successfully in informal, self-organizing, complex

⁷ *Cariocas* are people from Rio de Janeiro.

networks, such that if and when the other conditions addressed above are put into place, RedeTuris might be expected to function relatively effectively.

Conclusion

The bottom-line question at this point is whether RedeTuris is likely to develop into an effective collaborative network that exerts meaningful influence over the governance of the tourism sector in Rio de Janeiro. It is too early to tell how RedeTuris will evolve over the coming years, but clearly much more development is needed now if the network is to become an effective collaborative governance mechanism at some point in the future. Provan and Kenis (2007: 2) suggested that network effectiveness be defined as “the attainment of positive network-level outcomes that could not normally be achieved by individual organizational participants acting independently.” Given the many win-win possibilities available in the tourism industry, it shouldn’t be difficult – with a little cooperation, coordination, and collaboration – to generate benefits that couldn’t or wouldn’t have been obtained without working together. The extent to which this happens, and the scale or scope of the outcomes achieved, will ultimately depend on effective resolution of the kinds of issues addressed in the analysis above.

The other lingering question to surface out of this analysis focuses on the role of public managers in the context of a collaborative governance network such as RedeTuris. There is some indication that they are reluctant to get involved too significantly, especially if they are not in a position to take a leading role. For TurisRio, anyway, this may be in part because they have their own parallel organizing process in play. As part of their effort to improve regional (i.e., inter-city) cooperation and integration in the tourism sector, they too are promoting the development of a regional governance body or council that can help to integrate tourist initiatives across municipalities. While the function of this network would be largely the same as that

intended for RedeTuris, if both were to exist they would to some extent compete with each other for the time and attention of key actors, thus likely undermining the potential of both of them. Logic might suggest that RedeTuris should serve as the regional integration mechanism envisioned by TurisRio. However, this would mean that TurisRio would not then be “in charge” of the network or its process, a position probably not much to their liking.

But that brings us back to the question of the nature of collaborative governance, and whether government agencies should or need to be in charge of a network in order for them to be seen as a legitimate “public” system. At the turn of the millennium, Cleveland (2000) described the emergence of a world of governance operating primarily through networks, which he characterized as uncentralized, “nobody-in-charge” systems yet with everybody partly in charge. At issue in RedeTuris, and maybe in many other networks in many other places around the world, is whether public agencies (i.e., public managers) can assume a role as an equal partner in a collaborative effort that is intended to provide some public benefit, even if that network is initiated and maybe even led by the private sector. If the government tourism agencies choose to be active, engaged players in RedeTuris, it is viable that this network could play an important role in the development of sustainable tourism in Rio. If these agencies don’t take RedeTuris seriously and instead operate primarily through parallel processes, it is probably not likely to have much impact. Ultimately, then, collaborative governance depends on government being collaborative, and in the case of RedeTuris, time will tell how this all plays out.

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