

NETWORKS AND INTERORGANIZATIONAL COOPERATION IN NATURE TOURISM: A CASE STUDY

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Abstract

This research aims in general conceptualize some of the factors that have implications and the level of business networks and interorganizational cooperation. As nature tourism characterized by being an activity that has highlighted its potential growth, which combined with the importance of networking and cooperation and partnership plays an important role as local and regional development strategy.

The purpose of this research is essentially to develop a theoretical framework in order to match with different concepts and elements to explain and understand the phenomenon of partnerships in nature tourism.

Keywords: Networks, Nature Tourism, Interorganizational Cooperation, Partnerships.

JEL Classification: L83

I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism has been recognized as one of the most important economic and social phenomena today. It is important to understand how inter-national relations, cooperation networks, especially in nature tourism, are interrelated. Thus, based on the intense transformations in the economic and social systems, particularly those involving regional productive structures, in order for organizations working in these contexts to achieve greater competitiveness, there is a continuing need for adaptations in interorganizational relationships. In this process, more and more managers seem to be betting on the differentiation of established activities, which leads to the consideration of new relational forms capable of developing a greater value aggregation for organizations, consumers and markets (Brass et al., 2004). In this same line, international studies such as Jarillo (1998), Ring and Van de Ven (1994), Human and Provan (1997), Olivier and Ebers (1998), Thompson (2003), among others, demonstrate the importance of networks of cooperation as relational strategies capable of generating results that transcend the simple sum of individual resources. In addition, according to Powell (1998), resource and risk sharing, the synergy resulting from organizational interaction and the relationship structure produced, provide a configuration of elements that could result in increased competitiveness for organizations that establish cooperation networks Alternative to development.

According to some researchers, among them Knoke (1994) and Hacki and Lighton (2001), the coordinated evolution of cooperation networks is related to the role played by central organizations in the region of their interorganizational relationships. From the perspective of these authors, these organizations, also known as hub firms, are successful in guiding network development paths through the use of authority

and hierarchical power, thus enabling the achievement of common objectives aimed at the evolution of cooperation networks to Expansion of its physical structure.

Interorganizational cooperation and networking forms of organizations have gained great importance in many industries as well as in the nonprofit sector. (Raab & Kenis, 2009). For example, studies in management and organizational theory (Zaheer, Gozubuyek, & Milanov, 2010), public health (Varda, Shoup, & Miller, 2012), public administration (Kenis & Provan, And Cooper, 2010) have shown that cooperation in interorganizational networks can generate benefits by sharing the resources, knowledge and core competencies of involved actors, which can lead to the realization of common projects with higher performances and innovative behaviors. Based on the concept of network relationships as an organizational resource, interorganizational cooperation can be described as a process of a limited number of organizations working together for the same purpose but maintaining control of their individual resources (Pechlaner & Volgger, 2012).

Although interorganizational and cooperative relationships have been discussed previously in the investigation of nature tourism management, social network analysis, allowing the analysis of interorganizational structures, relational basis, is relatively new approach in the field of nature tourism (Pieters, Many authors who study interorganizational networks are based on different theoretical perspectives, focusing on different dimensions and levels of analysis (type of relationships, actors involved, (Breton et al., 2006), which is based on the analysis of the literature and the literature on the subject, (1996) and Camarillo-Matos and Afsarmanesh (2006), Azevedo (2000), Bramwell and Lane (2000), Petrillo et al., 2006, Lynch and Morrissey, 2007; The et

al, 2007; Moreira, 2007; Scott et al., 2008). The present study seeks to investigate emerging patterns of cooperation structures within a network, in this case in nature tourism. The effects were to explore interorganizational cooperation in nature tourism (as a field applied to the management of nature tourism), and to show the understanding of cooperation structure in the management of nature tourism. Therefore, structural characteristics of network cooperation relations will be studied, which structural effects and attributes are significant in mechanisms of interorganizational cooperation. Then the prospect of various approaches, cooperation and its value for research, nature tourism, and interorganizational cooperation in nature tourism networks will be introduced. Subsequently, the case of a network, cooperation, tourism of a regional nature, will be presented, discussed, as a contribution in the field of research for the regional tourism sector.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Approaches to cooperation networks

Networks are considered an important means to create opportunities and knowledge transfer, since the concept of networks of extended relationship allows, directly or indirectly, a greater environmental perception (Franco, 2006). In this sense, cooperation between companies presents itself as an adequate response, allowing companies, in various domains, to strengthen and supplement their limited resources without endangering their own individuality (Franco, 1995).

The importance of cooperation for organizations has been increasing significantly, registering a trend to continue to evolve, due to factors such as international competitiveness increase, rapid technological progress and constant market, customer and vendor sophistication that has been witnessed (Franco; Barbeira, 2008). Strategic partnerships, in the form of strategic alliances, are a method of cooperation that can be established between public sector or private sector entities between companies, or even between public and private organizations.

According to Franco, (2011) Lundberg, (2010), the importance of relationships and business development networks has progressively gained greater acceptance. This has been described as a paradigm shift from the concept of competitive advantage, whose level of analysis evolved from the unity of an 'organization', the 'organization network' (Awuah and Gebrekidan, 2008), regardless of its Planned or unplanned operation, formal or informal (Lundberg, 2010). The ability to give collective value to local goods and maintain the dynamics of growth thus presents regional competitiveness as new challenges (Figueiredo et al., 2009).

The relations established between companies are not a set of independent and isolated transactions,

but result from complex negotiation processes (Ford et al., 1998). The interaction between companies is a mechanism in which there are influences in both senses (Turnbull and Ford, 1996), that is, if we consider a dyadic relationship, each company accesses the resources and competences of the other.

Relations between companies are an important mechanism for access and development of resources and competences. Intercompany relations are not limited to mechanisms of access to resources that the company does not control. They are also means that the company uses to control and influence these resources (Möller and Svhan, 2003). Loasby (1994) emphasizes that most of the skills the company needs are outside it. Thus, according to the author, the company has to coordinate its internal organization, which encompasses the resources and competences that the company holds, with the external organization, constituted by the network of relationships that the company establishes. The relative importance of each type of organization varies according to the nature of the business that the company develops (Loasby, 1994). The networks are the result of relations established between companies, with the objective of extinguishing or alleviating the lack of internal resources or skills (Ford et al., 2003). Thus, it is considered that the company is incomplete and needs to resort to the resources and competences of other companies that are part of the network, making the borders between internal and external resources unclear (Ford et al., 1998). In the analysis of the interaction between companies, the concept of relationship presupposes mutual orientation and commitment over time, as well as a high level of interdependence among organizations (Hakansson and Snehota, 1995). These characteristics come from the constant interactions that are established between the two parts over time.

According to Blois (1972), the interactions established between industrial companies can be seen as relationships for two main reasons. On the one hand, the companies involved tend to see their interactions as relationships, because they feel a strong interdependence and a continued mutual commitment, and on the other hand, the interactions between companies over time create a kind of almost organization. In industrial network, this interdependence between firms both limits their behavior and creates opportunities (Hakansson and Snehota, 1995). The relationship produces something unique, through the interconnection of activities and resources of the companies involved, which in isolation could not achieve. In the network approach, it is important to realize that a network of companies is heterogeneous in that it includes companies and relationships of different nature (Gulati et al., 2000). That is, a network encompasses a set of relationships between a company and other organizations, such as suppliers, customers, competitors, associations or educational institutions.

In this perspective, the company cannot be seen as an autonomous entity, looking for competitive advantages by exploiting the external resources of the industry where it is inserted, as advocated by Porter (1980). The performance of the company is closely related to the network of relationships in which it is inserted (Gulati et al., 2000). The advantages of a network can be seen from three perspectives: first, the network allows the creation of inimitable and non-replaceable value; Second, the network is an inimitable resource on its own; And third, the network allows access to inimitable resources and capabilities (Gulati et al., 2000). Business networks allow access to key resources, such as information, capital, goods, services, among others, that have the potential to maintain or increase the competitive advantage of a company (Gulati et al., 2000). Considering the networks of idiosyncratic companies and generating a process of dependence on the past trajectory (Gulati and Gargilo, 1999), they become difficult to be imitated or replaced by competing companies (Gulati et al., 2000). The position of the company in the network is an important factor for its performance.

For Wilkinson and Young (2002), the position of the company in the network is defined by the role that the company plays and the way it is directly and indirectly linked to other companies. In the same sense, Hakansson and Snehota (1995) point out that the company's positioning is determined by the company's ability to access and control network resources and its value as a network partner. Nidjam and Langen (2003) report that a company is a leader when it has the capacity to make investments that translate into positive externalities for other companies in the network due to its size, market position, knowledge and entrepreneurial capacity. Thus, the firm's position is determined by the accumulation of its investments and the investments of the other companies in the network. According to Gulati et al. (2000), the companies that occupy more central places in the network, have superior returns because they obtain better opportunities comparatively with the more peripheral companies. It is clear that business networks have a profound impact on business performance (Jack, 2005 and Uzi, 1996). While the causal link between a company's network position within its portfolio of business relationships, and its performance has been researched from a structural perspective, empirical evidence on this link in relation to behavioral issues is still Missing, Baum et al. (2014). In concepts, such interaction behaviors as behaviors centered in networks. They are derived from a company's need to detect its position in the network (ie the opportunities and threats associated with its direct and indirect business relationships) and seize the opportunities derived from this position accordingly (Thornton et al., 2013).

Network-driven behaviors are therefore strategic acts that are designed to respond to network dynamics and proactively create ways to leverage

resources (Thornton et al., 2013). Thus, through this brief literary review, we can affirm that several studies and investigations affirm that in fact the networks have a fundamental impact on the performance of the companies, as we can see in the table below, where several studies point to this very thing.

2.2. Nature Tourism

2.2.1. Nature Tourism Concepts

It is generally agreed that tourism in nature is a very important segment of the tourism industry and that since the end of the last century it has grown at a rate faster than the industry average as quoted (Mehmetoglu, 2007). The relationship of Nature Tourism (TN) with space is obvious and at the same time very complex. This is evidenced by the considerable number of actions and initiatives of this tourism in space, such as routes / courses, events, shows, conferences, colloquiums, all at different times (holidays, weekends, various seasons of the year, day Or night, etc.). In this sense, it is one of the most important, attractive and dynamic tourism segments of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), together with the types of Sun and Beach, Sports / Adventure, Tourism in Rural Areas (TER), Business Tourism, Urban Tourism, Cultural Tourism and Cruise Tourism. When speaking of NT, there are several forms or designations that the most varied people give to it, for example, Nature-Based Tourism, Green Tourism and Active Tourism (Figure 1).

This tourism can also be called, according to the type of practice, such as Health and Welfare Tourism (Tisdell and Wilson, 2012), both as primary motivation and secondary motivation (THR - Turismo Hotelaría y Recreación - 2006). Therefore, Nature Tourism is a very comprehensive concept and can fit into the set of various modalities / segments "of accommodation, activities and complementary services of environmental animation, that allow to contemplate and enjoy the natural, architectural, landscape and Cultural, with a view to offering an integrated and diversified tourism product "(Santos and Cabral, 2005: p.10). Cater (1994) and (Dowling et al., 2013) are examples of authors who tell us that nature-based attractions may include features and influences associated with the cultural domain (architectural, landscape, intangible heritage, etc.) Which are educational and learning, relaxation, consumption and aesthetics.

According to Cunha (2009: 51) we observe Nature Tourism as that tourist practice that manifests itself in two divergent ways:

"Environmental tourism and eco-tourism (Graburn, 1998). The environmental is related to the various aspects of the earth, sea and sky and its state of purity; Ecotourism or ecotourism, on the other hand, includes travel to natural areas in order to observe and understand the nature and natural history of the environment, taking care to maintain the integrity of the ecosystem unchanged".

2.3. Inter-organizational relations in Tourism

Various forms of interorganizational relations, such as coordination, cooperation, collaboration, partnerships and networks, have attracted the interest of a growing number of researchers as a way of addressing the sensitive and volatile nature of the tourism sector in recent years (Saxena, 2005) and are increasingly viewed as a crucial factor for the performance and survival of organizations (Medina-Munóz and Garcia-Falcón, 2000) and tourist destinations (Yuksel and Yuksel, 2005).

However, in spite of this interest manifested, it was not possible to establish the proper clarification of those concepts, verifying that these designations are used, in the scientific literature as well as in practice, in an undifferentiated way. However, these concepts expose significant differences in terms of commitment, intensity of interactions and structure, which can be characterized both by the existence of legal link and by verbal agreements between the participating organizations. According to Hall (2000), the term coordination refers to the establishment of formal and institutionalized relations between networks of independent organizations or individuals, while, according to the same author, cooperation is characterized by informal exchange and attempts to establish reciprocity in the absence of Established rules.

Inter-organizational cooperation thus corresponds to the deliberate presence of relationships between independent organizations to achieve individual operational objectives. According to Wood and Gray (1991), they define collaboration as a procedure in which a group of independent stakeholders, confronted with a problem in a certain domain, is engaged in establishing an interactive process, using shared rules, norms and structures, With a view to taking action and taking decisions relating to that field.

According to these authors, what distinguishes collaboration from other forms of interorganizational relationships is that it is a process with some formality, requiring regular contact and dialogue. According to Selin and Chavez (1995: 845) they define partnership as "a voluntary sharing of resources (human, capital or information) in order to achieve common goals". As previously mentioned, and yet according to Hall (2000), these concepts are in fact different, but they are all intimately related to the emerging paradigm of networks of organizations, which in turn can be defined as a set of organizations working in With a view to achieving a common goal where coordination is not achieved through mergers and acquisitions but through the creation of a strategic network of organizations (Jarillo, 1993).

Selin and Chavez (1995) examined the specific conjunctures that favor the emergence of these structures, emphasizing that a crisis of a competitive, technological, political, social, environmental or

economic nature can act as a catalyst for collective action through partnerships.

The role of partnerships in these cases is, in particular, to minimize the damage of the organizations involved and to create an environment that provides more guarantees of success for the future. However, partnerships can also be seen as a form of proactive action, taking advantage of the potential of such structures to foster dialogue, negotiation and the construction of proposals that are acceptable and beneficial to the different parties involved, also resulting in an increase. The acceptance of established policies and a more effective implementation of them. Like Selin and Chavez (1995), we will adopt in this article the designation of partnerships to designate interorganizational relationships between two or more independent organizations that share resources (human, capital or information) to achieve individual objectives, but which are compatible and Beneficial to all parties involved, and where the necessary coordination is not achieved through acquisitions and mergers, but through networking.

The existence of the aforementioned foundations is not a guarantee for the emergence of partnerships and even when they do not always achieve the desired success, leading to the frustration of the partners involved. According to Medina Munóz and Garcia-Falcón (2000), the reasons for the failure of partnerships in tourism do not differ greatly from those pointed out in the interorganizational literature for other areas, such as lack of trust, participation, commitment and coordination, and Such as deficiencies in the quality of communication and the exchange of information and the non-use of conflict resolution techniques. Bramwell and Lane (2000) also identified as difficulties the enormous complexity and slowness of processes involving a broad set of stakeholders. Hall and Jenkins (1995) emphasize the existence of groups that refuse to participate for fear of losing influence and power or because they are suspicious of other partners involved. The difficulties highlighted by the authors can be attenuated or amplified by the socioeconomic, cultural, administrative and political environment of the societies within which this type of interorganizational relations is intended to be operationalized (Araujo and Bramwell, 2002).

2.4. Networks and Tourism

According to the literature review, and according to Wasserman and Faust (2009), a social network consists of a set of finite sets of actors and the relationship or relationships that are established between them. According to Borgatti and Foster (2003), a network is a set of actors (or nodes) linked by ties. However, Dredge (2006) defines networks as a set of formal and informal social relations that shape collaborative action among governments, industries, and civil societies. A network is a system that can contain a large number of elements, whereas, for Timur and Getz (2008), networks are formed from the direct

or indirect links established by agents within a network system.

Bypassing the organizational and structural boundaries (Presenza and Cipollina, 2010), networks are characterized as being links established between individuals or organizations and the elements that constitute them have similarities between them or common goals (Tyler and Dinan, 2001). These structures are characterized by reciprocal patterns of communication, exchange, cooperation (Powell, 1990; Tyler and Dinan, 2001) and trust, which is the main control mechanism in a networked organization (Romeiro, 2006). This confidence is supported by the commitment, through the sharing of information and knowledge and by strengthening relations between the parties (Presenza and Cipollina, 2010; Costa, 1996) and it is from this interaction between the elements of the networks that depend on the negotiation processes that are among them, it is this trust and negotiation that helps explain the dynamics of networks (Tyler and Dinan, 2001). For Thorelli (1986), a network consists of a set of nodes that can represent companies, families, trade associations and other types of organizations, and links that represent the interactions established among the different nodes. Jarillo (2011), defines the strategic network as a set of companies that work together towards a common goal. However, networks are difficult to delineate because they can be formal or informal, their elements can belong to more than one network at the same time, they are not constant, and they have to adapt to different situations (Tyler and Dinan 2001; Dredge, 2006). As Pavlovich (2003) points out, networks change over time because they are made of relationships.

By being one of the economic sectors that incorporates a greater diversity of activities, organizations, sectors and partnerships (March and Wilkinson, 2009, Pavlovich, 2003, Baggio and Cooper, 2008); which contributes to the development of the final product (Romeiro, 2006), tourism is very conducive to the analysis of networks, which is why the role of networks in improving tourism performance has been given greater importance (March and Wilkinson, 2009). According to Scott et al. (2008), the tourism industry is ideal for the study of networks, because it is a fragmented and geographically dispersed industry and networks allow tourism to overcome this fragmentation. According to Presenza and Cipollina (2010), in the current literature related to tourism, the study of networks follows two main currents of application: on the one hand are seen as a useful tool to analyze the evolution of business and development opportunities; on the other, are seen as an important channel for generating public-private relationships and for understanding the structures of tourism.

III. METHODOLOGY

In order to reach the defined objectives, a research approach of qualitative nature was adopted

and also because it is the most appropriate for the understanding of the questions to be investigated. According to Godoy (1995: 63), it should not be forgotten, however, that during the process, in this type of investigation, "the meaning that people give to things and their life must be the essential concern of the researcher."

The qualitative case study as a research method remains one of the most challenging endeavors of the social sciences. The case study is just one of many ways to conduct research in the social sciences (Yin, 2010). This growing awareness in the field of social sciences is largely due to the authors Yin and Stake, who, although not completely coincident, have sought to deepen, systematize and credibility the case study within the scope of research methodology (Meirinhos and Osório, 2010). In short, the vast majority of people have the feeling that they can prepare a case study, and almost everyone believes they understand a case study (Yin, 2010). From the above, for the elaboration of this investigation the qualitative methodology of exploratory was used and with recourse to the case study of the company Lokoloko, that is located in the Island of Madeira. The choice of this particular project was due to its great contribution to the development of activities related to nature tourism in the region and to reflect cooperation and partnerships at regional, national and international level. The interview was conducted with the store manager, in which he prefers to conceal his identity, and based on this interview the case study was carried out as analyzed below. In order to analyze the business and cooperation activities and partnerships, we used the <https://sourceforge.net> program to analyze the network of activities and the different configurations analyzed by the software.

IV. CASE STUDY: LOKOLOKO, LDA. (TOURIST ANIMATION COMPANY)

4.1. Company Characterization

In an interview with the Company Administrator, he was asked to tell us about the company, however, he began by mentioning that the company Lokoloko, Lda. Was created in 2010, with the intention of promoting a wide variety of outdoor activities in Madeira, Nature Tourism (TN), although I have moved from owners to relatively 2 years. In the meantime, the passion for Mountain Bike has made this young and innovative team dedicate themselves to guided mountain bike tours, the organization of bicycle events and competitions essentially linked to the TN. The Lokoloko shop is ideally located in Caniço de Baixo, close to the Garajau Underwater Natural Park. At the same time, it has also been the favorite "amusement park" for water activities such as kayaking, stand-up paddle and windsurfing. Through solid know-how and reliable partners, Lokoloko guarantees diversity and safe fun, but above all, A unique experience on the island of Madeira.

4.2. Analysis of Results and Interpretation of Collected Information

The case study (Lokoloko) had as a main source of information an interview with the manager of the company, who were registered with their authorization. The Manager of the company has a degree in Tourism and has been in the company since 2012. However, we request that you tell us about the main activities developed, in which we referenced some as we can see in the following tables and networks:

4.2.1. Main networks animation and sports activities in the nature of Lokoloko, Lda.

TABLE 3. NETWORK OF SPORTS AND LAND ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES, LOKOLOKO, LDA. (1)

1. PEDESTRIAN TOURS
2. MONTANHISMO
3. TRACK SKIING
4. SNOWBOARD
5. CLIMBING
6. RAPEL
7. CANYONING (MAY ALSO BECLASSIFIED IN AQUATICS)
8. SPELEOLOGY
9. SPELLING
10. CYCLOTOURISM
11. BTT
12. GUIDANCE
13. MULTI ACTIVITIES
14. HORSE RIDING
15. ARBORISM AND ADVENTURE RIDING AT HEIGHT

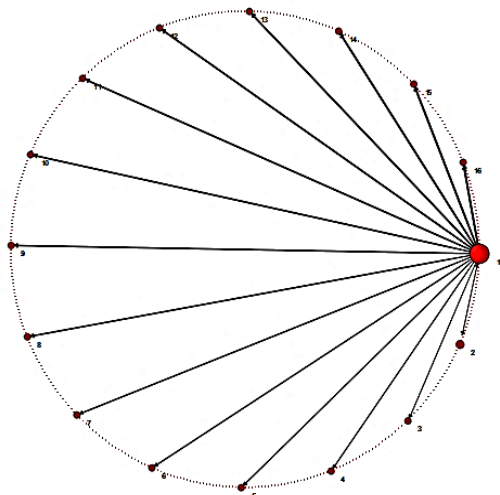


Figure 2. Land Sports and Adventure Activities Network of Lokoloko, Lda.

TABLE 4. AQUATIC ADVENTURE SPORTS AND ACTIVITIES (1)

1. SURF AND BODYBOARD
2. SKIMMING
3. WINDSURF
4. KITESURF
5. STAND UP PADDLE
6. SAIL
7. ENGINE BOAT RIDE
8. ARCHAEURISM
9. DIVING
10. UNDERWATER FISHING
11. COASTEERING
12. WAKEBOARD AND NAUTICAL SKIING
13. CANOEING AND CAKING OF CALM WATER, SEA AND BRAVAN WATERS
14. REMO
15. HIDROSPEED
16. RAFTING

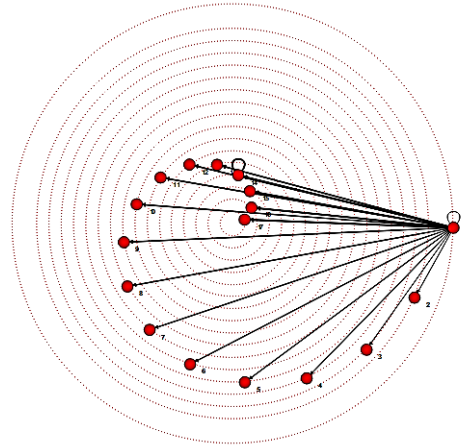


Figure 3. Lokoloko Aquatic Adventure Sports and Activities Network.

TABLE 5. AIR ADVENTURE SPORTS AND ACTIVITIES (1)

1. HANG GLIDING
2. PARAPENTE
3. FOR-QUEDISMO
4. FREE FALL
5. BASE JUMPING
6. BALANCE
7. ULTRALEVE
8. HANG GLIDING
9. PARAPENTE

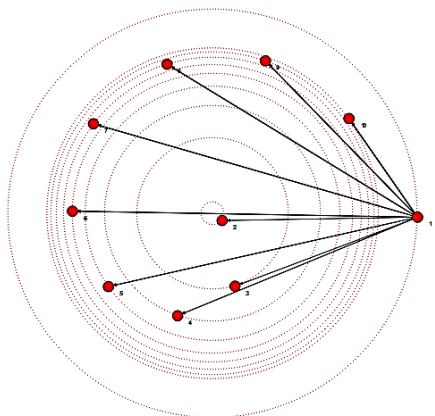


Figure 4. Aerial Adventure Sports and Activities Network of Lokoloko, Lda.

TABLE 6. ENVIRONMENTAL INTERPRETATION ACTIVITIES (1)

1. INTERPRETATIVE PATHWAYS
2. OBSERVATION OF FLORA
3. BIRD OBSERVATION
4. OBSERVATION OF ANOTHER TERRESTRIAL FAUNA
5. OBSERVATION OF CETACEANS
6. GEOTOURISM

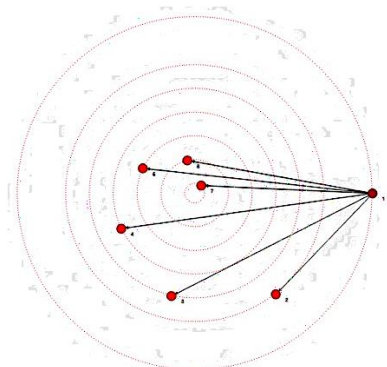


Figure 5. Environmental Activity and Interpretation Network of Lokoloko, Lda.

TABLE 7. MOTORIZED ACTIVITIES (1)

1. MOTO-CROSS
2. ALL-O-GROUND RIDING
3. CAR OR CARRIAGE RIDING
4. MOTO 4
5. KART CROSS

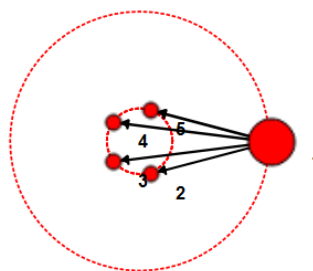


Figure 6. Motorized Activities Network of Lokoloko, Lda.

TABLE 8. OTHER ACTIVITIES

1. GOLF
2. HIPPOS
3. TRADITIONAL GAMES
4. TEAM BUILDING
5. PAINTBALL
6. OTHER ACTIVITIES SHOT

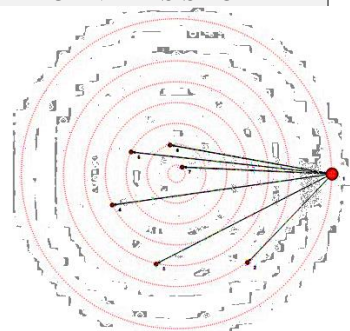


Figure 7. Other Activities of Lokoloko, Lda.

Listed the main activities of the company, it was questioned if they work in cooperation or partnerships with other companies, what we were told was that the company essentially works with partnerships, either formally or informally, with both public and private partnerships, from hotels, other tourism companies, rent-a-car, rural tourism houses, catering, in general all that is related to tourism in the region, as they refer to this as a means to achieve good results and improve the competitiveness of the company . It has also been mentioned that whenever a hotel, the company needs its services as a complement to the occupation of the visitors, or tourists, they are always ready to cooperate.

They also mention that they have some partnerships with some companies based in the foreigner, that offer tourist packages where they already include the activities carried out by Lokoloko.

The company itself does not have any formalized strategic plan, which they do as the activities are requested, that is, found a business opportunity, the company usually analyzes, invests and risks; as they consider that the development of partnerships and integration in cooperation networks is fundamental for the survival of any tourism company, namely those of nature tourism; it is clear that factors are taken into account at the level of compensation for the partnership, otherwise it is not worth cooperating

because the objective is that there is a benefit or financial compensation on both sides. One of the main values for the members of the company is to be aware of the established partnerships, being also attentive to the market opportunities and where they can contribute their suggestions and opinions, since the company functions like a group of friends, being able to even say a family, because it is through cooperation practices that are developed key factors for the success of the company.

The company since its inception, establishes cooperation practices with several entities in the region, both public entities, as previously mentioned, but essentially private sector entities, both national and international. Regarding the creation of networks, that is, the relationship or loyalty of our clients, this is, in fact, the case, since they have many clients in the portfolio, who almost every year look for them, who rely on the cooperation and occupation practices of their leisure time. The company tries to keep an eye on the trends and trends in the tourism market, especially in the region, which depends mainly on this sector. However, it does not always mention the bureaucracies and government policies in the region, as well as public entities.

4.2.2. Partnerships

According to Kernagham (1993) a partnership as a relationship that comprises sharing power, work, support and/or information with others to achieve mutual goals or benefits.

TABLE 9. SOME PARTNERSHIPS OF LOKOLOKO IN MADEIRA (1)

1. TRAVEL AGENCY WINDSOR TEL: 291 700 600/1/2/3/4/5, FAX: 291 700 622/3, WEB: WWW.WINDSORMADEIRA.COM E-MAIL: REGINA@WINDSORTRAVEL.WS ALLES -
2. ANIMAÇÃO SOCIETE SOC. U. LDA. TLM: 911000039, E-MAIL: ALLES@NETMADEIRA.COM
3. BONITA DA MADEIRA TEL: 291 762 218, FAX: 291 763 54, WEB: WWW.BONITA-DAMADEIRA.COM, E-MAIL: INFO@BONITA-DAMADEIRA.COM
4. HORSE RIDING ESCAPADA TLM: 966 312 15, FAX: 291 945 954, WEB: WWW.ESCAPADADOSCAVALEIROS.COM, E-MAIL: HORSERIDINGESCAPADA@NETMADEIRA.COM
5. WOOD ADVENTURE KINGDOM TEL: 291 600 796, TLM: 968 101 870, WEB: WWW.MADEIRA-ADVENTURE-KINGDOM.COM E-MAIL: GERAL@MADEIRA-ADVENTURE-KINGDOM.COM
6. OCEAN WOOD TLM: 918 479 922, WEB: WWW.MADEIRAOCEANOS.COM /

WWW.FOCUSNATURA.COM, E-MAIL: ADMIN@MADEIRAOCEANOS.COM
7. MOUNTAIN EXPEDITIONS TLM: 969 677 679, WEB: WWW.MOUNTAINEXPEDITION.PT, E-MAIL: INFO@MADEIRAEXPEDITIONS.COM / MOUNTAIN.EXPEDITIONS@HOTMAIL.COM
8. NATURE MEETINGS TEL: 291 524 482, TLM: 966 551 297, FAX: 291 524 484, WEB: WWW.NATUREMEETINGS.COM, E-MAIL: ANDREW.ZINO@NATUREMEETINGS.COM
9. LOKOLOKO TLM: 969 570 780/926 374 236, FAX: 291 934 566, WEB: WWW.LOKOLOKO.COM.PT, E-MAIL: INFO@LOKOLOKOMADEIRA.COM
10. PARALELO32 TEL: 291 001 025, TLM: 963 843 830, FAX: 291 001 024, WEB: WWW.PARALELO32.PT, E-MAIL: INFO@PARALELO32.PT
11. QUINTA DO RIACHO TLM: 967 010 015, WEB: WWW.QUINTADORIACHO.COM, E-MAIL: INFO@QUINTADORIACHO.COM
12. ROUTE OF CETACEANS TEL: 291 280 601, TLM: 918828242, WEB: WWW.ROTA-DOS-CETACEOS.PT, E-MAIL: GERAL@ROTA-DOS-CETACEOS.PT
13. LANDS OF ADVENTURE TEL: 291 708 990, TLM: 962 721 702, FAX: 291 708 999, WEB: WWW.TERRASDEAVENTURA.COM, E-MAIL: LUIZPINTOMACHADO@TERRASDEAVENTURA.COM.
14. VENTURA NATURE EMOTIONS TLM: 963 390 798, WEB: WWW.VENTURADOMAR.COM, E-MAIL: VENTURA@VENTURADOMAR.COM
15. HOLDERS OF THE AUTONOMOUS REGION OF MADEIRA
16. HOTEL GALOSOL, HOTEL ALPINO ATLÂNTICO, HOTEL GALOMAR AMONG MANY OTHERS.
17. PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS
18. UNIVERSIDADE DA MADEIRA
19. OTHER ...

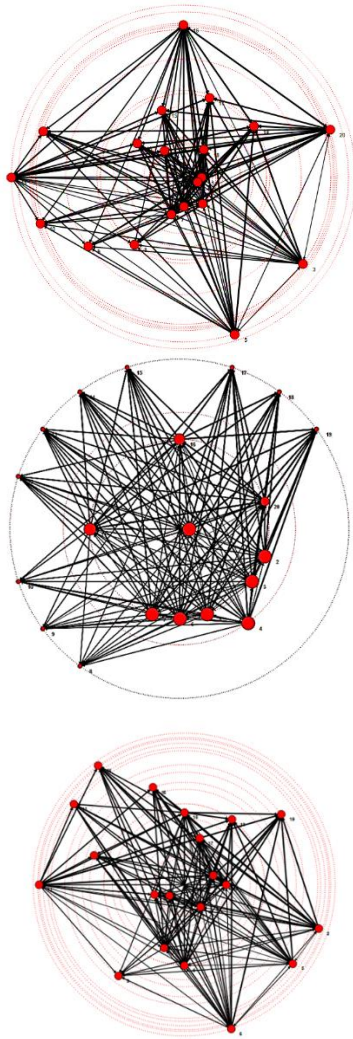


Figure 8. Lokoloko, Lda. Partner Network Configurations.

It should be noted that, in the case of the above-mentioned partnerships, some were implemented through some formal and some more informal cooperation protocols.

Not all partnerships and cooperation networks of the company were disclosed, for the sake of confidentiality, and these data can not be revealed, considered as business strategy. The company usually participates in some fairs and workshops, used to identify networks of knowledge, and establish other contacts, as well as to continue to disseminate the images and services of the company. However, the

company evaluates in a timely manner the business partners before making any commitment of cooperation, in order to evaluate whether or not this cooperation will be beneficial to the company.

Finally, the interview ended with the following sentence:

"Cooperation relations between companies are a necessary process for the survival of many companies in such a competitive environment, which is the tourism sector".

V. 5. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is virtually unanimously recognized that partnerships are a way for many companies to overcome the constraints caused by increased competitiveness in the sector due to the changing paradigm of tourism demand.

Embroideries to the study of interorganizational cooperation networks are diverse and can be studied in multiple perspectives. A basic concept that needs to be established argues that partnerships evolve dynamically in response to internal and external forces. The key factor leading to partnerships and cooperation is that all partners in both the public and private sectors want to benefit from the sharing of resources and objectives in a highly competitive sector such as tourism, Nature, companies must implement alliances and other forms of cooperation in order to develop synergies and achieve competitive advantages. In this sense, partnerships in nature tourism play an important role in regional development.

This study allowed to affirm the importance of partnerships as a way to ensure the sustainable development of the tourism sector, in this case, tourism of nature, which tends to present itself a consensual and evident given, however great difficulties and obstacles Which are faced with the creation and organization of the same are also indisputable. In fact, there are numerous empirical studies on networks and tourism, but in specific of the application of networks in nature tourism, these investigations are scarce.

Our study thus presents some theoretical and practical contributions that in our understanding, the development of cooperation networks are strategic valorization of the territories. In this way we can verify that nature tourism, interorganizational cooperation relations, are a type of network fundamental to increase regional competitiveness.

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