
The impact of the 2011 Rugby World Cup on the collaborative capacity of organisations in regional tourism destination marketing networks.



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RWC 2011

- Quadrennial event owned by the International Rugby Board (IRB)
- 9 September – 23 October 2011
- Biggest event ever hosted in New Zealand
- 133,200 international visitors
- Organised & delivered by RNZ 2011
- 48 matches, 20 participating teams
- Held in 11 cities in 12 different stadia across NZ

Rationale

- The number of event impact studies has steadily increased
- Most of them focus on economic factors
- The impact of events on interorganisational relationships and collaboration is rarely considered
- Collaboration appears essential for a successful mega-event
- Can the event in turn be used by organisations to increase their capacity to collaborate?



Literature review

Collaborative capacity (CC) refers to the “conditions needed for coalitions, partnerships, or networks to work together toward common goals in order to create sustainable ... changes” (García-Ramírez et al., 2009, p. 116)

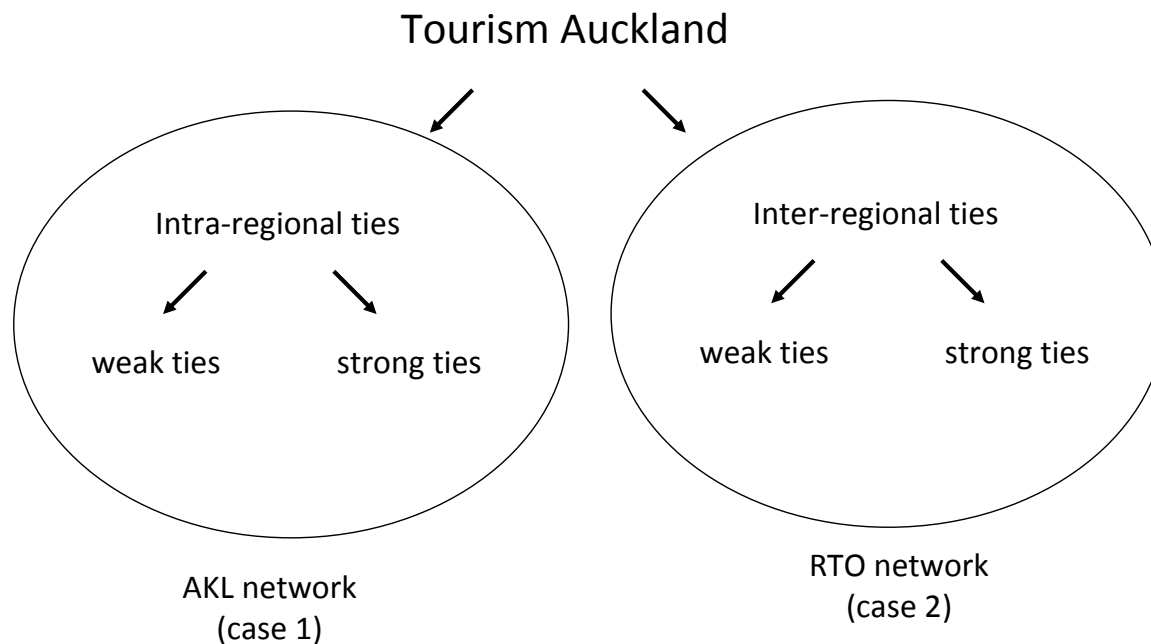
- Collaboration: large variety of terms with similar meanings, including coordination, cooperation, partnership, alliance and JV.
- The tourism environment is highly complex and fragmented; partnerships and collaborations play a pivotal role
- The collaborative network of relationships of an organisation is hard to imitate and substitute by competitors (Barney, 1991)
- “A key source of competitive advantage” (Beyerlein et al., 2003, p. 17).

Network analysis approach

- Ego-centric network analysis, focal organisation: Tourism Auckland (TA)
- The study compares the impact of RWC 2011 on collaboration of TA's strong and weak ties.
- Tie strength refers to the closeness and interaction frequency of a relationship between two organisations (Levin & Cross, 2004).

TA and its networks

- Embedded, multiple case study with two cases and each network representing a case



Research questions

RQ 1: How did the organisations in the two networks collaborate in the RWC 2011 context, and what role did collaboration play?

RQ 2: How has RWC 2011 contributed towards an increased collaborative capacity of the two networks and their organisations?

Methods

- Semi-structured interviews with 35 participants (both pre- and post-event)
- Formal online survey (post-event)
- Documentation review (e.g. reports, internal records, formal studies, agendas and minutes of meetings, bid documents,...)

Findings

RQ 1: How did the organisations in the two networks collaborate in the RWC 2011 context, and what role did collaboration play?



RQ 1 – forms & role of collaboration

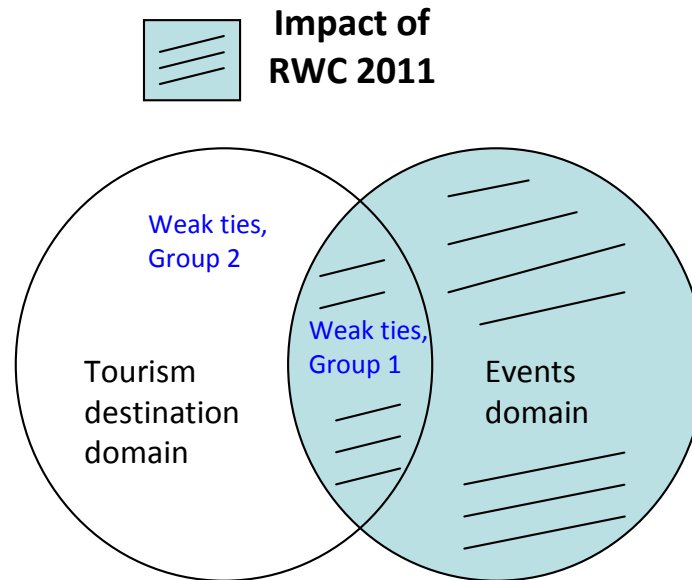
Collaboration played an important role within the AKL network for RWC 2011, and a variety of organisations collaborated closely – in particular the strong ties and several weak ties



RQ 1 – forms & role of collaboration

A variety of organisations (weak ties/group 2) were unsatisfied with the collaboration among organisations in Auckland. They felt excluded, with no chance to contribute or gain from the event.

RQ 1 – forms & role of collaboration



Tourism destination domain: all (tourism) organisations part of destination Auckland (i.e. TA's destination marketing network)

Events domain: all organisations that play a significant role in delivering the event within the Auckland region



RQ 1 – forms & role of collaboration

While seeking a chance to become more involved in the event, the weak ties (Group 2) did not get many opportunities to do so and frustration ensued.



RQ 1 – forms & role of collaboration

Most important barriers to collaboration

AKL network

- Lack of communication
- Different objectives/lack of common goals
- Overlap

RTO network

- Lack of human resources
- Extra workload
- Lack of communication
- Lack of willingness to collaborate



RQ 1 – forms & role of collaboration

An important barrier to collaboration among RTOs (RTO network) was “lack of willingness to collaborate”.

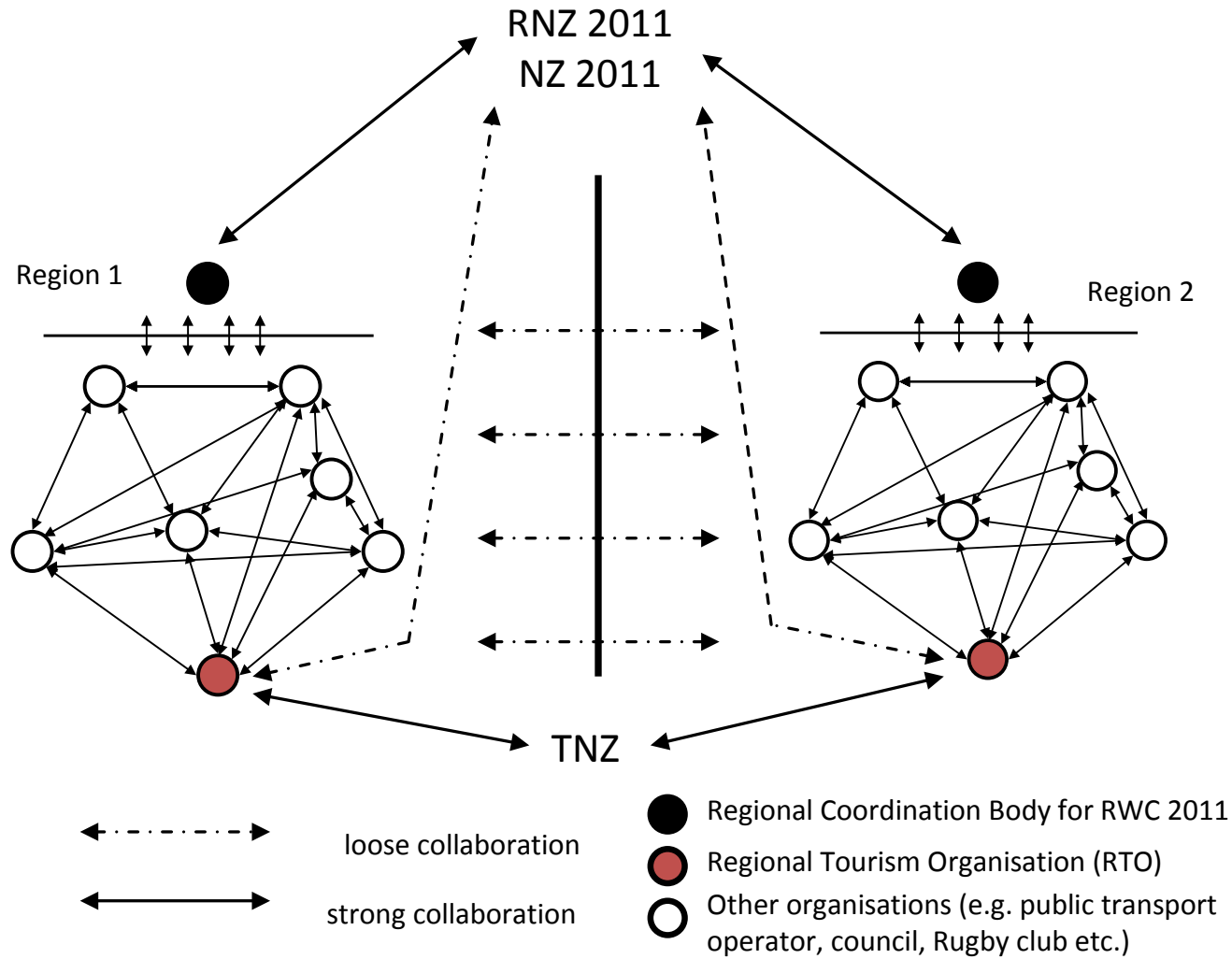
Other vehicles were more important for collaboration among RTOs:

- RTONZ membership/meetings,
- IMAs,
- Joint Venture Marketing Fund (central government)



RQ 1 – forms & role of collaboration

Intra-regional collaboration was more important than inter-regional collaboration. The set-up and organising structure of RWC 2011 played a significant role in this context.



Findings

RQ 2: How has RWC 2011 contributed towards an increased collaborative capacity of the two networks and their organisations?



RQ 2 - collaborative capacity

The conditions (needed to increase CC in the mega-events context) most frequently mentioned in both networks included:

- Clear and common goals (and shared vision);
- A collaborative approach;
- Regular, clear communication;
- Honesty and openness;
- Trust;
- Stakeholder integration and buy-in;
- Empathy;
- Leadership.



RQ 2 - collaborative capacity

RWC 2011 impacted positively on the CC of strong-tie and certain weak-tie organisations in the AKL network



RQ 2 - collaborative capacity

The Group 2 participants (AKL network) thought that RWC 2011 was rather irrelevant to increase their collaborative capacity.

However, - since the event impacted on the CC of key organisations in the AKL network - it can be said that it also positively affected the CC of the AKL network as a whole.



RQ 2 - collaborative capacity

The RTOs found that RWC 2011 was irrelevant to increase their collaborative capacity.



Conclusion

- The set-up of an event within a host country impacts significantly on the collaborative processes of the organisations involved.
- If future events use a similar set-up, more weak ties need to be integrated into the collaborative process (AKL network)
- Collaboration among the regions also needs (RTO network) to be further promoted.



Conclusion

- Previous research has confirmed that an increased level of collaboration also increases the sharing and transfer of valuable information and knowledge (Inkpen, 1996)
- Further collaboration would enhance knowledge transfer processes among the organisations in both networks
- It will help NZ to gain a competitive advantage over other international destinations

Final words

*“Mega events and the opportunities they present are merely the seed capital; what hosts do with that capital is the key to realizing sustainable longer-term legacies”
(O’Brien, 2006, p. 258)*

- Mega-events provide significant *opportunities* to increase collaborative capacities, improve knowledge transfer and build a competitive advantage.
- Tourism destination networks should carefully promote collaboration and strategically leverage the opportunities provided.
- This study demonstrates that longer-term economic outcomes are available to host communities, not just through the direct expenditure of tourists or through destination branding.

THANK YOU



References

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