

Institut für Öffentliche Dienstleistungen
und Tourismus



Universität St.Gallen

Social network analysis in destination management

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To define destination and destination management is rather easy

Definition of Destination

(WTO 1992 or Bieger 1996)

A destination is a geographical area consisting of all the services and infrastructure necessary for the stay of a specific tourist or tourism segment.

Destinations are the competitive units of incoming tourism. Destinations are therefore an important part of a tourism product.

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However, different types of tourist destinations compete for the same markets, today

type A

- Centrally managed destinations and owned by one or few companies or individuals
- cruise ships (mobile destinations)
- amusement parks
- winter sport resorts in Northern America
- summer vacation resorts, e.g. in Asia and in the Middle East

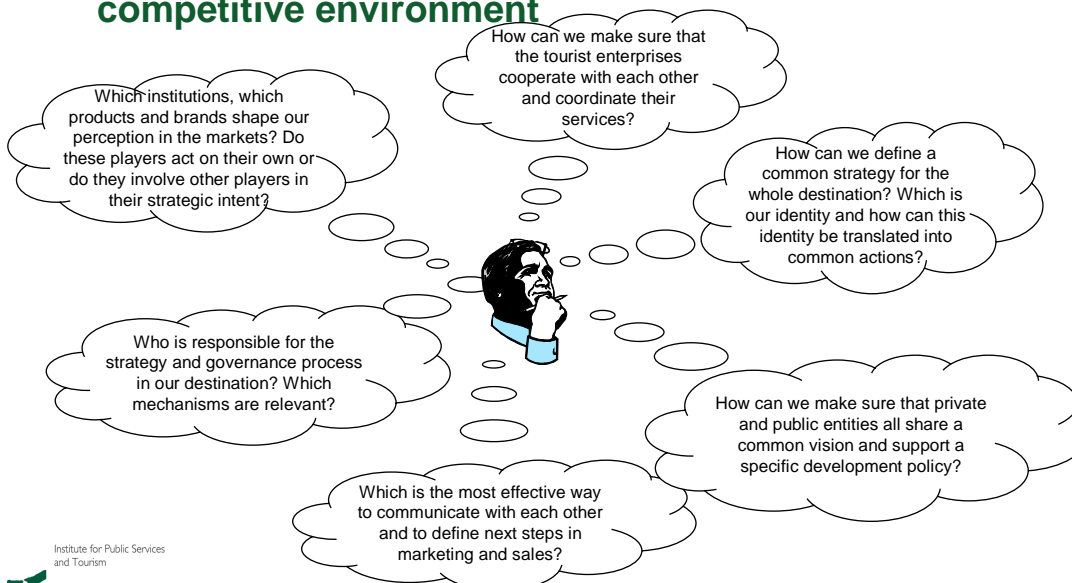
type B

- Destinations consisting of a system of fragmented services delivered by many companies and actors (numerous SMEs)
- traditional tourist regions/ destinations with community character (e.g. in Europe)
- cities

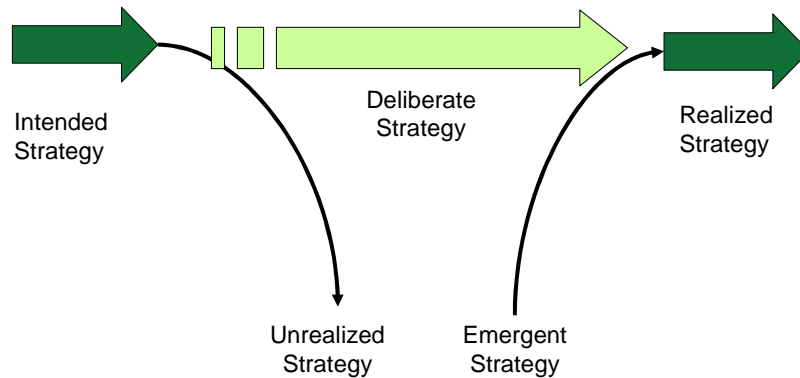
implications for strategy and governance

- entrepreneurial initiative
- private cooperation
- corporate strategies
- process of public choice and decision-making
- discussions and democratic decisions
- administrative decisions
- workshops and forums
- rules and norms set around the environment and the society

Particularly, type B (community type of destination) bears inherent challenges with regard to the current competitive environment



In fact, strategies in community type of destinations take place in public space...



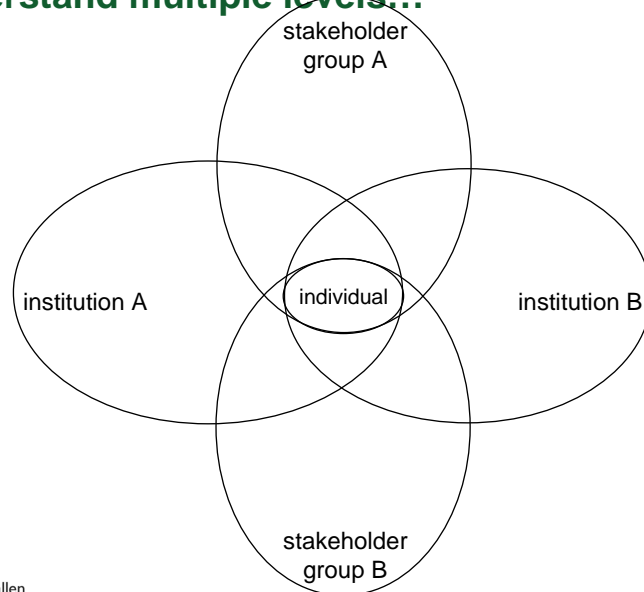
source : Mintzberg/Waters
1985

...and constrain the involved actors and their institutions in a complex system of particular interests

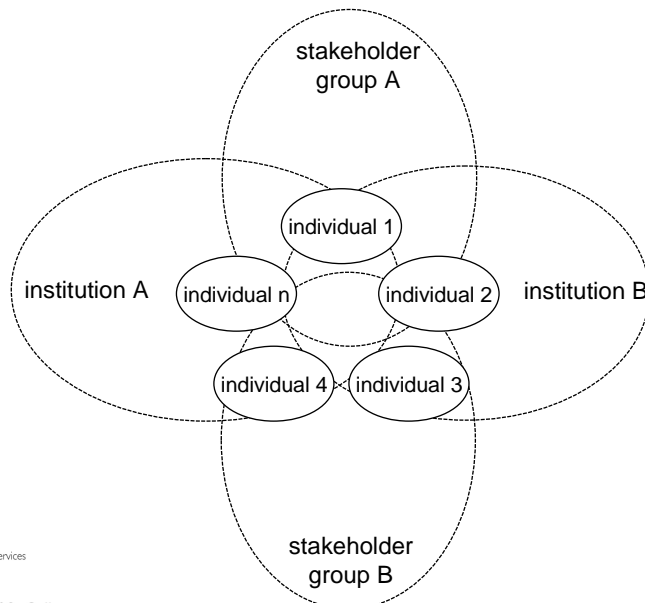
Cooperative behavior among stakeholders and their institutions is limited by three phenomena (Ostrom, 1991):

- 1.the tragedy of the commons, where there is no incentive for institutions to avoid the overexploitation of common resources (e.g. natural landscape, cultural assets) (Hardin, 1968),
- 2.the prisoner's dilemma, which induces the actors, under the conditions of limited information and non-repeated rounds, not to cooperate although they would be better off if they cooperated (Axelrod & Hamilton, 1981)
- 3.the challenge of collective action, whereby collective failure and the individual's limitation to acknowledge the importance of collective goods increases with (1) the size of the groups, (2) their homogeneity, and (3) the lack of institutional structures that promote collective action (Olson, 1965).

In order, to understand why and how opinions and ideas lead to action or omission, we must understand multiple levels...

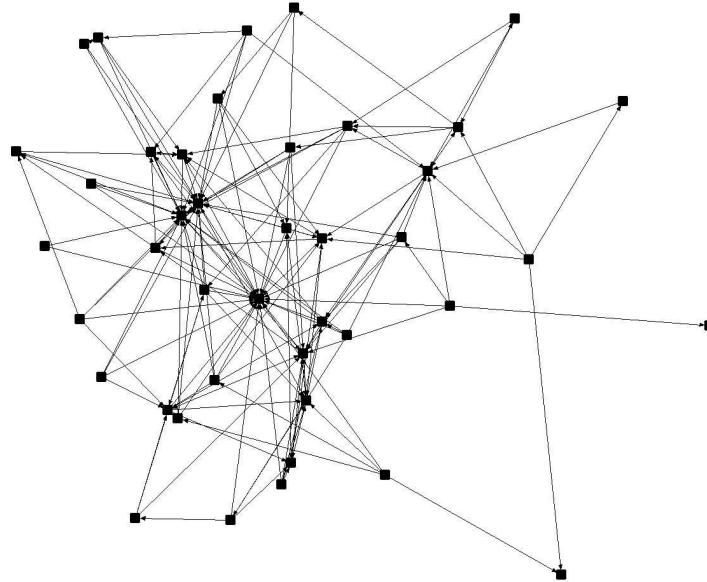


...as well as multiple relationships at these different levels

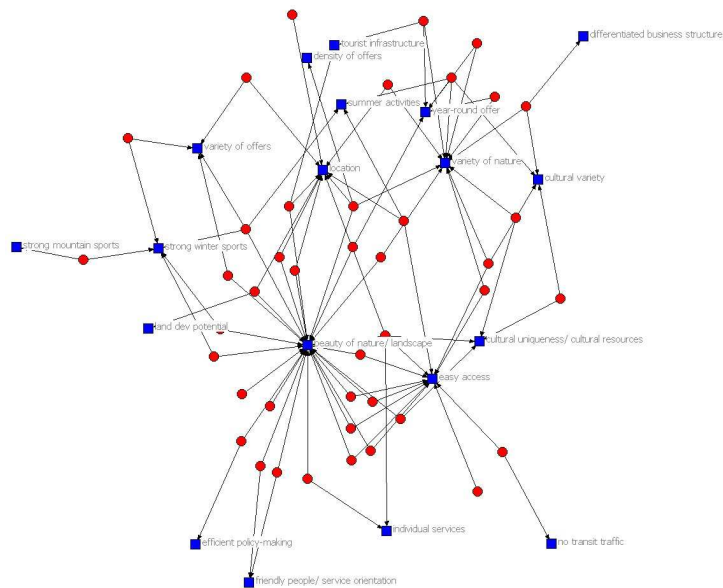


SNA is a methodological approach, which enables us (among others) to capture multiple characteristics and opinions of actors representing institutions and stakeholder groups

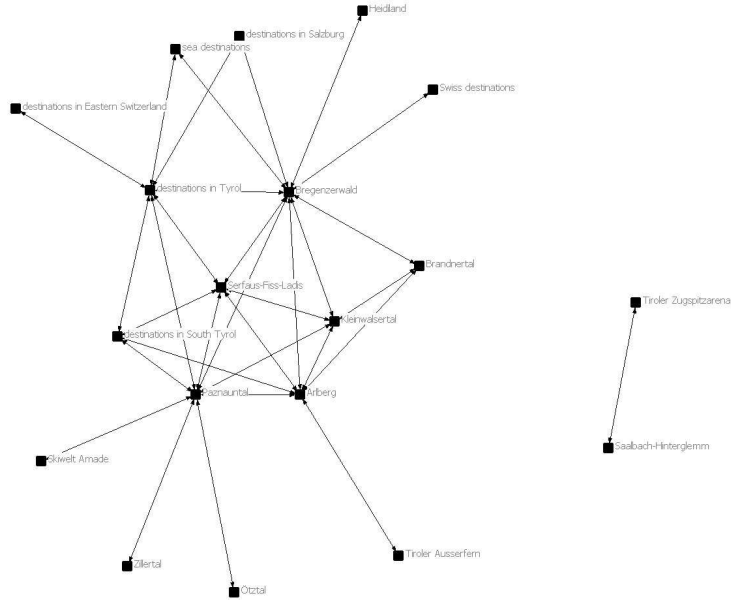
influence reputation network for an Alpine tourist destination in Austria (asymmetric, valued)
(44 nominated actors, 42 interviewed)



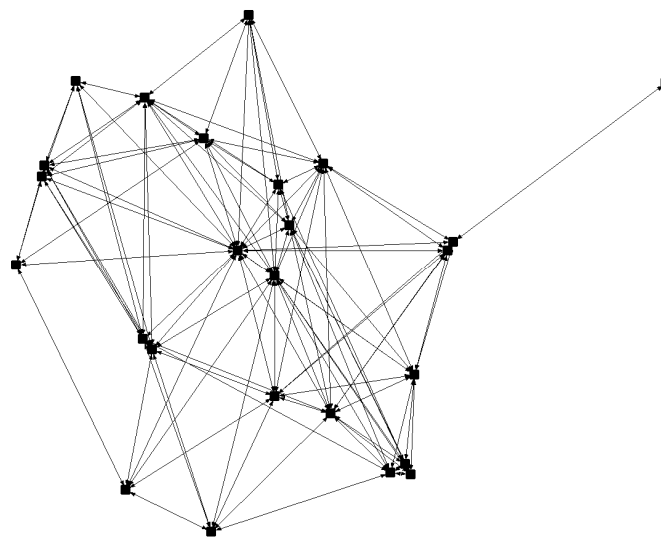
Two-mode binary network with regard to actors and the main competitive advantages of the destination



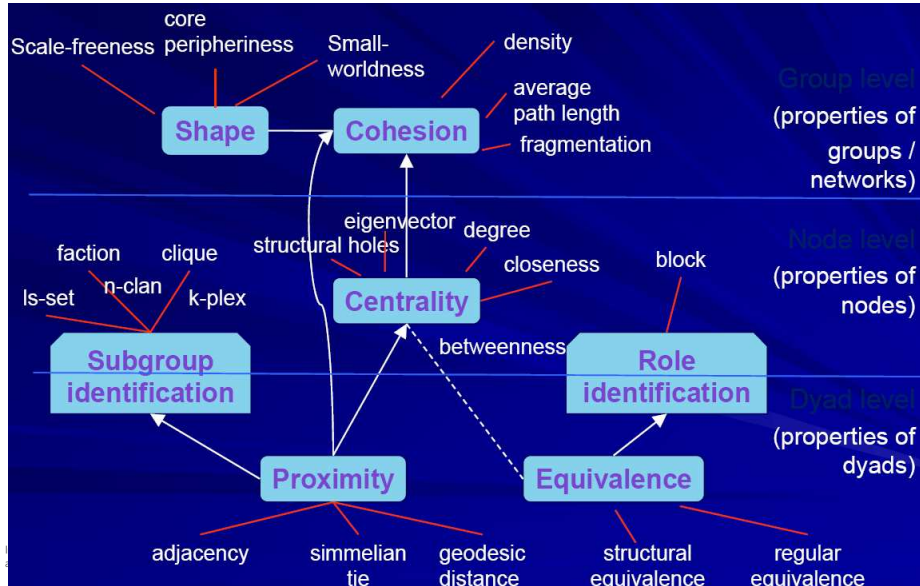
One-mode network with regard to the main competitors (derived from two-mode network)...



...and another perspective of the competitor's perception, here looking only at the actors



Network visualization look nice, but the real story develops when we discuss networks with respect to some central SNA theoretical constructs



Thank you very much for your attention!