A person is sitting on a thick, horizontal tree branch, looking out over a vast valley. The valley is filled with green fields, small towns, and winding roads. In the distance, there are blue mountains under a clear blue sky. The person is wearing a dark jacket and pants. The tree trunk is on the left side of the frame.

TRANSITION TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN PROTECTED AREAS IN TRENTINO (ITALY)

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*Recommendations for Designing and Implementing
Successful Partnerships for Sustainable Tourism in
Protected Areas*

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Those who want to use qualitative methods because they seem easier than statistics are in for a rude awakening". (Taylor and Bogdan 1984, p. 53)

ABSTRACT

The tension and tight dependency between preservation of natural resources and the potential of social and economic growth tourism conveys are currently a major problem, which arises more dramatically in mountain areas, frail and marginalized environments by definition. The instrument of creating protected areas has been used for a century in order to protect biodiversity of high naturalistic capital areas. At the beginning the management of such areas was always featured by top-down decisions which were based on a purely conservative paradigm. Over the last years this traditional approach was changed into a more open and integrated paradigm, claiming that the sustainable use of a protected areas may as well bring benefits to the preservation of biodiversity. This change emerged along with the concept of sustainable development and that of governance. As a matter of fact, together with demands for democratization in decisional processes, the complexity of certain policies or problems required suitable forms of government, where actors different from the traditional central state cooperate in order to try to carry out effective solutions to complex issues. Sustainable tourism, as a set of policies explicitly trying to lower the pressure of tourism upon the environment and rural communities, also represents an important concept that, even if it is broad, embraces both the subject of environmental protection and the demands for economic and socially sustainable growth. Provincia Autonoma di Trento (Autonomous Province of Trento, also known as Trentino) is situated in the central Italian Alps and it is completely mountainous; it deserves a specific interest because its incredible natural heritage (which includes Dolomites, recently declared UNESCO World Heritage Site), attracts, and thus has to cope with, five million tourists every year.

Considering the problems presented above, this dissertation aims at proposing recommendations to the Province of Trento for the design and implementation of policies of sustainable tourism in these protected areas. Such recommendations are based upon long-term cooperation between local and provincial stakeholders representing different sectors and interests.

First of all, this research proposes to develop an analytic framework gathered from the existing literature in intersectional cooperation and sustainable development, in order to identify the factors that may impede or facilitate the success of such kind of management. Secondly, the framework will be tried out on a specific case, i.e. the Adamello Brenta Natural Park, the only protected area of Trentino which has already exploited such participated practices for almost ten year. More than 30 in-depth or semi-structured interviews with different stakeholders have been collected, trying to depict as clearly as possible the different geographic and social components of the Park.

The result of this study case allowed a redesign of the framework for the analysis of this kind of governance, which tries to enhance and integrate aspects that are particularly relevant for the context of Trentino. Secondly, it is surely important that the system of protected areas of Trentino (30% of its territory) is examined in order to understand which aspects of each protected area will allow a more efficient implementation of participated and sustainable policies.

The research concludes that a participated management of natural resources with recreational purposes requires first of all an authority of management of the (protected) area who is as steady as possible and able to make human, organizational, technical and financial resources available. Furthermore, the research demonstrates how important it is for the Province to reinforce its commitment in favour of sustainable policies, especially in the field of tourism, where shrewd financing are necessary in support of long term policies formulation in order to deal in a structural way with the problem of intensity of touristic incomes in high season. Such change would also positively stimulate the attitude of certain local stakeholders (APT, the public utility for touristic promotion, but also tour operator, municipalities and usi civici associations. Moreover, we hope for an increased participation of provincial APT in developing the touristic product so to avoid problem in the consecutive promotion. In conclusion, it is necessary that the highest number of stakeholders take part proactively (also in budgetary terms) in the process of individuation and formulation of the governance, so to ensure a correct implementation of the policies they propose.

ABSTRACT ITALIANO

La tensione e la stretta dipendenza tra conservazione delle risorse naturali da un lato, e, dall'altro, le potenzialità di sviluppo economico e sociale portate dal turismo, costituiscono un problema di grande attualità, che emerge ancora più drammaticamente nelle aree di montagna, ambienti fragili ed emarginati per definizione. L'istituzione di aree protette è uno strumento usato da cent'anni per proteggere la biodiversità di aree ad alto capitale naturalistico. In principio la gestione di tale aree è sembrata caratterizzata da decisioni top-down che si basavano su un paradigma puramente conservazionistico. Questo tradizionale approccio è stato negli ultimi anni trasformato in un paradigma più aperto e integrato sostenendo che un uso sostenibile dell'area protetta può portare anche benefici alla conservazione della biodiversità. Questo cambiamento è emerso in parallelo sia al concetto di sviluppo sostenibile che di governance. Insieme alle richieste di democratizzazione dei processi decisionali, infatti, la complessità di certe politiche o problemi ha richiesto forme di governo adeguate dove attori diversi rispetto allo stato centrale tradizionale, cooperano per cercare di attuare soluzioni effettive a problemi complessi. Il turismo sostenibile, come insieme di politiche che tentano esplicitamente di diminuire la pressione esercitata dal turismo sull'ambiente e sulle comunità locali, rappresenta, inoltre, un importante concetto che, seppur ampio, si sovrappone sia al discorso della protezione ambientale che alle richieste di uno sviluppo economico e socialmente sostenibile. La Provincia Autonoma di Trento (conosciuta anche come Trentino) è situata nelle Alpi italiane centrali ed è completamente montuosa; merita un interesse particolare poiché il suo incredibile patrimonio naturale (che comprende anche le Dolomiti, da poco sito patrimonio dell'umanità UNESCO) attira e, dunque, deve fronteggiare, l'arrivo di cinque milioni di turisti all'anno.

Considerando il problema sopracitato, la presente tesi si pone l'obiettivo di proporre raccomandazioni alla provincia di Trento per il disegno e l'attuazione di politiche per un turismo sostenibile in queste aree protette, raccomandazioni basate su collaborazioni a lungo-termine tra attori locali e provinciali rappresentanti diversi settori e interessi.

La ricerca si propone di sviluppare, innanzitutto, un framework analitico dedotto dalla lettura esistente sulla cooperazione intersettoriale e sullo sviluppo sostenibile per identificare i fattori che potrebbero ostacolare o facilitare il successo di questo tipo di management. In secondo luogo, questo framework viene messo alla prova su un caso specifico, il Parco Naturale Adamello Brenta, unica area protetta in Trentino che si serva già di questo tipo di pratiche partecipate da quasi dieci anni. Si sono raccolte più di 30 interviste condotte con diversi stakeholders, in profondità o semi-strutturate, cercando di rappresentare il più possibile le diversi componenti geografiche e sociali del Parco.

Il risultato di questo caso in esame ha permesso di riformulare un nuovo framework per l'analisi di questo tipo di governance cercando di evidenziare ed integrare aspetti che sono particolarmente rilevanti per il contesto trentino. In secondo luogo, è sicuramente importante che il sistema delle aree protette del Trentino (il 30% del suo territorio) sia analizzato per capire quali sono gli aspetti delle singole aree protette che permetteranno un'attuazione più efficace delle politiche sostenibili e partecipative.

La ricerca conclude che una gestione partecipata delle risorse naturali con scopi ricreativi necessita prima di tutto di un ente di gestione dell'area (protetta) che sia il più possibile stabile e in grado di mettere a disposizione risorse umane, organizzative, tecniche e finanziarie. Inoltre, si è arrivati a dimostrare quanto sia importante che la provincia rafforzi il proprio impegno in favore di politiche sostenibili, soprattutto nel campo del turismo, dove, a sostegno della formulazione di politiche a lungo termine, sono necessari finanziamenti oculati per affrontare in maniera strutturale il problema della stagionalità e intensità dell'affluenza turistica. Un tale cambiamento servirebbe anche per stimolare positivamente l'atteggiamento di certi attori locali (APT, ma anche operatori turistici, comuni e associazioni di uso civico). Si auspica, inoltre, una maggiore partecipazione dell'azienda provinciale alla promozione turistica nello sviluppo del prodotto turistico per evitare problemi nella successiva promozione. In conclusione, è necessario che il maggior numero di attori partecipino in maniera proattiva (anche in termini finanziari) al processo di individuazione e di formulazione della governance in modo da assicurare una corretta attuazione delle politiche proposte.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	4
1.1. Scientific relevance.....	6
1.2. Societal relevance.....	7
2. Mountain sustainable development and collaborative arrangements: literature and theory for explaining success in participatory-based management for tourism in protected areas.....	7
2.1. Sustainable development in mountain regions	8
2.2. Mountains between natural protection and tourism development.....	9
2.3. Successful partnership in the literature: from a definition to a framework to explain success	14
2.3.1. Defining successful partnerships.....	16
2.3.2. The STCRC study.....	17
2.3.3. Glasbergen’s ladder of partnership activity.....	25
3. Research objective and research methods	28
3.1. Research objectives.....	28
3.2. Research framework.....	28
3.3. Sub-questions.....	29
3.4. Research strategy.....	30
3.4.1. Selection of the unit and cases	31
3.5. Data measurements	33
3.5.1. Operationalization of the variables	33
3.5.2. Data collection methods.....	37
3.5.3. Analysis of the data	39
4. The success of sustainable tourism-oriented partnerships in the Adamello-Brenta Natural Park	41
4.1. Background information on the PNAB	41
4.2. The establishment of cooperative behavior among the stakeholders	44
4.3. The sustainable development outcome.....	47
4.3.1. Economic outcome.....	47
4.3.2. Social outcome	48
4.3.3. Environmental outcome	50
4.3.4. Deseasonalization of tourism services	51
4.4. Conclusions on the success of the PNAB’s partnership framework.....	51
5. Explaining the success of the PNAB’s partnerships	53
5.1. The application of the STCRC’s explanation framework	53

5.1.1. Individual partner-related factors	53
5.1.2. Partnering and process-related factors	64
5.1.3. Partnership/context-related factors.....	79
5.2. Integration from the Glasbergen's five levels of partnership's activity	87
5.2.1. First level: Building trust	87
5.2.2. Second level: Exploring collaborative advantage.....	89
5.2.3. Third level: Constituting a rule system	90
5.2.4. Fourth level: Changing the market.....	91
5.2.5. Fifth level: Changing the political order.....	91
6. Lessons learnt from the results of the successful case-study	92
6.1. An adjusted framework for explaining success in the management of sustainable tourism in PAs based on collaborative arrangements in (Alpine) mountain regions	92
6.2. Practice-oriented recommendations	96
7. The Trentino ecological network and its capacity to implement collaborative arrangements for sustainable tourism in PAs	99
7.1. Background information.....	100
7.2. Recommendations for a provincial strategy.....	101
7.2.1. Final recommendations	103
8. Discussion (limits of the results and recommendations for further research)	104
9. Conclusion	104
10. References	111
List of Abbreviations.....	123
ANNEX 1 - Semi-structured interview form.....	125
ANNEX 2 - Stakeholders' power / interest grid.....	128
Postface and acknowledgements.....	129

List of figures

Figure 1: Tourism intensity in Alpine municipalities (source: Alpine Convention, 2010, p. 16).....	11
Figure 2: Natura 2000 Alpine system (source: Alparc, 2013)	11
Figure 3: Governance archetypes (Driessen et al., 2012)	15
Figure 4: Theoretical constructs behind partnerships and level(s) of analysis (source: Laing et al., 2008b, p. 43).....	18
Figure 5: Analytical framework	22
Figure 6: Visual representation of the research framework of the thesis	29

Figure 7: Protected areas in Trentino (adapted from PAT, 2012)	32
Figure 8: Extract from the Excel grid used to organize and analyze the data collected	40
Figure 9: Geographical location of the PNAB and its geomorphic map (source: PNAB, 2006, p. 7)	42
Figure 10: Map of the municipalities within the PNAB's borders (source: Rigatti, 2011)	44
Figure 11: Temporal representation of the PNAB's partnership framework.....	46
Figure 12: Place-specific adjusted framework	95
Figure 13: Map of the Trentino ecological network (adjusted from Ferrari, 2012)	100

List of tables

Table 1: Operationalization of the dependent variables	34
Table 2: Operationalization of the independent variables	35
Table 3: List of respondents	39
Table 4: Summary of the evaluation of the success of the PNAB case.....	52
Table 5: Summary of the results on <i>membership composition</i>	56
Table 6: Summary of the results on <i>leadership</i>	57
Table 7: Summary of the results on <i>empathy among partners</i>	59
Table 8: Summary of the results on <i>presence of innovation/openness to change</i>	60
Table 9: Summary of the results on <i>distribution/balance of power</i>	61
Table 10: Summary of the results on <i>participation of stakeholders</i>	63
Table 11: Summary of the results on <i>scope of the partnership</i>	64
Table 12: Summary of the results on shared vision/purpose	66
Table 13: Summary of the results of <i>information quantity and quality</i>	68
Table 14: Summary of the results on <i>commitment</i>	69
Table 15: Summary of results on <i>interdependence</i>	70
Table 16: Summary of the results on <i>trust</i>	71
Table 17: Summary of the results on <i>adequacy/transparency of the process</i>	72
Table 18: Summary of the results on <i>structured process</i>	72
Table 19: Summary of the results on <i>flexibility</i>	74
Table 20: Summary of the results on <i>dealing with conflict</i>	75
Table 21: Summary of the results on <i>open internal communication</i>	75
Table 22: Summary of the results on <i>external communication</i>	78
Table 23: Summary of the results on <i>adequacy of resources</i>	80
Table 24: Summary of the results on <i>adequacy of time/Duration of partnership</i>	80
Table 25: Summary of the results on <i>legislative framework</i>	83
Table 26: Summary of the results on <i>administrative setting</i>	85
Table 27: Summary of the results on <i>enforcement of behavior/decisions/agreements</i>	86
Table 28: Summary of the results on <i>benefits/incentives</i>	87

1. Introduction

Since the 1970's, tourism has experienced an unstoppable incremental growth, in most cases characterized by mass tourism development meaning "sprawling urbanization, expanding hotel and infrastructure construction, and rising population and visitor densities" (Mycoo, 2006, p.491). The intensive development of this leisure activity wherever the globe has been shaping landscapes, communities, economies bringing deep social, economic and environmental impacts (Godde et al., 1999). For mountain regions all around the world, tourism is or can be a source of both development and degradation and inequality. It results pivotal to sustain and protect those 'fragile environments' as recognized by Chapter 13 (Mountain ecosystems) of the text of the Agenda 21 issued by the 1992 Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit (Godde et al., 1999; Messerli, 2004).

Mountains and uplands consist in a huge portion of the Earth's surface and are home to about 10 percent of the world's population providing essential resources to almost half of it (Rudaz, 2011). Their morphology makes mountains vary in terms of ecosystems and biodiversity but at the same time makes this environment inhospitable and not easily accessible. Mountains are also particularly threatened by climate change because of their dependency on the water from glaciers (Cipra International, 2011). Moreover, in many cases, from a socio-economic point of view, mountains areas are considered emarginated and poor (Zhelezov, 2011). This is also why most European mountain areas are classified as less-favored areas (European Commission, 2004). Both researchers and practitioners have realized the importance of finding adequate and effective solutions for sustainable development in these particular regions. In Europe the Alpine Convention and the Carpathians Convention are positive examples of transnational cooperation efforts to address sustainable development through a regional approach. The implementation of these multi-lateral agreements, especially the Alpine Convention, has been hampered by the not ratification of its protocols by some adherent states. Nevertheless, the European Union, through the fund "Alpine Space" is helping many actors to find resources to implement locally sustainability actions in various fields. It is always more evident that sustainable objective can be achieved only by integrating state-led implementation with the engagement of regional and local actors from different spheres of society. However, one of the historical instruments for biodiversity protection in mountain areas and elsewhere has been the institution of protected areas (PAs). The latter, usually top-down imposed, are nowadays challenged to play an active role as local actors for local and regional sustainable development (Lasen, 2012; Mose, 2007; Zulberti, 2012).

Tourism is a potential source of development for mountain regions by considering its natural heritage as a pivotal element for destinations' competitiveness (Gorcheva, 2011; Gössling, 2002, Hall, 2011). Especially mass tourism brings along very strong pressures on environment and local population. The tension about development and nature conservation is evident and should be considered carefully when designing and implementing tourism in fragile areas such mountains. Considering the huge impacts that tourism might have on destination, more recently, the increasing interest for the preservation of 'fragile' ecosystems affected by tourism activities has played along with the development of various types of tourism such as ecotourism, nature-based tourism, alternative tourism, and small-scale tourism" (Godde et al., 1999). In parallel, PAs are called to assume a central role in developing governance arrangements that can enhance an effective implementation of tourism while ensuring the protection of the local biodiversity as recognized also by the 2003 World Park Congress. In practice, as Weiler et al. (2007, p.2) note, PAs management bodies, constrained by limited resources and inspired by global trends, "are engaging with partners to achieve their goals, and nowhere is this more apparent than in their efforts to fulfill the tourism services

side of their dual protection/use mandate". In the last decade, thanks to the trigger given by the Rio de Janeiro Agenda 21, participatory and collaborative arrangements have been widely employed to implement sustainable development policies and literature supports these methods with several claims. Yet empirical evidence shows that success of collaboration is not always ensured. Therefore, it seems relevant to dedicate further research on how to design and manage effectively collaborative arrangements in mountain areas. Doing so, the research aims at improving the scientific understanding of the complexity and diversity of mountains in order to "best serve sustainable development policies" in these regions, using Nikolova's (2011, p. 3) words.

It has been chosen to focus on a particular Italian Alpine region which is engaging to address regionally the management of sustainable tourism (ST) in PAs. Trentino, whose territory is made up of entirely by mountains, is an autonomous province of Italy. Its economy is mostly based on tourism which, since the end of 1960s, has been transforming a rural and emarginated area in a developed and wealthy region. Tourism is however characterized by high seasonality in summer and winter. Nowadays the dependency on mass tourism has been called into question when perceived the consequences of the national economic recession which reduced significantly the number of national arrivals (Trentino Sviluppo, 2013). This situation is even hampered by the globalization dynamics and the consequent increased competitiveness of other destinations. Thanks to the convergence of multiple factors, the environment, meant as the pivotal natural capital that attracts millions of tourists, can find a place in the political agenda. As a matter of fact, the Province wants to design a provincial strategy to approach and implement ST in PAs using participatory and collaborative arrangements. This provides an interesting context to study how collaboration to implement ST in PAs can occur successfully focusing on a total mountain and Alpine environment.

Hence, to better understand how collaborative approaches can be used in an effective way, the thesis will be guided by the following research question:

What are the factors that might facilitate and hinder an effective collaboration among the different stakeholders involved in the management of sustainable tourism in the network of protected areas of the mountain territory of Trentino, Italy?

To answer to the abovementioned research question, a case-study strategy is adopted and integrated with desk-research. First, a theoretical framework is applied on a crucial case-study which is deemed as successful practice at the European level, which is the Natural Park Adamello-Brenta (PNAB). This is the only PA in Trentino to have implemented projects and policies on ST based on collaborative arrangements. In fact, in 2006, after two years of planning phase, the PNAB was awarded of the Europarc's European Charter for Sustainable Tourism (ECST) which entails the PA to adopt participatory-based approaches. Once applied the framework, it is possible first, to understand what are the factors that are more relevant in determining the success of cooperative behavior in designing and implementing ST in PAs and second, to provide recommendation to adjust, in sight of the results of the crucial case, a new place-specific theoretical framework. Subsequently, based on the new improved framework I formulate a set of specific recommendations for implementing in other PAs of Trentino initiatives that are similar to the PNAB case.

The present thesis work is structured as follows. First, a brief introduction and the scientific and societal relevance of the research are outlined. Second, the literature chapter provides a state-of-art knowledge on the core concepts of the thesis which are sustainable mountain development, natural protection and governance structures. In particular within this chapter, collaborative arrangements are defined and a theoretical framework explaining success in partnerships for implementing ST in PAs. Third, the research

methodology is described and justified. The fourth chapter introduces the case-study and to what extent it can be deemed successful. Afterwards, the fifth chapter presents the results of the application of the analytical perspectives to the case-study. The sixth chapter discusses the results of the case-study by outlining its implications for an adjusted place-specific framework and preliminary policy-oriented recommendations. The seventh chapter addresses specifically the provincial network of PAs to provide specific recommendations for designing and implementing a Trentino provincial strategy on ST policies based on stakeholders' collaboration. Eventually, the last two chapters provide the discussion and conclusion of the research followed by references and appendices.

1.1. Scientific relevance

The present research aims at contributing to several fields of literature. First of all, it addresses the challenges resulting from collaborative arrangements by understanding the issues it implies. The present research does not believe the public participation is a panacea for all the problems affecting our society, but wants to contribute to research by seeking for the conditions that make public participation effective in terms of better sustainable outcome.

As Twining-Ward and Butler (2002) assert it is necessary integrating more systematically tourism studies and sustainability science. Moreover, we want also to integrate the latter with nature conservation management trying to develop a consistent framework that links together different fields.

The research, by focusing on effectiveness in ST management in PAs contributes the literature by investigating the adequate indicators of success of ST management in PAs. An adequate operationalization is necessary to yield valuable results and monitoring tourist sustainability with adequate indicators is a necessary condition both for scientific research and policy makers (Siegrist, 2004).

Many authors have been focus on management of ST in PAs based on collaborative arrangements. Nevertheless, much of the present studies focus on the Australian and New Zealand's context (Weiler et al., 2007; Laing et al., 2009). And although other authors (Siegrist, 2004, Dewhurst and Thomas, 2003) have been studied some cases in the Alpine and European context, further research is needed to shed lights on such complex interactions.

Moreover, the research explores governance structure that try to link different PAs under an umbrella network. According to Aruajo and Bramwell (2002, p. 1140) there is need for further investigating the challenges of "joint working at a regional scale". Moreover, as Zulberti (2012) notices that PAs should increase their organizational and institutional capacity in order to be proactive actors of sustainable development; but to achieve this objective it is necessary to embed and integrate PAs in a wider institutional context. This is possible through multifold actions. First of all, PAs should be interconnected by identifying credible and justified ecological corridors (as also Natura 2000 suggests) and second, international and regional partnerships (both inter- and intra- PA) should be supported.

Last but not least, the study of the partnerships for sustainable development addressing tourism in PAs seems to be very important in the specific context of mountain areas which are identified by many authors (e.g. Godde et al., 1999; Messerli, 2004; Bandyopadhyay and Perveen, 2004; Fodella, 2004; Shelton, 2004) as pivotal territories with global relevance and high local diversity and therefore, needed to be studied keeping in mind the specific mountain context. In fact, the present study wants to apply an Australian

theoretical framework which was developed regardless of the geomorphic characteristics where the PAs were established. This relevance will be made more evident in the chapter about sustainable development in mountain region.

1.2. Societal relevance

The growing interest of research in the development of collaborative arrangements for managing common and public goods (that is the focus of the next chapter) is reflected in trends happening in practice. Many examples can be found in Australia and New Zealand (e.g. Weiler et al., 2007; Hall, 1999). However, also the Autonomous Province of Trento (a north-eastern alpine province of Italy) is attempting at integrating ST in a network of PAs. The goal is that the network applies for the process-based certification “European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas” supported by Europarc. Hence, the first most important step is to think, develop and design how different stakeholders involved, how different spheres of society and different public organizations can collaborate by enhancing both process and sustainability outcome.

Furthermore, considering the rapid changes brought by global climate changes, deforestation and land degradation affecting in particular mountain ecosystems, it is important investigating which modes of governance can enhance the conservation of the equilibrium between wealth generation and nature conservation. The results might benefit not only the policy-makers of the province object of the research, but all those policy-makers of mountain regions globally that have tourism as the main source of economic development.

2. Mountain sustainable development and collaborative arrangements: literature and theory for explaining success in participatory-based management for tourism in protected areas

The present chapter aims at offering a state-of-the-art literature overview on the main issues addressed in the thesis. First of all, a brief overview on sustainable development’s concept is made, highlighting the peculiarities and the relevance of implementing sustainability policies in mountain areas. Secondly, sustainable development in mountain Alpine regions is addressed by focusing on the relation between tourism development and biodiversity conservation. The institutional context and the trends in governance structures emerged in the last decades are presented. This is done in order to explain the historical and scientific continuum on which collaborative and participatory arrangements have been taking place for implementing ST in PAs. Finally, the analytical framework is outlined by first defining successful partnership and second presenting two analytical perspectives to analyze the factors explaining success drawn from two different fields, ST and (international) environmental governance, respectively.

2.1. Sustainable development in mountain regions

When a thesis on sustainable development issues is presented, it is first of all important to explain what is meant by this notion that has been central to the evolution of the environmental policy domain in the last decades (Meadowcroft et al., 2013). To do so, the most famous definition of such term in used; which is defined by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) in their report 'Our Common Future' (1987) as development that meets "the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (WCED, 1987, p.8). Sustainable development has been the subject of diverse interpretations (e.g. Escobar, 1996; Dasgupta, 2010; Hopwood et al., 2005) but in general it is acknowledged as encompassing the three dimensions affecting the quality of life of present and future population: environmental, social and economic. A transition towards a more sustainable society is urgent to mitigate and adapt climate change and its consequent risks and transformations. But as it is also stated in the renewed 2006 EU Sustainable Development strategy, it is pivotal "achieving continuous improvement of the quality of life and well-being on earth for present and future generations, through the creation of sustainable communities able to manage and use resources efficiently and to tap the ecological and social innovation potential of the economy, ensuring prosperity, environmental protection, and social cohesion" (Nikolova, 2011, p. 5). Therefore, a wide and complex political action must be undertaken and adequate governance structures should be developed in order to enhance the transition. In this context, research should provide decision-makers with adequate scientific support.

Sustainability science is by definition an interdisciplinary subject as it encompasses transversally many scientific disciplines ranging from urban planning to energy innovation passing through nature protection and water quality. All the specific innovations that might serve as tools for sustainable development can be studied from a political point of view investigating the effectiveness of diverse governance structures in enhancing sustainability. This thesis aims at investigating success of governance structures based on partnership arrangements in the context of implementing ST in PAs.

In parallel, the research addresses mountain regions as specific and fragile territories that cannot be assumed holding the same problems and relative solutions of marine or urban areas. Mountains and uplands cover one-fifth of the earth's land surface and "supply important resources to over half of the world's population" (Godde et al., 1999, p. 3) and they are characterized by long periods of inaccessibility, varied landscape and wide biological diversity. The complexity of the mountain territories, characterized by deep verticality, results in a wide diversity of climate types which "provide the basis for a rich biodiversity" (Bandyopadhyay and Perveen, 2004, p. 10). These ecosystems are considered 'fragile' because the vertical formation of mountains makes the ecosystem unable to recover easily when an important species disappears (Bandyopadhyay and Perveen, 2004). Last but not least, mountains are the sources of all the main rivers of the world. Considering all this, the 1992 Earth Summit of Rio de Janeiro acknowledged for the first time that mountains' problems are not only national but also global competence since they are globally important ecosystems (Messerli, 2004; Bandyopadhyay and Perveen, 2004). This is testified in the chapter 13 of Agenda 21 which is specifically devoted to sustainable development in mountain regions (Rudaz, 2011). The growing attention to mountains culminated then, with the declaration of the 2002 International Year of Mountains (Fodella, 2004). It is interesting to notice that in the development of a global mountain agenda it has been constantly stressed "the importance of integrating mountain people into the process and in the various issues addressed" (Rudaz, 2011, p. 46). Nevertheless, besides the recognition of their global relevance, in the last years the awareness that mountain areas need the understanding of their unique characteristics has been growing. "Applying laws and policies that were enacted with lowland environments in mind to mountain areas can have disastrous effects" (Shelton, 2004,

p. 73). All this considered, it is evident the necessity to contribute to research that seeks to understand especially from a governance perspective, how tourism can be driven more sustainably in high natural capital areas such as mountains.

For the sake of clarity this thesis needs to present its three central issues more in details (i.e. ST, natural protection, partnerships). Although these elements are interwoven, first, it is important to explain the evolution in the approach to nature conservation. Second, ST needs to be further clarified since it is a not straightforward concept. Lastly, it is pivotal to give an adequate overview on the evolution of governance structures.

2.2. Mountains between natural protection and tourism development

Tourism and (mountain) locations are tied by a relation of mutual dependence. Among others, Gorcheva (2011), Fusilli (2005) and Butler (1999) highlight the dependency of tourism activities on the environment and how the pressure exerted by tourism activities establishes a negative feedback loop with its quality of the environment. However, for many peripheral mountain locations tourism is an opportunity of development as well as the main source of income on which local community depends (Bandyopadhyay and Perveen, 2004). The tension between nature conservation and economic development is high as the “rapid growth of mountain tourism is destroying the very ecological foundation on which was established” (Bandyopadhyay and Perveen, 2004, p.12). Hence, as recognized by many international declarations, in mountain regions it is paramount to manage appropriately the delicate equilibrium between preservation of natural resources and development of tourism activities. Nevertheless, the balance is even more threatened by climate change whose consequences primarily affect mountain regions due to their strong dependency on glaciers (Zulberti, 2012; Radovanovic, 2011; Zierl & Bugmann, 2005; IPCC, 2008; Bandyopadhyay and Perveen, 2004). In the European Alps the effects of climate change are already evident (Cipra International, 2011; WWF, 2009). In fact, climate change affects not only the natural capital (considering glaciers as pivotal global water sources), but also tourism. Global warming threatens the winter tourism on which mainly Alpine destinations rely and makes evident the need for undertaking a substantial shift towards a more sustainable (both in terms of mitigation and adaptation) tourism (Cipra International, 2011). Another important problem that Alpine destinations face is the *seasonal* concentration of tourists in ski areas which exerts an incredible pressure on the environment and local population. Differentiating and deseasonalizing tourism services are essential steps to change sustainably mass tourism dynamics (Zulberti, 2012).

As Twining-Ward and Butler (2002, p. 364) assert, ST has been often “misconceived as a type of ecotourism or a low impact form of niche product”. Although these could be forms of tourism reflecting ST principles, ST encompasses all types of tourism worldwide. However, as Dodds (2007) points out it especially interests mass forms since tourism represents the economic ground for many localities worldwide, which have already experienced the environmental and social degradation consequent of the huge pressure exerted by tourism. To sum up, ST is every kind of tourism trying to reduce its negative impacts to different extents and levels. For instance, as Hall (2011) remembers conservation of biodiversity must be meant as an integrative part of ST.

ST must be conceived as a continuous process rather than an end. It is a cluster of policies, practices and programs aiming to reduce the negative impacts on environment and communities as much as possible

(UNWTO, 2011). It is an approach that seeks balance between development and conservation. Planning and implementing ST policies is not easy because policy-processes and economic activities regarding tourism are always characterized by heterogeneity of scales, actors, issues, interests involved. Also in the case of tourism policies might be divided in public (issued by governmental authorities) and private (undertaken by business actors); although it is often the case that public policies encourage the adoption of private actions (Hall, 1999; Hall and Lew, 2009) addressing deseasonalization by incentivizing private businesses to extend their activities or to adopt environmental management measures (Zulberti, 2012). Furthermore, ST policies might cover a wide range of policy areas. Tourism-specific policy areas usually entail the marketing and promotion of a destination, whilst many other affect and are affected less directly by tourism. These mainly concern land and urban planning, transportation and infrastructure, waste management, energy consumption, environmental education. Another important dimension of policies relates to the instruments chosen to pursue them. Regulatory instruments might be used by public policies, for instance, such as by establishing a limit to accommodation growth and incentivizing the restoration of existing hotels; another example is enhancing public transport (Dodds, 2007). On the other hand, private policies employ market-based instruments which are voluntary and include certifications and environmental management systems (EMSs) (Ayuso, 2007; Blanco, 2011). To sum up, ST is a concept that encompasses all policies and actions trying to reduce the negative social, environmental and economical impacts on a community and according to Weaver (2006, p. 10) is “namely a condition that all types of tourism must fulfill”.

In parallel to the concept of sustainable development, ST contains a quite important normative dimension about the inclusion of communities and stakeholders in the decision-making, as it is clear from this statement by UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2011): “sustainable tourism development requires the informed participation of all relevant stakeholders, as well as strong political leadership to ensure wide participation and consensus building.”

The Alpine region, as figure 1 and 2 below show, includes many PAs which have been established in areas very different in levels of tourism development and maturation. Hence, if ST is meant as tourism seeking to reduce its negative impacts on social, environmental and economic capital of its destination, the importance of pursuing its objectives is pivotal especially in European developed countries where economic dimension has already a prominent role. In fact mountain regions are often peripheral and emarginated regions and tourism has been in many cases a development driver. For Alpine areas, tourism was the trigger of the shift from a rural and farming towards a wealthy developed society. To understand how a sustainable trade-off among the three dimensions can happen, it is important to realize the weight that tourism has on the economy. Nowadays it is one of the most important economic sectors of the Alpine municipalities. Although only the 10% of the municipalities have an economy exclusively based on tourism, the following map shows tourism intensity in the Alps (Alpine Convention, 2007). To fully understand the tension about tourism pressure and nature preservation, it is important to display a map of the Alpine PAs that can give a visual idea of how tourism and natural protection mechanisms are interwoven.

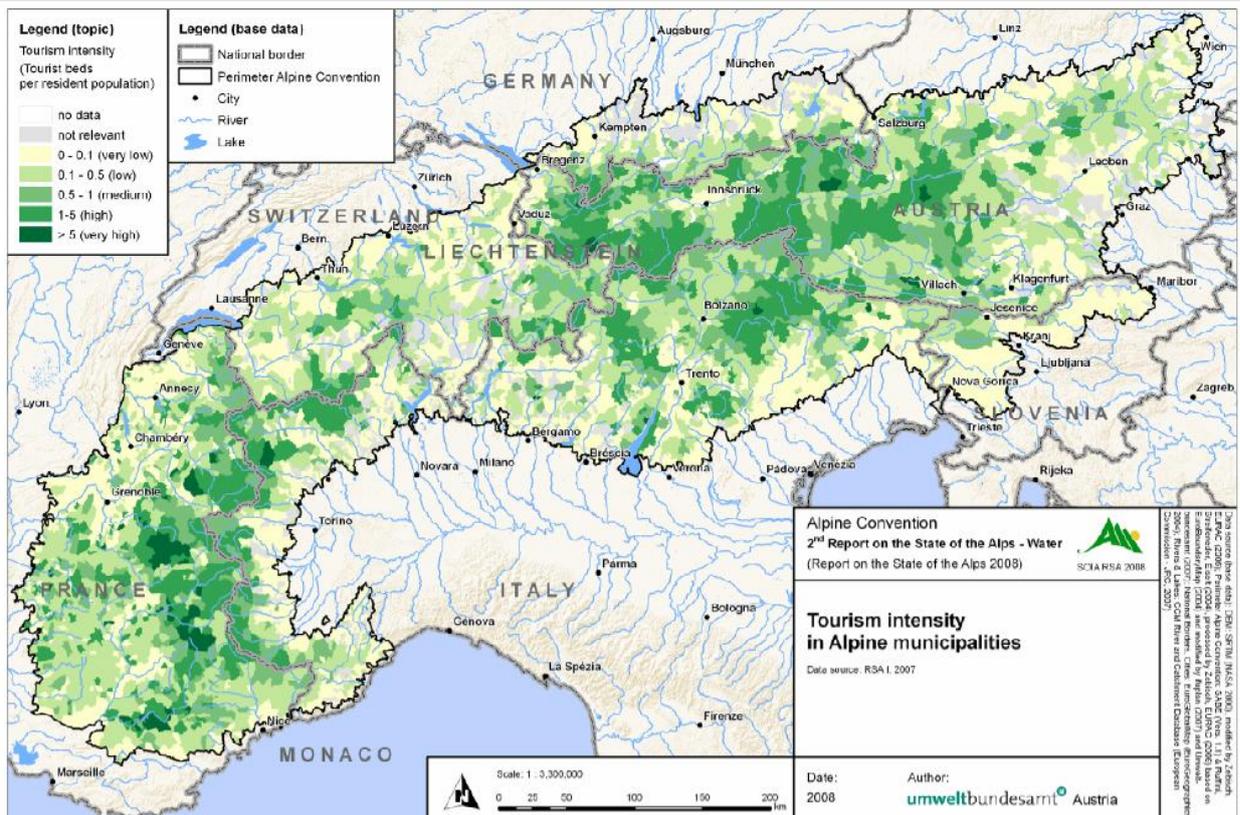


Figure 1: Tourism intensity in Alpine municipalities (source: Alpine Convention, 2010, p. 16)

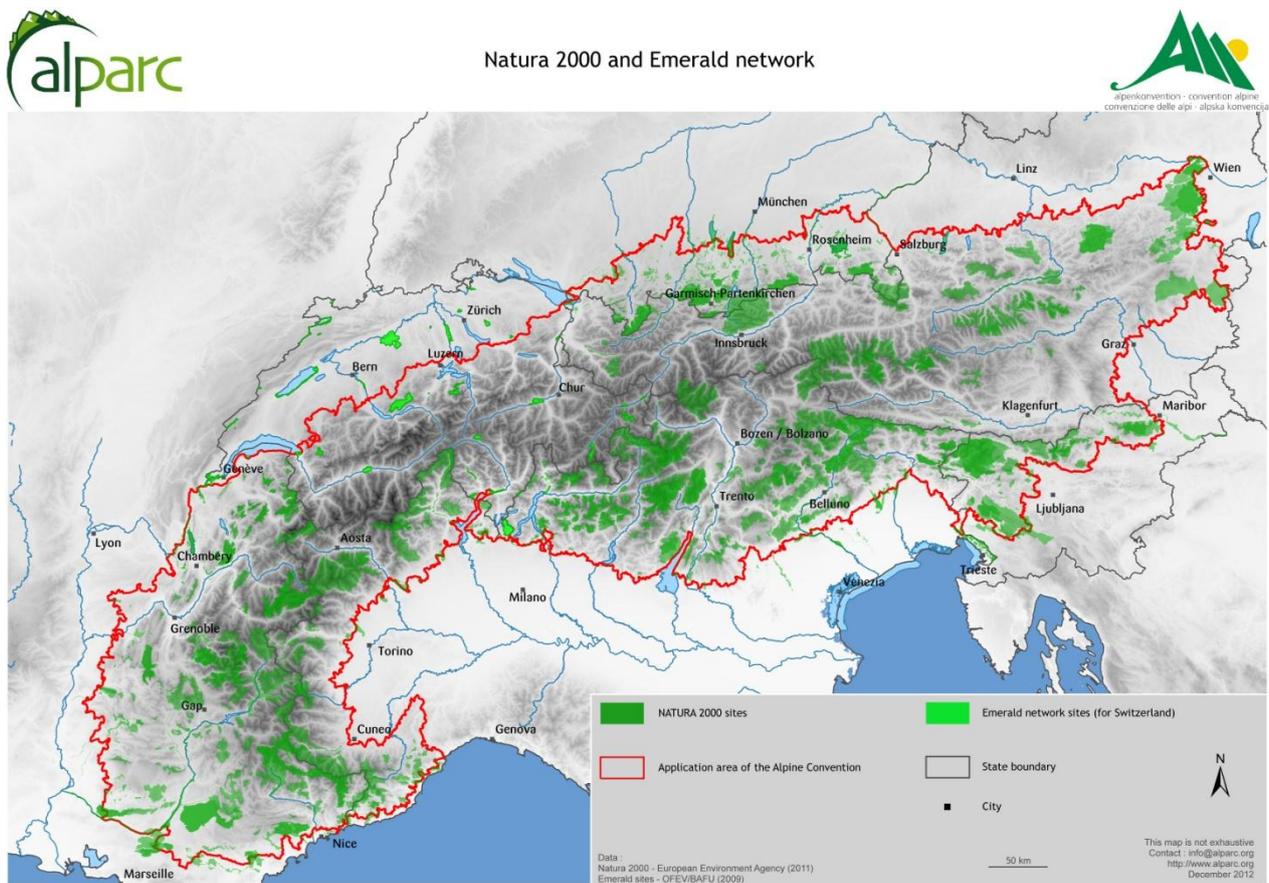


Figure 2: Natura 2000 Alpine system (source: Alparc, 2013)

The dependency and the pressure of tourism activities on the environment call for an enhanced natural protection that is also hampered by other global and local factors at the same time. Local and international actors need to join their forces and find effective policies that can stop biodiversity and landscape degradation. To understand how biodiversity protection is targeted nowadays, it is important to explain how the approach to nature conservation has evolved throughout the years.

Nature conservation is a concept and policy goal that might be supported for several reasons. An interesting work of Doremus (2000), based on political discourse analysis, faces the relation among the policies adopted to pursue the goal of nature protection and the relation that individuals or communities directly or indirectly claim to have with nature. In fact, according to its conclusions nature protection can be justified by three kinds of claims: the material, the esthetical and the ethical discourse. The first, most frequently used in the political debates, “treats nature as a material resource for human consumption” (Doremus, 2000, p. 14). The second, less frequent, considers nature as an esthetic resource. As the former, this discourse “is still instrumental in the sense that it views nature as an object of human use and enjoyment” (*ibidem*). Nevertheless, unlike the economic discourse, it acknowledges also a spiritual and mental value in nature. Lastly, the third discourse has been introduced in the political arena only recently and argues “that humanity has an ethical obligation to protect nature independent of any instrumental value nature may have” (p. 15). The classification proposed by Doremus (2000) is not directly related to the present research work but it proposes a useful perspective that should always be kept into consideration especially when studying tourism in PAs because it sheds lights on actors’ discourses and motivations.

The implementation of nature conservation entails different government levels and includes different mechanisms (Eckerberg, 2013). Nowadays, in many policies addressing sustainability market-based instruments are always more spread. A known example is the European Emission Trading Scheme. In nature protection mechanisms, terms such as eco-systems services are always gaining more attention. Nevertheless, this thesis focuses on a policy tool that consists in limiting land use by establishing protected areas of different size.

Although it is possible to date back the origins of modern nature protection to the 18th and 19th centuries, the first national laws were developed in the mid-20th century and an international environmental regime was developed only after the 1970s. Important events are represented by the 1970 European Year of Nature Protection and the 1972 Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment.

Since the establishment of the first National Park in the 1872, the convergence between recreation and conservation goals is evident. The North-American approach to PAs was reflecting the Doremus’ esthetic discourse by creating the myth of wilderness (meant also as the “west frontier”) and the tourism activities related to it (Mose and Weixlbaumer, 2007). Although it must be kept into account that the American historical and cultural context was completely different from the European one, the establishment of the first PAs in the US was claimed to be a trigger for similar demands in the Old continent. However, the main difference lies in the fact that Europe had a much more densely populated territory compared to North-America, which made the identification of large pristine natural areas to protect difficult. In fact, it is not surprising if the first European PA was established in a low populated Swedish area in 1909 (Mose and Weixlbaumer, 2007).

As already mentioned, the creation of the first PAs is antecedent to the development of the actual environmental international governance, whose claims found room in the international political agenda only since the early 1970s, gaining its maximum attention in 1987 thanks to the Brundtland Report (O’ Neill, 2009). To understand the current trends in the management of PAs, firstly it is important to display the international regime of biodiversity protection and its evolution throughout the years. Nowadays a more

open paradigm to biodiversity conservation is pursued (replacing the traditional conservationist approach) (Locke and Dearden, 2005; Henderson, 1992). In other words, there has been an evolution from a segregated approach (what Henderson 1992 calls “protection without use”) to an integrated approach (“protection through use”). This shift culminated with what today is called ecosystem-management approach which “replaces isolated nature with an integrative approach” (Mose and Weixlbaumer, 2007, p. 11). This type of management and approach to nature conservation was also legitimized by the 2003 Durban World Parks Congress which considers ecosystem management as an instrument to “turn PA management from ‘boundary thinking’ ...to an understanding of the spheres of influence that affect parks beyond the administrative boundary” (Slocombe and Dearden, 2002, p. 302).

However, the evolution of the management practices in PAs depends also on the general shift experienced at the practical and theoretical level in the management of public and common goods. This emerged with the rising awareness that the present-day governing structure cannot rely solely on the role of the government or on market relations but rather on a complex interplay of different spheres of society (Rhodes, 1998). Although these two trends might be analyzed differently, they also can be seen as interwoven. In fact, as long as the new adaptive paradigm of nature preservation emerged, it also has required adapting and adequate governing structures.

The following section indeed outlines briefly the institutional context (from a multi-level governance perspective) in regard to the new approach to natural protection with a focus on the European Alpine context. In the following chapter 2.3, the current state-of-the-art of the literature on collaborative arrangements in nature protection and tourism (mainly in mountain areas but not exclusively) is reviewed highlighting the most recurrent issues in the scientific debate and the empirical findings so far presented by the literature.

From the 1971 Ramsar treaty for wetlands until the 1992 Convention on Biological Conservation (CBD), many multilateral environmental agreements (MAEs) have been developed in the attempt of stopping the degradation of the global biodiversity that concerns also mountain regions (O’Neill, 2009). However, since this research focuses on the “most extensive mountain system in Europe” (i.e. the Alps) (Stone, 1992, p. 47) it is first of all, important to understand in what the institutional framework surrounding and defining nature protection in Europe consists.

At the European level the CBD finds its implementation is two directives: the 92/43/CEE “Habitat” Directive and the 79/409/CEE “Birds” Directive. From the implementation of the Habitat Directive, the so-called Natura 2000 system takes place. Natura 2000 is an EU-wide network of nature protection areas made up of reserves which are not necessarily strict nature reserves but where some human activities might happen (European Commission, 2012). Natura 2000 assumes that nature (as well as tourism) does not recognize the artificial boundaries of the PAs and calls for governance involving neighboring communities (Bushell et al., 2007).

Considering the Alpine territory as another level, it is important to present the 1991 Alpine Convention, framework-based international convention that addresses regional sustainable development (Scanlon and Burhenne-Guilmin, 2004). Article 12 of the Protocol “Nature conservation and landscape planning” in line with Natura 2000 foresees the creation of a “network of existing national and transboundary PAs, of biotopes and other protected elements or those to be protected”. This is the frame for the work started in 2003 by ALPARC aiming to implement an ecological network in the Alps with a priority on the creation of spatial links between the PAs.

The development through time of environmental protection arrangements reflects the shift from conservationism to a more open and adaptive paradigm of nature preservation. This is evident in the rethinking of the PAs' categories by the World Conservation Union (IUCN). These new categories have been strongly criticized (Locke and Dearden, 2005). Nevertheless the new categories introduced in 1994 represent a new paradigm that demands mechanisms of nature protection also in areas already shaped by human activities. This transition towards a more open and diffuse approach to biodiversity protection has been developed in parallel with a change of the governing structures and with what today is called *governance* (this issue is explained further in chapter 2.3). A management of PAs based on good governance and involvement of all the stakeholders seems to be a primary goal for all PAs as stated by the 2003 IUCN World Park Congress (Scanlon and Burhenne-Guilmin, 2004).

To conclude, all this considered it emerges clearly that in this thesis focusing on ST in PAs several dimensions are interwoven and interdependent. In fact, ST is addressed as policies addressing indirect and direct impacts of tourists through an integrated and open approach to natural protection and interactive modes of governance are interwoven and interdependent.

2.3. Successful partnership in the literature: from a definition to a framework to explain success

Governance of PAs cannot be considered without taking into account the contemporary thinking on governance and on the shift from government to governance observed by many authors (e.g. Rhodes, 1998; Glasbergen et al., 2007; O'Neill; 2009). To use the words of Driessen et al. (2012, p. 144) "[...] from this debate, governance emerges as a concept which acknowledges that the public sector is not the only controlling actor when it comes to the solution of societal problems". From a broader lens, governance might be seen as the alternative answer to the flaws in the traditional state-led implementation of the MAEs (O'Neill, 2009; Glasbergen et al., 2007) as it was noticed beforehand. All in all, this shift has been *institutionalized* by the United Nations through the 1992 Rio Local Agenda 21 and the 2002 Johannesburg World Summit for sustainable development when it was wished the creation of voluntary, multi-stakeholder initiatives that can contribute to the implementation of sustainable development.

In the literature many labels have arisen to refer to new governance structures used to manage public and common goods in which actors from different spheres of society and political levels interact. Such terms include for example: community-based management (White et al., 1994), partnerships (Glasbergen, 1998, 2010; Glasbergen et al., 2007), transition management (Kemp et al., 2007). Governance might assume several shapes depending on the configurations of the actors playing a role. Following this assumption, Driessen et al. (2012) propose an interesting classification by outlining five ideal types of governance modes that might be found in analyzing environmental governance issues. As a matter of illustration, the five archetypes are depicted in the following figure and for each the main involved actors are outlined.

Centralized governance	Decentralized governance	Public - private governance	Interactive governance	Self-governance
Central gov't agencies (or supra national bodies)	Gov't at its various levels of aggregation (subsidiarity)	Central gov't agencies; private sector is granted a preconditioned role also	Multiple actors: gov't, private sector and civil society	Private sector and/or civil society

→ = dominant role; ↔ = equivalent role; --- = background role;

S = central state; s = decentralized state; m = market; and cs = civil society

Figure 3: Governance archetypes (Driessen et al., 2012)

In spite of this wide overview, inspired by the definition of Glasbergen et al. (2007) and Weiler et al. (2007), in this thesis partnerships are defined as collaborative arrangements in which actors from two or more spheres of society (state, market, civil society) are involved in regular cross-sectoral non-hierarchical interactions through which these actors strive for common policy goals over an extended period of time.

Pluralistic approaches such as partnerships are supported by the literature by two main claims, one normative and one linked to interdependence discourse. The first has already been outlined and aims at involving local communities or groups in sight of democratic, legitimacy and empowerment issues (Rudaz, 2011). On the other hand, the interdependence claim is also partly used to justify the open paradigm to nature protection and is often used in business and organizational studies. Both practice and literature support the assumption that complex systems need the joining of several parties for the achievement of a successful outcome. Alike, for what concerns the implementation of (sustainable) tourism in PAs, Jamal and Stronza (2009) outline a very common problem:

“Most destination tourist organizations tend to focus on marketing and promotion; they are not closely involved in resource conservation and planning for sustainable use – which is the function of administrators and organizations in charge of managing the protected area. The resulting marketing–planning gap has serious consequences for destination sustainability. In protected areas, much of this issue plays out at the interface between the management of use (for visitation, habitation) and conservation (of biodiversity, culture), where a *use–conservation gap* can be similarly identified.” (Jamal and Stronza, 2009, p.171)

According to the authors, this *use-conservation gap* is to be ascribed to the very different knowledge and organizational bases of the tourism and natural protection sectors. Moreover, these problems might be aggravated by the fact that often the local community is not sufficiently informed and does not adequately support sustainability decision-making (Healey, 1997).

Given the complexity of the management structure needed in implementing and designing ST in PAs, literature generally accepts as a possible solution the establishment of collaborative arrangements (also called partnerships). These refer to the development of a governance structure that involves all the parties that have a stake in the issue, which include different sectorial governmental agencies (e.g. from tourism and natural protection sectors), local population and/or civil society representatives and tourism businesses, (local) government. In other words, the more complex a problem, the more multi and inter-organizational governance structure is needed (Trist, 1983; Araujo and Bramwell 2002).

Even though it is widely accepted that collaborative arrangements in such complex systems are crucial, organizing collaboration has proved difficult in many fields. In the management of ST in PAs (as also in other forms of ST), research and practice are still struggling in finding innovative and effective ways to cope with the problems. In fact, these new forms of management besides benefits encompass also drawbacks. As Imperial (1999, p. 450) outlines, many problems can arise, such as, “(1) the fragmentation and duplication of responsibility and authority; (2) poor use of existing information and resources; and, (3) the inconsistency of policies across and between levels of government”.

The focus (and the challenge) is how to effectively organize collaborative arrangements in order to enhance the sustainability outcome. Different authors have focused on the weaknesses and strengths of governance in PAs based on collaborative and participatory processes. All their studies contribute to the formation of a framework for explaining success in the collaborative management of ST in PAs. Not all of them targeted the specific management of tourism in PAs; nevertheless they all contribute to the understanding of this interactive type of governance specifically applied for studying governance in planning and implementing ST in PAs.

To the present research a massive contribution has been given by a two-year Australian research conducted within the Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Center (STSRC). This critically reviewed all the relevant research on the topic of collaborative arrangement using a multi-theoretical approach, tested empirically in the specific context of Pas and tourism and eventually created a comprehensive framework for explaining success in Pas. Considering its methodological and theoretical foundation, this work can be considered the most complete framework in the literature with a focus on PAs and ST. Their proposed framework is the result of an extensive review and analysis of literature on collaboration from several disciplines which include environmental, business and tourism management. The framework is clearly organized in dependent and independent variables. Although it is tested inv and is mostly representative of the Australian context, it stands as a valid theoretical basis for the present research.

However, by reviewing the literature another dimension is revealed as being significant in order to embed the analyzed partnerships in a greater and global picture. Glasbergen's ladder of partnership activities analyzes partnership aiming at sustainable development. Partnerships are seen as processes "in which actors from various sectors of society (state, market and civil) restructure and build new social relationships to create a more sustainable management practice" (Glasbergen, 2010, p. 1). Sustainability must always be considered not only in its local and contextual scope but also in its higher levels and global interconnected dimensions. When agreed with this, Glasbergen's five levels of partnership activities offer pivotal insights for a complete analysis.

The following sections, first, present what this thesis means by success in partnership (2.3.1.); second, section 2.3.2. outlines the different factors identified in the STCRC study to explain success. Third, the perspective of Glasbergen (2010), which focuses explicitly on success for partnerships for sustainable development, is outlined in section 2.3.3. where also the implications for the theoretical framework and for the results are explained.

2.3.1. Defining successful partnerships

Defining success for partnerships is not a result of a straightforward reasoning. Many authors have analyzed successful partnerships (in the ST field), some of them just assuming that the meaning of success is self evident, others by focusing on the process itself and others taking into account the outcome. Still, Bramwell and Lane (2000) divide success of partnerships in two wide categories that may also overlap. From one side, "[...] success is the adoption and/or implementation of watershed plans, projects, or policies, and their eventual impacts on environmental or socioeconomic indicators. Another type of success includes trust building, conflict resolution, satisfying the stakeholders, and strengthening the long-term organizational capacity of the partnership" (Bramwell and Lane, 2000, p. 380).

In general, the latter, process success, entails the level to which the parties assume a cooperative behavior. Leach and Pelkey (2001) assert that it usually concerns improvements in human and social capital of its

participant. On the other hand, the outcome approach refers to the output (e.g. products, projects) and to the results in terms of sustainable development. Mohr and Spekman (1994) suggest that outcome might be evaluated both in terms of objective indicators and in terms of satisfaction of the partners. Considering different literatures on collaborative arrangement Laing et al. (2009) in the STCRC study propose to evaluate the success of the partnership both in terms of process outcome and sustainable development outcome. Nevertheless, if sustainable development results are meant in terms of economical, environmental and social dimensions, the latter dimension might overlap partially with process meant as before (Laing et al., 2008b; 2009).

Another perspective is also significant, following Ostrom (1990, 2005), cooperation is shaped within the development of institutions for collective action, where norms and rules structure the decision-making which produces certain output (in terms of specific projects/policies), which in turn affect the outcome (McGinnis, 2011).

All this considered, for analytical purposes, the thesis generally means process success as the establishment of cooperative behavior, which is indicated first by the development of institutions for collective action and second, by the implementation of subsequent output. Moreover, sustainable development outcome is meant in its three traditional dimensions (environmental, economical and social). However, in addition I propose a further differentiation to reduce overlaps; social outcome entails two dimensions, one referred to the participants of the partnership themselves (what Bramwell and Lane, 2000 and Leach and Pelkey, 2001 mean as the reinforcement of the social capital of parties) and one referred to the general local social development affected by the partnership.

Moreover, considering the literature on mountain ST, it seems important to define success in partnerships for ST in Alpine areas also as the extent to which deseasonalization issues are addressed. Deseasonalization entails sustainable development in all its three dimensions because it attenuates its pressure on environment and local population. Furthermore it is supposed to benefit economically because it extends the opportunities of hosting tourists.

Overall, Figure 5 in the following section outlines visually the dependent variables concerning the success of the partnership reflecting the abovementioned considerations.

2.3.2. The STCRC study

When identifying the factors that can indicate and explain success in implementing ST in PAs, it is necessary to *stand on the shoulders of giants* in order to better contribute to the present research and practice. The STCRC research offers a massive contribution for this project, while at the same time this project offers the possibility to apply the STCRC's framework to a non-Australian context.

The STSRCR study is divided into two main parts. The first is literature-based and is grounded on existing research on collaboration from diverse fields and considering different theories. This is finalized by a conceptual theoretical framework that assumes to take into consideration all the relevant variables that might influence the success of management of ST in PAs. The second part regards the use of such a framework on the study of 21 Australian tourism-related partnerships. The results, the literature and the methods of the entire study are widely documented in several publications (i.e. Pfueller et al., 2011; Laing et al., 2008a; 2008b; 2009; Weiler et al., 2007; Moore et al., 2009).

First of all, what is at most relevant for the present research is the validity and accountability of the theoretical framework developed by the researchers. In fact, before testing the framework empirically, they undertook an extensive literature review and conducted a preliminary research to understand which theories might be more relevant to explain success or failure in the management of ST in PAs (Laing et al., 2009).

As first thing the researchers identified a literature gap; a preliminary literature research shed light on the fact that most previous studies undertook a descriptive rather than explanatory approach highlighting “the need for the development of a conceptual framework for analyzing successful partnerships that goes beyond the scope of the previous studies in this area” (Laing et al., 2008b; p. 15). The research tackled the knowledge gap by using what they call a post-disciplinary approach (Laing et al., 2009). It is based on literature from several disciplines which include tourism and natural resource, environmental and watershed management literature but also on research on collaboration from fields such as environmental, health, business and social studies. From the analysis of the literature on collaboration eight theories were identified which could enhance understanding of the elements contributing to successful partnerships in the context of PAs and ST. The relevant theories include: (1) social exchange theory, (2) adoption/diffusion of innovation theories, (3) environmental dispute resolution (EDR) theory, (4) social representation theory, (5) network theory, (6) stakeholder theory; (7) social capital theory and (8) institutional analysis and development (IAD) theory (Laing et al., 2009). For each theory, they started identifying the level of analysis as shown in Figure 4

Theory	Level(s) of analysis
Stakeholder theory	Individuals
Social exchange theory	Individuals and groups
Social representation	Individuals and groups
Environmental dispute resolution	Individuals and groups
Social capital/community capacity	Individuals, groups and organisations
Adoption/diffusion of innovations	Individuals, groups and organisations
Network theory	Individuals, groups and organisations
Institutional analysis and development	Groups and organisations

Figure 4: Theoretical constructs behind partnerships and level(s) of analysis (source: Laing et al., 2008b, p. 43)

To be sure of thoroughly understanding the framework developed by the STSCRC study that is going to be used in the present study, it is necessary to present briefly the relevant selected theories.

2.3.1.1. Social exchange theory

Social exchange theory derives from the fields of anthropology, microeconomics and social psychology. It approaches relationships and interactions between actors by focusing on the exchange of resources and on its role within the relation of the actors and specifically on the reciprocity that the exchange generates among the actors (Emerson, 1976; Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005; Ap, 1992). It is a theory or a frame for many theories (Emerson, 1976) which focuses on behavior of actors and on the exchange as a transaction from which the actors expect to gain something (Laing et al., 2008b). This theory has been used, among others in tourism literature mainly to explain the relation between tourism and host population (Ap, 1992; Beeton, 2006). According to Laing et al. (2009, p. 210), “social exchange theory provides a useful framework for examining partnerships based on the different exchanges that occur between partners and the impacts these exchanges have on partner relationships and partnership success”.

2.3.1.2. Adoption/diffusion of innovation theories

Theories on diffusion of innovations can be led back to the 1960s and the work of Everett Rogers (1962; 1983; 1995; 2003; 2010) that had many scholars in Europe and United States. In the milestone “Diffusion of innovation” (of which four editions exist) innovation is meant as an idea perceived as new. The term ‘perceived’ is important for this theory because the idea itself has not to be ‘objectively’ new; what is relevant is the newness perceived by the subject (Rogers, 2010). The object of this theory is explaining how an innovation is adopted and diffused among a group of people. The theory about the adoption and diffusion of innovation has been used and confirmed in several fields including not only innovation studies but also agriculture, forestry, medicine, urban planning, business, marketing and tourism studies (Laing et al., 2008b). In particular in the case of partnerships in protected area tourism, collaborative arrangements can be regarded as an innovative process to manage PAs and ST. However, innovation in new management practices belongs to a relatively new literature, since most studies have focused on product innovation (Hjalager, 1996). According to Rogers (2010) innovation entails five dimensions which explain its rate of diffusion: the relative advantage (that the innovation is perceived to offer), the compatibility (with current practices), the complexity, the observability (of the benefits of the innovation) and the trialability (i.e. the degree to which an innovation can be tried on limited basis).

Besides these variables, success in diffusion and adoption of innovation are linked to strong leadership, good communication systems, sufficient time and flexible organizational systems (Rogers, 2010, Lundblad, 2003).

2.3.2.3. Environmental dispute resolution (EDR) theory

The EDR theory draws back to the 1970s and the work on conflict resolution and alternative dispute resolution of Gail Bingham (1986) and Cormick (1976). In general EDR theory focuses on defining successful resolution of conflicts and the roles of resolution processes and the surrounding context (which entails also social and organizational systems). For analyzing the success for collaborative arrangements for managing ST in PAs, EDR seems to be relevant, according to Laing et al. (2008b; 2009), because partnerships depend inherently on success of the resolution of the potential conflicts that might arise within it. The EDR theory “potentially offers insights into what affects the development and persistence of partnerships, through its focus on the influences of processes on dispute resolution (e.g. how partnership is developed and matured) and the dispute context (e.g. the political, policy and administrative setting) on successful resolution” (Laing et al., 2008b, p. 48-49). Conflict is in fact an inevitable element of democratic and participatory processes, especially when sustainable development issues are at stake (Campbell, 1996). If managed successfully, conflict is a stimulating hub of ideas and innovation (Imperial, 1999). Under this theory, the STSCRC study identified the following variables (both to explain and characterize success in collaborative arrangements) connected to the EDR theory with a specific focus on the work of Bingham (1986) and O’Leary and Bingham (2003). From the framework offered by Bingham (1986), Laing et al. (2008a; 2008b; 2009) used the organization of the variables influencing the resolution in three different clusters (Party-related; process- and context- related; substance-related facts).

Nevertheless, other scholars such as Campbell (1996), although not mentioned by the STSCRC research, have faced EDR shedding light on the role of leadership and facilitators in managing successfully the arisen conflicts.

2.3.2.4. Social representation theory

Social representation theory originates from the studies of Serge Moscovici in the beginning of the 1960s in the field of social psychology. It draws insights from social constructivism. Social representation is a system of values, ideas and practices that enables individuals to make sense of their social reality and allows individuals to communicate through codes of social exchange (Moscovici, 1984). In general, it explores “different attitudes, views and behavior amongst partners” and explains “the rationale behind shared attitudes that may result in differences in behavior” (Laing et al., 2009, p. 2010). This theory results useful for management of ST in PAs because it can explain conflicts in partnerships even when values and goals seem to be shared by the partners.

2.3.2.5. Network theory

Laing et al. (2009) consider network theory to be very insightful for the study of partnership since they focus on (policy) networks which are sets of formal and informal social relationships that shape collaborative action between government, industry and civil society (e.g. Atkinson and Coleman, 1992; Dredge, 2006; Dredge and Pforr, 2008; Rhodes, 1998; O’Toole et al., 1997). Actually, it is more an approach than a real theory. Nevertheless, this is a problem that related also to other theories mentioned by the STSCRC study; the threshold between an actual theory made up of a set of hypotheses and a conceptual framework that guides a systematic approach. In fact, network approach has been applied in several fields including biology and tourism studies. According to Laing et al. (2009), the studies of Dredge (2006) and Braun (2004) are particularly useful for the research on partnerships for ST. Specifically, Braun’s (2004) studies focus on the relation between diffusion of innovation and position in the network; using this perspective the network is the tool facilitating innovation and network theory is integrated with theories on adoption/diffusion of innovations (Laing et al., 2008b).

2.3.2.6. Stakeholder theory

The stakeholder theory selected by Laing et al. (2008b; 2009) is a theory born in the fields of organizational management and business ethics with the work of Edward Freeman (1984). His theory assumes that in any strategic issue it is important to consider all the consequences on the stakeholders and therefore, manage processes in such a way to take into account all the interests involved. In fact, a stakeholder is defined as any individual, or group, that can be affected or affect the implementation of a project or action (Freeman, 1984). This theory posits that effective management must identify the organization’s stakeholders and take into consideration their stakes. The STSCRC study uses stakeholder theory regarding the partners of the partnerships as stakeholders (Laing et al., 2009) and approaches many elements such as the grid *power/interest* that is the basis of the more operational stakeholder analysis methodologies (Bryson, 2004). However, their approach reflects the origin of stakeholder theory and uses a strong business management, rather than natural resource management, point of view. In spite of that, they are careful on facing one of the main difference in the two approached that refers to the degree of inclusivity. Strategically, stakeholders might be considered whether necessary or compatible, while from a public policy perspective, the most inclusive the identification of stakeholders is, the more effective, though time-consuming, the policy will be (Grimble and Wellard, 1997).

2.3.2.7. Social capital theory

The STSCRC study chose to use theory linked to social capital theory because this theory “can contribute to our understanding of why and how people might work together in partnership. Social capital theory has its foundation in the works of Coleman (1988) and Putnam (1993) and focuses on how individuals or groups

interact with each other within certain structures, systems and relations. These entail two aspects, first, structural elements such as “networks, roles, rules and precedents” and second, cognitive elements which involve “norms, values, attitudes and beliefs” (Beeton, 2006, p. 91). The literature has identified three types of social capital: bonding linking, bridging. The first type develops thanks to the ties linked to friends or family or a common social/cultural group. The second, the linking capital, evolves in relation with hierarchical relations, while, lastly, bridging social capital is the results of network ties. According to Laing et al. (2009) the linking and bridging forms of social capital are the more interesting for the study of partnerships in tourism in PAs helping the understanding why and how people work in partnerships and the explanation of the failure and the success of such arrangements.

2.3.2.8. Institutional analysis and development (IAD) theory

The IAD framework is the last ‘theory’ to be considered. It is very useful to identify what are the factors of success of partnerships for protected areas and ST management because it explains “how local institutional arrangements help to shape environmental management practices and outcomes” (Laing et al., 2008b, p. 67). In other words, it helps the understanding of how cooperative behavior can be incentivized (Imperial, 1999). The IAD framework of Elinor Ostrom is her answer to the “tragedy of the commons” (Hardin, 1968) and aims to identify the factors that make collective action successful.

To understand PA and tourism partnerships’ success and especially to identify which theories were more relevant in explaining partnerships’ outcome, Laing et al. (2009) tested empirically the relevance in this context of different theories. They distributed a 72-item questionnaire which was developed according to the eight theoretical perspectives. From one hundred of completed questionnaires, in which the respondents were asked to indicate the importance of the mentioned factors, the researchers concluded that only some of those theories are specifically relevant for studying partnerships for ST in PAs. The results indicated as more relevant for explaining success in such a context. IAD, social capital, environmental dispute resolution and network theories.

The dependent variables identified by the STCRC study are listed on the left side of Figure 5. On the right side one can see the visual representation of the success of the partnership as outlined in section 2.3.1.

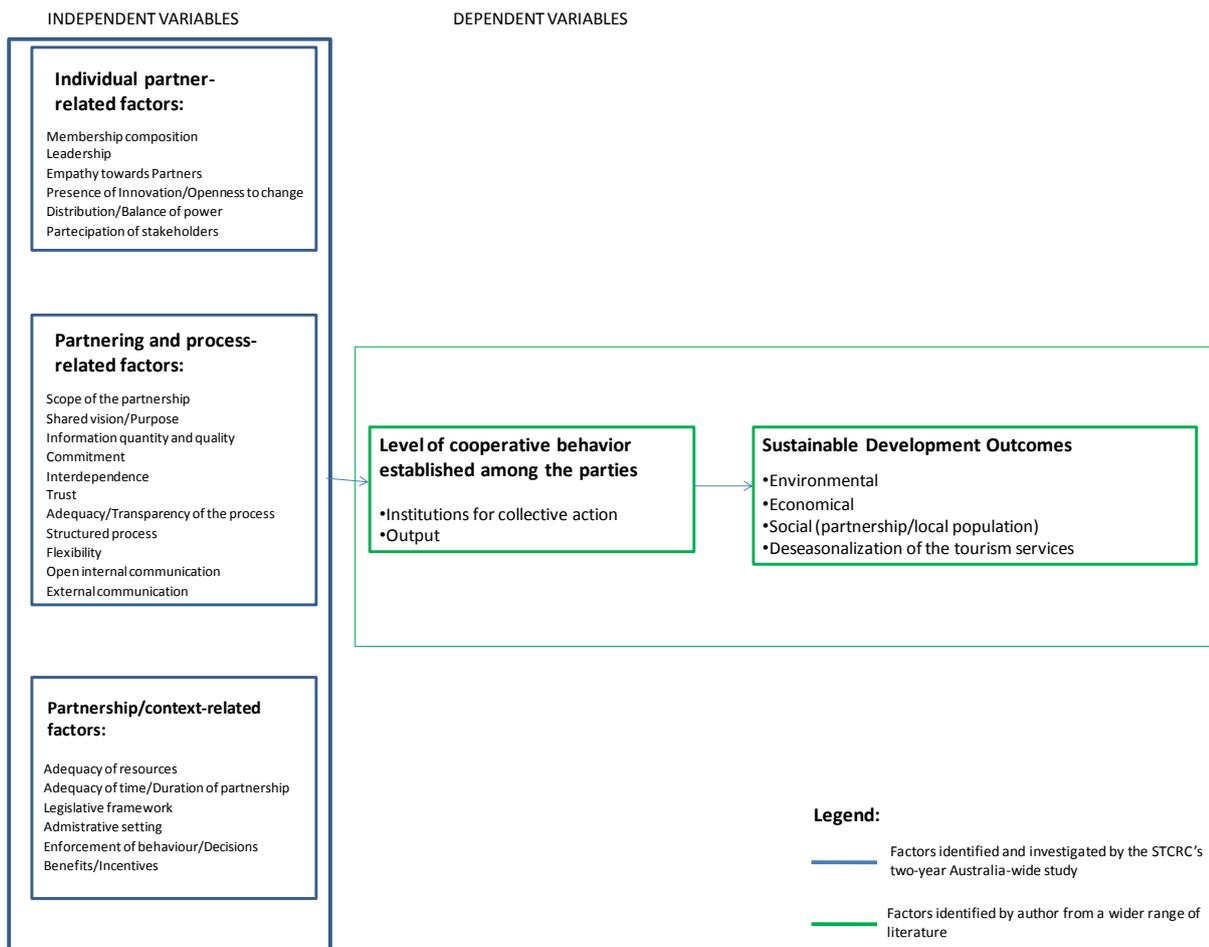


Figure 5: Analytical framework

Laing et al. (2008a; 2008b) choose to group the independent variables in three clusters following the distinction made by Bingham (1986). First, partner-related factors focus on the elements characterizing the (potential) partners themselves and include leadership, empathy, innovation, power, participation and whether all the relevant parties have been involved. Second, process-related factors focus on the way the partnership is managed or operated. This cluster includes elements such as trust, interdependence, open communication and structured process. Third, the context-related factors relate to the framework and background of the partnership including legislative and policy settings, adequacy of resources, enforcement of agreements and benefits to partners.

Table 1 summarizes the factors identified the STCRC's study. For each variable, it is specified sources following Laing et al. (2009). Moreover, each factor is represented through at least a hypothesis that depicts the presumed relation (s) among the dependent variable and success of the partnership as identified by the STCRC study.

Table 1: Overview of the hypotheses and sources for each independent variables identified by the STCRC study

Cluster of independent variables	Individual factor	Source	Hypothesis
Individual partner-related factors	Leadership	Laing et al. (2008); Leach and Pelkey (2001); Poncelet (2004).	A skilled coordinator and/or facilitator is a crucial step for the success of a partnership. Nevertheless, partnerships deeply dependent on particular individuals are subjected to failure when such leaders leave the partnership. Moreover, a third-party facilitator might help stakeholders to achieve successful partnership outcome. This might help encourage empathy, manage conflict and innovation.
	Empathy towards Partners	Imperial, 2005; Steffen, 2004; Poncelet, 2004.	The success of a partnership is increased if partners feel empathy among each other. This involves respecting differences (in legal, social, economic and environmental constraints) between partners, not necessarily sharing the same values. This is a crucial step to achieve a common language and can provide a fertile field where innovation can rise.
	Presence of Innovation/Openness to change	Imperial, 2005; Gray, 1996; Brinkerhoff, 2002b.	A responsive approach to changing condition and openness to adaption is crucial for the success of a partnership. Creative solutions are needed in order to exceed the limited perspectives of each stakeholders. <i>Per se</i> even the only willingness to change might be a crucial factor for the success of the partnership because it involves flexibility, responsiveness to unknown circumstances.
	Distribution/Balance of power	Roberts and Simpson, 1999; Brinkerhoff, 2002b; De Araujo and Bramwell, 2002.	A balance of power among stakeholders is an important factor affecting the success of tourism partnerships because it affects the equality and the quality of the decision-making. Another factor very important for success of partnership is the acceptance (and the perceived legitimacy) of powerful actors in sustainable tourism context which might positively affect the provision of incentives.
	Partecipation of stakeholders	Mohr and Spekman, 1994; Bramwell and Lane, 2000.	Partecipation of stakeholders refers to the level of joint engagement of the individual stakeholders. The more volunteer and active the participation in planning and goal setting, the more successful the final outcome is.
	Membership composition	Brinkerhoff, 2002b; Buckley and Sommer, 2001.	Membership composition is an important factor infuencing partnership's outcome in two senses. First, it is important that there is compatibility between the partners and second, there is need to adopt a open and extensive community involvement.

Partnering and process-related factors	Scope of the partnership	Leach and Pelkey, 2001	An appropriate geographic scope is necessary to guarantee the success of the partnership. By appropriate it is meant a partnership that is broad enough to encompass relevant ecological and political factors but not so large that makes the partnership unwieldy.
	Shared vision/Purpose	Dowling et al., 2004; Imperial, 2005.	The extent to which purposes and mission are shared by the parties affects the success of the partnership.
	Information quantity and quality	Mohr and Spekman, 1994; Leach and Pelkey, 2001.	The quality (in terms of relevance and content) of information shared by all the parties and its quantity (in terms of methods and frequency) are really important factors in determining positively the success of a partnership.
	Commitment	Mohr and Spekman, 1994; Bramwell and Lane, 2000.	The commitment shown by the partnership's parties is really important factor for its success.
	Interdependence	Mohr and Spekman, 1994; Bramwell and Lane, 2000.	Given the potential synergies involved, interdependence might be a success factor for the partnership. Interdependence is defined as "interaction based on the distribution of resources between various actors, the goals they pursue and their perceptions of their resource dependencies".
	Trust	Mohr and Spekman, 1994; Bramwell and Lane, 2000; Roberts and Simpson, 1999.	Trust and respect between parties are important elements to ensure the success of a partnership. Trust is defined as "the belief that a party's word is reliable and that a party will fulfill its obligation in an exchange". Trust seems to be pivotal in the enforcement of the decisions and commitment. Nevertheless, when trust is based specifically on individuals, trust might erode when a individual leaves the partnership. Thus, some institutionalizing agreements might help overcome this problem.
	Adequacy/Transparency of the process	Poncelet, 2004; Mohr and Spekman, 1994; Steffen, 2004.	The adequacy of the process might influence positively the efficacy of the process and thus the success of the partnership. By adequacy it is meant a trade-off among structure and formalization for one hand and flexibility and transparency on the other hand.
	Structured process	Leach and Pelkey, 2001	Clear, defined and structured processes, which provide certainty and structure to decision-making are really important for the success of a partnership.
	Flexibility	Leach and Pelkey, 2002; Imperial, 2005.	A certain degree of flexibility might increase the ability of the partnership to adapt to changing conditions, thus enhancing the possibilities of success of the partnership.

Partnering and process-related factors	Dealing with conflict	Gray, 1996; Mohr and Spekman, 1994; Himmelman, 1996.	Although it seems the way in which parties resolve conflict influences partnership's success, it seems that an important factor enhancing partnerships success is solving the roots of the conflict and not smoothing it over or avoiding it. Moreover, although a third-party facilitator might help in managing conflicts in the initial phases, "ongoing use of arbitrators might indicate inherent problems" in the partnership.
	Open internal communication	Mohr and Spekman, 1994; Leach and Pelkey, 2001.	An open, inclusive, effective and shared communication process is an essential factor in order to enhance cooperation among parties and hence, partnership's success.
	External communication	Lundblad, 2003; Braun, 2004.	The relation among the partnership and other external actors seems to be a pivotal factor in determining the capacity of exchanging ideas which enhance partnership's flexibility and diffusing innovation also outside the partnership's environment.

Partnership/context-related factors	Adequacy of resources	Imperial, 2005; Leach and Pelkey, 2001; Cropper, 1996.	Resources might refer to staff levels and expertise ,equipment and funding. Its adequacy is deemed as beeing essential for a successful partnership. The pooling of resources might be an indicator collective ability to solve problems.
	Adequacy of time/Duration of partnership	Leach and Pelkey, 2001; Imperial, 2005.	Adequate time is an important precondition for a successful partnership since it enhances the benefits and allows the setting of long-term strategy.
	Legislative framework	Hall, 1999; Buckley and Sommer, 2001.	The legislative framework refers to the vertical and horizontal integration of the partnership's operational arrangements. A coherent and harmonised legislative framework is an important condition to enhance partnership's success because it might offer important incentives to the actors to cooperate within the scope of the partnership.
	Administrative setting (operational arrangements)	Buckley and Sommer, 2001.	The administrative setting refers to elements such as land tenure, usage of land, use of resources, use of infrastructures, financial and management arrangements adopted by the partnership. Certain settings help to facilitate partnership's success more than others.
	Enforcement of behaviour/decisions/agreements	Leach and Pelkey, 2001; Imperial, 2005.	Enforcement can entail a wide range of mechanisms helping to favour cooperative behaviour and living up to commitments, thus facilitating effective implementation of partnership activities. Although the literature is not unanimous whether formal legal enforcement is better than informal procedures and peer pressure, it seems that the threat of formal or informal sanctions might be an important factor for facilitating cooperative behaviour.
	Benefits/Incentives	Imperial, 2005; Steffen, 2004; Poncelet, 2004.	If the benefits of a partnerships are shared by all the parties, collaborative endeavor is facilitated. Conversely, if one party gains all the benefits, the partnership is not likely to work effectively.

2.3.3. Glasbergen's ladder of partnership activity

Another approach seems to be particularly promising for integrating the analytical framework in a comprehensive manner. By Glasbergen partnerships are meant as arrangements that dedicate to furthering sustainable development (Glasbergen et al., 2007). In fact, his studies on partnerships focus explicitly on outcomes in terms of sustainable development; which is actually missing in most studies about collaboration.

Glasbergen (2010) proposes to evaluate partnerships' effectiveness on the basis on five different levels which encompass mainly three perspectives.

The first perspective is drawn by organization studies and focuses on partnerships as single collaborative arrangements. The attention is on the creation and the development of new collaborative practices as tools to make the process design more effective. And here effectiveness is meant in terms of the feasibility of intersectoral collaboration (Glasbergen, 2010).

The second perspective focuses on the external effects of the partnerships and uses insights from policy studies. "Partnership arrangements are seen as tools for deliberate societal change" (Glasbergen, 2010, p.2). This perspective investigates how a reform agenda develops because of improved collaboration between the different actors. Hence, the context meant as interactive structures and processes in which

the partnerships operate and implement their activities in terms of sustainability outcomes is the focus of this perspective (Brinkerhoff, 2002; Börzel and Risse, 2005).

The third perspective assumes a broader focus and entails the effectiveness as societal governance system by using literature and analytical lens from political science. According to Ruggie (2004) and Biermann and Pattberg (2008) it is important to evaluate partnerships in terms of their consequences on the configuration of societal decision-making structures. According to Glasbergen (2010, p. 3) “one of the main questions here is whether they represent a more fundamental shift in the pattern of governance in liberal–democratic societies, and whether they are able to institutionalize a new sense of collective responsibility for sustainable development”.

Under this three perspective-based framework, Glasbergen (2010, p. 4) proposes a ladder of partnership’s activities outlined in five levels and set in a temporal continuum.

“The first level is exploratory. This level refers to the attitudinal preconditions to start a partnering process and the underlying mechanism of building trust. The second level refers to the formation of the partnership as a new arrangement. The central mechanism is specified as exploring collaborative advantage. This level refers to businesslike characteristics of partnering. The third level, constituting a rule system, specifies the governance regimes that partnerships develop. Here we look at the interim effects in terms of outputs. The fourth level refers to implementation of the rule system. Gaining legitimacy in the relevant area of the partnership is the main mechanism. The last activity, changing the political order, may be a deliberate outcome, but also the unintended societal consequence of the partnering process. Here the discussion focuses on the mechanism of social power, understood as the potential to create private and public–private regulations that positively influence the outcome of societal processes relevant for the solution of public issues.”

The following table summarizes the levels of the ladder of partnership’s activities of Glasbergen (2007, 2010).

Table 2: Overview of Glasbergen's ladder of partnership activities

Glasbergen levels		Description
1	Building trust	Presence of mutual trust and respect
2	Creating collaborative arrangements	1. Each party recognizes that their special interests are connected and in line with the common goal - "For each partner the opportunities should outweigh the risks." 2. Fairness - "a sense of balance in the distribution of benefits and costs among the partners"
3	Constituting a rule system	1. Definition of common problems 2. Establishment of (internal and external) rules through which procedural arrangements are outlined and rules about decision-making, monitoring and enforcement
4	Changing the market	The change in the specific "niche" market spills over to the broader tourism market
5	Changing the political system	Partnerships as pivotal contributors to governability

Glasbergen's work has not focused yet on developing a systematic theoretical model that can explain effectiveness for each proposed level. He refers, as in the case of the first two levels, to other literature that already have theoretical framework to explain it (for example in our case, the framework of Laing et al., 2008b). Nevertheless, Glasbergen's studies add a valuable contribution to this study because, thanks to their temporal perspective, they propose a comprehensive framework, from which it is possible to analyze the ongoing and potential effectiveness beyond the internal activities of the partnership. Hence, regarded this thesis, the successful case, where a partnership is already formalized, entails surely the first three levels proposed by Glasbergen. The next levels might help analyze possible future spill-over scenarios of the PNAB's success to the other cases in province for the final recommendations of the thesis.

Moreover, the ladder is also analytically helpful for providing recommendations for future scenarios in the Trentino province. For example, by considering the first level, this means an attempt to evaluate the extent to which there is the ground to develop such a level of trust among the parties that a formalized collaborative arrangement can be signed in the near future. Yet, Considering the potential spill-over of such policy arrangements in Trentino, it is possible to forecast, by taking as reference the last two levels, the external consequences of these projects as model for other Italian alpine destinations and mountain regions in Europe and outside.

To sum up, Glasbergen's approach is very useful to analyze partnerships and potential partnerships from a temporal perspective. This allows the researcher to collocate temporally different partnerships and also allows the researcher to reflect on other potential effects that a partnership might have outside its organizational, geographical and issue borders. All this considered, Glasbergen, besides its temporal ladder of partnerships activities does not offer supplementary variables to understand effectiveness of collaborative arrangements.

3. Research objective and research methods

This chapter aims at presenting the methodological choices undertaken by the present research in a transparent and clear manner. First, the objectives of the research are outlined. Second, the research framework is explained in order to understand the subsequent steps necessary to achieve the research objectives. Third, the sub-questions guiding the research process are presented. Fourth, the research strategy is outlined and justified by presenting the selection of unit and case. Lastly, the methods of data measurements are described by attempting an operationalization of the variables and by proposing the data collection methods.

3.1. Research objectives

The final or external - as Verschuren and Dooreward (2010) call it - objective of this research is to give practical-oriented recommendations to the Autonomous Province of Trento about how to design a successful strategy of implementation of ST in PAs based on collaborative arrangements in a potential network of PAs of the Autonomous Province of Trento. This is done by integrating different theories in an explanatory framework by moving forward from the framework developed by the STCRC's study. Once the theoretical framework is refined, this is applied to a successful case-study in order to adjust it according to practice. Afterwards the adjusted framework is then applied to the current situation of the Trentino's ecological network. This is needed to yield *predictive knowledge* about how future strategy might be designed. Lastly, the results of the analysis are elaborated in such a way to produce *prescriptive knowledge* in form of recommendations.

Following Verschuren and Dooreward (2010), the research question constitutes then the internal aim of the research, which is needed to be answered in order to fulfill its research objective. Hence, the main research question is posed as follows:

What are the factors that might facilitate and hinder an effective collaboration among the different stakeholders involved in the management of sustainable tourism in the network of protected areas of the mountain territory of Trentino, Italy?

3.2. Research framework

Following Verschuren and Dooreward (2010, p.65) the research framework is the “schematic representation of the research objective and includes the appropriate steps that need to be taken in order to achieve it”. The research framework of this project can be described and represented (Figure 6) as follows.

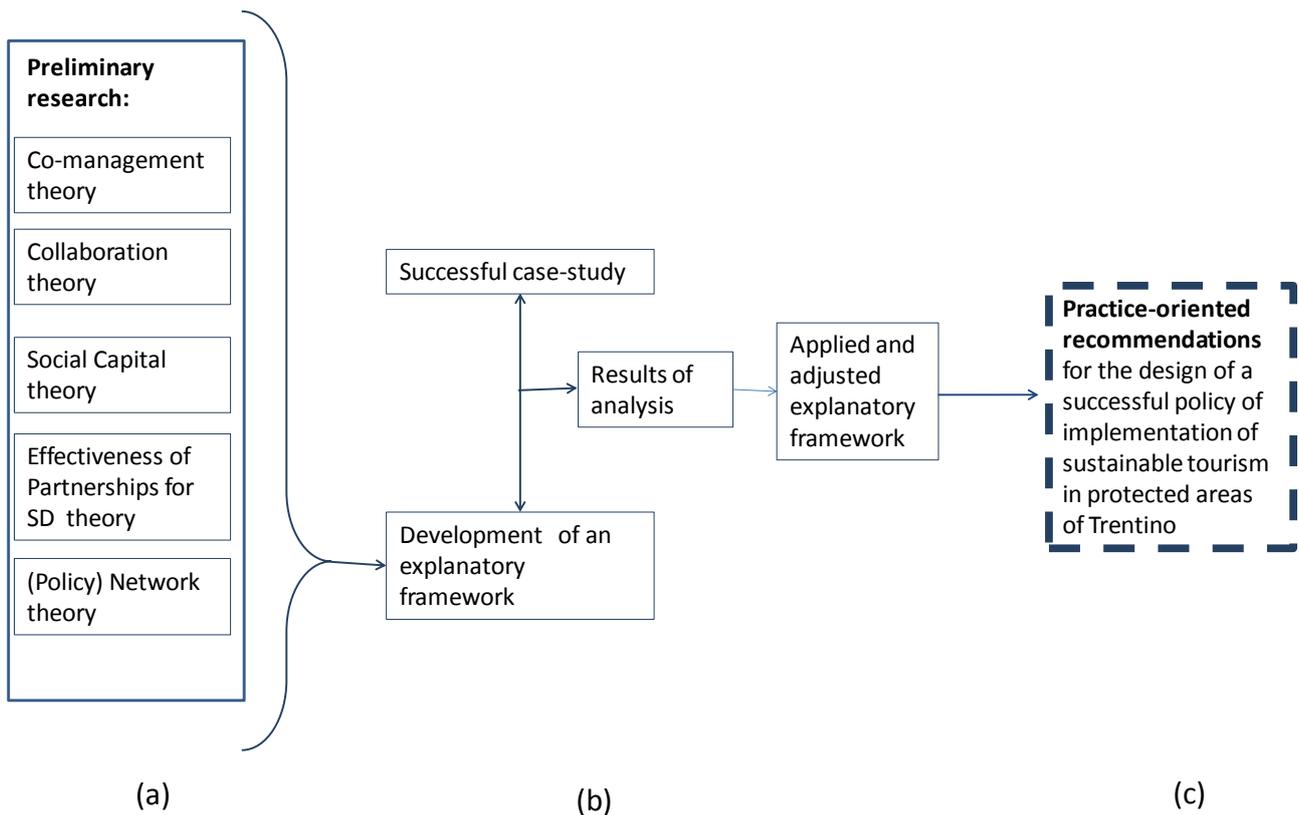


Figure 6: Visual representation of the research framework of the thesis

Following the research framework (Figure 6), the first step of the research (a) concerns the review of some theories (which are: co-management and collaboration theories, social capital theory, partnerships for sustainable development theories and policy network theory) which are relevant for the study of collaborative arrangements. (b) Once developed, the framework is applied to a successful case-study where it is possible to conclude to what extent the theoretical framework matches empirical evidence and in which parts adjustments are needed. Eventually, the adjusted and improved place-specific framework is proposed. (d) The identification of potential place-specific enhancing and/or hindering factors constitutes the basis to formulate a set of recommendations for applying in other Trentino’s PAs initiatives that are similar to the PNAB case.

3.3. Sub-questions

Following Verschuren and Dooreward (2010), it is necessary to develop a set of research questions formulated in such a way that they fulfill the criteria of efficiency and steering function. I follow one of the methodologies proposed by them by which central questions are developed in order to reflect the research framework (Figure 6). For each part of the research framework, a central research question is developed. Each central question is followed by sub-questions. For each, the type of knowledge required is indicated. In fact, the research eventually aims to yield *descriptive*, *evaluative*, *predictive* and *prescriptive* knowledge on the design and implementation of effective interactive governance for the management of ST in a network of PAs in the specific context of Trentino.

- a) What factors are relevant to be included coherently in a consistent and complete framework able to explain a successful outcome in the management of ST in PAs based on collaborative arrangements? (*descriptive, explanatory and evaluative knowledge*)
- I. What factors can be used to analyze success in the management of ST in PAs based on collaborative arrangements?
 - II. What factors can be derived from co-management literature to explain the success of management of ST in PAs based on collaborative arrangement?
 - III. What factors can be derived from collaboration literature to explain the success of management of ST in PAs based on collaborative arrangement?
 - IV. What factors can be derived from social capital literature to explain the success of management of ST in PAs based on collaborative arrangement?
 - V. What factors can be derived from the literature on policy networks to explain the success of management of ST in PAs based on collaborative arrangement?
 - VI. What factors can be derived from the literature on success of partnerships for sustainable development to explain the success of management of ST in PAs based on collaborative arrangement?
- b) How can the theoretically defined framework be adjusted in sight of the results of its application to a successful case-study? (*descriptive, explanatory and evaluative knowledge*)
- I. What factors facilitated the success of the successful case-study?
 - II. What factors hindered the success of the successful case-study?
 - III. What factors are more relevant to be considered when coping with the Trentino's context?
 - IV. What are the relevant insights drawn from the results of the successful case-study to be considered when adjusting the theoretically defined framework?
- c) What kind of recommendations can be given to the Autonomous Province of Trento for the design of a strategy of collaboration and participation for the implementation of ST in the network of PAs of the province? (*evaluative, descriptive, prescriptive knowledge*)
- I. What kinds of PAs compound the Trentino ecological network?
 - II. When considering the provincial level, what are the relevant elements that might affect outcome at the partnership level?
 - III. When considering the local level, what are the relevant elements that might affect outcome of the partnership?

3.4. Research strategy

Following Gerring (2004), the research strategy is set as an explorative within-unit in-depth case-study. By unit is meant the research area (Autonomous Province of Trento) and by case is meant the PA. The case-study research strategy has been chosen because of the nature of the research objective which requires a focus on depth rather than breadth and prefers internal rather than external validity. For the same reasons, the data are going to be collected and analyzed qualitatively. This choice is also fruit of my personal constructivist

position to research. In fact, I see the researcher as completely embedded in the reality that one is studying and research as that process that attempts at identifying what meanings individuals assign to experience (Berg, 1989). This implies the need of understanding the research object as a construct that needs to be approached holistically and in depth so that the researcher is ready to catch any insight or issue that was not forecasted. However, this approach requires and demands intensive data generation, transparent and informative choices and careful analyses.

The design of an adequate research strategy is a critical point in order to make the results valid and reliable and this requires a careful analysis of the potential trade-offs that different methods offer. Hence, the following section sheds lights on the methodological choices and challenges that this research undertakes. For the sake of clarity, I present these issues by referring to the steps indicated in the research framework (Figure 6). I especially focus on the selection of the cases and unit. Afterwards, the methods of data collection are discussed and the operationalization of the variables is presented. Lastly, the methodology undertaken in analyzing the data is outlined.

3.4.1. Selection of the unit and cases

3.4.1.1. The unit: The Autonomous Province of Trento

The Autonomous Province of Trento (as it is named in Italian Constitution), or Trentino (as it is frequently used) is an Alpine province that lays in the North-Eastern part of Italy. Trentino's territory is made up entirely of mountains (75% is above the 1000 m altitude). In 2012 almost the 30% of its territory was safeguarded by some type of natural protection (PAT, 2012). The Trentino ecological network includes one big national park, two provincial parks and 293 of other kind of PAs which encompass the 80% of the municipalities of the entire province (Bazzanella and Grigolli, 2012). Figure 7 represents the map of the PAs of Trentino. This great natural capital has been a pivotal element in transforming the marginalized community and territory of Trentino in one of wealthiest Italian provinces. In fact, its economy is supported by tourism activities that have been growing since the 1970s. Nowadays, Trentino's tourism sector assumes significant importance. To give an idea of the weight of tourism on the provincial economy, it might be interesting to know that in 2011 with a population of 531 thousand inhabitants, Trentino provided 479 thousand bed places for non-residents reaching in the same year almost five million arrivals (Trentino Sviluppo, 2013). Considering these factors, it is evident how Trentino has been experiencing the tension between an important natural landscape and the need for the economic development that tourism brings along. Due to political and economical contingencies, the Province now wants to design a provincial strategy to approach and implement ST in PAs using participatory and collaborative arrangements. It is important to show that in spite of several MAEs developed in the last decades, national implementation has shown its weaknesses and many authors supports that a solution "lies in shifting nature conservation policy down to local constituencies, thereby creating legitimacy for action and ownership of the problem and promoting learning among key stakeholders" (Eckerberg, 2013, p. 56). This argument is based on the assumption that leaving the choice to sub-national authorities of what and why should be preserved, and "stimulating broader community participation, could overcome some of the inertia in current European biodiversity policy" (Eckerberg, 2013, p. 56). For this reason the choice of Trentino seems appropriate. It represents a case from one EU member state that might inspire others to sustainably address biodiversity protection as well as development needs.

Moreover, it is important to highlight an institutional characteristic that makes the territory particularly interesting. In fact, in Trentino, which has a high degree of political autonomy according to the Italian

Constitution, exists an intermediate level of government that can be understood as a kind of district and usually corresponds to the borders of the valleys morphologically compounding Trentino. These districts were established in 1964 by the name of *comprensori* and each was compounded by a council of representatives of the interested municipalities. This system was reformed in 2006 with provincial law n. 3/2006 and divides the provincial territory in 16 Valley Communities (*Comunità di Valle*). This institution formally replaced the *comprensori* only in 2010 by establishing democratic elections to choose the representatives in the council. Although the role and the competences of the institution have been strongly criticized and put through a referendum of abolition, Valley Communities undertake important tasks concerning social services and, in relevance with the object of the thesis, local socio-economical development planning, waste and water management, mobility and land use planning.

All this coupled with the homogeneity of its Alpine territory and its high degree of institutional autonomy, makes Trentino a interesting area to be investigated in the research about mountain regional development and transition towards ST starting from PAs in Europe but also for other mountain regions worldwide.

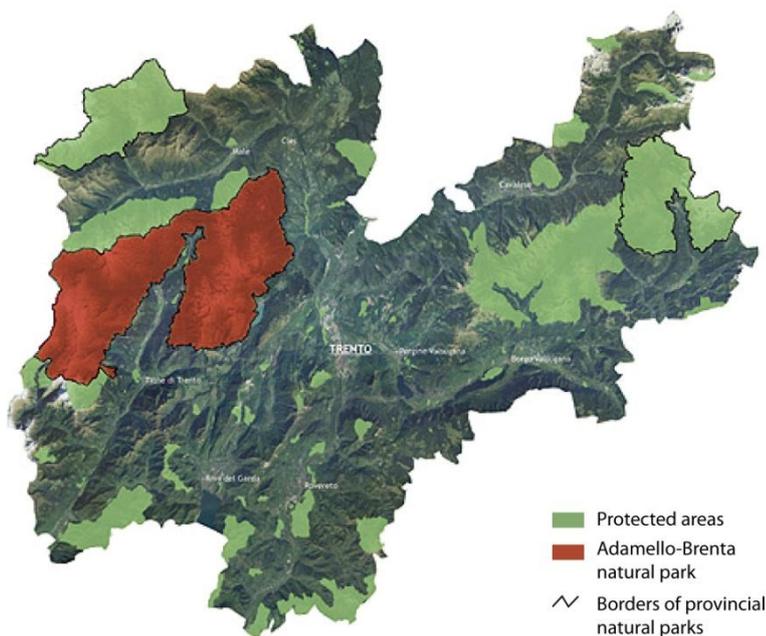


Figure 7: Protected areas in Trentino (adapted from PAT, 2012)

3.4.1.2. The successful case: The Natural Park Adamello-Brenta

To fulfill the second step of the research framework (Figure 6), that is applying the theoretically developed framework to a successful case-study, only one case is selected. This is done to better understand how the framework can be adjusted to Trentino's place-specific context. The selection of a single case-study refers to the method proposed by Gerring (2007) as *pathway case* (in the framework called successful case); it "serves not to confirm or disconfirm a causal hypothesis (because that hypothesis is already well established) but rather to clarify a hypothesis" (Gerring, 2007, p. 239). In fact, this is the purpose of this step of the research: adjusting the complex framework (which is made up of well established hypotheses) to a specific context.

All this considered, a case that has deemed successful by practitioners (PAT, 2012a) has been identified, the case of Adamello-Brenta Natural Park (PNAB). With its 620.517 km² it is the largest PA of Trentino. It encompasses 80 lakes and one of the largest glaciers in Europe (the Adamello glacier), it protects one of the richest fauna of the Alps (PNAB, 2012; 2007), it encompasses also a portion of Dolomites (Unesco World

Natural Heritage) and surrounds the most famous Trentino's ski resort and destination, Madonna di Campiglio. Besides its exceptional natural habitats and important species, the Adamello-Brenta National Park is an important case to study for our research because in 2004 the PA's authority experienced a shift in its governance mode according to the process-based certification "European Charter for Sustainable Tourism" for protected areas issued by Europarc; which was verified and revalidated in 2011. This certification is based on the assumption that an effective governance of ST for protected areas can be achieved only through the joint efforts of all the stakeholders of the PA. The long life span of this kind of management (almost a decade) allows to understand the evolution of the relationships among the actors and how cooperative behavior has emerged and changed throughout the years. The PNAB, involving in its territory 39 municipalities, four Valley Communities, five different Tourism Board Organizations (TBOs), various levels of tourism and economical development, is very representative of the Trentino's diversity. Yet, *per se* serves as complex case from which it is possible to yield promising and valuable insights to approach and meaningfully conclude the present research.

3.5. Data measurements

Measuring is a pivotal step of an empirical research and on it depend the reliability and the validity of the results. In fact, according to Rossi et al., (2004) reliability refers to "the extent to which the measure produces the same results when used repeatedly to measure the same thing" (p. 218), while validity concerns "the extent to which it measures what it is intended to measure" (p. 220). Both requirements call for a transparent presentation of the operationalization of the variables and of the collection methods undertaken by the research. Chapter 3.5.1 and 3.5.2 face respectively these two issues.

3.5.1. Operationalization of the variables

The following tables 1 and 2 present an attempt of operationalization for each factor of the STCRC's study for both dependent and independent clusters of variables.

Table 3: Operationalization of the dependent variables

Sustainable development outcome	Environmental	Mburu and Birner, 2007; Mohr and Spekman, 1994	<p>Satisfaction among stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Improved biodiversity conservation in the protected area -Establishment of monitoring system -Reduced use of energy associated with protected area tourism -Reduced production of waste by visitors -Reduced production of waste by tourism enterprises
	Economical	Mohr and Spekman, 1994; De Lacy et al., 2002; Bramwell and Lane, 2000.	<p>Satisfaction among stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Funding for conservation programmes -Financial revenues for the local businesses -Improved competitiveness of the protected area as a tourist destination
	Social	Mohr and Spekman, 1995; De Lacy et al., 2002-, Bramwell and Lane, 2000.	<p>Satisfaction among stakeholders:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Local development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Spread awareness -Improved understanding of the values of protected areas by partners -Creation of indirect benefits for the local community such as creation of local jobs -Greater respect for local culture, heritage and/or traditions 2. Partnership level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Building of social and organizational capacity, innovative capacity
	Deseasonalization	Zulberti, 2012	<p>Satisfaction among the stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Level to which deseasonalization policies are pursued

Table 4: Operationalization of the independent variables

Cluster of independent variables	Individual factor	Source	Indicator	Data collection method
Individual partner-related factors	Membership composition	Brinkerhoff, 2002b; Buckley and Sommer, 2001.	Presence of all the parties affected by the partnership Presence of non-governmental organizations	Policy documents In-depth interviews Stakeholder analysis
	Leadership	Laing et al. (2008); Leach and Pelkey (2001); Poncelet (2004).	Presence of a person/organization that is entitled to coordinate and serves as reference, coordinator and facilitator for the partnership's parties	Semi-structured interviews In-depth interviews
	Empathy towards Partners	Imperial, 2005; Steffen, 2004; Poncelet, 2004.	Encourage/respect diversity of values and beliefs Recognition of differing legal, social, economic and environmental constraints of the parties	Semi-structured interviews In-depth interviews Policy documents
	Presence of Innovation/Openness to change	Imperial, 2005; Gray, 1996; Brinkerhoff, 2002b.	Openness to new ideas/willingness to adapt Support change agents/engage in new ideas	Semi-structured interviews In-depth interviews Policy documents
	Distribution/Balance of power	Roberts and Simpson, 1999; Brinkerhoff, 2002b; De Araujo and Bramwell, 2002.	Balance of power among stakeholders Perceived legitimacy of power institutions.	Semi-structured interviews In-depth interviews Policy documents
	Participation of stakeholders	Mohr and Spekman, 1994; Bramwell and Lane, 2000.	Voluntary participation Active participation	Semi-structured interviews In-depth interviews Policy documents

Partnering and process-related factors	Scope of the partnership	Leach and Pelkey, 2001	Scope of the activities (geographical)
	Shared vision/Purpose	Dowling et al., 2004; Imperial, 2005.	Shared vision/purpose Existence of a vision statement signed by all the parties
	Information quantity and quality	Mohr and Spekman, 1994; Leach and Pelkey, 2001.	Adequate scientific and technical information Information sharing/exchange Equal access to information
	Commitment	Mohr and Spekman, 1994; Bramwell and Lane, 2000.	Cooperative behaviour of the parties Lived up to commitments Intensity of relations (regularity of the meetings)
	Interdependence	Mohr and Spekman, 1994; Bramwell and Lane, 2000.	Recognition of a high degree of interdependence in planning and managing sustainable tourism the protected area
	Trust	Mohr and Spekman, 1994; Bramwell and Lane, 2000; Roberts and Simpson, 1999.	Trust, sincerity and respect Perception that decisions will be implemented
	Adequacy/Transparency of the process	Poncelet, 2004; Mohr and Spekman, 1994; Steffen, 2004.	Expert preparation Familiarity with political processes Awareness of critical process issues and adequate addressing of these issues Transparent planning/negotiation process
	Structured process	Leach and Pelkey, 2001	Well-defined decision-making rules, goals and objectives Regular scheduled meeting
	Flexibility	Leach and Pelkey, 2002; Imperial, 2005.	Flexibility in negotiation conditions Flexibility in planning Informality in relations
	Dealing with conflict	Gray, 1996; Mohr and Spekman, 1994; Himmelman, 1996.	Low or medium level of conflict Conflict resolution training
	Open internal communication	Mohr and Spekman, 1994; Leach and Pelkey, 2001.	Effective/ quality communication, data sharing Regular, clear and open communication strategies
	External communication	Lundblad, 2003; Braun, 2004.	Adequate communication to the wider public of the achievements and work of the partnership

Partnership/context-related factors	Adequacy of resources	Imperial, 2005; Leach and Pelkey, 2001; Cropper, 1996.	Adequate resources(from partnership's revenues/ from government) Efficient allocation of resources Equitable access to resources
	Adequacy of time/Duration of partnership	Leach and Pelkey, 2001; Imperial, 2005.	Adequate time
	Legislative framework	Hall, 1999; Buckley and Sommer, 2001.	Presence of legal arrangements covering liability and insurance requirements of all parties Political framework enables the partnership to establish Legal arrangements exist to implement the decision-making
	Administrative setting (operational arrangements)	Buckley and Sommer, 2001.	Operational rules are developed in such a way to stimulate tourism but at the same time to protect the natural environment
	Enforcement of behaviour/decisions/agreements	Leach and Pelkey, 2001; Imperial, 2005.	Formal/informal enforcement procedures Responsible and accountable actions
	Benefits/Incentives	Imperial, 2005; Steffen, 2004; Poncelet, 2004.	Recognition of mutual benefit to be derived and that all parties will benefit from the partnership; All the parties feel a sense of balance in the distribution of benefits and costs among the partners

3.5.2. Data collection methods

For what concerns the first part of the research framework (see step *a* in Figure 6), an extensive literature review constitutes the method to develop a comprehensive framework. Eventually, my research uses as crucial starting point the Australian STCRC's framework since it represents the most up-to-date and consistent research on the factors that enhance or hinder the success in ST management in PAs. Nevertheless, insights from Glasbergen's (2007; 2010) theories on success of partnerships for sustainable development seem promising for integrating the framework in a comprehensive manner. In fact, his studies on partnerships focus explicitly on outcomes in terms of sustainable development; which is actually missing in most studies about collaboration.

The step *b*, which involves the application of the explanatory framework on the successful (or *pathway* case), the data are collected through a combination of semi-structured and in-depth interviews to key representatives of the stakeholder groups. Representatives from the PA's management body, from local business, from local community and from the governmental bodies are contacted. The data are collected through semi-structured interviews or in-depth interviews according to the expertise of the actors. This analysis is triangulated with the analysis of relevant policy documents and secondary sources. All this helps the research in defining the issues and the elements that enhanced or hindered a successful cooperation among the stakeholders taking into account their perspective. The initial plan set eight to twelve interviews.

In spite of that, it was clear since the beginning of the fieldwork that, considering the institutional and economical diversity and the life span of the partnership, the PNAB case would have required much more attention and thus, more interviewees. Eventually almost thirty interviews are carried out, most of them in-depth. Snow-ball sampling was used to identify relevant organizations and interviewees and all interviews but one have been conducted in person (only one was handed out and filled in written form) and recorded. The duration of the interviews varies from 20 minutes to one hour and a half. The choice of combining semi-structured with in-depth interviews is imposed by the diversity of the interviewees. From the first interview, it was clear that not all the potential respondents would have been able to disentangle and analyze governance processes. Therefore, flexibility has been adopted in conducting interviews according to the respondent level of expertise in outlining and analyzing the complex governance system and also according to the time available. The basis of the semi-structured interviews (whose form is presented in Annex 1) has been developed following the guidelines of Isernia (2001) through reviews and empirical tests according to the items of the explanatory framework. Whereas in carrying out the in-depth interviews I aimed at following as guideline the outline of the semi-structured interviews. In both cases, according to the interviewee, I tried to steer the discussion on certain factors rather than other in order to develop eventually a comprehensive and complementary picture of the PNAB success.

Moreover, to better understand the provincial context in which the Trentino's PAs are embedded, additional interviews with respondents that can shed light on some provincial-specific elements were collected. Eventually, all the provincial context-related respondents were or still are also involved as stakeholders in the successful case. In addition, more than 30 policy documents (i.e. PNAB, 2005a; 2005b; 2005c; 2005d; 2005e; 2005f; 2005g; 2005h; 2005i; 2005j; 2005k; 2005l; 2006; 2007; 2009; 2011a, 2011b; 2012a; 2012b; Qualità Parco, 2006; 2010; Mazzucchi, 1994; Osti, 1993; Basile, 2009; Rigatti, 2011; Trentino Sviluppo, 2013; PAT, 2011; 2012c; 2012d; 2012e; 2013b) were collected through the internet and the interviewees and subsequently used to triangulate the data collected through interviews.

Third (step c), final recommendations are based on the data collected in the fieldwork that are relevant for this case (all the data concerning the provincial level) and on other policy documents (i.e. PAT, 2012a; 2012b; 2012e; 2013a; PAT-Brentonico, 2010; 2012; PAT-Basso Sarca, 2012a; 2012b; PAT-Cembra-Avisio, 2011a; 2011b; 2012; Ferrari, 2012). This allows the researcher to better understand what factors are likely to emerge as facilitators or obstacles to a successful cooperation among the actors. Moreover, an official meeting, a provincial conference for PAs' practitioners (Grumes, 4th April 2013, Title: Sustainable tourism in PAs) was observed to gain better understanding of the institutional framework surrounding Trentino's PAs. Especially the final discussion revealed interesting data.

To sum up, the target population of this research is made up of representatives of (potential) parties of the (potential) partnerships for management of ST in PAs. This included some representatives of the provincial level of relevant departments for the issue. It can be concluded that the main source of information are individuals; which is adequate for three main reasons. First, it provides us with a "very wide diversity of information"; it can be gathered in a relative small amount of time (Verschuren and Dooreward, 2010, p.209) and being our variable linked to behavioral change (in order to meet cooperative behavior), it is pivotal to understand the motivation of the actions of the actors in order to interpret the mechanisms of interaction and thus, its subsequent outcome (Isernia, 2001). However, to strengthen the validity of the results, these sources are triangulated with analysis of relevant policy documents and policy meeting observations.

The following Table 5 presents the actual respondents by outlining the organization and the role of the interviewees. The respondents are additionally clustered in the part of society they represent. Additional

information about the level of tourism development of the districts represented by the respondents is offered.

Lastly, it is important to ensure that research has been carried out taking into account all the ethical issues emerging when a research involves human subjects (Gregory, 2003). Every respondent is informed about the purpose of this study and has the right to choose whether he or she participates or not. Anonymity of respondents is guaranteed.

Table 5: List of respondents

Number	Sphere of society	Level	Organization	Role
1	Government	Provincial/General	Provincial Tourism Promotion Agency	Former responsible for tourism in Pas in its
2			Provincial Tourism Promotion Agency	Responsible for statistical research
3			Tourism statistical Observatory	Former Director
4			Provincial Department Protected Areas	Director
5	Civil society		Federpark- Italian protected areas organization	Responsible ECST
6	Civil society		SAT - Provincial Alpine Hiking Association	President
7	Market		ASAT - Provincial tourism sector associaton	Responsible Marketing and Innovation Department
8	Government	Protected area	PNAB's authority	Project Manager
9			PNAB's authority	Former-President (1995-2011)
10			PNAB's authority	Former Director (2002-2011)
11			PNAB's authority	Director
12			PNAB's authority	Responsible for QP project
13	Market sector		Qualità Parco (QP) Associaton	President
14	government	Mature tourism area	Molveno municipality	Coucil member responsible for tourism
15	government		Dimaro municipality	Coucil member responsible for tourism
16	government		Giustino municipality	Major
18	government		Community of Val di Sole (intermediate local government)	President
19	government		Community of Valli Giudicarie (intermediate local government)	President
20	tourism/government		APT Val di Sole - TBO (Tourism Board Organization)	Director
21	civil society		Regole Spinale Manez - <i>usi civici</i> organization	President
22	tourism/government		APT Madonna di Campiglio - Pinzolo - Rendena - TBO	Former president
23	civil society		ASUC Dimaro - <i>usi civici</i> organization	President
24	civil society		Low/emerging tourism areas	Comano library
25	civil society	Middle School Cles		Director (2010-2011)
26	government	Tassullo Municipality		Former major (2000-2010)
17	government	San Lorenzo in Banale		Major and council members
27	government	Community of Val di Non (intermediate local government)		Council member
28	tourism/government	APT Comano Terme - TBO		Director
29	tourism/government	APT Val di Non - TBO		Director
30	government	Tuenno municipality		Major
31	government	Campodenno Municipality		Council member
32	civil society	Asuc Campodenno - <i>usi civici</i> organization		President

Moreover, an expert on legislative issues over the *usi civici* situation in Trentino has been interviewed in order to clarify the legislative context that affects the behavior of actors.

3.5.3. Analysis of the data

All the content of the interviews has been transcribed in Italian and then consequently organized in an Excel matrix ordered by factor and analyzed qualitatively. Figure 8 serves as example to show how the data have been organized to facilitate the analysis.

Individual factor	Ilaria Rigatti- project manager	Ferrari_ former director PNAB	Zulberti - former President PNAB
planning phase	yes	yes	yes
operative phase	yes	yes	yes
Leadership	The success in initiating the process was due to the strong role of PA's director Ferrari. The success of the planning phase is due to the positive role played by the facilitator which belonged to an external consultancy company. The more operative phases were perceived well-coordinated by the project manager itself (in fact in the other 2 Italian parks that implemented similar approaches such role of coordinator in operational phases was missing).	n.a.	The success of the process is to be entitled to the personality of Ferrari who was enthusiastic and had plenty of energy to invest in a new approach. Another factor who helped the PNAB's authority get more legitimization refers to the fact that the members of the PNAB's executive council have been majors of the the PNAB's municipality. Also the role of coordinator of Ilaria was pivotal for maintaining trust and commitment in the actors. Important to invest in these resources.
Empathy towards Partners	Involved actors were asked to participate with a civil role not for their role of representatives of some interests. This made parties open to each other and not biased by previous conflicts. Especially for what concerns the perception toward the PNAB and its authority because thanks to this openness the PNAB has been recognized by the other territorial actors to be legitimate to involve and to be involved. The planning phase (1 year and a half) was very important to create empathy.	Not all the actors were/are understanding the differences in the roles and missions of other parts. For example, the TBOs often obstructed the new proactive role the PNAB's authority was playing. On the other hand, a positive attitude was taken by a group of entrepreneurs (in the specific from Madonna di Campiglio) who supported the mission and vision of the PA's authority. The ECST and its discussion moments were really determinating in changing positively the attitude towards the role of the PA.	The ECST and the processes it involved were really useful for determining the empathy towards the partners. In this context, the PNAB tried to open out to tourists and residents.

Figure 8: Extract from the Excel grid used to organize and analyze the data collected

Qualitative analysis of in-depth and semi-structured interviews relies usually on a large bulk of unstructured textual material posing significant challenges to the researchers (Bryman, 2012). Clear and more appropriate rules to approach the analysis do not exist, but in the work of Bryman (2012), Marsh (1988), Berg (1989) and Silverman (2011) one can find insightful guidelines.

However, the main challenge resulted to not end up overwhelmed by the amount of collected data. To overcome such risk, approaches used in grounded theory and content analysis, such as coding and iterative analysis, are followed to guide the data analysis. All the data are triangulated with each other in order ensure the account of a consistent picture. When needed, some respondents have been contacted again and new respondents have been identified to confirm a fact or to fill a knowledge gap. Eventually, following the principles of iterative analysis all the interviews and the policy documents are investigated again at least once to ensure validity of the research results. For what concerns the results however, I want to clarify some aspects.

The data collected through the interviews do not want to represent a statistical claim; sometimes one answer on a certain issue is giving more valuable information than all the other interviews together. The high number of respondents has been chosen not by virtue of its statistical representativeness but for yielding enough comprehensive knowledge to explain in-depth the dynamics determining or hindering

success and especially triggering the change towards a collaborative behavior. The data collected refer to more than 30 interviews and as many policy documents; the analysis of the PNAB success has been undertaken always keeping in mind the overall picture and thus seeking for (in-) coherence and (not-) confirmation. When some inconsistencies were found in the analysis of the data, these specific data into discussions have been further faced with other interviews in order to aim at finding an overall final evaluation. All in all as Silvermann (2011) suggests, in presenting the results I try to be *persuasive* outlining how initial theoretical claims are confronted with evidence from respondents' accounts including when necessary, negative cases and alternative interpretations.

Another consideration refers to the non- collected interviews. In fact, the approach to the potential interviewee could provide important insights about the attitude of the stakeholders towards the partnership for ST. This is especially important when the respondents were not available for the requested interview. Although this kind of information relies on informal contacts and not on recorded data as the formal interviews, it still unveils insights on the commitment of the parties.

Lastly, it is important to underline that all the knowledge that is presented in the following chapters is the fruit of the work of a qualitative analysis of the data collected. However, presenting the background information mainly descriptive knowledge is provided, whereas in outlining the success of the partnership and its factors, descriptive knowledge is coupled with evaluative knowledge.

4. The success of sustainable tourism-oriented partnerships in the Adamello-Brenta Natural Park

The present chapter aims at providing descriptive and evaluative knowledge about the PNAB case and its success. First, background information on the case is provided and afterwards the success, the dependent cluster of variable of the analytical framework (i.e. the success of the partnership arrangement) as defined in section 2.3.2. and operationalized in 3.5.1. is applied on the PNAB case and evaluated through the iterative analysis of the data collected (both interviews and policy documents).

4.1. Background information on the PNAB

The PNAB is located in the western side of Trentino and with its 620,51 km² is the widest PA in the province. The name of the PA originates from its morphological composition since it is made up of two mountain ridges completely different from one another. In the western part is there part of the granitic massive of Adamello and Presanella (the rest is in the region Lombardia), while in the eastern part one finds the whole Brenta Dolomites group, which belongs to the Dolomites, Unesco World Natural Heritage site since 2009. The former is abundant in surface, like waterfalls and lakes, fed by glaciers and among its peaks, has the highest one in the province, Presanella, with its 3558 meters above sea level. On the other side, the Brenta ridge where the water flows mostly underground excavating the rock erects with its "vertical walls, sheer cliffs and a high density of narrow, deep and long valleys" eroded by wind and water (UNESCO-World Heritage Center, 2013). Because of its significant geologic heritage, in 2008 the PNAB entered in the Unesco world network of Geoparks committing in promoting sustainable development. Overall, the PNAB is

extended over four different valleys and one altiplane, encompasses 48 lakes and the biggest Italian Alpine glacier.

Within the 620 km² the landscape is made up of forests, lakes, highland pastures, rocks and cliff but the territory of the PNAB entailing also large parts of cultural landscape which has developed over centuries and is traditionally used for hiking and mountain farming. Its territory made of forests and highland pastures has served as the basis for local communities' development based on timber extraction and farming in the highland pastures in summer based on the so-known *malga*. Malga (plural Malghe) is a community-owned highland grassland area, with pasture or meadow use, that is associated with a mountain hut, cheese production facilities, and cattle sheds, traditionally managed by a cattle herder and/or dairyman under community rules on behalf of cattle owners (Soane et al., 2012). However although excluding those seasonal settlements for instance on Alpine pastures and huts, within the formal borders of the PA there are no villages, the PA entails the territory of 39 municipalities and is embedded in a very large area that has within different economical realities. Tourism-based economy characterizes the areas of Val Rendena, Paganella upland and Val di Sole, where mass and winter tourism is the prominent form of tourism. Moreover, the Eastern territory of the PNAB is in Val di Non, an area characterized by agricultural economy based on apple monoculture; while, the service sector typifies the southern part of the PNAB also known as Valli Giudicarie Esteriori. Lastly, the Valli Giudicarie Centrali are instead interested by a significant portion of tourism-related economy that is more focused on wellness tourism thanks to the thermal waters present in the area (PNAB, 2006).

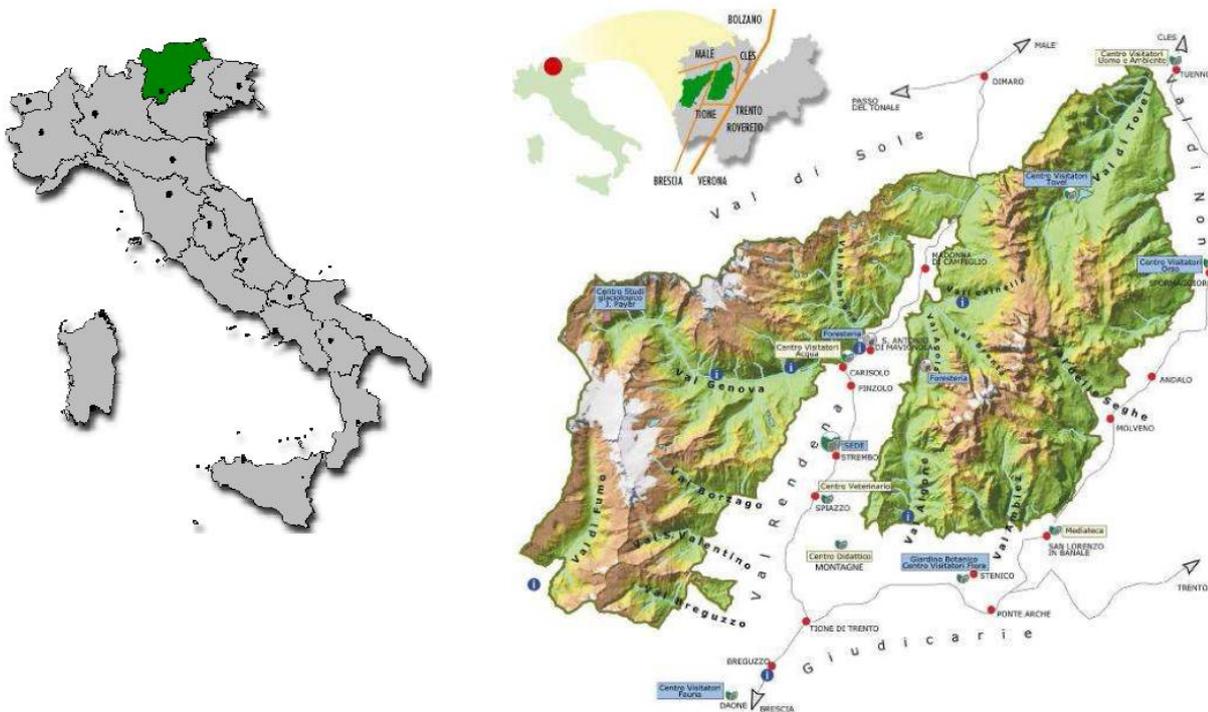


Figure 9: Geographical location of the PNAB and its geomorphic map (source: PNAB, 2006, p. 7)

Thanks to the diversity of the different geological characteristics of its mountain ridges, the PNAB extends over conifer and broad-leaved forests and meadows where live more than 1200 species of plants with flowers growing also up to 2500 meters upon the sea level. The territory of the PNAB also houses a very rich representation of Alpine fauna; the most famous is the brown bear which is also the symbol of the park. Among the ungulates live chamois, roe-bucks, deer and steinbocks (which have been reintroduced in the PA in the mid 1990s). Many rodents live in the park such the squirrel and the marmot. There is also a

significant presence of birds (82 species nest within the park) including a few exemplars of golden eagles and western capercaillies (*Tetrao urogallus*). Lastly, it is important to remember the several species of amphibians, insects, reptiles and fish living in the park and the predators such as the fox and weasel (Mazzucchi, 1994; PNAB, 2013).

The variety and richness of the biodiversity in the area was acknowledged still in the early 1900 by some naturalists. However, only in 1967 the Autonomous Province of Trento established the PNAB together with the Natural Park of Paneveggio-Pale di San Martino through the provincial urban plan (PUP). Nonetheless, only in the 1988 a law gives to the parks adequate management systems and thus, parks' executive authorities. Through this provincial law (n. 18/88), it is defined that the goals of the provincial parks refer to protection and conservation of natural resources as well as scientific research and divulgation and the promotion and social use of the territory. In 2003 the territory of the PNAB was expanded following the variation of the PUP achieving the current dimension of more than 620 km². Nowadays, the park's territory consists of 39 municipalities (38 in Trentino and one in Lombardia) and four different administrative districts. The PNAB's authority is organized in five different bodies (the Management Committee, the Executive Council, the President, the Director and the Board of Auditors of Accounts) and has a regular staff of 38 people including the Director (in summer the number more than doubles).

The Management Committee is made up of 73 members who are representatives of the municipalities or other local and provincial stakeholders. Usually it gathers two or three times a year.

The Executive Council is compounded by the President and other eleven members elected by and among the members of the Management Committee.

The President is the legal representative of the Park and is in charge for five years and is elected by the Management Committee among the municipalities' representatives.

The Director is elected by the Executive Council and its competences concern the management of the staff and the implementation of the Directive of the Executive Council.



Figure 10: Map of the municipalities within the PNAB's borders (source: Rigatti, 2011)

Since its actual establishment in the late 1980s, the PNAB encountered significant problems of local social acceptance which was particularly strong until the approval of its strategic executive document (the Park's Plan, *Piano del Parco*), the management tool through which the authority carries out its tasks. In fact, initially the PNAB was considered as an imposed institution that limited and expropriated the land to its traditional users as if they could not manage their own territory appropriately. However, when the Park's plan was definitively approved setting land use limits and rules, the tension decreased although many misunderstandings left. The zoning of the PNAB is defined through the identification of special, integral, guided and controlled reserves. The Park's Plan is a frame project of environment conservation and considering its aim and in accordance with the law n. 18/1988, it sets limits, prohibitions and duties to the land use and plans strategic actions in fields of scientific research and education.

4.2. The establishment of cooperative behavior among the stakeholders

With the idea of systematizing some temporary collaborations with few local actors and to improve its relation with the local community, in 2004 the PNAB's authority started the process to be awarded of the

EUROPARC's European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in PAs (ECST). This certification is a methodology-based framework that implies its PA-members to organize and implement ST activities in their territory using participatory and collaborative approaches. The ECST process was completely successfully and in 2006 the certification was obtained. Since the ECST is a five-year validity, the PNAB undertook a revalidation process that was successfully completely in 2011.

The ECST is a formal framework that structured the participatory approach giving guidelines of actions and objectives asking to the parties of the collaborative arrangements to develop ST in line with the following aims:

- “[...] to increase awareness of, and support for, Europe’s protected areas as a fundamental part of our heritage, which should be preserved for, and enjoyed by, current and future generations.
- To improve the sustainable development and management of tourism in protected areas, which takes account of the needs of the environment, local residents, local businesses and visitors.” (Europarc, 2012, p. 4)

To fulfill the standards of the ECST the PA is subjected to strict verification and must fulfill the principles of the Charter by preparing and implementing a strategy addressing key-issues in partnership and by monitoring and verifying the course of the actions and tourism flows. Following the guidelines of the ECST, the PNAB started a new governance mode based on partnership arrangements among its local and provincial stakeholders.

According to the analytical framework and to the operationalization of

Table 3, success of the partnership can be measured both through objective and subjective indicators. First, it can be measured through the presence of institutions for collective action, through the stipulation of an agreement and through the presence of output in terms of projects or policies. Second, success is assessed according to the perspective expressed by the stakeholders for what concerns their satisfaction with the level of cooperative behavior shown by the parties and with the output.

Considering its life span, the partnership initiated by the PA's authority can be analytically divided into two phases. These two stages can be deemed reflecting also two different **institutions for collective action** established by the partnerships: respectively, the territorial forums and the roundtables.

The first phase is about planning. First, the PNAB's authority conducted interviews with the local communities and visitors and carried out an extensive research on the socio-economic context in which the park was embedded. For the wide territory's extension it was decided to identify four areas according to the intensity of tourism. For each area an average of four territorial forums a year was organized. All local business, interested provincial agencies, local governments and civil society organizations were invited to these meetings. The territorial forum was conceived as a meeting place aimed at stimulating confrontation, discussion, learning and working together. Final objective of this institution for collective action was the shared development of a five-year strategy to be jointly implemented. In order to spur the debate and the

emergence of the stakeholders' points view, and of the planning ideas to be carried out, an external moderator was included and, in some meetings, also some theme experts (PNAB, 2006, p. 44).

In May 2006 the output of the planning phase was formalized in the 2006 Plan of Action (PNAB, 2006) which, together with 53 signed agreement protocols (of which, 38 with each municipality and 15 with the TBOs), can be regarded as **the stipulation of an agreement** among the parties. With this act, the operative phase can be deemed started. After the formalization of the collaborative arrangement, each project was managed on a roundtable where the interested parties have to join. For each project a leader was identified, which was the party most responsible for such project. However, the joint-management did not concern only decision-making but also shared funding.

Figure 11 attempts to give a visualization of the partnership process undertaken by the PNAB from a historical perspective. Although membership composition is an independent variable that is presented in the following chapter, it still seems appropriate to include it in the temporal framework of the partnership development.

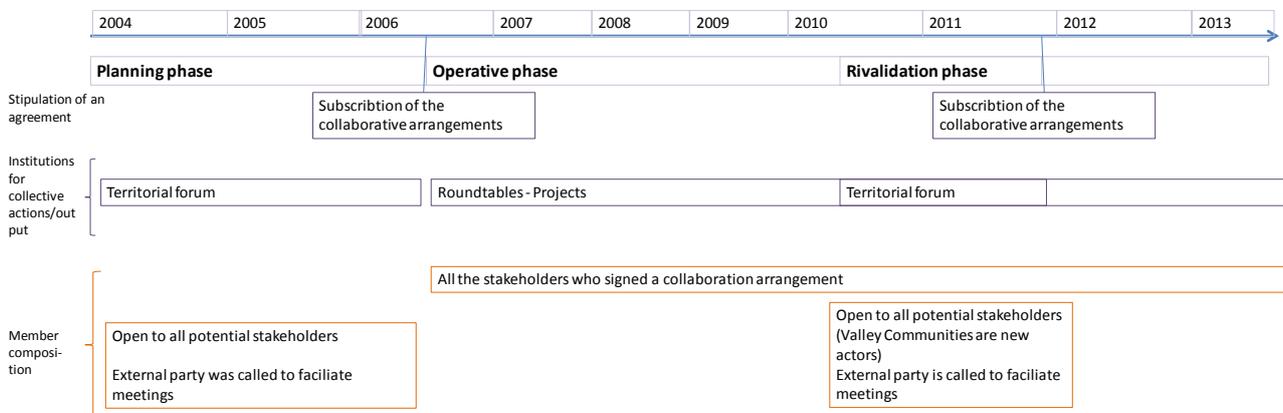


Figure 11: Temporal representation of the PNAB's partnership framework

The output of the planning phases is made up of the 65 projects that have been included in the 2006 final document of application for the ECST. In 2012 through the revalidation phase, some projects were renovated while new ones were added. Each project is managed on the level of a roundtable where the signatory parties join (the roundtable should correspond to the institution for collective actors developed by the partnership) and actually each roundtable might be considered as a partnership arrangement *per se*. All this considered the PNAB governance mode results more as partnership framework than a single partnership. Therefore, it is not possible to analyze the effectiveness of each roundtable but I rather focus on the overall cooperative behavior assumed by the main relevant stakeholder. Among the 65 projects, in the analysis of the results I focus only on some of them deemed most important by its stakeholders.

Most interviews are explicitly satisfied with the level of cooperative behavior because it established and maintained significant sustainability actions. According to the interviewees and to the policy documents the most important projects are three in terms of energy, innovation, resources and visibility. First, the market-oriented project "Qualità Parco", a territory-based environmental certification for all the interested accommodation structures of the territory of the municipalities of the PNAB. The roundtable of this project today evolved in an association where the members share experiences and invest in innovation. Second, the Brenta Ring project, a project in which local tourism board organizations (TBOs) and the PNAB's authority would have the task to design and promote a tourism product linked to two excursion routes for trekking, mountain bike and horse riding. Lastly, in terms of ST, all the mobility projects established among the PNAB's authorities and relative stakeholders are significant because they triggered one of main

problems that tourism brings alone: transportation. During the last revalidation, in 2011, a project seems to be particularly noteworthy because it entails to an area, the Val di Sole, which had had marginal relations with PNAB's authority until then. This project regards the enhancement of the natural, cultural and historical heritage of the Val Meledrio, the valley entering in the northern PNAB's area. The latter, while is deemed important, it is now about to enter in the operative phase, hence no evaluation in terms of sustainable development outcome can be offered.

Furthermore, according to the PNAB's authority an important indicator of success is that most projects proposed in the 2006 ECST plan of action were completed and that in the new Plan of Action 2012-2017 half of the projects are revalidated.

For what concerns the process, considering the established institutions for collective action and their output, it can be generally inferred that collaboration is established. Nevertheless, some interviews explicitly notice that in the PNAB's territory as well as in the province a smooth collaboration is difficult to achieve (or at least is not the same in all the areas) because some (also institutional) stakeholders are "tied to their own logics and competences making difficult the sharing of values, projects and tasks". However, they also notice that the collaborative arrangements proposed by the PNAB dealt with this issue although they have not completely solved it.

4.3. The sustainable development outcome

Once that is shown that a cooperative behavior is established (through institutions for collective action and output), success of collaborative arrangements can be measured by evaluating the satisfaction of the stakeholders themselves in terms of sustainable development outcome according to the operationalization offered by

offered by

Table 3.

It is important to state clearly that is out of the scope of the present research making a counterfactual analysis in terms of sustainable development indicators and taking into account practical considerations (the data itself show that quantitative analysis of the results is hardly possible), the evaluation of the success of the results is conducted qualitatively by assessing the satisfaction expressed by the interviewed stakeholders and by policy documents.

It is evident from the analysis of the interviews and policy documents that the time extension of the partnership (almost 10 years) is deemed by all the stakeholders as a main indicator of its success. This reasoning seems to be in contrast with the initial analytical framework which places adequacy of time as one facilitating factor for success.

For what concerns the economical, social and environmental outcome, it is important to notice that all the interviewees admit that quantifying the results of the partnership framework and its projects is difficult. First of all, it is noteworthy to make an overview about what results the parties deem as most relevant. Hence, it is really interesting to note that the tourism-related respondents found much more important to gain economical results in terms of destination competitiveness (while maintaining environmental standards). While, (most) local governments and all the *usi civici* associations, some explicitly, other implicitly, evaluated as most important the environmental protection, since this is the essential requisite to ensure to the (present and future) local population a satisfying and sustainable quality of life also based on economic prosperity (thanks to destination competitiveness).

4.3.1. Economic outcome

In the specific context of economic results, by admission of the interviews themselves, it is hard to find valid and measurable evidence of the economic benefits of the partnership. In spite of the lack of quantitative results, every interviewee has evaluated the economical benefits according to its own perspective.

For example, the PA's authority deems economic benefits as positive for two reasons. First, because according to them, enhancing tourism in PAs by tackling deseasonalization in summer increases tourism flows balancing the losses of arrivals in winter. Second, the PA's authority sees its funding increasing since through the collaborative arrangements the economic costs of many projects have been shared. Nowadays, the PNAB is mainly funded (60 %) by the Autonomous Province of Trento. However, to back up to increasing public cuts and to meet the *incentive award grant*, throughout the years thanks to tourism-oriented approach the PNAB's authority has been increasingly gaining financial autonomy by organizing projects and activities such as sustainable mobility, didactic activities and the sale of gadgets. Nevertheless, although the sharing of the funding is said to be a good result, the PA's authority is always the first funding actor and this should be improved in the future (according to PA's authority interviews).

In general all interviewed TBOs admit that economic results are not evident yet but at the same time they assert to be confident that more evident results are likely to show in the future. Nevertheless, according to two of them increased foreign arrivals might be regarded as a positive result. This is an important insight because it reveals that increased arrivals of foreign tourists might be a good indicator of success to measure success. It seems particularly significant if considered that Trentino's has been destination of mainly national arrivals which have been importantly decreased due to the national economic crisis.

Regarding the specific project of QP, according to all interested interviews (province-related, market-related and PA's authority) this product club still lacks of significant positive economical results. Nevertheless, the strict protocol allows the member-firms to save on electricity, water and waste disposal. These results are hampered by the current economic crisis but especially it is noticed unanimously that economic benefits are lacking because of the difficulties in promotion both on national and on foreign markets. This was also shown by the report n. 41 issued by the tourism department of the province (PAT, 2012d) reveals that only few tourists chose a QP hotel because of its certification. The lack of evident economic benefits is indicated as a problem for the cohesion and the maintenance of the group by both the President of the QP association and the provincial tourism business representative.

For the Dolomiti Brenta Bike (DBB) and Dolomiti Brenta Trekking (the two operative projects of the Brenta Ring) is still difficult for the involved actors to see evident economic results. In fact, no economical data can be taken as definitive since an effective method of evaluation does not exist. Few data are used for

monitoring such as website accesses, travel agency's packages sold, questionnaires to the users, bike-counters along the route. However, evident results are still lacking probably due to the fact that promotion should still be improved, which should show more clear benefits especially through foreign markets promotion.

4.3.2. Social outcome

For what concerns the social results of the partnership, all the stakeholders but one recognize that the partnership has positive social effects both for the participants themselves and for the social local development of the entire area interested by the PNAB. For what concerns the latter, the data collected confirm that social outcome is usually meant by local stakeholders (especially *usi civici* organizations and local governments) as the level of quality of life of the local residents. This means that also the creation of local job is perceived as a social rather economic benefit.

In general, according to the PNAB's authority's perspective the success of the process is shown by its spill-over. In fact, the same methodology was used in 2009 for reviewing the ten years-PA's management plan, the fundamental executive document of the PNAB's management and also for the Geopark certification's process. Also, the respondents from the Valley Communities assert that collaborative arrangements are fundamental instruments of sustainable development. Evidence of that is, according to the Comunità di Valle di Sole that this institution adopted this kind of interactive decision-making also in other sustainability-related projects in the area (even though it is added that "eventually objectives are more important than methods").

4.3.2.1. Social outcome for the participants

For what concerns the specific social outcome experienced by the participants, considering the evolution of social capital as meant by Putnam (1993), by all interviewees it is agreed that the ties among the actors (i.e. bridging social capital) have been strengthened. It is important to notice that the evolution of the social capital overlaps with indicators of the independent variable such as the development of trust. Yet, considering theory and the results of the data analysis, it seems important to still explicitly measuring it also as dependent variable.

Moreover, all the interviewed actors notice an improved understanding of the values of PAs and environmental concerns among all the parties. However, also the other way around is noticed by all the interviewed actors. This entails a better understanding on behalf of the PA's agency of the tourism sector and of different local realities. In general, it is very interesting that almost all actors conceive the participatory methodology as an ongoing learning tool which facilitates the creation of a group of people sharing similar environmental concerns and values and acknowledges in the PA a source and driver of transition toward a more sustainable future.

In addition, it is also observed (by all but one) an improvement in the organizational capacity of the parties. As a matter of example, in the specific case of the DBB, it is noticed by two TBOs out of three that it has been really positive for them to work independently from their usual supervisor (i.e. the provincial tourism promotion authority) and actively on a project.

For what concerns the project QP, the market-oriented project, according to the President of the association and to the representative of the tourism businesses involved, the network created by this project is strong and seems to be very pivotal in supporting the efforts of the members put into discussion

by the economical crisis. The social capital of the members of QP is deemed as being increased as space is given for the sharing of energies and experience.

4.3.2.2. Social outcome for the local population

In regard to the social outcome for the local population, it is observed by all respondents but one, that the participatory approaches have been really important for spreading awareness of environmental concerns and PA's role and thus, achieving PA's social acceptance. Overall, all the respondents confirm that, even at different extent, social acceptance of the PA has really improved. It is important to notice that, improved relations with partners as outlined before reflect the trend in population's mood and this is confirmed by all the interviewees. By especially one respondent of a local municipality it is noticed that these processes and projects are helpful to enhance the awareness among the population of the natural and cultural heritage of their area, hence facilitating a more general transition towards local sustainable development.

Moreover, the results of the collaborative arrangements are evident also in improved tourists' attitudes towards the environment and this is noticed both by the PNAB-related respondents and by two TBO's directors.

In addition, another important indicator of social positive results is the creation of local employment. This result is indicated as extremely important by all the actors linked to municipalities and *usi civici's* associations and they all seem satisfied with the results obtained by the partnership. Furthermore, one representative of a *usi civici* association and two interviewees from municipality assert that benefits in creation of local employment are supposed to be a very important result of deseasonalization policies. These are said to lengthen the period of jobs opportunities *in loco* for the local population.

4.3.3. Environmental outcome

The interviewees focus only marginally and implicitly on environmental results, these are not criticized but not even quantified. The expert on tourism research (from the Provincial Tourism Observatory) suggests that counterfactual but also even quantitative analysis is difficult to carry out in this context because there are multiple entrances to the PNAB which complicates measurements.

According to all the actors and especially according to the PNAB's authority, positive environmental results seem to be ensured by the projects addressing negative tourism impacts and spreading awareness about biodiversity's importance among local population and visitors. In fact, according to the PNAB's authority "[...] trying to change towards a tourism of quality rather than of quantity is *per se* a good indicator of success". It is claimed that the actions undertaken within the partnership framework have been an instrument to orient and target the tourists already massive in the area.

According to the PA's authority, environmental standards seem to be ensured by an ongoing monitoring framework, whose results are accessible to the public through the annual relations issued by the PNAB's authority. According to the PA's agency, environmental sustainability is monitored and guaranteed by the two environmental management certifications, the UNI EN ISO 14001, obtained by the PNAB in 2001 and the EMAS, in 2006. Moreover, considering PA's agency's point of view, also the adhesion of the PNAB to the European Geoparks network is an indicator of environmental integrity.

Furthermore, the environmental results of the market-oriented project are outlined. This is important, since the effectiveness of this project influences the number of tourism businesses contributing to sustainability in the future. The environmental results, for each structure, are a consequence of the

implementation of the strict protocol that the certification implies. The environmental results are guaranteed by a good environmental management system framed by the QP protocol which sets environmental standards and activities of education towards tourists and staff. However, the president of the QP association and the provincial representative of the tourism businesses, complain that the success of the project QP in terms of sustainability has been recognized everywhere but in the province. In fact, other regions asked the President of QP and the PNAB's authority to share their experience because it represents a model for other realities. This role-model has been confirmed by the obtainment of the sponsorship of Unesco-Dolomites Foundation that after stringent tests recognized the project as a pivotal contributor to the sustainable development in the Dolomites (UNESCO-World Heritage Centre, 2013). Yet, because of its complex and comprehensive characterization (environmental management certification coupled with social and territorial focus), the QP is the only project in Italy that has earned the recognition by the European Commission as employing good practices of corporate social responsibility (Basile, 2009).

Lastly, it is very interesting to outline another perspective on which evaluating the environmental outcome of the collaborative arrangements. The most environmental-friendly association suggests that environmental results must be considered not only in light of the alternatives built, but especially in light of the extent to which winter skiing-related tourism is still pursued and supported. By taking into account this perspective, the outcome of the PNAB's processes appears weaker, since still within the PNAB's borders new widening of ski slopes and new infrastructures are planned to be build or have been already built since 2004. According to this interviewee and also in part confirmed by a respondent from the PNAB's authority, the ski-related stakeholders detain a strong power since for decades skiing has been the most compelling part of the Trentino's tourism sector. The goal of strengthening the competitiveness of some areas of the PNAB as ski resort is in contradiction with low-impact tourism, sustainability (in time and in place) principles and also with the PA's goals.

4.3.4. Deseasonalization of tourism services

Although deasonalization issues might be regarded in its different social, environmental and economic outcome, it is worthy to focus on the extent to which tourism seasonalization has been tackled by the partnership.

Deseasonalization of the tourism services is recognized by theory and confirmed by the data collected to be a challenge that all the destinations (mountain or not) should address. According to the personal opinion of a representative of the provincial tourism sector, it should be "the main objective of all sustainable development policies". Nevertheless, the same interviewee notices how, at the provincial level (including the PNAB's case), this has been achieved only in theory while no concrete action has been undertaken yet: "for the moment, the lack in Italian arrivals has been balanced by an increase in foreign tourists (especially Russian and Polish)". Overall, apparently, at a strategic level, the quantity assumption has not been put into discussion and the issue of reducing the number of tourists is a "provincial taboo". This is a significant constraint that affects the provincial tourism decision-making as well as the PNAB's participatory arena. It seems that "since in Trentino nature has been conserved better than other Italian places, its preservation is often deemed as granted and thus, for many actors is not considered a challenge".

However, on the other hand, the PNAB's authority claims that the projects did face the issue of deseasonalization. Still, the abovementioned interviewee from the provincial tourism sector is critical asserting that those projects only address summer season and not off season. Nevertheless, the commitment of the PNAB's authority in this context has been confirmed by some municipalities that show

the efforts undertaken by PNAB's authority and by the same local government to start discussing this important issue with the tourism business. Overall, it seems that although the participatory approaches have not developed yet concrete solutions for deseasonalizing the tourism services, they still faced the issue and discussion started on this theme which seems still positive. As a matter of concrete example, the Val Meledrio project has as a strategic objective to be open also in off seasons as well as in winter in order to be a potential destination for school trips and to offer a valid alternative to skiing in winter.

4.4. Conclusions on the success of the PNAB's partnership framework

Overall, the PNAB's partnership framework can be deemed successful for several reasons. First, it established actual institutions for collective actions (the territorial forums and the roundtables) where collaboration to design and implement concrete projects takes place. Second, the fact that the partnership framework is almost achieving a decade of lifespan indicates the success in maintaining the collaboration. Third, in spite of the long time, it is still difficult for the actors to assess to what extent the processes and relative projects have resulted in certain economic, social and environmental benefits. The lack of evident (especially economic) results seems likely to affect negatively the benefits perceived by the parties, and thus the duration of the collaborations. However, in brief, environmental results seem considered only implicitly, social results especially in improving the understanding of the PA's value seem the most evident and mentioned by the interviewees and economic results are on the other hand the most important but still explicitly not proved. Moreover, deseasonalization results are really debated among different partners. Table 6 summarizes the results gained by the data analysis for each factor of the dependent clusters of variables highlighting the relevance indicated by the interviewees, the extent to which the factor might be deemed successful, its theoretical relevance and brief recommendations to take into account.

Table 6: Summary of the evaluation of the success of the PNAB case

Cluster of dependent variables	Individual factor	Source	Indicator	Results of the application of the framework	Data collection method
Level of cooperative behavior among the parties	Level of cooperative behavior among the parties	Buckley and Sommer, 2001; Leach and Pelkey, 2001.	Established institutions for collective action Established output Stipulation of an agreement among the parties Number of projects established Satisfaction among the stakeholders: - cooperative behavior shown by the parties - output	Case-related relevance: high Case-related evaluation: successful especially when compared to the previous level of conflict Theoretical relevance: confirmed Recommendations: Clear institutions for collective action are essential indicators of success in the establishment of partnership; important to develop concrete output; it is important to have several small actions as well as some ambitious ones to give visibility to the partnership.	Policy documents Semi-structured interviews In-depth interviews
Sustainable development outcome	Economical	Mohr and Spekman, 1994; De Lacy et al., 2002; Bramwell and Lane, 2000.	Satisfaction among stakeholders: -Funding for conservation programmes -Financial revenues for the local businesses -Improved competitiveness of the protected area as a tourist destination	Case-related relevance: high Case-related evaluation: low success (evident results are missing) Theoretical relevance: confirmed Recommendations: Evident economic results are essential to ensure a longlasting partnership since for tourism-related actors economic sustainability is paramount.	Policy documents Semi-structured interviews In-depth interviews
	Social	Mohr and Spekman, 1995; De Lacy et al., 2002; Bramwell and Lane, 2000.	Satisfaction among stakeholders: 1. Local development: -Spread awareness -Improved understanding of the values of protected areas by partners -Creation of indirect benefits for the local community such as creation of local jobs -Greater respect for local culture, heritage and/or traditions 2. Partnership level -Building of social and organizational capacity, innovative capacity	Case-related relevance: high Case-related evaluation: success (evident results are still missing) Theoretical relevance: confirmed Recommendations: Social results especially in regard of social development are essential to ensure a longlasting partnership since for local actors and <i>usi civici</i> associations benefits for their community are really important to maintaining a cooperative behavior	Policy documents Semi-structured interviews In-depth interviews
	Environmental	Mburu and Birner, 2007; Mohr and Spekman, 1994	Satisfaction among stakeholders: -Improved biodiversity conservation in the protected area -Establishment of monitoring system -Reduced use of energy associated with protected area tourism -Reduced production of waste by	Case-related relevance: low Case-related evaluation: successful but is not so often explicitly addressed by the interviewees, no improvement is actually proved Theoretical relevance: confirmed Recommendations: ensure that environmental standards are strict and are not forgotten in the name of development opportunities; pursue more strongly alternatives to mass tourism.	Policy documents Semi-structured interviews In-depth interviews
	Deseasonalization	Zulberti, 2012	Satisfaction among the stakeholders: -Level to which deseasonalization policies are pursued	Case-related relevance: high Case-related evaluation: success is not agreed upon Theoretical relevance: confirmed Recommendations: Deseasonalization policies are important indicators of sustainability, however, clearer efforts should be undertaken.	Semi-structured interviews In-depth interviews

5. Explaining the success of the PNAB's partnerships

The present chapter aims at providing descriptive and evaluative knowledge about the PNAB case and its success. First, the independent variables identified by the STCRC study are applied to the case-study as operationalized in Table 4 and evaluated through the iterative analysis of the data collected (both interviews and policy documents). Second, the results are integrated with the analytical ladder for partnerships for sustainable development of Glasbergen (2010).

5.1. The application of the STCRC's explanation framework

For each variable I attempt to identify the degree to which the respondents evaluate it as determinant and how this contributed to the success of the partnership. Moreover, in order to adjust eventually the framework, at the end of each factor's paragraph a table summarizes the results obtained by the applications of the framework on the case-study by highlighting the general relevance of the factor, its relations with other factors and some key aspects to consider for future recommendation. Moreover, its validity is considered by evaluating to what extent a factor is measured by and thus overlaps with other factors, making the analysis redundant.

5.1.1. Individual partner-related factors

The first cluster of variables concerns partner-related factors and according to Laing et al. (2009) it focuses on the characteristics of the partners themselves.

Membership composition

The membership composition results to be pivotal for the PNAB's partnership success and this is confirmed by all the data collected. Moreover, this factor provides also the opportunity to present to the reader the relevant actors in the partnership. To analyze the data regarding membership composition insights from stakeholder analysis (e.g. Bryson, 2004; Grimble and Wellard, 1997) are used. To understand better, it might be helpful to present why not significant collaboration took place before 2004. For one side, the PA was (in some example is still) seen as a restriction to development (by economic actors, both TBOs and entrepreneurs, and municipalities) and to the traditional use of the territory (according to the *usi civici* association and municipalities, stakeholders as land owners).

It is observed that all local and provincial stakeholders were invited to participate to the planning phase. An inclusive approach was undertaken as not only the tourism-related actors were asked to join the participatory phase, but also all local organizations that might have been interested to participate. However, what is noticed to be especially important is the membership composition of the roundtables. Applying a typical instrument of stakeholder analysis, the power/interest grid (whose visual representation is available in annex 2), it is possible to conclude that almost all the most powerful and interested actors are included in the relevant roundtable. It is also confirmed by all the interviewees that, although at different extents, all the different areas (meant as valleys and districts) have been represented in the composition of the partnership membership. Nevertheless, considered the multitude of actors involved in the partnerships at the different extents and levels, it is difficult to undertake a comprehensive stakeholder

analysis that takes all stakeholders into considerations. Therefore, I focus on the most relevant stakeholders, those common to all the areas of the partnership framework and that might be also relevant for the other provincial PAs.

First of all, the membership of actors linked to the tourism supply chain (both economic actors, local and provincial institutions and tourism businesses' associations) is particularly relevant because they are key-stakeholders both for planning and for implementation, and on their behavior the success of the tourism product depends. The involvement of the local five TBOs is also significant because by the provincial law 2002/8 "they are in charge of information and tourism help services, tourism marketing initiatives, environmental, cultural and historical heritage enhancement initiatives, of the framework of reference, intermediation and reservation of services and tourism packages" (PNAB, 2006, p. 28).

Secondly, the participation of the *usi civici* associations and local governments (although not the totality of them participated) is pivotal not only since they own most of the PNAB's land and in most cases, have economical, institutional power and organizational capacities. They furthermore, might help enhancing local support for PA and ST values. Why membership of local governments is necessary is easily understandable, whereas why *usi civici* associations are pivotal is not so evident since their role is less known. In Trentino, 75 % of the forest surface is a collective property as well as 75.000 km² of highland grassland and pastures (in total 54% of the total provincial territory) (Giacomoni, 2003). It is interesting that many authors notice that in this province, unlike the rest of Italian forms of collective properties, the emergence of this kind of governance arrangement is endogenous, that means, it was created by the local community and not imposed by nobility (Pace, 2006). Analyzing the literature, in Trentino the collective use of forests has been considered an inalienable right since before the Roman colonization (Groffer, 1988). Nowadays, one fifth of the PNAB's territory (i.e. forests, grassland and pastures) is collective property. In Trentino, the origins of the PAs can be traced back to the medieval ages when they were disciplined by a written regulation (*Carta di Regola*). As also confirmed by Casari (2007) this type of institutions fulfills all seven design principles that Ostrom (1990) proposes to identify long-enduring common-pool resources institutions. The institutions managing these collective goods were fulfilling the same role of what later will belongs to municipalities, established in 1800 by the Austrian Empire. Usually, the government of these institutions (usually called Regole, Vicinie, Ville or Comunità) was elected by the *patres familias* of the community. Nowadays, this collective property (based on *usi civici*, literally, *commons' rights to use*) is still in many cases (e.g. *Malga system* and forests) managed by collective institutions (although in some cases they are managed by local government). In the PNAB the collective institutions are represented by the Comunità delle Regole of Spinale and Manez and more than twenty ASUCs (Associazione Separata *Usi civici*). The main difference about the two is that the Comunità delle Regole is the result of the union of two communities (Spinale and Manez) that succeeded in 1960 to make the province acknowledge their statute. On the other hand, the ASUCs still claim that, although they have been legally recognized through a rather recent law (provincial law 2005/6), they still are often besieged by local government and province attempting to exert control over the ASUCs' decisions and competences as it is noticed in the interviews with the *usi civici* associations. However, this legal-power issue is faced in detailed in distribution of power and legislative framework factors.

Third, provincial support and participation is important although this is still the most critical point. The Trentino tourism promotion authority (called officially Trentino Sviluppo – Marketing and promotion division) is one of the most important actors. Another significant presence is the provincial body called Provincial Tourism Observatory, its task was to acquire and elaborate the information through which Trentino tourism promotion authority defines objectives and plans the strategies that guide promotional policies. The Observatory was dismantled a couple of years ago and since then an important institutional

and informative support was missing (although this was noticed only by one stakeholder, it is still important considered the role of such interviewee).

Fourth, the participation since 2011 (revalidation phase) of the newly born Valley Communities is also important because this is a local but inter-municipalities institution which has local development planning competences, and thus must be integrated as a key-actor in the roundtables.

Last but not least, the environmental and civil society stakeholders seem not so well represented in partnership, even if the *usi civici* associations might be considered belonging to civil society as this differentiates from market and governmental actors. The SAT (Società Alpinisti Tridentini – Tridentin Mountaineering Society), is the provincial historical (founded in Madonna di Campiglio in 1872) mountaineering association that counts 27.000 members (SAT, 2013), presented in Trentino with 82 local sections and owns huts and shelters in the mountains taking care of trails and signage maintenance. It has a strong proposition of environmental awareness and it can count on local support, institutional and cognitive capital and an operative relevance and all this considered it seems as a key-actor to be involved. Nevertheless, as the president of the association himself admits, its structure is fragmented between central executive committee and local sections. Both local sections and central committee were involved but as is noticed in many relevant interviews (with municipalities, PA's authority and the SAT itself), often the attitudes of local sections have not reflected the central committee's one (that is why under suggestions of other interviewees I interviewed a representative of the central committee). The fragmentation has been also evident in the lack of communication, as the SAT's president himself admits. This hindered the SAT's contribute to the partnership which is already subjected to the voluntary-based adhesion of its representatives in the partnership. Another, environmental-related actor invited to the participatory approach is the Provincial environmental agency (APPA- Agenzia Provinciale per la Protezione dell'Ambiente), which, nevertheless, seems to have not had a so prominent role in any roundtable. In spite of that, the PA's authority explicitly asserts that its presence at least in planning phase is significant.

The limited participation of the SAT to the partnership and the absence of other non-governmental organizations in the composition, according to the analytical framework, should hinder the overall effectiveness of the partnership. Nevertheless, the data collected through the interviews seem to assert that the limited participation of SAT limited the partnership outcome only in the extent to which operative implementation (e.g. trail maintenance) is lacking. No other evidence is available to assert that the absence of non-governmental organizations involves shortcoming for the partnership's success.

Also all the relevant economic actors have been invited to participate, both those one more related to tourism such as cableway plant managers and accommodation and catering sector operators and the other socio-economic operators at large (e.g. agricultural enterprises, breeders and artisans). The QP roundtable is an attempt of involving in sustainability some of these economic actors. QP is open to all the economic actors but even schools that are willing to accept the certification. The economic categories to which the certification is applicable have been increased over time (also for schools and local producers of honey and cheese).

To sum up, composition of the partnership is important for its success, especially when all relevant and interested stakeholders participate. However, no blueprint about an optimal composition can be provided and only two main conclusions can be drawn by the PNAB case-study. First, in the planning phase an inclusive and open approach is recommended to be undertaken. Second, in the operative phase a trade-off should be found between representativeness and level of participation of the stakeholders. In fact, at the roundtable level, it is important that key actors for the implementation participate, but it is also necessary

that members of the partnership are active members that can contribute with adequate and organization resources.

Table 7: Summary of the results on *membership composition*

Individual factor	Source	Hypothesis	Indicator	Results of the application of the framework	Data collection method
Membership composition	Brinkerhoff, 2002; Buckley and Sommer, 2001.	Membership composition is an important factor influencing partnership's outcome in two senses. First, it is important that there is compatibility between the partners and second, there is need to adopt a open and extensive community involvement.	Presence of all the parties affected by the partnership Presence of non-governmental organizations	<p>Case-related relevance: high</p> <p>Case-related evaluation: successful (inclusive)</p> <p>Theoretical relevance: high</p> <p>Overlapping: partially with stakeholders' participation</p> <p>Relations with other factors: participation of stakeholders, empathy among partners, interdependence, adequacy of the partnership</p> <p>Recommendations for the other cases: as much as inclusive as possible in the planning phase, while in the operative phase a trade-off among quantity and quality must be implemented (civil society and environmental might be disadvantaged because although they are committed they do not have resources). In particular, ideally, parties not only with shared vision but with adequate resources are needed. USI CIVICI associations might be considered civil society organization and usually detain significant economical resources (although they are volunteers)</p>	Policy documents In-depth interviews Stakeholder analysis

Leadership

All the data collected through the interviews confirms that leadership is an important factor in determining the PNAB's partnership framework's success. However, as also theory suggests, leadership is a factor entailing different undertones. Following the hypotheses proposed in the theoretical chapter and integrating them with insights from the data collected in the interviews, I identified the subsequent levels.

First, an initiator is essential. In the PNAB case, this role was undertaken by the former Director of the PNAB who was identified by all the interviewees as a strong and innovative person. Most interviews highlight that the success in initiating the process was due to its action and commitment and the energy he invested in a new approach. His role was pivotal because he succeeded in finding concrete and appealing solutions (e.g. QP project and Brenta Ring) that were able to incentivize the actors to collaborate. However, the strong role of the former director also showed some drawbacks in personal relations as revealed in some interviews to representatives of some municipalities and civil society associations.

Second, another important aspect of leadership entails the coordination and the facilitation of the process. In the PNAB's case, it is noticed by all the respondents participating to the territorial forums that the success of the planning phase was achieved also due to the positive role played by the facilitator which belonged to an external consultancy company. On the other hand, the more operative phases were perceived successfully well-coordinated by the project manager (whose tasks refer to communication, quality and quantity of information) which is seen by most actors as pivotal for maintaining trust and commitment in the actors. As a further illustration of this, it is reported by more than one respondent within the PA's authority, that in the other two Italian PAs that implemented similar approaches such role in operational phases was missing and this hindered an effective management of the partnership. Another example of the importance of her role is that even the current maternity leave of the project manager might hinder temporarily the process (this is noticed by at least five interviewees).

Third, a further level of leadership refers to the roles played by the stakeholders' groups. Leadership is important at the decision-making level because is presumed to influence the effectiveness of the territorial forums and of the roundtables. In the initiative and in the coordination of the planning phase, it was obvious that the coordinator role was played by the leading role of PNAB's authority. Whereas in the operative phase, for example in the Brenta Ring roundtable, the responsible of the projects (APT Comano for DBB and APT Val di Non for DBT) have been key-figures in the implementation of the projects taking more responsibilities than the other partners since the beginning. The same is also true for the QP project, whose success is due, not only to the idea of the former director, but to the support and enthusiasm of some entrepreneurs of the most famous PNAB's destination (Campiglio). Also the project in Val Meledrio is observed by all the interested interviewees, to be born and implemented thanks to the personality of a new local council member, who put together efforts coming from different stakeholders.

Moreover, leadership might be measured at individual partner level which refers to the degree to which stakeholders' groups are represented by strong leader with coordinative skills, able to communicate and involve her/his organization. Some associations have been negatively affected by the fact that different individuals participated to different meetings and no effective communication within the organization was done, affecting negatively the participation of that stakeholder. This could be a problem experienced by voluntary-based organizations where (organizational and human) resources are missing.

Overall, leadership is confirmed by the PNAB case to be very important. Especially, what emerged is that the role of the PA's authority in initiating and coordinating the partnerships has been paramount in the success of the process. However, compared to the initial framework, it results necessary to add other levels of analysis. In fact, beside a skilled coordinator and the intervention of a third-party, also an initiator and skilled leaders at the partners' level are really important.

Table 8: Summary of the results on *leadership*

Individual factor	Source	Hypothesis	Indicator	Results of the application of the framework	Data collection method
Leadership	Laing et al. (2008); Leach and Pelkey (2001); Poncelet (2004).	A skilled coordinator and/or facilitator is a crucial step for the success of a partnership. Nevertheless, partnerships deeply dependent on particular individuals are subjected to failure when such leaders leave the partnership. Moreover, a third-party facilitator might help stakeholders to achieve successful partnership outcome. This might help encourage empathy, manage conflict and innovation.	Presence of a person/organization that is entitled to coordinate and serves as reference, coordinator and facilitator for the partnership's parties	<p>Case-related relevance: high</p> <p>Case-related evaluation: successful but with shortcomings</p> <p>Theoretical relevance: confirmed</p> <p>Overlapping: none</p> <p>Relations with other factors: internal communication, trust, quantity/quality of information, innovation, legislative framework (electoral turn-over), structured process, stakeholder participation,</p> <p>Recommendations for the other cases: adequate resources for a long-term coordinator, if conflict is high, invest in a temporary third-party facilitator, leadership of the PA's authority.</p>	Semi-structured interviews In-depth interviews

Empathy towards Partners

According to all the collected interviews, it seems clear that the degree to which differences (in legal, social, economic and environmental constraints and values) are respected among the partners is an essential component determining success of the partnerships of the PNAB's area. All the data collected in the

interviews confirm that empathy is the most relevant step to built trust and that the establishment of the territorial forums was positive to trigger the change in the actors' attitudes.

In general, all interviewees who participated to the planning phase consider this step very important to contribute to the creation of empathy. However, respondents differ about what hindered or facilitated the development of mutual empathy. To understand their claims and in general to understand the success of the PNAB's partnership framework, it is firstly important to remember that prior to the 2000 between PNAB's authority and local population (and thus local stakeholders) there had been a long social conflict and collaborations were really limited. When the PA was established, the local residents in all the different districts of the PNAB perceived it as an imposed, not necessary and therefore not legit institution. On the other side, the PNAB's authority "was forced to entrench in the defense of its principles" (PNAB, 2013). One of the provincial tourism stakeholders, that might also be considered an expert of the provincial tourism sector, has given an interesting explanation of what facilitated the empathy towards partners in the PNAB's context. What it was found to be a pivotal factor contributing to solve the misunderstanding, is that the actors were openly asked to participate to the process as citizens and not as representatives of some interests. Discussing about quality of life instead of conflicting interests helped parties be more open to each other and less biased by previous conflicts. This especially helped to change the perception toward the PNAB's institution and its authority as now it is finally recognized by many local actors "to be legit to involve and to be involved" (this was an aspect that all interview confirmed, although with different enthusiasms). Legitimacy results important in developing empathy also in another dynamics. In fact, for local governments and *usi civici* associations, since the origin of the conflict was more political, empathy was found not only through discussion about common values but also through political representation in the decision-making of the PNAB's management system. It is very noteworthy to analyze the particular relation among the PNAB and the *usi civici* Associations because they both highly consider environmental values, whose commitment is also formally expressed in their institutional acts. For instance, the environmental values and the sustainable management of resources are also defined as priority in the 1964 Charter of the Comunità delle Regole di Spinale e Manez. As they claim, the *usi civici* associations own a centenary experience of collective good (i.e. forests and highland pastures through the *malga* system) management and the PNAB's institution in their opinion was not needed because they felt as if they had been already fulfilling PA's functions.

However, in general, all the interviewed stakeholders agree that bringing the discussion around quality of life has been pivotal. Nature framed as mountains has been discovered being a value for all the parties involved, hence empathy on this level could be found. Especially, for the tourism-related actors nature is connected to the value it has as product to promote. Nevertheless it is interesting to see that empathy is here linked to the perception of the innovation of the output proposed and on the potential future benefits. In fact, the respondents related to the TBOs in the low-tourism areas have been very positive about the new attitude and role of the PNAB, whereas the TBOs in the mass-tourism have been less enthusiastic toward the PNAB since ST is not seen an opportunity as the priority still lies in the maintenance of ski-based tourism. This reasoning is being even admitted by the Val di Sole TBO, the only interviewed TBO from a mass-tourism area.

In regard to a further aspect, another PA's authority-related respondent and some local governments' representatives highlight how the global trends (both the sustainability discourse and the international economic crisis) helped the actors as well as the population to develop a growing environmental awareness which triggered change in some actors' attitude. Economical crisis is mentioned by most interviewees as a trigger of change for TBOs and local government in mass tourism destinations.

Another element that is considered significant by most TBOs and PA's authority is that a very positive attitude was taken by a group of entrepreneurs who supported the mission and vision of the PA's authority (those who joined the QP). It is noticed that the fact that most of these entrepreneurs were belonging to the most famous resort of the PNAB's area (Madonna di Campiglio) was pivotal in gaining acceptance and spreading awareness among other entrepreneurs and TBOs.

For what concerns the newly born institutions, the Valley Communities are said (by their interviewed presidents) to respect and also share the values that PNAB's authority proposes. Nevertheless, analyzing other interviews and other policy documents, empathy seems limited. Their representatives asked the PNAB's authority to recognize formally the different roles that PNAB's authority and Valley Communities have in the socio-economical planning of the territory. Especially, one president of the Valley Community says to be willing to cooperate with the PNAB's authority to "only if the latter recognizes that its competence is only about socio-economic matters linked strictly with the environment". Nevertheless, it seems that the willingness of including new ski slopes within the PNAB in the future valley urban plan results completely in opposition with partnership's vision.

In general, although empathy is not a static process, the main common ground was found to be reached in the planning phase, it seems that empathy is nearly connected to trust and thus so be maintained throughout the whole decision-making.

To sum up, the PNAB's case confirms empathy among partners to be a pivotal factor for building the ground for collaborative behavior since it is the base of mutual trust and thus, is determinant for the partnership's success also in the future. In addition, empathy is found to be closely related to legitimacy and benefits.

Table 9: Summary of the results on *empathy among partners*

Individual factor	Source	Hypothesis	Indicator	Results of the application of the framework	Data collection method
Empathy towards Partners	Imperial, 2005; Steffen, 2004; Poncelet, 2004.	The success of a partnership is increased if partners feel empathy among each other. This involves respecting differences (in legal, social, economic and environmental constraints) between partners, not necessarily sharing the same values. This is a crucial step to achieve a common language and can provide a fertile field where innovation can rise.	Encourage/r respect diversity of values and beliefs Recognition of differing legal, social, economic and environmental constraints of the parties	Case-related relevance: high Case-related evaluation: successful but not among all the stakeholders Theoretical relevance: confirmed Overlapping: partially shared vision Relations with other factors: trust, institutions for collective actions, interdependence, benefits/incentives, dealing with conflict, shared vision, membership composition, legitimacy, mountain territorial identity, macro context Recommendations for the other cases: innovative output and processes are pivotal to stimulate empathy especially if the initial level of conflict is high; need to focus on language and dealing with conflict	Semi-structured interviews In-depth interviews Policy documents

Presence of Innovation/Openness to change

Generally the data collected (both through interviews and policy documents) seem to confirm that presence of innovation/openness to change is an important factor contributing to partnership's success also in the PNAB's case. According to the data collected, innovation can be analyzed according to two different dimensions. First, innovation generally is meant by the interviewees as a characteristic of the participatory processes themselves. Second, innovation was also regarded as essential by all the actors in terms of innovation of the products and solutions proposed.

The former type, process innovation, is important because the perceived innovation apparently helped the actors changing attitude toward the PNAB, thus enhancing the creation of empathy among partners and as it was observed, through the achievement of the ECST, the PA reached *de facto* a place in the tourism supply-chain. It was especially noticed that the management of the DBB and DBT roundtables is very innovative because its management crosses (like the territory of the PNAB), different valleys and destinations and thus, different TBOs. In particular, the DBB is innovative because it proposes a new work-methodology in which resources and energies are shared. Process innovation is perceived also in the Val Meledrio project, where for the first time that a project related to sustainability in Val di Sole is proposed and implemented jointly by more than two actors in the area.

Second, product innovation is said to be pivotal in creating and maintaining a cooperative behavior because the proposed output has been perceived as a benefit by all the local partners. To better understand how the benefit was perceived by the parties I outline the main innovative characteristics of the Brenta Ring, QP and Val Meledrio outputs.

In the Brenta Ring, for the first time five different TBOs worked jointly on a cross-boundary tourism product. The innovative idea of developing a trail ring around the PA was very innovative and was appealing for also those TBOs not so sympathetic with the PA's authority. In regard to the QP, it is noticed that it was innovative to propose a voluntary-based instrument (i.e. adhering to a sustainable management certification that promotes sustainable values and activities in the PA) to gather a group of economic actors supporting the PNAB's authority in its mission. The innovation is said to lie on the fact that an environmental management practice is coupled with a place-specific territorial product.

On the other hand, the project of Val Meledrio is considered innovative by the local government because it takes place and is proposed by Dimaro's municipality, the destination hosting one third of the total arrivals in Val di Sole, hence a mass tourism destination. In this regard, it is the first project in Val di Sole promoting the PA's presence (an information point is being built) and thus it incentivized the partnering of the PA. Differently, what the *usi civici* association considered innovative of the project is that the project does not want to highlight only the natural capital of the valley but also its cultural and historical heritage (e.g. an old smithy and quarry were renovated).

Lastly, it is admitted by two TBOs that during the planning phases the level of innovation was high, while it has decreased in the more operative phases. Nevertheless, it is also noticed that process innovation can also stimulate product innovation and some potential target for the future is proposed. In fact, ST could be a source also for agriculture survival, is suggested by one interviewee since mountain farming cannot compete with low-land economy any longer.

To sum up, to enhance success innovation must be perceived by stakeholders both in the process and in the product; however the latter seems providing higher incentives than the former. Notwithstanding, albeit new management practices and creative solutions might serve as incentives, (so that to exceed the limited perspectives of each stakeholder), what seems to be most important is the attitude of the individual actors (PA's authority included) about being open to change.

Moreover, how is defined in the STCRC study, innovation/openness to change seems to overlap with is also meant by flexibility. However, flexibility refers to the capacity of the partnership to adapt to changing conditions, while innovation/openness to change concerns the individual level. In spite of that, it is important to be aware that although the difference might be clear at an initial stage, the two factors might overlap or closely influence each other when the partnership is in a more operative stage.

Table 10: Summary of the results on *presence of innovation/openness to change*

Individual factor	Source	Hypothesis	Indicator	Results of the application of the framework	Data collection method
Presence of Innovation/Openness to change	Imperial, 2005; Gray, 1996; Brinkerhoff, 2002.	A responsive approach to changing conditions and openness to adaptation is crucial for the success of a partnership. Creative solutions are needed in order to exceed the limited perspectives of each stakeholders. <i>Per se</i> even the only willingness to change might be a crucial factor for the success of the partnership because it involves flexibility, responsiveness to unknown circumstances.	Openness to new ideas/willingness to adapt Support change agents/engage in new ideas	<p>Case-related relevance: high (in the planning phase)</p> <p>Case-related evaluation: succesul but decremental</p> <p>Theoretical relevance: confirmed (but NEW product and process innovation)</p> <p>Overlapping: partially flexibility when partnership arrives at an operative phase</p> <p>Relations with other factors: output, participation of stakeholders, benefits/incentives, empathy towards partners, trust</p> <p>Recommendations for the other cases: participatory approaches stimulate innovation; innovative but practical solutions need to be proposed</p>	Semi-structured interviews In-depth interviews Policy documents

Distribution/Balance of power

Although the analysis of the whole data collected seems to confirm the theoretical and empirical relevance of power distribution in affecting the outcome of the partnership, in the PNAB case, the interviewees only highlighted that the participatory approaches helped in balancing power among partners creating therefore a collaborative environment. This is also underlined in comparison to the prior situation of non social acceptance of the PNAB, where power struggles among municipalities, TBOs, and *usi civici* organizations from one side and PNAB's authority on the other side, were really strong. What seems to be more important, is linked to the (perceived) legitimacy of actors (as it is shown in the creation of empathy beforehand and membership composition) because it has played a role in catalyzing other actors and thus providing an incentive for cooperative behavior. In particular, the *usi civici* associations, especially the ASUCs have been for years politically controlled by the local municipalities. Hence, when the PNAB was established, this was seen as an additional actor that aimed at controlling these centenary institutions. According to the legal expert of *usi civici*, the evolution of the legislative framework in the last decade has helped protect these institutions from external control although political power of municipalities is still high in some areas.

To conclude, first, a balance of power among stakeholders is an important factor affecting the success of tourism partnerships because it affects the equality and the quality of the decision-making. Secondly, another factor very important for the success of partnership is the acceptance (and the perceived legitimacy) of powerful actors in the context of ST in PA. In fact, in the PNAB case, power is closely connected with legitimacy issues. Mutual legitimacy seems to be facilitated by open participatory processes and to positively affect the perception of incentives, the empathy among the stakeholders, trust and membership composition.

Table 11: Summary of the results on *distribution/balance of power*

Individual factor	Source	Hypothesis	Indicator	Results of the application of the framework	Data collection method
Distribution/Balance of power	Roberts and Simpson, 1999; Brinkerhoff, 2002; De Araujo and Bramwell, 2002.	A balance of power among stakeholders is an important factor affecting the success of tourism partnerships because it affects the equality and the quality of the decision-making. Another factor very important for success of partnership is the acceptance (and the perceived legitimacy) of powerful actors in sustainable tourism context which might positively affect the provision of incentives.	Balance of power among stakeholders Perceived legitimacy of power institutions.	Case-related relevance: high (linked to legitimacy issues) Case-related evaluation: successful but with shortcoming Theoretical relevance: confirmed Overlapping: none Relations with other factors: conflict, empathy, membership distribution, trust, Recommendations for the other cases: legitimacy must be perceived among the actors	Semi-structured interviews In-depth interviews Policy documents

Participation of stakeholders

An active participation of individual stakeholders is resulted to be a pivotal factor in determining the extent to which partnership is successful. In the case of PNAB, it is clear in all the texts of the collected interviews that the life span of the partnerships depends on the extent to which the partners have been engaged with energy and resources. On their engagement depends the adequacy of resources of the partnership which in turn, as it will be demonstrated later, is one of the main determinants on the effectiveness of the solutions in terms of sustainable development outcome. Analyzing the data collected, participation of the stakeholders seems often dependent on the individual availability of human and economical resources, leadership and on empathy among the partners.

In the PNAB case-study, the analyzed data show that not all the stakeholders have been playing an active role. The PA's authority surely has been paying a proactive and leading role in the planning phases and also in many roundtables. Only two out of three TBOs are engaged significantly in projects (this is evident in the interviews to all the TBOs as well as those related to the PA's authority). Overall, it seems that a leading and active stakeholder is the significant factor to contribute to the success of the roundtable. However, it is also clear from all the interviewees that there is the need that an active participation of all the members is needed in order to achieve long lasting results.

In general, the participatory approach itself is found to serve as a hub of ideas where participants feel stimulated to be active. Through these participatory processes, an interviewee from the provincial context observed, an "active minority" was born, a group of actors who had enough energy, resources and enthusiasm to join the partnership proactively. In this context, it is noticed by at least five interviewees that, at the beginning was very important the active participation of some economic actors who had famous and significant hotels in the most fancy area (Campiglio). They really played as a model role for the others.

Notwithstanding, some parties have not undertaken an active role within the partnership. Different kinds of behavior have been observed. For example, SAT is still not very active because as they are all volunteers not many energy is left and participation has been fragmented. On the other hand, other actors have been showing a laggard attitude. According to a PA's respondent this is valid both for some municipalities and *usi civici* associations. In regard of the latter, although some associations have been supporting the activity of the PNAB's authority, others have been very hostile towards the PNAB's authority and thus laggards in the

participatory process. The laggard attitude of some actors, according to the collected data, seems to have partially hindered both the decision-making and the effective implementation of the projects. Overall, considering interviews and policy documents, the level of participation of stakeholders (TBOs, municipalities and *usi civici* associations) seems to be linked to the level to which tourism associated with PA is perceived to bring economic benefits. As it is observed previously in the empathy factor, economic crisis from macro-context seems to affect the activism of the stakeholders in two different ways. For instance, in the TBO of Campiglio-Rendena (the most famous destination of the PNAB) it has been observed a radical change in the attitude (this was also due to a shift in the president and director of both the PNAB's authority and the TBOs). They started understanding that the economic crisis should be faced by investing in the summer or off-peak seasons. Thus, collaboration with PNAB's on organizing the tourism product is seen as favorable and so, they have been very proactive lately. On the other side, economic difficulties hamper the cohesiveness of the QP group because many members loose enthusiasm in front of negative economic results.

It is also recognized that the current success of the partnership framework is due to the fundamental leading role shown by the PNAB's authority "as organizational machine" to spread sustainability values among the population and to change the attitude of the population favorably towards the PNAB.

Regarding ST products, by all the relevant stakeholders a stronger role of provincial tourism promotion agency is envisaged, since this detains by law the competences on Trentino's products promotion on foreign market. It is also called a greater role in the development of the product itself but this seems not possible since competences of this agency are limited by the provincial law 2002/8.

To sum up, the case-study analyzed seems to confirm that the more voluntary and active the participation in planning, goal setting and implementation, the more successful the final outcome is. This seems important especially in the operative phase, when parties are needed to be proactive and committed in terms of resources in order to implement the project effectively. Overall, participation seems to be affected by empathy, perceived benefits and leadership and to affect the adequacy of the resources and quality and quantity of the information of the partnership.

Table 12: Summary of the results on *participation of stakeholders*

Individual factor	Source	Hypothesis	Indicator	Results of the application of the framework	Data collection method
Participation of stakeholders	Mohr and Spekman, 1994; Bramwell and Lane, 2000.	Participation of stakeholders refers to the level of joint engagement of the individual stakeholders. The more volunteer and active the participation in planning and goal setting, the more successful the final outcome is.	Voluntary participation Active participation	<p>Case-related relevance: high</p> <p>Case-related evaluation: successful</p> <p>Theoretical relevance: confirmed</p> <p>Overlapping: commitment</p> <p>Relations with other factors: empathy, adequacy of resources, commitment, leadership, trust, macro context, legislative context, benefits, quality and quality of information, membership composition</p> <p>Recommendations for the other cases: Need of active parties (other than the Pa's authority), built an "active minority"</p>	Semi-structured interviews In-depth interviews Policy documents

5.1.2. Partnering and process-related factors

The second cluster of variables relates, according to Laing et al. (2009) to the way the partnership, once it is established, is managed and operated.

Scope of the partnership

The scope of the partnership is identified by all the interviewees as determinants for partnership's success. In the PNAB case, what is found to be key-determinant is that the partnership scope interests the area of the PNAB meant in an extensive geographical sense, going beyond of the strict PA's borders. In fact, since the planning phase, the participants were asked to think about their territory as a whole not only within the formal PA's borders. Also in the roundtable an multi-area approach has been always undertaken, which helps to widen the environmental perception of residents and tourists since the whole territory is perceived (to be) protected and appraised.

It is also appreciated and indicated as source of success since the PNAB's authority is blamed to have focused only on Val Rendena (the valley where the headquarters of the PNAB's authority are located) for too many years. In this regard, it is observed that a wider attention to the more external areas and districts compounding the PNAB was really positively seen by all the interviewees.

Nevertheless, it is also noticed by all the stakeholders of the project and also by the provincial observers that for the project QP, that the geographical scope is not broad enough and this is the main obstacle to its success. To overcome to this difficulty it is envisaged that QP assumes a provincial scope in order to gain more effective external communication.

Still, large geographical areas such as the PNAB's case entail practical problems that are found to hinder in part the success of the partnership. The larger the area, the least the parties are represented by individuals who are less likely to have personal relations. Moreover, a large mountain area presents some additional mobility issues that are observed by many interviewees by adding weight to the already time-consuming participatory processes.

Furthermore, the application of the analytical framework to a case-study revealed that all the interviewees claim that most of the success lies in the content of the partnership's scope. It is observed that it is really important for the success of the projects that the scope goes beyond strict ideal environment-related scope. First, it is pivotal that sustainability aims are translated in operative and pragmatic terms. More specifically, it is noticed that for enhancing future success of the partnership, the scope of the partnership should not only address the natural heritage of the PNAB but also its cultural and social elements (e.g. historical elements, highland pastures with its *malga* system).

To sum up, the data collected confirm the initial hypothesis that an wide (beyond the strict PA's borders) geographic scope is necessary to guarantee the success of the partnership. Nevertheless, it is observed that to encompass relevant ecological and cultural factors and thus be successful, the partnership must also has an appropriate scope in terms of content (going beyond protecting and spread awareness on the mere environmental heritage but also including the cultural and historical heritage of the entire area).

Table 13: Summary of the results on *scope of the partnership*

Individual factor	Source	Hypothesis	Indicator	Results of the application of the framework	Data collection method
Scope of the partnership	Leach and Pelkey, 2001	An appropriate geographic scope is necessary to guarantee the success of the partnership. By appropriate it is meant a partnership that is broad enough to encompass relevant ecological and political factors but not so large that makes the partnership unwieldy.	Scope of the activities	<p>Case-related relevance: high</p> <p>Case-related evaluation: successful because broad</p> <p>Theoretical relevance: confirmed</p> <p>Overlapping:</p> <p>Relations with other factors: innovation, membership composition,</p> <p>Recommendations for the other cases: need of a scope broader than the strict PA's borders; need of including within the scope of the partnership not only the valorization of the environmental capital but also the local cultural heritage (highland agriculture) - this can played as incentives for those actors such as USI CIVICI association and other local cultural organizations. Market-oriented instruments should have a provincial scope.</p>	Policy documents In-depth interviews

Shared vision/Purpose

The results of the application of the framework on the case-study confirm that the attainment of a shared vision is considered an essential determinant of its success. Analyzing all the texts of the interviews it is possible to deduce that shared vision is developed parallel to empathy. However, to understand to what extent vision is shared within the PNAB partnership framework, it is important vision is first of all defined.

Reviewing policy documents relative to the ECST application, it can be inferred that the vision of the PNAB's partnership framework involves different elements. First, it entails the planning and the implementation of policies/projects based on the sharing of purposes but also resources and tasks. Second, it attains the protection of the diversity of the PNAB's heritage (meant also as the acknowledgment of the current development dynamics) and third, the mission concerns the promotion of the diversity meant as the development of new forms of tourism (Europarc, 2012; PNAB, 2006). In particular, the latter two elements can be said to form the sustainability vision of the partnership, which, explicitly, does not want to dismantle current mass tourism dynamics whereas aims at developing small but valid and thus growing alternatives to this high-impact tourism. The subscription on behalf of the involved stakeholders of the 2006 ECST's Plan of Action (and the 2011 revalidated Plan of Action) should be an indicator of a shared vision according to the proposed operationalization. Nevertheless, the data collected in the interviews suggest different extents to which vision is shared which has consequences for the success of the partnership framework. Therefore, it is interesting to outline these differences.

The attitudes of the stakeholders as presented in the empathy among parties and the participation of stakeholders reflect the extents to which the vision is shared.

First, the scope of sharing competences and resources creating a solid network of collaboration is mainly seen positively by the parties. It seems that all involved and interviewed stakeholders recognize the value of collaboration because decreases transaction costs of design and implementation (i.e. recognition of interdependence). Only one interviewed actor linked to a TBO of mass tourism area thinks that participatory processes are too much time-consuming and that competences should be divided since the early stages reducing at the least the information exchanged. A preliminary inference suggests that the extent to which collaborative arrangements are seen as positive reflects the extent to which interdependence among the actors is acknowledged as some respondents themselves admit.

Second, for what concerns the sustainability vision, it can be inferred that is mainly shared. In fact, as it was noticed in many interviews (from some municipalities, *usi civici* association and QP related interviewees) that the main trigger of participation consisted in the ethical belief of doing something for reducing the impact of tourism activities. Others highlight that common ground was found in defining nature as the essential identity of the homeland of the participants (Trentino, Alpine mountain space). As it is already noticed in the empathy towards partners, it seems that all parties share a vision of sustainable development where economic viability is coupled with environmental protection. Analyzing the text of the interviews and policy documents, it seems that language has played an important in framing discussion and defining common vision. In fact, key-words on which common ground has been found is *valorizzazione del territorio*, that literally might be translated with landscape valorization or enhancement. In Italian however, valorization does not refer explicitly to the increase of an area's economic value but rather on the improvement in the general quality (environmental, social and economical) of an area.

Nevertheless, some TBOs of the most mature destinations (Val di Sole, Campiglio-Rendena, Paganella) and some municipalities are still in practice very dependent on mass winter tourism (while others, in Val di Non are still very dependent on intensive apple agriculture). As one interviewee from the provincial sector notices, "the TBOs are linked to the quotas paid by all the members and thus, for some of them, most market choices are not free but tied to the mass tourism dynamics". From their level of participation in the roundtables is evident that not all the TBOs have been sharing the same vision and purpose. Notwithstanding, as is noticed in the participation of stakeholders the current economical crisis is providing a fertile field to further develop common vision among the actors.

Lastly, I consider very important to underline that an additional insight can be inferred considering the shared vision among the *usi civici* associations and local governments and other actors. It is noticed by several interviewees and also claimed by the *usi civici* and local governments' representatives themselves that sustainability is meant as quality of life and satisfaction of their own community. This means that each of these actors represents a community usually corresponding to village's residents. Thus, the purpose of PNAB partnership framework is always framed by the extent to which their community will take advantage from that. As it is asserted by one *usi civici* representative, "for Regole, first come its community and the potential benefits for it and only later comes the possibility to collaborate with the PNAB's authority or other parties". Although not all the data confirm it explicitly, preliminary conclusions suggest that this parochial reasoning (that is also retrievable in some discourses of local governments' representatives) might have partially hindered the success of the overall partnership since sustainability is not meant by all actors as an advantage for all the area but only within the strict boundaries of the community.

As they are pivotal in improving empathy among actors, planning phases are also important for the construction of a shared vision. The more empathy, the more vision is shared, although it is granted that also the participation of stakeholders grows (this depends also on availability of internal resources, as SAT's example shows). However, to ensure a shared vision (and eventually to maintain an active participation of stakeholders) it is really important to stimulate the interest and the attitude of people by maintaining trust and information structured process.

To sum up, the initial hypothesis, as the extent to which purposes and mission are shared by the parties affects the success of the partnership, is confirmed. However, this factor is in turn dependent on other elements such as empathy, participation of stakeholders, recognition of interdependence, trust and open communication.

Table 14: Summary of the results on shared vision/purpose

Individual factor	Source	Hypothesis	Indicator	Results of the application of the framework	Data collection method
Shared vision/Purpose	Imperial, 2005.	The extent to which purposes and mission are shared by the parties affects the success of the partnership.	Shared vision/purpose Existence of a vision statement signed by all the parties	Case-related relevance: high Case-related evaluation: successful Theoretical relevance: confirmed Overlapping: Relations with other factors: empathy, participation, legitimacy, interdependence, quality/quantity of information, trust Recommendations for the other cases: Build a shared vision over mountain identity and quality of life, collaboration as tradition and environmental protection as territorial valorization	Semi-structured interviews In-depth interviews

Information quantity and quality

The data collected through the interviews and policy documents confirms that quality of information shared by all the parties and its quantity (in terms of methods and frequency) are really important factors in determining positively the success of a partnership.

In general, all the interviewees assert that quantity and quality of information have been adequate both in the planning and in the operative phases of the PNAB case. Only an interviewee disagrees from the others, and parallel to his perspective in other factors, thinks “information should be reduced and limited to sharing the basic information. Every part should focus on what is more competent and then inform the other actors only superficially”.

As the PA’s authority asserts and as also confirmed by other interviewed participants, efforts were made in particular during the planning phase to keep participants informed giving them weekly feedback on how the results of the territorial forums were being processed. The role of the project manager, which entails mainly communication, has been pivotal in determining the quantity and the quality of the information and thus making the project accountable, transparent and in turn perceived as fair by the involved stakeholders. Nevertheless, in the operative phase, it is admitted by the people in charge themselves that information quantity and quality of information decreased significantly not at the level of roundtables but concerning keeping all participants update about the whole progress of the partnerships and of the work of the roundtables. As a way of illustration, the project about maintaining a newsletter for the implementation phase of the project failed for lack of time. Also the ambition of organizing yearly plenum for each of the geographical area was critically reconsidered due to lack of organizational resources. In spite of these difficulties however, no interviewee observed an unequal access to information and not even that these shortcoming affected significantly the partnership. Furthermore, it is noticed by several interviewees (from different stakeholders groups) that for guaranteeing quality of information in the planning phase were really central informal and personal relations among the actors. Informal contacts have been also essential in building legitimacy among the actors.

At the level of the roundtables, information quantity and quality seems really essential for the success and even the survival of the collaboration and thus, of the partnership itself. To illustrate, despite only two respondents of a failed project were interviewed, in that case (where librarians were involved) it is observed that the lack of information and communication among the involved parties was the cause of the

failure. Conversely, in a few interviews it is found that also the intensity of the relations and the quality of the information exchanged might affect positively the maintenance of an adequate active participation of the parties throughout the years.

From what concerns the roundtables of the Brenta Ring, the quantity and quality of information is satisfying to almost all the members. In general, the pace of the meetings is considered adequate, although it is at the same time admitted that it has been decreasing along the years. Still, flexibility balances this shortcoming and e-mails and personal contacts are considered essential channels for information exchange.

Also for what concerns the QP project, information exchange is seen as pivotal for the success of the project. In this particular case this need for adequate information has been the trigger of the collaboration, since the sharing of experience and the creating of informative and knowledge-based network is one of the objectives of the project. To show it in practice, once a year a general assembly is called and every 15 days a newsletter is sent around to keep up-to-date the members with local and international relevant news. Moreover, theme conferences and lectures are organized to serve as useful inputs for the members of the association.

In addition, for the sake of accountability a methodological consideration is needed. Not all the interviewees identify explicitly that information exchange is important. In spite of that, analyzing all the texts of interviews it is possible to infer that informal contacts often based on personal have been important channels for exchanging information and for the general success of the partnership. In fact, this is particularly important since perception of fairness and adequacy of information enhances trust among the actors. However, it is possible to conclude from the overall collected data that a trade-off about informal and structured process is necessary to guarantee the perception among the actors of transparency and adequacy of the information.

To sum up, it is confirmed the initial hypothesis that the quality (in terms of relevance and content) of information shared by all the parties and its quantity (in terms of methods and frequency) are really important factors in determining positively the success of a partnership. Nevertheless, it is found that a flexible system that balances informal and personal contacts with a structured process that has adequate organizational and economical resources is pivotal to determine an adequate quantity and quality of the information exchange. This is essential because it enhances mutual trust and enforcement of the behavior.

Table 15: Summary of the results of *information quantity and quality*

Individual factor	Source	Hypothesis	Indicator	Results of the application of the framework	Data collection method
Information quantity and quality	Mohr and Spekman, 1994; Leach and Pelkey, 2001.	The quality (in terms of relevance and content) of information shared by all the parties and its quantity (in terms of methods and frequency) are really important factors in determining positively the success of a partnership.	Adequate scientific and technical information Information sharing/exchange Equal access to information	<p>Case-related relevance: high Case-related evaluation: successful but dependent on resources Theoretical relevance: confirmed Overlapping: open internal communication Relations with other factors: adequacy of resources, flexibility, leadership, enforcement of decisions. participation, Recommendations for the other cases: Informal contacts and personal relations are really important for the quality and quantity of information. adequate resources to invest in a coordinator that focus on information exchange among the stakeholders especially in the planning phase. In operative phase important to responsables of the projects inform adequately the other partners.</p>	Semi-structured interviews In-depth interviews

Commitment

The analysis of the data collected suggests that the commitment shown by the partnership's parties is an important factor for its success. However, it is evident that commitment of the actors is influenced by empathy among partners, shared vision and adequacy of individual resources. Moreover, it also seems that commitment overlaps in the PNAB's case with the level of participation of stakeholders. This explains why answers to commitment and participation items were overall the same. Hence, I refer to the paragraph of participation to understand why and how, not all the actors have been committed at the same level.

All this considered, although not every stakeholder has been participating with the same commitment, it can be concluded that the commitment shown by the partnership's parties is really important factor for its success. In spite of that, first, commitment overlaps completely with participation of stakeholders' factor (which is wider). Second, this factor is still determined by other variables (i.e. adequacy of internal resources, shared vision, empathy), which are the *condiciones sine quibus non* for commitment to take place.

Table 16: Summary of the results on *commitment*

Individual factor	Source	Hypothesis	Indicator	Results of the application of the framework	Data collection method
Commitment	Mohr and Spekman, 1994; Bramwell and Lane, 2000.	The commitment shown by the partnership's parties is really important factor for its success.	Cooperative behaviour of the parties Lived up to commitments Intensity of relations (regularity of the meetings)	<p>Case-related relevance: low Case-related evaluation: high Theoretical relevance: high but is redundant Overlapping: Participation of stakeholders Relations with other factors: Recommendations for the other cases:</p>	Policy documents Semi-structured interviews In-depth interviews

Interdependence

The triangulated analysis of the collected data suggests that the more an actor is aware of the interdependence, the more active in the partnership is; which confirms the initial hypothesis. Interdependence, although is not often explicitly mentioned by the interviewees, seems to be very high in the PNAB case. *Per se* ST requires a high level of interdependence among different fields and levels, to which the diversity of the Trentino's actors and institutions must be added. In general, all the interviewees recognize that a minimum level of interdependence exists and therefore it seems that collaborative arrangements are seen as a benefit because of a reduction in the implementation transaction costs. Additionally, the data suggest that the more the interdependence is recognized by the stakeholders, the more the partners see the collaborative arrangements as a benefit, the more they are active in the partnership and the more adequate the partnership resources are.

By analyzing the data collected through the interviews, it is possible to deduce that first, not all the actors are aware of the high level of interdependence and that second, the process itself tried to highlight the links on interdependence. Third, recognition of interdependence seems to develop in parallel with empathy among the partners. However, for example, all the projects concerned with mobility in the PA are considered unanimously successful because the interdependence among PA and local governments is high and implementation could easily rely on few joint measures (shared funding and shared management of the parking system). Nevertheless, it is noticed by the president of QP and by other province-related interviewees that, for a greater success the partnership itself should be acknowledged for its interdependence with the wider provincial ecological network and tourism provincial context.

Overall, the collected data confirm that for the success of the partnership related to tourism in PAs (considering the interrelation among fields) it is fundamental that the actors recognize the interdependence that links and ties the relevant stakeholders in the planning and implementation network.

Table 17: Summary of results on *interdependence*

Individual factor	Source	Hypothesis	Indicator	Results of the application of the framework	Data collection method
Interdependence	Mohr and Spekman, 1994; Bramwell and Lane, 2000.	Given the potential synergies involved, recognition of interdependence might be a success factor for the partnership. Interdependence is defined as "interaction based on the distribution of resources between various actors, the goals they pursue and their perceptions of their resource dependencies".	Recognition of a high degree of interdependence in planning and managing sustainable tourism the protected area	<p>Case-related relevance: high</p> <p>Case-related evaluation: successful but to be improved</p> <p>Theoretical relevance: high</p> <p>Overlapping: none</p> <p>Relations with other factors: legislative framework, empathy, participation, adequacy of resources, benefits</p> <p>Recommendations for the other cases: as for creating empathy also interdependence must be explained through a common and shared language: complexity of the objective and the benefits through a saving in transaction costs must be presented to the participants.</p>	Semi-structured interviews In-depth interviews

Trust

As it is clear in the individual-partners factors, the development of trust relations has been playing a fundamental role in determining the establishment and the current success of the partnership framework of the PNAB. In fact, especially if considered the high level of historical conflict among the PA's authority and other local actors, which was due to lack of trust and legitimacy towards the PA, construction of trust has been pivotal for the cooperative behavior to take place.

Trust is defined by Mohr and Spekman (1994, p. 138) as 'the belief that a party's word is reliable and that a party will fulfill its obligation in an exchange'. However, the collection and the analysis of the data reveal

that trust is not simply measurable and is analytically tricky because trust building is both a condition for success and a positive result for the social outcome of the partnership. Moreover, in the application of STCRC framework to the PNAB case, the data collected in the interviews suggest that trust is somehow explained and measured through other factors of the framework. For example, how (some) stakeholders developed empathy among themselves and why some parties have been more active than others, quite well represents how trust has been building in the PNAB's area. All in all, in the PNAB legitimacy, issues seem to play the greater role in trust development. In parallel, it seems that trust is dependent on conflict management, quantity and quality of information (informal and personal relations are determinant), adequacy of time, recognition of interdependence, transparency of the process and to the extent to which values are shared. Also participation of the stakeholders seems to be connected with trust. Trust is also pivotal for the enforcement of agreements. In order to not be redundant, I suggest referring to the mentioned factors for further elements contributing to trust building; while I refer to the conclusion of the adjusted framework to understand how trust could be analyzed. In fact, it seems that Glasbergen's partnership's levels might help to place development of trust in a better analytical picture as it is shown afterwards.

To sum up, trust is paramount for cooperative behavior. Nevertheless, as the SAT example shows, adequate resources and internal communication at individual-partners' level must be present as well for a successful cooperation to take place. Trust is also related to almost all the factors of the STCRC study.

Table 18: Summary of the results on *trust*

Individual factor	Source	Hypothesis	Indicator	Results of the application of the framework	Data collection method
Trust	Mohr and Spekman, 1994; Bramwell and Lane, 2000; Roberts and Simpson, 1999.	Trust and respect between parties are important elements to ensure the success of a partnership. Trust is defined as "the belief that a party's word is reliable and that a party will fulfill its obligation in an exchange". Trust seems to be pivotal in the enforcement of the decisions and commitment. Nevertheless, when trust is based specifically on individuals, trust might erode when an individual leaves the partnership. Thus, some institutionalizing agreements might help overcome this problem.	Trust, sincerity and respect Perception that decisions will be implemented	<p>Case-related relevance: high</p> <p>Case-related evaluation: successful but to be improved</p> <p>Theoretical relevance: confirmed</p> <p>Overlapping:</p> <p>Relations with other factors: with all (excluding external communication and adequacy of resources)</p> <p>Recommendations for the other cases: to fulfill all the other factors</p>	Semi-structured interviews In-depth interviews

Adequacy/Transparency of the process

By adequacy it is meant a trade-off among structure and formalization for one hand and flexibility and transparency on the other hand. From the application of the framework to the case-study, one conclusion might be drawn. Adequacy and transparency of the process overlaps with many other factors such as structured process, flexibility, quantity and quality of information and open internal communication but also external communication.

The adequacy and transparency of the process might influence positively the efficacy of the partnership, also enhancing trust and thus the success of the partnership. What is more relevant to note, without being redundant with other factors mentioned before, is that almost the totality of the respondents is explicitly

satisfied with the adequacy of the process mentioning as point of reference the availability of resources, as saying “it is made the best with the limited resources the partnership has”.

To sum, adequacy and transparency of the process does not seem to be relevant in the PNAB’s case. This is a consequence of the redundancy of the framework; in fact other overlapping factors are better measurable and understandable by the interviewees.

Table 19: Summary of the results on *adequacy/transparency of the process*

Individual factor	Source	Hypothesis	Indicator	Results of the application of the framework	Data collection method
Adequacy/Transparency of the process	Poncelet, 2004; Mohr and Spekman, 1994; Steffen, 2004.	The adequacy of the process might influence positively the efficacy of the process and thus the success of the partnership. By adequacy it is meant a trade-off among structure and formalization for one hand and flexibility and transparency on the other hand.	Expert preparation Familiarity with political processes Awareness of critical process issues and adequate addressing of these issues Transparent planning/negotiation process	Case-related relevance: low Case-related evaluation: successful Theoretical relevance: confirmed but redundant Overlapping: structured process, flexibility, quantity and quality of information and open internal communication but also external communication, adequacy of resources Relations with other factors: Recommendations for the other cases:	Semi-structured interviews In-depth interviews

Structured process

Although, as it is noticed earlier, a certain degree of informality and flexibility is important, a clear, defined and structured process seems to be important for the PNAB success by providing certainty and structure to decision-making. In the planning phase, no interviewee asserts that the success of that phase was dependent on the structure of the process and it is explicitly observed that flexibility and informality were appreciated. On the other hand, when the operative phase started, each roundtable adopted different decision-making and process rules; in spite of that, guidelines of the general Plan of Action (it is noticed that the ECST serves a positive structure to guide the development of the partnership) are subscribed by all the parties. Additionally, what is also noteworthy is that a structured process is linked to the quantity of the information and leadership and thus, is also dependent on the availability of the resources as the failure of the general newsletter project demonstrates.

To sum up, a clear, defined and structured process which provides certainty and structure to decision-making and implementation (e.g. enforcement of behavior) is really important for the success of a partnership, although it is usually subjected to the availability of resources for partnership. To balance this trade-off, for the sake of the success of the partnership, structure and formality must also be integrated with flexibility in the process.

Table 20: Summary of the results on *structured process*

Individual factor	Source	Hypothesis	Indicator	Results of the application of the framework	Data collection method
Structured process	Leach and Pelkey, 2001	Clear, defined and structured processes, which provide certainty and structure to decision-making are really important for the success of a partnership.	Well-defined decision-making rules, goals and objectives Regular scheduled meeting	<p>Case-related relevance: high</p> <p>Case-related evaluation: successful but needs to be balanced</p> <p>Theoretical relevance: confirmed</p> <p>Overlapping:</p> <p>Relations with other factors: quantity of information, flexibility, adequacy of resources, enforcement behavior, trust</p> <p>Recommendations for the other cases: trade-off between formal structured process and informal contacts and flexibility</p>	Policy documents Semi-structured interviews In-depth interviews

Flexibility

As is mentioned before, the interviews confirm that in the PNAB case, a certain degree of flexibility might increase the ability of the partnership to adapt to changing conditions, thus enhancing the possibilities of success of the partnership.

Flexibility seems to be meant by almost all the interviewees as the capacity on behalf of the PA's authority (i.e. the coordinator), of finding a balance among different "pragmatic" trade-offs. First, it is found positive the trade-off between the quantity of involved stakeholders in the planning phase and the effectiveness of the decision-making. Second, the trade-off between formality and informality of the relations among parties is deemed as really important (to solve conflict, create trust and adapting to changing conditions). It is considered positive by all the interested respondents, that each roundtable is free to choose the most appropriate structure and agreement. It is overall considered positive that the ECST framework allowed to the PNAB actors a high level of flexibility within some major useful guidelines.

Furthermore, in the PNAB case, flexibility seems to be enhanced by the learning working environment. Other PAs' experiences were investigated by the PA's authority before applying the participatory framework to the PNAB. Moreover, according to the interviews but also other documents (i.e. PNAB, 2006; 2009; 2012a; 2012b) yearly revision and feedback mechanisms are planned for each roundtable. This gives the possibility to adjust action according to changing conditions since revision and monitoring mechanisms are essential informative tools for the partnership to be successful and many interviewees are aware of that.

The QP project serves as illustration of the flexibility of the roundtables' decision-making. In fact, the categories that could be certificated QP have increased significantly (not only hotels, but nowadays also camping, farms producing local products, and schools). The flexibility of the QP seems also to be enhanced by its learning network which bases its reasons to exist on sharing of knowledge and experience and environmental values (Basile, 2009; Qualità Parco, 2006; 2010). Moreover, it is observed by its president that two levels have been creating to order to allow the members an additional flexibility: the association (30 members) and the Club (10 members). The latter is meant to include all those members of the association willing to pay a quota to be invested in label promotion; while the former involves concerns exchange of information and experiences but less financial participation.

Overall, flexibility meant as readiness to adapt to changing conditions is really important for the PNAB case and it seemed enhanced by informal contacts. Nevertheless, as outlined in the structured process a balanced trade-off between structure and flexibility must be found to ensure the success of the partnership.

Table 21: Summary of the results on *flexibility*

Individual factor	Source	Hypothesis	Indicator	Results of the application of the framework	Data collection method
Flexibility	Leach and Pelkey, 2002; Imperial, 2005.	A certain degree of flexibility might increase the ability of the partnership to adapt to changing conditions, thus enhancing the possibilities of success of the partnership.	Flexibility in negotiation conditions Flexibility in planning Informality in relations	<p>Case-related relevance: high</p> <p>Case-related evaluation: successful</p> <p>Theoretical relevance: confirmed</p> <p>Overlapping: partially innovation/adaption to change</p> <p>Relations with other factors: quantity and quality of information, leadership</p> <p>Recommendations for the other cases: flexibility must be balanced with a structured process, however it is fundamental to rely on informal and personal relations to enhance flexibility</p>	Policy documents Semi-structured interviews In-depth interviews

Dealing with conflict

Considering the high level of conflict characterizing the relation among the PNAB's authority and the local stakeholders makes one predict already how much important conflict management in the PNAB case is. From the analysis of the texts of the interviews, it emerges that this factor might be analyzed from different perspectives.

First of all, it is important to remember that the establishment of the PNAB in the 1980s was not socially accepted by the local population in all its areas because it was seen as an imposed not necessary institution that limited local sovereignty and development. More specifically, the PA was mostly obstructed for economical and political (but somebody might say also social) reasons. Economically, it was established over a large area entailing destinations such as Madonna di Campiglio that at that time were experiencing a significant economic boom as ski resorts or such as Val di Non, where apples were already cultivated intensively. Consequently, the PNAB was conceived as a limit to present and future tourism development. On the other hand, politically, the PNAB was perceived as a not legit institution that seemed to overwhelm the landownership and the centenary role of the *usi civici* associations and local governments to manage their own land and use their soils and forests. Yet, the interviews confirm implicitly that economical and political factors are interwoven. Social tensions, with even the establishment of an ANTI-PA popular committee signed the first decade of the PNAB. In general, in the data collected through the interviews, it is possible to identify five main drivers solving conflict surrounding the PA. The first trigger is constituted by the process itself which in the planning phase was facilitated by a third-party intervention. The participatory strategy itself acted as conflict "damper" because it was perceived as signal of openness on behalf of all the parties. According to a provincial tourism-related respondent, moving the debate from different systems of values to something more practice-oriented did serve as *bridge* among the different actors. In his exact words, "this bridge was successfully created by proposing projects that could be measurable, feasible, pragmatic and verifiable". As highlighted in the empathy factor, an important element used to solve conflict among stakeholders concerns the language used in the decision-making. It is noticed that it has been trying to use a language that could aggregate rather than divide and that is why, as PA's respondents and province- and tourism-related interviews confirm, strict environmental concerns have been not addressed explicitly in the discussion (quality of life is a concept less conflicting). Second, in parallel to the participatory process, the fact that the members of the PNAB's executive council have been majors of the concerned areas (belonging to the local population not external). Third, the political recognition of the landownership of the *usi civici* associations (through a representative in the PA's executive council) has been pivotal to solve the legitimacy conflict. Fourth, generational turnover is also indicated as an important factor (in several interviews from municipalities, TBOs and PA's authority) that

has been changing the attitude of some actors. In this context, also the economic crisis and recent environmental global trends seem to have played a role in changing some actors' attitude. Fifth, the conflict raised by the limitation on the land use caused by the zoning of the PA his conflict was partly solved by adhering to the EU Natura 2000 principles by potentiating the special areas and reducing the integral conservation area. Overall, however, it can be concluded that flexibility and informal and personal relations are essential elements to manage adequately past and current conflicts since they are linked to trust and all the factors enhancing it.

Nevertheless, all the elements mentioned above have been not effective with all the involved actors in the same way. As has been already noticed in other factors, some stakeholders are still showing adversarial attitude and conflict still persists in spite of the participatory approaches. Some interviewees from the PA's authority claim that this is to be entitled to the closeness and political prejudice towards the PNAB's authority. While according to the *usi civici* associations and the local governments of Val di Non, the conflicts were not been solved because of the strong character of the former PA's director "who was not good at managing conflict at all".

To sum up, by applying the analytical framework, it could be concluded that the management of conflict surrounding the PNAB has been contributing to the partnership's success for two reasons. First, because the roots of the conflict were addressed (i.e. the legitimacy issue) and second, the third-party facilitation was only limited to an initial phase.

Table 22: Summary of the results on *dealing with conflict*

Individual factor	Source	Hypothesis	Indicator	Results of the application of the framework	Data collection method
Dealing with conflict	Gray, 1996; Mohr and Spekman, 1994; Himmelman, 1996.	Although it seems the way in which parties resolve conflict influences partnership's success, it seems that an important factor enhancing partnership's success is solving the roots of the conflict and not smoothing it over or avoiding it. Moreover, although a third-party facilitator might help in managing conflicts in the initial phases, "ongoing use of arbitrators might indicate inherent problems" in the partnership.	Low or medium level of conflict Conflict resolution training	<p>Case-related relevance: high</p> <p>Case-related evaluation: successful but with shortcomings</p> <p>Theoretical relevance: confirmed</p> <p>Overlapping:</p> <p>Relations with other factors: trust, empathy, legitimacy, participation, leadership,</p> <p>Recommendations for the other cases: diagnose the initial level of conflict and set specific strategies to address it, a third-party might be helpful at the beginning but later it is an indicator of deep divisions.</p>	Semi-structured interviews Expert in-depth interview Observations during meetings Policy documents

Open internal communication

Applying the STCRC's framework to the PNAB's case-study it results clear that *open internal communication* totally overlaps with part of what is meant by *quality/quantity of information*. In fact, the latter entails *per se* an evaluation of the adequacy of the information exchange and communication. More specifically, *open internal communication* according to Laing et al. (2009) refers to the openness, inclusiveness and effectiveness of the communication process. Measuring this factor in the PNAB's case by using effective data sharing and regular, clear and open communication strategies as indicators shows that the answers of the interviewees are completely overlapping with part of the data collected for the *quality/quantity of information* factor which *per se* entails technical adequacy, fairness and frequency in the exchange of information. All this considered, in order not to be redundant, I refer to the factor *quantity/quality of the information* for the assessment of this criterion.

Table 23: Summary of the results on *open internal communication*

Individual factor	Source	Hypothesis	Indicator	Results of the application of the framework	Data collection method
Open internal communication	Mohr and Spekman, 1994; Leach and Pelkey, 2001.	An open, inclusive, effective and shared communication process is an essential factor in order to enhance cooperation among parties and hence, partnership's success.	Effective/ quality communication, data sharing Regular, clear and open communication strategies	Case-related relevance: low Case-related evaluation: successful but redundant Theoretical relevance: confirmed but redundant Overlapping: quality of information Relations with other factors: Recommendations for the other cases:	Policy documents Semi-structured interviews In-depth interviews

External communication

External communication is deemed important by all the interviewees (also confirmed through the analysis of policy documents) and it results as being the most critical factor for the future PNAB's partnership success (especially for what concern the QP and the Brenta Ring projects). However, the initial hypothesis meant external actors as general organizations with whom the partnership might have exchange of information. In spite of this initial premise, all the collected data (both through interviews and policy documents) suggests that, being the partnership associated with tourism, the importance of external communication in terms of tourism product promotion is self-evident. In addition to tourists, other actors seem important to be included in the analysis. In fact, also communication towards the local residents is deemed as really important by all the PA-related respondents since it is assumed to enhance the partnership life time supporting an active participation of the local stakeholders. Overall, the collected data suggests that three clusters of external actors could be identified: local population, tourists and others (e.g. other PAs).

Communication towards the local residents. As noted in other sections of the analysis, attitudes of stakeholders are linked with population moods and trends. As many authors in the literature highlight, electoral turnover hinders long-term sustainable development policy. This is why farsighted leadership in individual partners (such as majors, or TBO's director) results important. Nevertheless, an effective communication towards the population is proposed by many interviewees (from the PA and local governments) as an important driver to build a long-term common vision around sustainability values; which coincides with one of the social results of the partnership's success. The PNAB's authority seems to have understood that and publishes and distributes freely an informative magazine to all the libraries and the families of the PNAB's area (PNAB, 2012a; 2012b).

According to an interviewee from a local government, still many residents do not perceive and realize how many projects the PNAB's authority has been carrying out. Apparently this is not to due to the lack of information from the PA's authority, but rather to the persistence of prejudices in some local residents who still see the PNAB as economic and political limit. Nevertheless, in her opinion, this perception depends on the level of tourism development of the area. For example the population is more hostile in mass tourism area such Pinzolo and in general in Val Rendena, while it is more sympathetic in less economic developed areas that see in the PNAB a development opportunity. However, the participatory approaches, especially in the planning phase when the forums were open to everybody, targeted this problem and external communication is slowly changing the residents' perception. Nevertheless, the reintroduction of the brown bear through the Life Ursus EU-funded project (started in 1996) resulted in a source of misunderstanding among the population and the PA's authority. In some cases, it even became a political and psychological issue as it is noticed by several interviewees within and outside the PA's authority. A PNAB-related respondents asserts that the ideological and psychological roots of this conflict seem to be demonstrated by the lack of participants to the informative meetings organized by the PNAB.

Communication towards tourists/visitors. For what concerns the communication towards tourists, in general the PNAB's authority has invested a lot of efforts in improving services and infrastructure for several visitor centers and info-points where information and communication about the protection of environment and the peculiarities of the PNAB are available (PNAB, 2006). In addition, according to the managers of the PA's authority, the number of employees dedicated to education and communication has been enlarged (rather than increase park guards). Information points within and outside the PNAB are important as suggested by Osti (1993) that studied the behavior of PA's visitors and found that when visitors perceive to be in a PA are more prone to limit and inhibit their behavior according to limits and restrictions.

Another important action undertaken by the PNAB's authority and proposed in 2005 to the local TBOs is called Parco-card and it "is a pre-paid service card that enables visitors to use a range of services at a discount" (PNAB, 2006). This project seems to be successful especially when considering that currently the TBO of Campiglio-Pinzolo-Val Rendena in collaboration with the PNAB adapted this project for developing a more place-specific product called "Dolomeet-card" inspired by similar principles.

Although it is difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of the promotion of PNAB's partnership framework in general, it is worthy to understand the difficulties in external communication that are experienced by the QP project. In fact, the overall success of this project, as noticed in the indicator of economic success, the report n. 41 of the Provincial Tourism Observatory (PNAB; 2012d) reveals that only few tourists choose a QP hotel because of its sustainability label. Two different points of views are found in the data to explain the weaknesses of QP in external communication. The first explanation is supported by the members of the roundtable and claims a lack of commitment from the provincial promotion authority and local TBOs. First, the provincial promotion authority is supposed to detain by law the responsibility and the competence to deal with tourism promotion on a large scale. It is blamed to have failed in identifying a fruitful channel of promotion especially in foreign markets. In addition, a lack of engagement of the local TBOs is observed. It seems that the reasons of their low level of engagement lie in the choice of "horizontal/vertical promotion". To better explain, the TBOs do not promote adequately the activity of QP members because QP represents excellence while the TBOs are not prone to promote excellence because they are funded by all hotels of their territory and they do not want to highlight this quality gap. In other words, the tourism promotion of QP is seen as the most critical point for its success, which seems to be hindered by a political unwillingness to promote this brand (for the provincial perspective because it represents only a part of the province, and for the TBO'S perspective because it is likely damage the other TBO's members).

On the other side, provincial tourism-related stakeholders claim that the difficulties in QP promotion lie in the fact that QP is a complicate product to communicate. Personally, I have to admit that also for myself was really difficult to understand fully what QP project and its association are about and how are structured. It is understandable that for a tourist it is difficult to understand what QP offers. It is at the same time an environmental management certification (such as the EU Ecolabel) and a PA-related accommodation structure (characteristics that is evident in the provision of Parco-cards to the guests). But in regard of the latter element, this still creates confusion according to a provincial tourism representative because the QP hotels are not exactly within the geographical borders of the PNAB. In addition, it is claimed that another weakness of QP is that covers only a part of the whole provincial area and thus, it seems more difficult to promote by the provincial promotion agency. However, all in all, it seems that the problems in promotion reflect the content and the aim of QP; as the members themselves acknowledge, this has a stronger internal objective (based on individual ethical beliefs and network benefits) rather than external (e.g. increasing economical results). This former refers to the establishment of a group of economic actors who supports and promotes the PNAB's mission. In conclusion, according to the provincial

tourism stakeholders, the difficulties in external communication are due to the inconsistency between promotion and product. Notwithstanding, the same provincial interviewee still confirms the lack of commitment on behalf of the local TBOs, referring to it as a TBO's governance problem. In fact it is problematic for the TBOs to promote the QP hotels because these are a small minority of the overall TBO's members (which all pay a quota).

Overall, external communication meant as tourism marketing and promotion is the most important factor in determining the economic results of the partnership and in the PNAB case it is the factor the most among all should deserve improvements. More specifically, in the operative phase external communication seems to be significantly dependent on the level of participation of the stakeholders and on the adequacy of the resources available to the roundtable.

Communication with other external actors. It is noteworthy that the PNAB partnership framework has had relations evaluated (by all the interviewees aware of them) as very positive for the learning process and the organizational capacity of the partnership framework. First of all, it is important to mention the three PAs' networks in which the PNAB is embedded and where it tries to be an active actor (according to PA's interviewees and policy documents): the Unesco Geopark network, the Alparc network (i.e. the Alpine network for PAs) and in the network of Italian PAs adhering to ECST. Moreover, it is observed the importance that the PNAB obtained the sponsorship of Unesco-Dolomites in virtue of its sustainability commitment. Lastly, an important actor that interacted with the PNAB's partnership framework is the European Commission which awarded QP project and the PNAB's framework as one of the best European practice in corporate social responsibility in 2009 (Basile, 2009).

To conclude, the relation among the partnership and other external actors seems to be a pivotal factor in determining the capacity of exchanging ideas which enhance partnership's flexibility and diffusing innovation also outside the partnership's environment. Nevertheless, an adjustment to the initial framework and hypothesis is needed. In fact, by external actors it is important to mean also tourists and local population (not only external organization). An effective communication towards tourists will also increase the chance of positive economical results, while effective communication towards local residents will enhance social results. Nevertheless, both increase the environmental awareness and thus improving environmental results.

Table 24: Summary of the results on *external communication*

Individual factor	Source	Hypothesis	Indicator	Results of the application of the framework	Data collection method
External communication	Lundblad, 2003; Braun, 2004.	The relation among the partnership and other external actors seems to be a pivotal factor in determining the capacity of exchanging ideas which enhance partnership's flexibility and diffusing innovation also outside the partnership's environment.	Adequate communication to the wider public of the achievements and work of the partnership	<p>Case-related relevance: high</p> <p>Case-related evaluation: critical</p> <p>Theoretical relevance: high, but need to entail three dimensions (third parties, local communication, tourists)</p> <p>Overlapping: none</p> <p>Relations with other factors: participation, adequacy of resources, benefits, trust, legislative framework</p> <p>Recommendations for the other cases: need of stronger provincial promotion authority role, enlarge market-oriented instruments to the whole province.</p>	Policy documents Semi-structured interviews In-depth interviews

5.1.3. Partnership/context-related factors

Context-related factors concern the issues related to the framework within which the partnership is located.

Adequacy of resources

According to the STCRC framework, the adequacy of resources (meant as staff levels and expertise, equipment and funding) is essential for a successful partnership and the pooling of resources is an indicator collective ability to solve problems. The empirical application of the framework confirms that together with trust, adequacy of resources is the main determinant for success. Nevertheless, the results of the analysis suggest that partnership's collective resources are dependent on the individual-partner's availability of resources (which *per se* together with empathy and shared vision affects the level of participation undertaken by a stakeholder).

First, for what concerns the adequacy of the resources at the individual-partner level, the data collected in the interviews suggest that resources limit or enhance individual participation to the partnership and thus, affect the final success. The SAT example serves as a good illustration. In fact, although empathy as well as shared vision was positive, its internal inadequacy of resources affected significantly how this organization could participate in the partnership framework.

Second, at the partnership level, all the interviewees confirm that organizational and financial resources are pivotal elements of partnership success. It is furthermore suggested that also the ambitiousness of its objectives is related to its capacity of organizing resources. From the analyzed data it could be inferred that the success of the PNAB's participatory approach is linked to its availability of resources and that an increase of them could enhance further its success. Currently, the economical and human resources seem barely adequate since throughout the years they have been significantly reduced. This is reflected in the simplicity of many projects so that they are more likely to be implemented.

Moreover, almost all the interviewees (including those from the provincial level) observed that the provincial resources are not adequate to intervene substantially in a wide ST policy. This is observed to be due to the provincial legislative framework as it is shown afterwards. Provincial and local TBOs plan their strategy according to their resources at a yearly basis without knowing what it will be the availability for the next years. This hinders the overall success of the partnership.

In spite of the low funding for the projects, the fact that PA's authority hired at long-term contract a person entitled to manage all the operational actions of the partnership framework has been identified by all the interviewees as an indicator of adequate resource.

The mechanism of joint funding seems to be evaluated positively by all interviewees. Nevertheless, from one side the PA's authority complains that it still the major funder while other stakeholders (especially from marginal areas) claim that PA's authority is not engaged economically with their local project.

To conclude, while the level of joint funding is confirmed to be an indicator of cooperative behavior, it is important to consider the adequacy of the resources at the partnership level as well as at the individual-partner level. The latter is important to determine the level of participation that stakeholders will show (provided that also empathy among stakeholders is present) and thus partnership success. In parallel, the level of adequacy of joint resources available to the partnership determines the level of ambitiousness and feasibility of implementation in terms of sustainable development outcome. In fact, if resources are low, also the operational setting of the project should be flexible and be planned according to the available resources.

Table 25: Summary of the results on *adequacy of resources*

Individual factor	Source	Hypothesis	Indicator	Results of the application of the framework	Data collection method
Adequacy of resources	Imperial, 2005; Leach and Pelkey, 2001.	Resources might refer to staff levels and expertise ,equipment and funding. Its adequacy is deemed as being essential for a successful partnership. The pooling of resources might be an indicator collective ability to solve problems.	Adequate resources(from partnership's revenues/ from government) Efficient allocation of resources Equitable access to resources	Case-related relevance: high Case-related evaluation: successful but to be improved Theoretical relevance: confirmed Overlapping: none Relations with other factors: participation, composition, quantity and quality of information, structured process, legislative framework, macro context Recommendations for the other cases: pivotal to adjust feasibility of projects to the adequacy of resources, invest in organizational capabilities (long-term coordinator), involve partners with adequate individual resources	Policy documents Semi-structured interviews In-depth interviews

Adequacy of time/Duration of partnership

The analyzed data in some policy documents and in the interviews suggests that adequacy of time has been a relevant factor in determining PNAB case success.

Especially, for what concerns the planning phase (which lasted since 2005 more than one year and a half), it is found a quite long time was necessary to create empathy among the parties.

On the other hand, in the roundtables, it is observed that the length of a project is an indicator of its success and thus, long-lasting partnerships are essential to produce relevant results and show benefits. This is also understood by the ECST demanding for at least a five-year strategy to be admitted.

To sum up, adequacy of time is a factor to keep in mind when evaluating partnerships in PAs linked to ST. Moreover, as Glasbergen (2010) suggests partnership for sustainable development to be defined as such should be based on long-term cooperation.

Table 26: Summary of the results on *adequacy of time/Duration of partnership*

Individual factor	Source	Hypothesis	Indicator	Results of the application of the framework	Data collection method
Adequacy of time/Duration of partnership	Leach and Pelkey, 2001; Imperial, 2005.	Adequate time is an important precondition for a successful partnership since it enhances the benefits and allows the setting of long-term strategy.	Adequate time	Case-related relevance: high Case-related evaluation: adequate Theoretical relevance: confirmed Overlapping: indicator of success Relations with other factors: all factors Recommendations for the other cases: at the beginning necessary to set a minimum time (five-year) as the ECST suggests.	Policy documents Semi-structured interviews In-depth interviews

Legislative framework

The PNAB case confirms that a coherent and harmonized legislative framework is an important condition to enhance partnership's success because it offers important incentives to the actors to cooperate within the scope of the partnership.

Integrating the results of the interviews with the analysis of relevant documents, it is clear that from one side, the international, Alpine and the environmental provincial legislative framework is sufficient coherent

with the PNAB's policies. However, on the other side, the provincial legislative context is also responsible for some failures hindering the current and future success of the PNAB partnership framework.

The policy arena of the PNAB's framework is embedded in a complex multi-level governance framework. As mentioned in relevant policy documents, the international and the European levels respectively refer to the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992 (including the CBD), the EU 6th Environment Action Program and Strategy for Sustainable Development (including the NATURA 2000 system). Subsequently, there is the national Italian legislative level. Given the special autonomy given by the Italian Constitution to the Province of Trento¹ and considered that the PNAB is a provincial PA, the provincial level is the most important legislative framework. This determines in turn the lower levels of government which are the Valley Communities and the municipalities. However, between the provincial and the higher levels, exists another macro-regional level established by the 1991 Alpine Convention on Sustainable Development. Although, Italy as well as Switzerland have been not very active in ratifying the protocols of implementation, the Alpine Convention tries to drive sustainable development locally through the EU Alpine Space fund (Balsiger, 2007, Del Baggio, 2009). The Alpine Network of PAs (Alparc) and the network of municipalities (Alliance in the Alps) are example of alternative channels of implementation of sustainable development in the Alpine region.

The international institutional framework regarding protection of biodiversity and sustainable development in general, as outlined in chapter 2, finds implementation in the PNAB's partnership policies. The European Conservation Strategy (NATURA 2000) guided with its principles of ecological corridors and harmonization among natural and human needs the strategy of the PNAB as well as the general provincial approach that has been undertaking in the last couple of years (which aims to constitute a provincial PA's network).

The study of the Trentino context (and within this, the PNAB case) highlights that, as shown by many authors of international environmental governance literature (O'Neill, 2009; Glasbergen, 1998; 2010), the implementation of environmental international policy cannot rely any longer on the only traditional state-led channels. The PNAB' case showed that "is at the local level that more interesting, and effective experiences have been developed, mainly at municipal and provincial levels" (Diamantini and Zanon, 2000, p. 301). The reference to the implementation of *Local Agenda 21*, one of policy output of the 1992 Rio de Janeiro Earth Conference containing very important sustainable development guidelines, is retrievable in many provincial and the PNAB policy documents and in some interviews. Analyzing the collected data, it seems that no stakeholder mentions the national Italian legislative framework as it affects the environmental and tourism provincial framework. This might be explained by the fact that, thanks to its special autonomy, the province holds all competences in environmental and tourism issues (excluding National Parks). Overall, the analysis of the data suggests that at the provincial level three policy-fields are more relevant, the environmental, the tourism-related and the institutional-administrative one.

The provincial environmental framework is considered by all the interviewees an important dimension facilitating the success of the partnership. First, it is said to set increasingly environmental standards (e.g. in waste reduction, energy waste) thus, serving as incentive to adopt environmental practices anticipating future regulations. Second, the provincial level also offers economical incentives and technical assistance for Ecolabel and Emas certifications. All this is seen as an important trigger for cooperative behavior for the QP members but also local governments, Valley Communities and increases environmental awareness of local population.

¹ According to the article 116 of the Italian Constitution home rule is granted to five regions (namely Sardinia, Sicily, Trentino-Alto Adige/Südtirol, Aosta Valley and Friuli-Venezia Giulia) out of 20, acknowledging their powers in relation to legislation, administration and finance. However, by constitution in Trentino-Alto Adige/Südtirol is a special case since the regional authority is exerted separately by the two Autonomous Province of Trento and Bolzano.

The tourism provincial framework results instead more critical and in spite of its potential organizational capacities and financial resources, it seems that some elements have been hindering a further success of the partnership. The 2002/8 provincial law reformed the Trentino promotion and product development system. In fact, the competences of the local TBOs, from just taking care of information and local hospitality, since 2002 they have been in charge of product development, marketing and commercialization. While the provincial tourism promotion authority only focuses on promotion with especially tasks for foreign markets. This structure is not negative *per se*, but the fact that the provincial authority limits its competences to promotion might hinder the success of product (what happened in the QP project and partly also for the Brenta Ring).

Another aspect that is found by the tourism-related interviewees (including provincial tourism stakeholders) to hinder the partnership success is regarded as a structural problem. What seems to be missing is an adequate farsighted provincial tourism implementation strategy that might support strategically and financially long-term transition towards ST. Sustainability and specifically tourism deseasonalization seem to be important targets for the Trentino tourism strategy as it is evident in the two provincial tourism policy documents (summed up in the 2011 provincial tourism guidelines). This seems to be in harmonization with the newly published provincial sustainability strategy called PASSO (PAtto per uno Sviluppo SOstenibile – Alliance for a sustainable development) that supports local partnerships for sustainable development and sets 24 2020 targets and 22 monitoring indicators among which also tourism seasonality is addressed. However, the ambitiousness of these objectives is observed to be hampered by provincial tourism structure and dynamics. First, the provincial tourism sector “is spoiled by decades of economic growth and massive tourism” and nowadays the quantity assumption based on ski-based tourism has not been object of discussion. This is a significant constraint that affects both the provincial and the PNAB's participatory arena. Second but in parallel to the former, ST strategies demands long-term strategies while current provincial tourism relies on budgets on yearly basis, this economical rigidity which affects the availability of investments is even worsened by the current economic crisis and public cuts. Yet, it is highlighted by the some (tourism provincial) interviewees that (tourism) sustainability principles (which are defined in a vague and wide manner) are only laying on the ground because the operative and funding setting hamper the implementation of such guidelines. If the aim is long-term, you also need a long-term strategy with adequate funding. Moreover, the dismantling of the Provincial Observatory of Tourism some years ago is regarded by one provincial observer as a clear indicator of the lack of (political willingness to fund) scientific and qualitative research monitoring the provincial tourism context and processes.

A third aspect of the legislative framework surrounding the PNAB refers to the administrative-institutional dimensions which involves the local institutional actors of the PNAB's partnerships (*usi civici* associations, municipalities and Valley Communities). The Trentino is characterized by a rich institutional diversity, which in some ways facilitates cooperative behavior, while considering other aspects it hinders the success. However, the diversity is made by the presence of the place-specific actors, the newly established Valley Communities and the ancient institutions for the management of collective forests and highland pastures. For what concerns Valley Communities it is noticed by its representatives that the PNAB's partnership should harmonize better its projects to the legislative framework giving power and role to these institutions. However, this is a relatively new problem since the valley communities have been operative only since late 2010 (although they were established through the provincial law 2006/3). Their establishment has been strongly contested also through an abrogative referendum. However, some problems lie on the roles of this institution which overlaps with competences of province on one side and municipalities on the other. Regarding otherwise the *usi civici* stakeholders, the collective land management associations claim that their legal position at the provincial level hinders their participation in

the collaborative arrangements. In fact, whereas the Charter of the Community of Regole of Spinale and Manez was recognized by a provincial law in 1960, the other *usi civici* associations (i.e. ASUCs) do not perceive that they are acknowledged with the same rights. This is observed to hinder the participation of this type of actors in collaborative arrangements because they feel that there is an overall political power pressuring their legit sovereignty. Notwithstanding, the expert on *usi civici*'s legislative framework clarifies that it is true that some ASUCs are politically pressured by local government and province. However, this is not due to the legislative framework, which legally protects at the same level the landownership of Regole and ASUCs, but to political powers and pressures on behalf of local government. In his perspective, the law 2005/8 protects the collective property and this might provide the basis to enhance the capacity of ASUCs to not surrender to external pressures.

Another legislative constraint, noticed by all the interviewees, is the electoral turnover in the municipalities but also, in the future, in the Valley Communities. The change in the leaders in local governments might be harmonized by a stronger legislative provincial framework addressing sustainability.

Lastly, for what concerns higher legislative levels, according to the interviewees the EU framework is really relevant because, first, it provides funding (through different channels for example with the program Life + and the LEADER territorial fund) and second, though NATURA 2000 provides the instrument to implement the open approach to biodiversity protection. The Alpine Convention framework is mentioned by some PA's authority representatives through its Alparc network and is recognized to be very important to support local sustainable development.

In light of the application of the analytical framework, I consider necessary for future research to better define the differences among legislative framework, macro-context and administrative setting. To sum u

To sum up, coordination and harmonization with other legislative and institutional framework is important for determining the extent of the success of the partnership. In particular, in the Trentino case, it is noticed that in the future three aspects should deserved revisions. First, tourism policy could plan long-term strategies with relative adequate resources. Second, Valley Communities' institutions should be harmonized within the PNAB's scope and operative arrangement. This also involves that Valley Communities should integrate sustainability principles in their territorial plans. Third, legislative protection should be provide the ground to the associations managing collective land to understand and define their role in local sustainable development.

Table 27: Summary of the results on legislative framework

Individual factor	Source	Hypothesis	Indicator	Results of the application of the framework	Data collection method
Legislative framework	Hall, 1999; Buckley and Sommer, 2001.	The legislative framework refers to the vertical and horizontal integration of the partnership's operational arrangements. A coherent and harmonised legislative framework is an important condition to enhance partnership's success because it might offer important incentives to the actors to cooperate within the scope of the partnership.	Presence of legal arrangements covering liability and insurance requirements of all parties Political framework enables the partnership to establish Legal arrangements exist to implement the decision-making	<p>Case-related relevance: high</p> <p>Case-related evaluation: successful but with shortcomings in the tourism sector</p> <p>Theoretical relevance: confirmed but need of better definition</p> <p>Overlapping: partially with macro-context and administrative setting</p> <p>Relations with other factors: participation, empathy, external communication, adequacy of resources</p> <p>Recommendations for the other cases: need of provincial legislative adjustment: stronger involvement of the Tourism Provincial Promotion Agency in the construction of sustainable product, fill the gap between strategy and implementation: plan long-term sustainable tourism strategies with adequate resources addressing key-challenges such as deseasonalization and mass tourism dependency; clearer legal position for ASUCs; stronger institutional role for Valley Communities to plan and implement sustainable local development</p>	Policy documents Semi-structured interviews In-depth interviews

Administrative setting (operational arrangements)

The STCRC study refers to Buckley and Sommer (2001) proposing that administrative setting may entail elements such as land tenure, usage of land, use of resources, use of infrastructures, financial and management arrangements adopted by the partnership. However, this concept it is very broad and thus, I concentrate here only on the administrative elements that are identified by the interviewed stakeholders as affecting positively or negatively the outcome of the PNAB partnership.

First of all, by the PA's authority it is noticed that the administrative setting of the PNAB's authority favors a successful implementation of ST because through land zoning and other settings determines the level of human activities that might be carried out. This has been done through monitoring, bans, pathways maintenance and also thanks to the increase of the number of employees working in the communication and education center. Nevertheless, the number of guard parks did not increased. According to the PNAB's authority, this choice is in accordance with the Natura 2000 guidelines which prefer a preventive and education-oriented rather than prohibitive and regulation-based approach. This approach is also reflected in the choice of increasing the special zones rather than integral ones in the latest zoning of the PNAB. It is important to mention is that the PNAB's authority asserts that since the beginning they have been aware that participatory approach might have been risky for the environmental outcome. Nevertheless, all the interviewees perceive that all the projects, even the small ones, are environmental concerned

The integral and special reserves (recently the number of special reserves has been increased substituting some integral one) are strictly controlled. Moreover, every landscape intervention is subject to a preliminary environmental impact assessment. It is noticed that for what concerns requests for landscape interventions, these mainly origin from some local governments and *usi civici* associations that claim the right to decide how to plan the development of their own land (the same claim source of the initial conflict that was described beforehand). However, these stakeholders are usually those that are not empathetic with PNAB's authority and are passive or not even partners in the collaborative arrangement. Yet, it is noteworthy that even one of the local government representatives from the Val di Non (the area with agriculture-based economy and a high level of protection due to the presence of rare animal species) asserts that collaboration with the PNAB's authority will not be possible as far as their demands about land

use are not accepted. The not management of the land tenure conflict can explained, according to the data collected, why some local institutional stakeholders did not show any cooperative attitude.

Secondly, another dimension that is found to be very effective in determining cooperative behavior among some stakeholders is how the institutions for collective action (i.e. the territorial forums in the planning phase and the roundtables in the operative phase) were set up. This can be retrieved in the structured process factors and in the results where is analyzed how institutions for collective actions themselves facilitate served as cooperation and social capital drivers.

In particular, all the roundtables, although flexible in setting methods, intensity and times, have to fulfill common administrative setting signing a protocol where competencies and roles are outlined. For each roundtable one project leader and the partners are identified. A clear definition of the roles to be undertaken in the operative phase is highlighted to be essential for the success of cooperation by all the involved interviewed stakeholders.

For example, I illustrate how the Brenta ring project has been operatively arranged. In 2007, the collaborative arrangement on the Brenta Ring was signed by the local TBOs, the provincial tourism promotion agency and the PNAB. This project is here operatively split in three different tiers. The Dolomiti Brenta Bike whose project leader is the TBO of Comano and the Dolomiti Brenta Trekking and Horse (this is stopped due to environmental impact problems) whose project leader is the TBOs Val di Non. The competences and roles where defined as follows. To the PNAB's authority concerned the construction of the product (i.e. practical part, identification and maintenance of the trails and signage). While, to TBOs it concerns the cooperation on the development of the product, marketing, target identification, hotels involvement (organized through a hospitality protocol) and the organization of luggage transfer. Lastly, an in later stage the Trentino promotion agency took over the responsibility for promotion on foreign markets.

To sum up, surely an adequate trade-off in administrative settings is pivotal for partnership success. Nevertheless, it needs further theoretical attention and a clearer definition in operationalization to understand what to encompass within this factor. In fact, this might overlap with the legislative framework.

Table 28: Summary of the results on *administrative setting*

Individual factor	Source	Hypothesis	Indicator	Results of the application of the framework	Data collection method
Administrative setting (operational arrangements)	Buckley and Sommer, 2001.	The administrative setting refers to elements such as land tenure, usage of land, use of resources, use of infrastructures, financial and management arrangements adopted by the partnership. Certain settings help to facilitate partnership's success more than others.	Operational rules	Case-related relevance: high Case-related evaluation: successful Theoretical relevance: confirmed but need of better definition Overlapping: partially with legislative framework Relations with other factors: adequacy of resources, legislative framework, quantity and quality of information, membership composition, enforcement of behavior, Recommendations for the other cases: important to define roles, competences and rules. important to maintain a zoning of the PA with adequate control, important to involve actors which reduce transaction costs for implementation,	Policy documents Semi-structured interviews In-depth interviews

Enforcement of behavior/decisions/agreements

Although the literature does not agree what kind of enforcement mechanisms better facilitate the compliance of the partners, the PNAB's case-study demonstrates first that this factor is really relevant and

second that a trade-off between formal and informal mechanisms of compliance is the best pattern for success.

First, the participation to the roundtables is voluntary-based; which according to all the interviews is positive because the voluntary participation shows the willingness of a party to live up to the commitments (in sight also of the potential benefits). Second, the PNAB's partnership framework asks parties of each roundtable to develop a written agreement; even if this is not legally binding, it is observed by the interviews that this form holds legitimacy for the parties. Third, it is observed that personal and informal relations and contacts have worked as trust enhancer and peer pressure, facilitating the accomplishment with the agreements.

To conclude, the mechanisms ensuring the enforcement of behavior within the partnership framework are important elements to determine the success of the partnership. Although it is important that the decisions are formalized, it seems that the main determinant of the enforcement of the behavior relies on informal mechanisms, such trust, active participation, peer pressure and quality of information (also through personal contacts).

Table 29: Summary of the results on *enforcement of behavior/decisions/agreements*

Individual factor	Source	Hypothesis	Indicator	Results of the application of the framework	Data collection method
Enforcement of behaviour/decisions/agreements	Leach and Pelkey, 2001; Imperial, 2005.	Enforcement can entail a wide range of mechanisms helping to favour cooperative behaviour and living up to commitments, thus facilitating effective implementation of partnership activities. Although the literature is not unanimous whether formal legal enforcement is better than informal procedures and peer pressure, it seems that the threat of formal or informal sanctions might be an important factor for facilitating cooperative behaviour.	Formal/informal enforcement procedures Responsible and accountable actions	<p>Case-related relevance: high</p> <p>Case-related evaluation: successful</p> <p>Theoretical relevance: confirmed</p> <p>Overlapping:</p> <p>Relations with other factors: leadership, adequacy of resources, participation, membership composition, flexibility, quantity and quality of information, structured process, trust</p> <p>Recommendations for the other cases: important to develop a system of enforcement of decisions based on a trade-off among informal contacts and trust on one side and structured process and formality on the other side</p>	Policy documents In-depth interviews

Benefits/Incentives

According to the data collected, a fair distribution of benefits is an important element for facilitating collaborative endeavor. All the interviewees and the policy documents analyzed seem to confirm that the distribution of benefits is shared fairly by all the parties. Nevertheless, it is also noticed that, for example in the project Brenta Ring some parties (especially some TBOs) who has been very laggard for a long time enjoy the same benefits of more active TBOs. This is seen as unfair but as far as the benefits are gained also by the other active actors, is not likely to become a problem for the success of the partnership *per se* (according to what the interested TBOs assert).

In the PNAB case, what is found to be pivotal in determining cooperative behavior is the presentation of the potential benefits to the stakeholders and in this term the territorial forums were really important. As for empathy and shared vision, language is central. In fact, the discussion over the direct and indirect benefits of the ST strategy and its concrete projects has been pivotal to change positively the attitude of some (economical and institutional) actors. Conserving pristine mountains for the quality of life of present and future local populations and gaining destination competitiveness in spite of the current national crisis can be summarized as the general benefits perceived by the parties.

To be comprehensive, the QP project shows that a condition hindering its success is the lack of evident economic results. This is a critical point for the project because of its problem with external communication. Nevertheless, incentives still persist including the strong personal environmental awareness of the members and the recognition by other external actors (i.e. European Commission and other PA's authorities) of the importance of the project. To maintain this network however, a stronger political support might be a significant incentive as it is noticed by more than five interviewees.

To conclude, shared benefits are important for the long term lifespan of the partnership, reducing conflict and stimulating the empathy and the participation of the stakeholders.

Table 30: Summary of the results on *benefits/incentives*

Individual factor	Source	Hypothesis	Indicator	Results of the application of the framework	Data collection method
Benefits/Incentives	Imperial, 2005; Steffen, 2004; Poncelet, 2004.	If the benefits of a partnerships are shared by all the parties, collaborative endeavor is facilitated. Conversely, if one party gains all the benefits, the partnership is not likely to work effectively.	Recognition of mutual benefit to be derived and that all parties will benefit from the partnership; All the parties feel a sense of balance in the distribution of benefits and costs among the partners	<p>Case-related relevance: high Case-related evaluation: successful Theoretical relevance: confirmed Overlapping: Relations with other factors: empathy, participation, legislative framework, adequacy of resources Recommendations for the other cases: important to frame sustainable development in terms of benefits for the stakeholders, but also important that the vision is shared around environmental standards well defined and monitored. Interesting to understand how to better and effectively involve USI CIVICI associations and Valley communities.</p>	In-depth interviews; semi-structured interviews

5.2. Integration from the Glasbergen's five levels of partnership's activity

According to the collected data, it seems that the PNAB's partnership framework entails all the first three levels of Glasbergen's ladder. From an analytical perspective this ladder results very useful to better understand the PNAB's dynamics and to integrate the results of the PNAB with the STCRC's study. The temporal perspective adds a further dimension to the framework in order to understand the development over time of partnerships for sustainable development. Moreover, the subsequent two levels widening the level of the perspective are used as analytical tools to give recommendations for the other cases where an intervention is supposed to take place. The data used in the following section are the same used beforehand only presented according to the temporal setting proposed by Glasbergen. The following section by providing a temporal perspective offers a concise summary on how success in the PNAB's partnerships has been achieved.

5.2.1. First level: Building trust

Achieving trust is according to Glasbergen (2010) the first *condicio sine qua non*, an enabling factor, for developing a successful partnership for sustainable development. In fact, it is primarily important that

“partners are able to change an adversarial interaction into a collaborative interaction” (Glasbergen, 2010, p. 4).

In the PNAB case, before 2000 the relations among the PNAB’s authority and most local actors had been characterized by adversarial and competitive interaction. Still today, some local actors have maintained adversarial attitude, there is no trust among these and the PNAB and no collaborative arrangement has signed yet. However, throughout a decade most actors in all different districts have joined the PNAB’s partnership framework and in all cases trust has been a pivotal step to create the cooperative behavior.

Trust is linked to the real emotional belief in the positive intentions and competences of the partner(s), which makes predictable to a certain extent their behavior by perceiving a diminishment of risks and uncertainty in the partnering. Although trust is surely an enabling factor for developing successful partnerships, once it is achieved, must be also maintained. Glasbergen (2010) suggests some conditions facilitating the creation and the maintenance of trust. These factors coincide with many findings of the case-study and thus with the factors identified by the STCRC study.

First, as also the PNAB case shows, a “minimal structure and ground rules” (Glasbergen, 2010, p.6) for decision-making, sanctioning and communication are important for regulating cooperative interaction giving to the partners a feeling of predictability and fairness of the partnering. For example, this insight might explain the lack of trust that is perceived towards the SAT (the hiking organization) since there is discrepancy between local and central committees and lack of a fixed representative is really difficult to predict the behavior of this party. On the other hand, it explains also why most interviewees value as very important the establishment of the territorial forums as democracy arenas and the ECST as useful guideline structuring the process.

Second, legitimacy plays an important role; in fact the parties should perceive each other as legitimate to participate. This seems to be connected or parallel to the recognition of interdependence, which according to Glasbergen (2010) is more difficult when potential partners come from different intersectoral organizations. In the PNAB case, recognition of interdependence is dependent on the empathy among the stakeholders and is facilitated if partners share the same values. Moreover, in framing interdependence also another important element is linked to the “perceived opportunities for added values of collaborations for each of the partners” (Glasbergen, 2010, p. 4). This is particularly true for understanding why many actors have changed positively their attitude in the PNAB case. However, in the PNAB case, legitimacy issues are mainly linked to land tenure arrangements, legal recognition and executive involvement in the decision-making and conflict has been dealt by addressing some of these three issues. In addition, it is noticed by the interviewees that the territorial forums first, and the roundtables afterwards, are useful frameworks of behavior (what Ostrom 2008 would call institutions for collective action) that when well managed can provide a democratic fair framework to ensure perceived legitimacy and mutual trust. Where conflicts of legitimacy were not solved, a mutual distrust left which explains why many stakeholders did not join the partnerships (Alta Rendena ASUCs and municipalities).

Overall, considering the theoretical premises and the context of high conflict and mistrust within the actors in the PA it can be deduced that developing trust among the PA’s authority and (most of) its stakeholders is the first step to its success. Trust has been developed thanks to changes in legitimacy perceptions, recognition of interdependence among the actors (also in terms of perceived future benefits), empathy among partners and the extent to which values are shared. All these might be facilitated by a minimal organized process and fair exchange of information. In addition, the PNAB case suggests that other facilitating factors entail changes in the legislative and administrative setting (regulative executive

representation and land tenure arrangements) and flexibility and quality of information (based on personal and informal relations).

5.2.2. Second level: Exploring collaborative advantage

Once that a certain level of trust among the partners seems is established, it is important to enable a collaborative arrangement to take place that each party fosters its special interests since also risks and investments are at stake. According to Glasbergen (2010, p. 5) partnership by definition is “a contractual arrangement as with any other political and economic arrangement within which the partners distribute opportunities and risks”. In fact, a successful partnership seems requires that each party has to pursue its own goals in sight of its identity. For the PNAB case, for example, while the local governments and *usi civici* associations have to nurture the interests of their communities, TBOs respond to its paying members and pursue economic goals.

According to Glasbergen, next to trust it is necessary that the parties feel to gain real advantage from collaboration which is not achievable by the action of one of the partners alone but still represents an interest. Sustainable development objectives can be only if relevant parties perceive that it coincides with their own interests. Among the different interests and perceived benefits, common ground for joint action must be found and fair distribution of benefits must be perceived (Glasbergen, 2010). In the PNAB case protection of nature is the main interest of the PA’s authority because of its protectionist mission. Common ground with the partners has been found on different levels. With the municipalities and *usi civici* associations, nature protection has been framed as territorial enhancement, which is really important for the communities they represent. Mountain identity perceived as centenary history of rural community-based management and linked to quality of life is an important issue that might stimulate the participation of local civil society and governmental stakeholders. Community and identity however are often framed by all the *usi civici* and some governmental local stakeholders according to very limited geographical/administrative borders. In the PNAB case, but in Trentino more in general, mountains have been shaping with its physical distances and geomorphologic differences the identity of the local residents since the first settlements established. The definition of community in Trentino can range from the provincial dimension till to the little villages (i.e. *frazioni*) compounding a municipality. For example, *usi civici* associations find their identity at the *frazione* level. The Alps with its forests and pastures constituted until the early postwar period the main source of subsistence for the local residents, most of which still now are used to provide themselves their own timber for the winter heating according to some common established rules. Understanding this identity allows detect why the scope of the partnership went beyond the mere protection of the natural capital, but where environment is integrated with the human traces that have been left throughout the years first of all the requalification of the malga systems, attempting to place them in the (sustainable) tourism sector (since it is no longer competitive in the cheese, milk and farming sectors). But also other collaborative arrangements such as the Val Meledrio project are based where *usi civici* association participated only because cultural and historical elements (such as the old quarry and smith’s) were also included in the scope of the partnership. In parallel it must be remembered, (sustainable) tourism, is considered by all the interviewed local governments, an essential source of development (both for mature than unexpressed destination) in terms of economic but also social benefits (e.g. creation of local jobs). The consideration of collaborative advantages related to ST opportunities in mountain landscape (in its natural and cultural heritage), together with the development of mutual trust, has been triggering the cooperative behavior of those parties from *usi civici* and local government organizations. For what concerns the TBOs, generally common ground has been instead found in understanding nature and Alpine environment as a value for promoting an area as a pristine environment. However, the level of perceived advantage and consequently the level of participation seem dependent on

the level of tourism intensity of the considered district. In fact, non-skiing dependent areas (those less economically developed) are those perceiving the greatest advantage, while the other areas are more tied to mass tourism path dependency and thus the advantage is perceived as minimum. As an example at the operative level, although they joined the Brenta Ring roundtable their level of participation totally reflected the level of advantage perceived. The fact that partnerships for sustainable development in PAs are not always seen to bring real advantages is the reason why many local stakeholders, even when trust might be found, did not collaborate or undertook a passive attitude. However, the perception of the law advantage is noticed to increase when economic shortcoming in the traditional tourism dynamics and sustainable nature-based tourism seems becoming strategically appealing (especially for its new foreign targets). Path dependency on mass tourism explains the main obstacle of the transition towards ST because lack of commitments and involvement by local and provincial actors and especially the lack of resources for implementing strategic sustainable development at the provincial level. For what concerns, the market-oriented partnership, QP, besides ethical considerations and, three main advantages were perceived by its members. First, economically, the members considered to achieve future savings on electricity and heating and second to gain a competitive advantage on the other local structures. Lastly, they perceived an advantage in creating a network where experiences and information could be shared. The case of QP shows how a negative change in the perception of the economic advantages could hinder the long lasting life of the partnership.

Lastly, following Glasbergen but as is also outlined by the STCRC framework, a minimum sense of balance in the distribution of benefits and costs among the partners should be perceived to have a positive effect on the outcome. This overall happened in the PNAB case and it is also found by the interviews as an important factor for success. However, there is still place for future improvement since some minor shortcomings have been noticed by the interviewees.

In short, as theory and practice have confirmed, once trust finds room to develop, to implement a successful partnership, it is also necessary that each party considers and is aware of its own interests and relative potential collaborative advantages that might be achieved through the partnership. If trust is not present, the risks of collaborating would surely overrun the potential benefits and therefore, it is necessary that first step of the partnership activity is fulfilled. Afterwards, it is important to find a common ground on which potential partners might be interested in it. Analyzing the case-study it is evident that perceived benefits in its place-specific context has been built around different conception of nature valorization, from one side as cultural landscape and on the other one as a prerequisite for a pristine environment to propose as tourism destination. Moreover, a general provincial legislative framework that has been enhancing environmental awareness helps the perception of collaborative arrangements in this direction facilitating also the perception of a fair distribution of benefits among the stakeholders. Lastly, even if Glasbergen never explicitly mentions innovation, innovation in content of the partnership serves as additional incentive for collaborative advantage as the results of the data collected show.

5.2.3. Third level: Constituting a rule system

Once partners have established mutual trust and reflected over the potential advantages of collaboration, there is room to develop concrete collaborative arrangements compounded by a rule system, what Glasbergen (2010, p. 6) calls a “new social contract with which the partners formally invest in each other”. Instead of what Ostrom would call institutions for collective action, norms, rule-in-use framing cooperative behavior, Glasbergen (2010, p.11) here refers to the formalization of intents, where are outlined “different transactional and procedural elements of the arrangement, such as commitments on different tasks and

resources, and how the partnership will deal with decision-making processes, monitoring, enforcement". This in the PNAB case would correspond to the Plan of Action proposed in 2006 for the ECST candidacy where mutual obligations, roles, objectives and concrete project are outlined signing the beginning of the operative part when roundtables were established. At the level of the roundtable other further formalization might be found such the association of QP and the Brenta Ring protocol. This should correspond in general with what the STCRC framework refer as administrative setting and enforcement of the decisions.

Glasbergen (2010) however recognizes that there is a mutual relation between trust and formalization of collaborative behavior. Without mutual trust no formal agreement might be signed, nevertheless, formality might help maintaining trust helping reducing uncertainty and structuring processes and basic evaluation measures and revisions. However, trust and voluntariness are necessary elements for a successful implementation of the objectives according to Glasbergen and a balanced trade-off between formality and flexibility must be found.

Overall, through the formalization of the commitments, partnering process experiences a clear evolution from mere voluntarism to a contractual dimension. As the results of PNAB case confirm the terms of the contract and the degree to which the parties live up to them, are determinant for a long-lasting partnership ensuring continuity of trust and collaborative advantage.

5.2.4. Fourth level: Changing the market

As was mentioned in the theory part, fourth and fifth dimensions relate to the external interactions of the partnership and can be only meant to outline a future scenario for a provincial approach to develop partnerships covering the whole provincial ecological network. The fourth level of partnership success refers to the extent to which the partnership is "able to influence the governance of the chain, i.e. the authority and power relationships that determine how financial, material and human resources are allocated and flow within the chain" (Glasbergen, 2010, p. 8). For partnerships for ST in Trentino's PAs, this means that the level of success depends on the extent to which path dependency on tourism intensity and seasonality are targeted by the outcome of the partnership. In practical terms such policies should be implemented addressing the inherent problems of the provincial tourism sector supporting long-term sustainability with adequate resources and clear decisions.

5.2.5. Fifth level: Changing the political order

The fifth level is much broader and defines success in terms of the extents to which partnership system contribute to governability. In the specific case of Trentino, once changed the internal market, this established and diffuse governance system will be successful because it constitutes a local and interactive governance initiative to implement the CBD, other relevant European Directives and Alpine Convention's protocols, which suffer of shortcomings in national ratifications. Trentino might play a role model for other Alpine regions, which together may form a consistent regional Alpine governance system that in turn can inspire and teach lessons to other mountain areas around the world.

6. Lessons learnt from the results of the successful case-study

The application of the initial analytical framework aims at yielding two forms of conclusions. First, it is possible to propose how the initially proposed framework might be adjusted to the place-specific Trentino context. Second, from the results of the case-study it is possible to infer which elements might be included in practice-oriented recommendations offered to the Province of Trentino for the design of a provincial strategy.

6.1. An adjusted framework for explaining success in the management of sustainable tourism in PAs based on collaborative arrangements in (Alpine) mountain regions

Considering the results of the application of the framework to the case-study and integrating them with the insights of Glasbergen (2010), it is possible to make the following statements on the relevance of the STCRC factors for evaluating successful partnerships for ST in PAs in the Alpine province of Trento. The STCRC framework proved itself as a very useful tool to determine the conditions that have facilitated and hindered the current success of the PNAB case. Nevertheless, some limitations in the approach of Laing et al. (2008a) are evident and some adjustments in light of the place-specific characteristics of the Trentino context are needed in order to have a comprehensive framework that can serve to provide relevant recommendations to design and implement ST policies in the ecological network of Trentino. The shortcoming highlighted by the present research need also be considered in light of the method used to apply the framework to the selected case. In fact, whereas the STCRC tested their factors by selecting a large number of case-studies in Australia and conducting a survey, the present research undertakes an in-depth case-study in Trentino using qualitative methods of data collection and analysis.

The first conclusion is that Glasbergen's perspective offers insightful results because it adds a temporal dimension to the analysis of the success of partnership, which also places the partnership in a wider context of sustainability.

The second conclusion refers to the adjustment of the framework; as a matter of fact, new factors have been identified as relevant, some factors have been discarded because they have been evaluated as redundant within the framework, and some factors have been adjusted to increase their relevance.

The **newly identified factors** are outlined as follows.

The application of the framework to the PNAB case reveals that a shared vision has been built around the *mountain identity* of the participants. By mountain identity it is not only meant as the recognition of the natural heritage of cliffs and forests but it is especially regarded as social construct. As Barth (1969) and Nagel (1998) highlight, analyzing how groups and organizations negotiate and frame boundaries, identities and cultures are important to understand how social interaction inside and outside the group is affected by and affects the definition of such identity. In fact, residents of mountain areas feel identity in different ways, as demonstrated by the collected data. Some actors perceive it in its outstanding natural and biodiversity heritage (e.g. SAT and PA's authority), others in its traditional and cultural use linked to highland pastures and forest management (i.e. *usi civici* association) and still others as a pivotal source for tourism development (e.g. TBOs). This factor turned out very important to be kept in mind by the practitioners when defining the language within discussions and during the development of a common

vision. The mountain identity of the participants represents an important element to be explored and discussed in order to define the common ground on which the partnership should be built.

Another factor that is not explicitly considered by both Glasbergen and the STCRC study is the individual capacity of the partners to collaborate. This could be meant as the level of bridging capital that members show. In addition, the results of the case-study (i.e. the SAT example) show that the resources (in financial, leadership and organizational terms) the party has or is willing to share within the partnership are a critical element for the success of the partnership. To consider this aspect comprehensively I choose a term used by Foster-Fishman et al. (2001): *member collaborative capacity*. Although this capacity might be enhanced by the process itself, this factor is very helpful to predict, to a limited extent though, how the single members are likely to contribute to the partnership success. The members' collaborative capacity influences the attitude of the parties in all the factors identified by the framework from the common vision to the adequacy of the resources.

The third and new factor introduced in the adjusted framework is the *macro context*. This appeared crucial when analyzing the texts of the interviews. To not overlap with the already existing legislative framework, the macro context does not refer to the international legislative context but rather to other economic and social aspects, namely economic crises and globalization dynamics. In fact, many respondents attribute the change of attitudes of some (economic and tourism-related) actors to the European and national economic crisis, which reduces national consumption pattern, and to the ongoing globalization dynamics increasing the competitiveness of other destinations.

The **discarded factors** have been identified according to their theoretical relevance especially in terms of their overlap with other factors.

Commitment has been discarded because the data collected show that commitment is covered within the factor stakeholders' participation. Commitment is an indicator of participation. Hence, commitment is already included in stakeholder participation.

Adequacy/transparency of the process is a very broad factor. It has been discarded since the application of the framework to the PNAB case shows that its various dimensions can be measured and assessed through other factors, namely structured process, flexibility, quantity and quality of information but also external communication.

Open internal communication indicates that communication within the partnership is fair and open to all the members. This factor has been dismissed because, as shown in the previous chapter, the data referring to this factor completely overlap with the quantity and quality of information since the latter entails per se fairness in the exchange of information.

The **adjusted factors** refer to those factors that have been found to need further definition *a posteriori* of the empirical test.

First, for what concerns the factor *distribution/balance of power*, in light of the collected data legitimacy is found to assume a prominent dimension within this factor. Hence, it deserves explicit and major attention.

Second, the data collected and analyzed suggest that *membership and composition of stakeholder participation* are on the same continuum. In fact, once it is determined who is member of the collaborative arrangement one can assess to what extent that member is contributing to the partnership. On the other hand, if stakeholder participation is missing this is also reflected in the non-membership in the partnership. Hence, although they entail two different elements of the partnership they can be considered as a single

factor that is compounded by the number and the inclusiveness of partnership membership on one side and by the extent to which they are active and volunteer within this context on the other side.

Third, in light of the results, *external communication* is better defined as encompassing three categories, namely local population, tourists (i.e. marketing and promotion) and other external actors.

Lastly, *adequacy of the time* is not adjusted in its content but in the position of the framework. The data analysis testifies that the duration of the partnership is rather an indicator of its success than a determinant at the same level of quantity and quality of information.

Another conclusion that can be inferred based on the analysis of the results of the case-study is that the three clusters used by the STCRC study seem not so relevant. Especially partnering/process and partnering/context seem overlapping. For example, it is absolutely clear why the legislative framework should be part of the context, whereas it is not evident why the administrative setting and enforcement of behavior are referred to the context and not the process. In light of this consideration, the first three levels of Glasbergen offer more analytically useful clusters of factors. In fact, trust appears to be also in the STCRC study as a condition that is determined by many other factors. Moreover, trust, the first cluster, refers more to an emotional aspect of the partnership (which is facilitated by empathy, shared vision, perception of legitimacy and the level to which mountains are perceived as identity by the stakeholders); whereas the development of a collaborative arrangement entails more the rational dynamics and reasoning about future benefits and transaction costs based on collaborative advantage (which seems especially dependent on perceived benefits, scope of the partnership and recognition of interdependence). Instead, the third level, the definition of a rule system concerns all the operational arrangements and practical resources framing the implementation of the arrangements (the definition of a rule system is based on enforcement of behavior/decisions/agreements, administrative setting, external communication and adequacy of the resources). Besides these three clusters (within each pivotal factors are highlighted), the rest of the factors influence the success of the partnership in all its levels and stages.

Last but not least it is important to specify that collaborative processes are in place also before a collaborative arrangement is signed. Hence, the analysis misses the consideration of the institutions *for collective action* in place even if a collaborative arrangement has not been signed yet. All this considered, the adjusted framework should include institutions for collective action as an element that should be present from the early phases of trust building and definition of the collaborative arrangement. In fact, as the PNAB case shows, a planning phase where rules are less structured and the composition is more open is likely to take place before a collaborative arrangement is signed and a rule system is developed.

All in all, next Figure 12 offers a visual representation of the adjusted framework reflecting the abovementioned conclusions.

The framework is set in a temporal continuum that, following Glasbergen (2010), focuses on the interactions among the partners themselves to the interactions of the partnership with its relevant external environment.

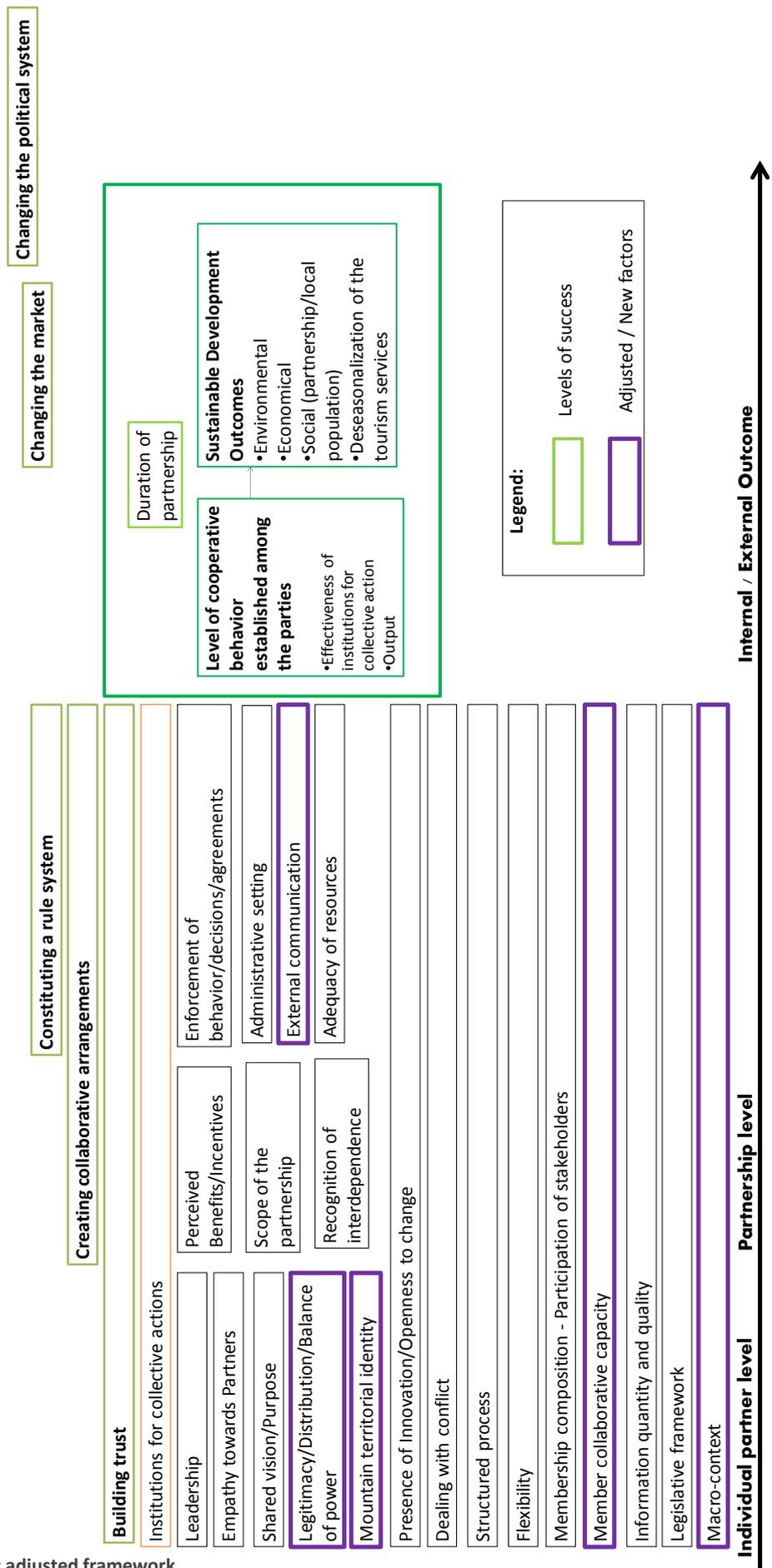


Figure 12: Place-specific adjusted framework

6.2. Practice-oriented recommendations

The practice-oriented recommendations that should be kept in mind by local and provincial policy-makers are summarized in the following. The recommendations are mainly based on the factors that have been found to enhance or hinder the success of a potential partnership for ST in mountain PAs in its different levels.

- ❖ Policy-makers at the provincial level and the PA's level should consider that adequate time is needed for the partnership to be built and to ensure sustainable development. This implies that first it is important to dedicate appropriate time to the planning phase where stakeholders participate to open meetings during which the scope of the partnership, the problems and then a shared vision is defined, empathy and overall trust among the actors are build and finally a collaborative arrangement is established setting in motion the implementation of a rule system. The planning phase should require a more open and inclusive approach comparing to the operative phase. Secondly, it is also necessary that strategy, projects and expected benefits are planned in a long-term perspective. This is evident in the case of the PNAB where after eight years still no quantifiable results are identified by the respondents.
- ❖ Leadership meant especially as coordination appears to be determinant in every stage of the partnership process. Specifically, the analysis of the PNAB case shows that leadership is particularly important both in terms of individuals and organizations. First, a strong PA's authority that could dispose of adequate financial and organizational resources is said pivotal by all the interviewed respondents. In fact, appropriate economic resources should support the identification of a long-term process coordinator and in case of high social conflict also a third party to facilitate the early stage of the process. Appropriate coordination of the process is essential to ensure that participants perceive a structured process and adequate quality and quantity communication; which is also linked, besides trust, to the partnership's capacity to adapt to changing conditions and enforcement of the decisions. Moreover, leadership in terms of individuals is important because it is connected on one side to the perception of innovation (especially related to the output) and thus perceived benefits and, on the other side, to conflict management and trust building. A last conclusion drawn from the results of the case-study is that an active and positive participation of stakeholders is dependent on their level of coordination and leadership as organization (which is in turn dependent on the member collaborative capacity).
- ❖ Innovation results important on two levels, output and process. Both were found to be linked with leadership. Output innovation is really important for the definition of a collaboration advantage and for the perception of potential benefits. On the other hand, innovation in process is identified as essential to stimulate empathy (especially if the initial level of conflict is high) and a shared vision. Innovation is often regarded in the interviews as connected to language issues and discourse framing. In this regard, mountain identity (meant in its natural, cultural and economic heritage) might play an important role by building common ground among different stakeholders and interests.
- ❖ The results of the PNAB case identify legitimacy and associated perceptions as determinant elements of trust building and the definition of the collaborative arrangement. In fact, Trentino's

institutional diversity might result in an overlap and conflict about power, roles and competences among the actors. This could entail the relationship among the PA's authority and local actors but might also refer to dynamics among other actors. In regard of the latter, the PNAB case shed light on how such legitimacy issues might negatively affect the participation of the *usi civici* associations in particular.

- ❖ For what concerns dealing with conflict, this represents an important factor that might be more relevant in different stages according to the context of the PA. However, in a case, such as the PNAB, where conflict was really characterizing the relations between some actors and the PA's authority, a diagnosis of conflict and of the social and economic context has demonstrated useful in guiding the identification of specific strategies and maybe it might suggest the involvement of a third-party for facilitating the construction of trust among the parties.
- ❖ A partnership is found to be successful when an adequate membership composition is found. What the PNAB case seems to suggest is that the composition should be as inclusive as possible in the planning phase, whereas in the operative phase a trade-off among quantity and quality must be implemented (civil society and environmental actors might be disadvantaged because although they might share the vision, they are likely to suffer of lack of resources). Active stakeholders, besides a shared vision and trust, should also make adequate resources available to the partnership in order to yield success in terms of the sustainability outcome.
- ❖ Another factor determining the success of the partnership represents the definition of a shared vision. What is found to be successful in all the areas of the PNAB is the inclusion of the different dimensions of the what can be generally called mountain identity in the shared vision; hence, as objectives were defined not only the natural protection but also the enhancement of other cultural and historical elements of the landscape (such as the traditional highland agriculture linked with the *malga* system). The latter is likely to be an incentive for those actors such as *usi civici* associations, local government and other local cultural organizations.
- ❖ The definition of the scope of the partnership is really important to provide incentives to the stakeholders to become a member. This means first of all that the partnership should entail geographically all the institutional and territorial districts that compound the PA. Secondly, it is found that more actors are willing to collaborate more actively when the scope of the partnership, which should be the result of a shared vision, encompasses the protection of the environment as well as the local cultural heritage. Lastly, another conclusion that can be drawn from the PNAB case-study is that in Trentino place-specific environmental labels, such as sustainability market-oriented tools (e.g. the QP), should assume a provincial scope and not be restricted to a specific PAs. This would enable a more effective external communication in terms of promotion that is expected to entail an increase of economical benefits for the participants themselves.
- ❖ Moreover, as was noticed already, quality and quantity of information seem to be very important determinant of the success of the PNAB partnership framework. However, what is found to determine a positive perception by the participants about the quality and adequate information is a balance among a structured process and flexibility which is often based on informal contacts and personal relations. In fact, this flexible system seems to determine all the stages of the partnership

activities, from the developing of trust until the implementation of a rule system. Especially the enforcement of the behavior seems to gain advantage from a process based on trade-off between informality and structure. On the other hand, for what concerns the structure, the ECST framework is deemed as important to structure major steps of the partnership process.

- ❖ For building trust and creating a collaborative arrangement, empathy and recognition of interdependence are found to be really important. Although some stakeholders might be more inclined to recognize different values and interdependence among the actors, during the process, complexity of the context and objectives together with the mutual benefits in the saving in the transaction costs in the implementation must be discussed with the participants.
- ❖ Besides the creation of trust and the identification of a collaborative arrangement, to effectively implement a rule system adequacy of resources is required. Surely the resources available to the partnership determine the extent to which a sustainable development outcome is observed. However, the PNAB case shows that feasibility is important and that projects and output should be designed according to the available resources.
- ❖ Enforcement of behavior and decisions is important as testified by the results of the PNAB case and must rely on a trade-off among informal contacts and trust on one side and structured process and formality on the other side.
- ❖ An additional factor that is found to be particularly important and closely related with the sustainable development outcome is external communication in all three dimensions. First, effective communication to local population might increase both the participation of local stakeholders and the increased spread of environmental values. Second, communication with other external actors such as other PAs seems to positively increase the organizational capacity of the partnership. However, the third dimension refers both to communication to the visitors of the PAs through info-points, visitor centers and environmental education and to tourism promotion. Third, the tourism promotion-related dimension seems the most relevant in determining the maintenance of the cooperative behavior of the economic and tourism-related actors because it directly affects economic gains. This dimension is found to be the more critical element hindering the PNAB partnership success. For instance, in the case of the market-oriented project, this shortcoming is attributed to three different elements. First it can be related to a non-adequate role undertaken by the provincial tourism promotion agency. However, its ineffective promotion seems to be ascribed to the political unwillingness of local TBOs to promote a minority of its members on one side and, on the other side, to the complexity of its product and subsequent difficulties in promoting it effectively. It seems that an extension of the project to the whole provincial area would benefit its communication. On the other hand, the problems with the role of the provincial tourism authority seems to be linked to the provincial tourism-related legislative framework that limits the provincial tourism authority to be involved only in a later stage when the product is already defined.
- ❖ The overall success of the partnership of the PNAB was both facilitated and hindered by its surrounding multi-level framework. In fact, on the one hand the environmental framework at provincial and higher levels is considered opportune for the success of the partnership. On the other hand, the provincial tourism framework and structure is found to be the main obstacle for

greater success in terms of the sustainable development outcome. No long-term sustainability strategies addressing deseasonalization and mass-tourism dependency have yet been implemented at provincial levels. Strategies nowadays are planned according to the available budget which is disposed at a yearly-basis. Moreover, it is also wished for a greater role and commitment of Valley Communities in planning and implementing sustainable development.

- ❖ Lastly, the macro context seems to positively affect the partnerships for ST in PAs for two reasons. First, the financial crisis and the national reduction of consumption pattern seem to partially act as a trigger for the discussion of current mass tourism dynamics and the potential transition towards sustainable alternatives. Second, the globalization dynamics have increased the competitiveness of other destination, thus increasing the need to improve the competitive advantage of Trentino as destination.

7. The Trentino ecological network and its capacity to implement collaborative arrangements for sustainable tourism in PAs

Based on the adjusted place-specific framework proposed in section 6.1, this chapter aims to formulate a set of specific recommendations for implementing similar initiatives to the PNAB case (in governance type and scope) in other Trentino's PAs. As has been already noticed, only the PNAB in the province has implemented such arrangements. Nevertheless, the Autonomous Province of Trento seems committed to develop a more coordinated ecological network that by implementing Natura 2000 principles attempts to transition towards a more open paradigm of the traditional governance and purpose in which PAs are approached (PAT, 2013a). In particular, the provincial government recently manifested the will to integrate the new coordinated management of the ecological network with tourism development goals through a specific project called *Turismo/Natura* (PAT, 2012e). In light of this likely policy scenario the need for an appropriate informative support appears evident and thus the recommendations yielded by the present thesis are particularly relevant.

Considering the collected data, future scenarios on partnership formation and success in the other Trentino's PAs can only be predicted on the basis of limited information. Overall, mainly prescriptive knowledge integrated with some evaluative and descriptive knowledge about the current situation of the PAs can be provided. However, the availability of the secondary-data and the data collected in the interviews to a certain extent allow the evaluation of the current collaborative capacity of the PAs' authorities and the surrounding legislative framework. As a matter of fact, as the PNAB case has demonstrated, a strong role of the PA's authority is paramount to gather actors and to structure the process. Additionally, as both theory and evidence show, the legislative framework is determinant for the success of the partnership on all its levels; the relatively produced knowledge is mainly based on the assessment of the PNAB case and integrated with some details about the provincial ecological network.

To understand a provincial future scenario of design and implementation of ST policy in PAs, it is primarily important to understand what other types of PAs form the Trentino ecological network. This means providing background information on the Trentino context which also involves using data collected to provide descriptive knowledge. Moreover, presenting the provincial framework of PAs also entails presenting part of the legislative framework affecting the PAs and their potential partnerships. All the

information used in this chapter refers to the data of the interviews relevant for the provincial context and to policy documents and data retrievable in the website of the provincial PAs' department.

7.1. Background information

Figure 13 represents the PAs of Trentino, which in total cover almost one third of the entire provincial territory and interests the 80% of all municipalities. In the upper western corner of the map there is the Trentino's part of the Stelvio Natural Park, the biggest Italian PA. This PA recently experienced a change in its governance system due to a national directive, which is still under revision and definition. The other park on the left is the PNAB, whereas the park in the eastern side is the Paneveggio-Pale di San Martino Provincial Park. The two provincial parks have had a parallel history. Their borders were both established by the 1967 provincial urban plan but their management structure and PA authorities were only created with the provincial law 1988/18. Before 2007, the other types of PAs were constituted by the natural reserves and biotopes instituted by the provincial law 1986/14, which encouraged the establishment of PAs of small dimensions (from a minimum of 1 till 100 hectares). In the early 2000s this system was further integrated (in some cases overlapping the existing reserves, in others, creating new PAs through the designation of Sites of Community Importance, SCIs (which are entitled after an assessment to become Special Areas of Conservation, SACs) and Special Protection Areas, SPAs, respectively linked to the European Directives 92/43/CEE "Habitat" and 79/409/CEE "Birds". However, as is noticed in the policy documents, this system was fragmented due to a lack of resources and thus a lack of protection (Ferrari, 2012). The province tried to tackle this problem with the provincial law 2007/11 about the governance of forests, mountains, river streams and PAs. This provincial law reformed the whole provincial system of PAs and abrogated 15 previous laws in forest and nature protection management. For the scope of this research, two main changes brought by this law are worthy to be highlighted. The first entails the institutions of a new type of PAs, the so-called *network of reserves*, which consists in the aggregation of existing small reserves (whose union must be justified by coherent ecological corridors) managed by a united body proposed by a local government (i.e. Valley Communities or municipalities).

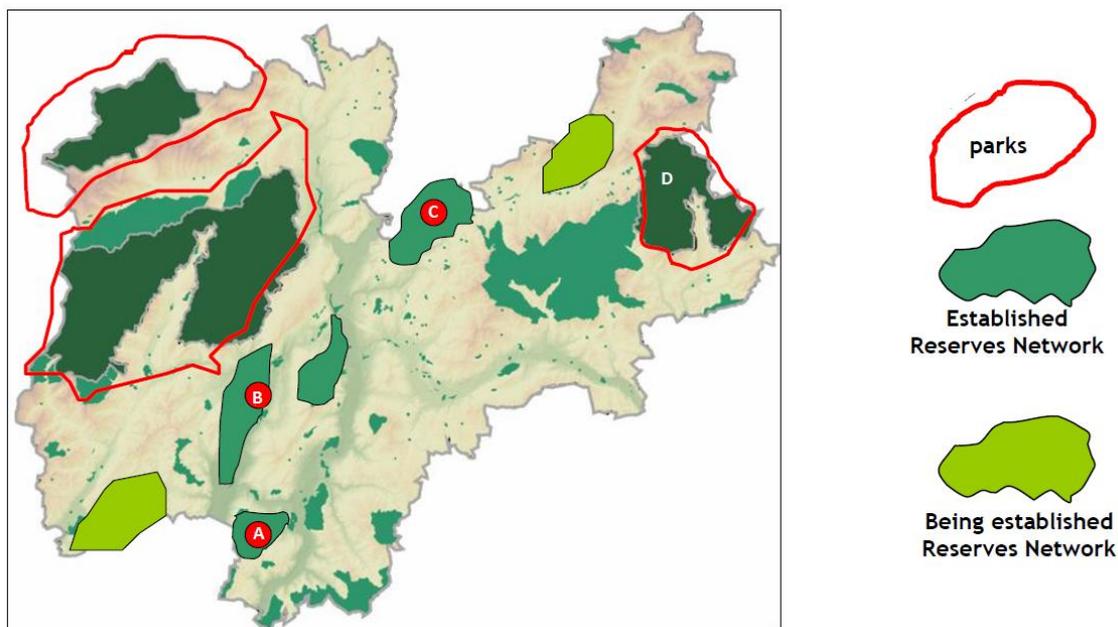


Figure 13: Map of the Trentino ecological network (adjusted from Ferrari, 2012)

The second change proposed by the provincial law 2007/11 entails the explicit aim of addressing the management of the entire provincial system of PAs, considering the latter as “promoters of active protection” of the natural and cultural landscapes of the province. The law requires the adjustment of the management of the PAs to the following objectives: nature conservation, integrated and participatory management (what in the theoretical chapter are called conservation through use and participatory approaches, respectively), scientific research, compatible social use and environmental education.

A third novelty in regard to this law, even if more marginal comparing to previous ones, is the institution of two new provincial bodies, the Scientific Committee of the PAs with a function of technical and informative support and the “*cabina di regia delle aree protette e dei ghiacciai*” that is a sort of strategic committee for PA and glaciers. Both authorities are predisposed to involve different local and provincial stakeholders in their management.

Overall, the provincial law 2007/11 seems demonstrating the provincial willingness to establish a diffuse governance of PAs that adopts participatory approaches to promote the enhancement and the requalification of the natural and cultural heritage of the province. Nevertheless, in order to give appropriate recommendation for a provincial strategy and considering the importance of the role of the PAs as testified by the PNAB case, it seems important to evaluate to what extent the PAs of the Trentino ecological network are likely to implement the partnership successfully.

7.2. Recommendations for a provincial strategy

To provide tailor-made recommendations to the Autonomous Province of Trento, it is important to take the current status of the provincial PAs into account. However, given the extension, the fragmentation and the variety of PAs within the Trentino’s ecological network, I select four PAs, three networks of reserve and one provincial park (A, B, C and D in Figure 13, respectively), that vary in size, age and type of natural protection and consequently offer different elements that the recommendations should address. The selection does not provide a basis for a case-study analysis where to undertake a comprehensive *ex ante* evaluation. It rather includes the PAs that according to PAT (2012b), might be suitable to be interested by future ST interventions and thus are likely to provide knowledge indicative for the whole network.

All the information is deducted from PAT (2012b), the website of the Trentino’s PAs, if not stated differently. All further information constitutes the basis of the analysis for understanding to what extent collaborative approaches can be implemented in PAs in Trentino.

A preliminary analysis of the PAs A, B, C and D is presented by outlining similarities and differences among them in their capacity to lead/implement participatory approaches, the multi-level framework in which they are involved and the predicted implications of these assessment for the other factors.

Assessing the level of collaborative capacity of PAs is paramount because the PAs’ authorities are expected to assume a coordinating role in the partnership process. The role undertaken by the PNAB has resulted to be an essential element for the whole process of the coordination of the process and actors. Therefore, it results important to preliminarily assess the adequacy of the administrative setting of the PA (not of the partnership since it is not in place yet) and the relative adequacy of its economic, organizational and human resources.

In this regard, case D, the provincial park Paneveggio-Pale di San Martino, is the only among the other PAs that has the status of a natural park and has the longest lifetime. Although it covers one third of the size of the PNAB (191 km²), its (PA) authority has a regular staff of 20 employees. Similarly to the PNAB, it has a Management Committee and Executive Council, whose composition is according to the provincial law 1988/18. Nevertheless, unlike the PNAB, case D has also established two Commissions (one focused on fauna and the other on management and research) that call a limited but diversified group of local governmental and civil society actors to participate (Parco Naturale Paneveggio-Pale di San Martino, 2013). Moreover, like the PNAB, it also encompasses a part of the Dolomites, Unesco Natural World Heritage, which also require higher management standards from the PA's authority (EURAC research, 2011).

In contrast, the PAs A (i.e. Brentonico's network of reserve), B (i.e. Basso Sarca's network of reserves) and C (Cembra-Avisio's network of reserves) have a far more recent history. It is interestingly to note that whereas in the cases of the Paneveggio Park and the PNAB the Park's plan was approved after the establishment of the PA's authority, in the networks of reserve the opposite is found. In fact, for all the three networks of reserve a management plan indicating zoning and potential actions for conservation and requalification has been approved before an actual management body was formed. The information available (PAT-Brentonico, 2010, 2012; PAT-Basso Sarca, 2012a, 2012b; PAT-Cembra-Avisio, 2011a, 2011b, 2012) suggests that no actual management body has been assigned yet to any of the networks of reserves. Policy documents suggest which form this body is likely to assume but no evidence is found about the actual establishment of these management bodies. As illustration of the heterogeneity of the forms that these bodies might take, case A (Brentonico), which encompasses a territory of only one municipality, is planning to establish a dedicated office within the municipality's structure and to institute a management committee composed by representatives of the province, of the municipality and of the economic and civil society sector (PAT-Brentonico, 2010). In contrast, case B (Basso Sarca) plans to establish two bodies: the first called conference where a representative from each municipality, one from the Valley Community and one from the province participate and the second named as roundtable where representatives from provincial sectors, the two local TBOs and other representatives from local governments convene (PAT-Basso Sarca, 2012). Lastly, case C (Cembra-Avisio) is the only one that, in the management plan together with a conference of the municipalities and a president (that corresponds to the mayor of the leading municipality), has predisposed a territorial forum where stakeholders are invited to participate (PAT-Cembra-Avisio, 2011). Moreover, concerning the implementation of such management plan, only in case C (Cembra-Avisio) evidence is found that an external coordinator has been entitled to coordinate the network of reserves. In spite of that, there is no data testifying the actual operation of a wider management body. Nevertheless, all three cases have a detailed management plan about zoning, protection measures, development opportunities, financial system and potential stakeholders to involve. Lastly, it is important to mention that, as the provincial law 2007/11 requires, all management plans should have a validity of at least three years.

All this considered, case D, the Paneveggio-Pale di San Martino Natural Park, seems to have, comparing to the other cases, a more adequate administrative setting to allow an effective capacity (in terms on organizational, financial and human resources) to coordinate participatory processes for designing and implementing a long-term strategy of ST in PAs. In fact, as has been noticed in the PNAB results and as the ECST requires, a minimum of a five-year strategy is necessary. The fact that networks of reserves are based on three-year management plans hinders the possibility to develop a parallel process of partnering which requires time both for the planning phase and for yielding evident results. This is even more obvious in the PNAB case, where after 10 years no quantitative results are visible. Moreover, (at the present day,) the fact that no management body is actually in charge in any network of reserve exacerbates the construction of

an effective strategy. Among the networks of reserve however, case C (Cembra-Avisio), by planning the institution of a territorial forum seems the most prone to implement a partnership process. In spite of that, the triennial duration of the management plan is likely to hinder the process, the output and the outcome of the partnership for sustainable development.

All in all a provincial strategy for PAs should take into account that PAs, in order to design and implement ST policies based on collaborative arrangement, should be supported by adequate administrative instruments that are long-term management plans and operative management bodies. In sight of that, among all the PAs, the Paneveggio-Pale di San Martino Natural Park seems to be more likely to coordinate successful partnerships.

For what concerns the legislative framework, I refer to what has been outlined at the beginning of this section about law 2007/11 and in the section 5.1.3, which is still valid for the whole PAs system since it refers to the provincial and higher legislative framework. This can be summarized as follows. The environmental provincial legislative framework is predicted to work coherently and to support partnership for ST in PAs, by also implementing European and Alpine Convention's directives. Nevertheless, the attitude of the actors, the adequacy of resources and the ambitiousness of the projects in terms of the transition towards tourism sustainability seem hindered by the provincial tourism framework. In fact, the tourism representatives themselves notice a gap between its strategic sustainability-oriented document and its actual implementation. This seems due to the fact that currently tourism strategies are planned on a yearly basis according to the yearly budget. Therefore, long-term sustainability objectives are never faced substantially. Moreover, the PNAB case shows that the legislative framework also negatively affects the participation of the provincial tourism promotion authority, which should be more active from the planning phase in the definition of tourism products till the later stage of promotion. Overall, these are problems that should be tackled at the general provincial level.

The available data allows the limited assessment of the previous elements, for all the other factors only recommendations in light of the results of the PNAB case can be offered. In order not to be redundant I refer to the conclusions of the PNAB case for more specific recommendations on the partnership level. Nevertheless, the next section outlines what a provincial strategy should take into account to promote successful partnership in its ecological network of PAs.

7.2.1. Final recommendations

The analysis of the results of the successful case-study and the results of the abovementioned preliminary assessment on the other Trentino's PAs helps to yield prescriptive knowledge about the elements that should be considered by policy-makers from the Autonomous Province of Trento when designing a provincial strategy of implementation of collaborative arrangements for ST in its network of PAs.

A provincial strategy to implement collaborative arrangements in its PAs for ST should address two levels of intervention, the provincial context and the level of PAs.

For what concerns the latter, from the results of the data collected it is possible to infer that a working and operative PA's authority is a *condition sine qua non* for an effective coordination of the process which also monitors potential environmental impacts. In this regard, the newly established reserves networks seem to not be ready to undertake a leading role in partnership formation because an operative management is not in place yet. Therefore, I conclude that it would be premature to implement participatory approaches in

such PAs. On the other hand, the other provincial park, case D, seems to fulfill the abovementioned requisite and thus appears prone to implement partnership arrangements successfully. An adequate collaborative capacity of the PA's authority is pivotal because, according to the knowledge produced by the PNAB case, this influences significantly the potential structure and flexibility of the process, its effective coordination and leadership, quality and quantity of the information, adequacy of resources, and an effective administrative setting and enforcement of behavior. This would affect a potential partnership in all its stages, from the building of trust till the formation of a rule system. It is important that a PA's authority is well-established to allow the definition of its role and mission in contrast to the other stakeholders, which is pivotal for the development of empathy and the recognition of interdependence. This, together with perceived benefits, is expected to determine the membership composition of the partnership and the level to which stakeholders consider worthy to participate actively.

For what concerns the provincial legislative framework, it can be concluded that the tourism sectors involve many structural shortcomings that, if addressed, might enhance partnership success in the provincial PAs especially in terms of economical, environmental and social benefits. More specifically, structural adjustments to the tourism policies might help the partnership of the PNAB to achieve the fourth and the fifth level of Glasbergen's (2010) ladder of partnership activities. First of all, the province should fill the gap between theory and practice and identify valid sustainable development policies supported by adequate resources. In the field of tourism this means to define a long-term specific tourism strategy supported by appropriate resources where path dependency on mass ski-based tourism is addressed. Second, although not completely separate from the former, participation of the provincial tourism promotion board should be enhanced in the definition of ST product. This would reduce inconsistencies between product development and product promotion as emerged in the PNAB case. Moreover, it could also be suggested that the market-oriented project is extended in its geographical scope to the whole province in order to facilitate external communication and coherence among the province.

Lastly, attention from both the provincial level and the local level should be drawn on defining such scope of the partnership around different perspectives of mountain identity. This involves not only the natural heritage of the area but also its historical and cultural heritage. Innovation that might trigger the participation of local and civil society stakeholders could refer to the integration of the natural and cultural capital (such as the *malga* system) of the PAs where agriculture might find economic viability through ST policies. Other detailed recommendations that are drawn from the PNAB case and have a general validity for all potential partnerships in Trentino can be found in section 6.2.

8. Discussion - limits of the results and recommendations for further research

This research has been guided by a constructivist rather than positivist approach and has used qualitative methods of data collection and analysis. This has revealed as positive because the case-study of the PNAB has entailed the emergence of new important insights and helps depicting a comprehensive and detailed picture of a complex case-study. In spite of that, this methodological approach also involved a great challenge for the researcher in collecting and analyzing the data. Moreover, the underlying constructivist assumption that the researcher is completely embedded in the research context implies natural biases in the research. This demands transparency and clarity in presenting how the results have been yielded. In

light of this consideration, it is important to write explicitly on the position of the research in respect to the case-study analyzed. In fact, I have been grown up in Trentino, more specifically in Val di Sole, one of the valleys interested by the PNAB. This, from one hand, has advantaged me in the collection and analysis of data both because it facilitated the contacts with the respondents and both because my overall knowledge of the area (physically, socially and linguistically) made it easier to understand some interviewees' language (some of them used very often dialectal and colloquial expressions) and context dynamics referred in the interviews. On the other hand, I have to admit such closeness to the research object might have affected the objectivity of the analysis. To overcome this risk, I aimed at putting further efforts in the iterative analysis of the textual data, trying to representing all the perspectives that might be found on a factor or element.

Compared to positivist and quantitative research, qualitative research demands further space for methodological clarity and presentation of the results through words and explanations. This is because depicting a comprehensive picture that can be deemed reliable and representative of what it is really meant to be measured, relies on a story that is not straightforward. This is even more true when facing governance issues (whose factors are per se interconnected) in the context of Trentino and the case of PNAB which both encompass a rich institutional and socio-economical diversity. The results cannot be reduced to mere numbers and univocal relations but need to be represented in their fullness although the sake of clarity and reliability must still be kept in mind.

Moreover, in light of the undertaken constructivist approach and considering practical issues, this work does not claim to have established any statistically significant causal claim. In fact, this research relied more on the perspective of the involved participants or other relevant actors trying to establish interrelationships among elements. This has revealed to be appropriate because the satisfaction of the stakeholders in terms of economical, social and environmental outcome affects the extent to which a benefit in the cooperative arrangement is perceived and in turn determines the extent to which the actors cooperate.

In addition, although many constructivist authors (such as Agar, 1986; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000) assert that qualitative research cannot be evaluated with the same strict standards set by positivist research such as replicability, credibility and validity, it is still important to reflect over the position of the present research in comparison to these issues. In fact, albeit qualitative research does not rely on certain numbers or statistical causal claims, it still needs to persuade the reader that its results are credible and yielded through a rigorous method (Morse et al., 2002). Moreover, according to Silverman (2004) discussing the generalizability of the results and the potential limitations of the research is an important step to present a credible qualitative research. Hence, with regard to validity and reliability as defined by Rossi et al. (2004) in section 3.5., it is important to assert what follows.

First, in regard to reliability, this refers to the extent to which future researchers could repeat the same project and produce the same results and more in general to the degree "findings of the study are independent of accidental circumstances of their production" (Silverman, 2004, p. 360). It deals with replicability issues. Concerning the present thesis, it might be criticized that different researchers may have produced different results analyzing the same data or that other researchers might have collected different data and thus offered a different analysis. Nevertheless, I argue that I tried to follow all the guidelines proposed by the literature to overcome such risk. In fact, I aimed at outlining transparently choices and data collection methods and analysis, in such a way that the reader or another researcher could follow how every claim has been inferred.

Second, validity can be both internal and external. The former concerns “the extent to which it measures what it is intended to measure” (Rossi et al. p. 220) and according to Bryman (2012) this entails first a measurement and second, a causality dimension. To assess to what extent the results of the thesis might be considered internally valid, it is important to assert that standards posed by quantitative results to consider the validity of established correlations should be different from standards for qualitative research (Silverman, 2004). In fact, in light of its objectives, the present research does not claim to have established a certain causal relation. It rather proposes the explanation of the success of partnerships in a particular geographical and administrative area based on causal insights and interrelationships among the elements. I believe my research can be deemed internally valid because data has been triangulated and choices, analysis and conclusions have been presented transparently. Nevertheless, I am aware that quantification of some elements (such as objective indicators sustainable development outcome or use of integrative questionnaires) could have attributed more internal validity to my results. Secondly, external validity refers to the extent to which the results of this study can be generalized beyond the context of the research unit (Bryman, 2012). As it becomes clear in chapter 3 (methodology), the study, being aware of its approach and methods, aims *per se* more at having internal than external validity. Nevertheless, it might still provide indicative and interesting insights for other Alpine and mountain areas especially for practitioners. What makes difficult to generalize the results is the peculiar political autonomy (and thus legislative) granted to the Autonomous Province of Trento which is similar only to the German-speaking Autonomous Province of Bolzano, but is still not comparable to other Italian Alpine provinces which are more centralized. However, generalizing the results to the Province of Bolzano might be dangerous because besides holding a different culture and language, the Bolzano’s Province might have very different laws in environmental protection and tourism development which would change the types of actors involved and the type of emerging consequences.

A problem with the theoretical perspective is important to notice. In fact, at the beginning of the thesis when I identified the STCRC study as the most complete framework for my research questions, I noticed that the authors were presenting IAD, social capital, network theory as theories. However, the IAD is more a framework where different theories might be placed to explain the outcome of the action arena. Nevertheless, I decided to use the explanatory framework as it was developed because this was the result of an extensive empirical test and it still seemed valid. I am aware that a critical review of the theoretical construction of the STCRC framework is missing and that is why I suggest further research should face this problem trying to understand if there is still room for improvement.

Moreover, with regard to the sustainable development outcome, it would be envisaged for further research to approach this issue from a more positivist and quantitative approach in two ways. Firstly, its results are interesting to focus on the causal relation between cooperative behavior and results of sustainable development using objective measurements and impact analysis. Secondly, it might be really interesting to test the results of the adjusted place-specific framework through questionnaire and statistical analysis of the data.

An additional element of the sustainable development outcome would deserve further attention, which is deseasonalization. In fact, identifying appropriate objective indicators to measure to what extent deseasonalization is affected by policies. It would also be interesting to investigate which policies and relative governance mode might be more effective.

Another suggestion for further research that appears to be relevant from the present research concerns analyzing the PNAB partnerships’ framework through an extensive historical discourse analysis. In fact,

language appeared to be a central element of the process defining benefits, empathy and shared vision. Especially, it would be interesting to focus on how environment and biodiversity issues have been framed within the decision-making.

Another element emerging from my research is linked to the discussion over the present-day role of Trentino's *usi civici* organizations. These are the current administrative structure of ancient local institutions that for centuries have managed sustainably forests and highland pastures. In the history of these institutions (together with the history of cooperatives and of the Ladin-speaking minority) lie the cultural and political motivations of the political autonomy granted to Trentino. According to Casari (2007), these institutions detained an important role in the governance of the natural resources also as administrative government until the end of the XIX. After that it seems that the stronger role assumed by the centralized state pressured the existence of local autonomous government and in many cases, although the collective property was still granted, their autonomous governing institutions succumbed. Nowadays, in Trentino more than half of the land is collective property managed by municipalities and in other cases by the actors mentioned in this thesis as *usi civici* associations. All this considered, in light of the results emerged in the analysis of the present thesis, it seems important to investigate the contemporaneity of the role and of the institutions per se in the current governance setting and evaluate what is the potential of such institutions for contributing to sustainability (considering their high local knowledge).

A last insight that appears interesting from my research and should deserve further attention especially by practitioners refers to the potential synergies between tourism and highland grazing and dairy farming (connected to the malga system). In fact, most Alpine PAs entail highland pasture that adds ecological and environmental value to the area. However, this extensive grazing system is not competitive with intensive low land systems any longer and there is the risk for them to disappear. This would constitute a huge cultural as well as ecological loss (Soane et al., 2012). Including the enhancement of these systems, policies for sustainable tourism might address the abovementioned risks. Moreover, since these traditional systems are perceived as a strong cultural identity by the local residents, they also might provide an additional incentive to trigger a cooperative behavior in local actors (especially those linked to the *usi civici*).

9. Conclusion

Being the largest mountain range in Europe, the Alps, with their rich biodiversity and their glaciers in danger for global warming, are important contributors to European transition towards sustainability. Tourism is a prominent sector of the Alpine economy, whose sustainability must not only be considered for its economical benefits or in spite of its costs but as the promotion of sustainable quality of life for present and future local residents. In fact, sustainable tourism refers to any policy that aims at targeting the pressure exerted by tourism at any level. The present thesis has focused on sustainable tourism policies in the context of natural protection and more specifically of PAs, designed and managed through collaborative and participatory processes. In spite of the numerous labels used in the literature, I have referred to these management structures as partnerships or collaborative arrangements. However, in the context of PAs the shift towards a participated management is the consequence of the shift towards a more open paradigm to natural protection. This shift represents also a more integrated approach to sustainable development where tourism is seen as a source of economic and social development that can be managed in such a way that also natural resources are preserved. Considering the risk of environmental degradation

that tourism activities and participatory processes could bring along, the shift to more “tourism-open” PAs needs to be carefully considered in order to avoid any drawbacks.

The present research draws upon the current experience of the Alpine province of Trentino which, in spite of having 30% of its mountain territory covered by some type of PAs, welcomes almost 5 millions of tourism arrivals a year. In this region the tension between natural protection and tourism development (in many cases mass tourism related to skiing), however what makes this province so interesting is the fact that partnerships for sustainable tourism have been implemented in its biggest PA, the PNAB, and similar interventions are planned to involve other PAs of the provincial ecological network. To give an adequate informative support to these future policies, the present research has aimed to answer to the following research question:

What are the factors that might facilitate and hinder an effective collaboration among the different stakeholders involved in the management of sustainable tourism in the network of protected areas of the mountain territory of Trentino, Italy?

To answer, first a detailed analytical framework has been drawn from the current state-of-art literature on the topic. Afterwards this framework has been applied in an in-depth case-study using qualitative approaches in the collection and the analysis of the data. Eventually, after three months of field work and two months of analysis, success and explanations for success (summarized in a visual representation in Figure 12) have been outlined in the present work and summed up as follows.

Success. First of all, it is important to explain what is meant by success for partnership in sustainable tourism in mountain PAs. Success might be defined on different levels and as Glasbergen (2010) suggests and the PNAB case confirmed, building trust might be regarded as a first successful step to develop a partnership. Nevertheless, success is generally meant as the establishment of an effective cooperation among some actors which could be regarded both as the establishment of certain institutions for collective actions and the determination of practical projects to be implemented. Yet, all this is supposed to affect sooner or later the sustainable development outcome in all three dimensions. Adequate time is also discovered to be both a condition and an indicator for success. In fact, a lack of sustainable development outcome in the long-term might affect negatively the duration of the partnership, especially if economic benefits are missing. Within sustainable development outcome, the achievement of deseasonalization of the tourism services seems to offer an adequate place-specific indicator of success since Trentino, as other Alpine destination, is mainly dependent on mass tourism dynamics that concentrated arrivals in only few months. However, success might be approached from a wider perspective and be meant as the extent to which such established partnerships are able to affect its surrounding market and governance system. The latter two, even if very vague, are analytically useful to predict potential spill-over of the partnership.

Factors facilitating or hindering success. Overall, all the hypotheses of the STCRC independent variables are confirmed, even if some variables have been discarded because redundant and others have been added because missing. All the factors have been applied and then adjusted to the place-specific context of the research to yield place-specific conclusions.

As Glasbergen (2010) suggested, the development of trust among the parties and, subsequently, of a collaborative arrangement are the prerequisites for the establishment of a rule system. And only an effective rule system can ensure long-lasting results. However, to achieve successfully every level of the partnership’s activities many factors must contribute.

It is found that an active leading role of the PA's authority is paramount for the overall success of the partnership, but especially at the beginning it is important that the PA's author plays the role of coordinator. A leading PA's authority is important because given its organizational, technical and financial capacity can help the perception of a structured process, enhance flexibility, quantity and quality of the information and boost innovation and openness to change on behalf of the other actors. The planning phase is particularly relevant because it corresponds to when trust is developed and collaborative advantages defined among the actors. Its effective coordination is important because it decreases the perception of uncertainty and enhances the potential for trust and collaborative advantage to be developed.

What seems to be particularly successful in determining trust in the context study is how shared vision and scope of the partnership are framed around the concept protection and the enhancement of the natural and cultural heritage of the local area (reflecting different types of perceived mountain identity). In fact, besides exploring the tourism-related economic potential of natural resources, it is important to include within the scope of the partnerships also local cultural and historical elements. Especially, the *malga* system (in many cases governed by the *usi civici* associations), with its highland farming and dairy production, is today no longer competitive with low-land production, which has resulted in a general abandonment of such practices. This affects negatively the biodiversity and the conservation of traditional landscapes. Thus, tourism in PAs should address these systems to provide alternatives for the survival of these local institutions and knowledge.

Still, when especially high levels of conflict are evident, openness to change on behalf of each actor is essential and together with (perceived) innovation of product and process seems to play a role in determining the initial collaborative advantage. In parallel, legitimacy plays an important role determining empathy and recognition of interdependence. To trigger a cooperative-oriented change within the stakeholders beyond emotional beliefs, it is also essential that actors perceive benefits in the partnership. Once the collaborative arrangement is signed, there is a need to balance a structure process with flexibility and informality. In general informal relations are really important especially when dealing with Trentino's local actors and small mountain communities.

Moreover, the results call for an enhanced participation of provincial stakeholders. A stronger participation of the provincial tourism promotion authority since the early stages of the partnership might be important to harmonize the development with the promotion of a tourism product. This would positively affect the external communication of the partnership and thus should ensure economic benefits. This is particularly important at the present day when the traditional tourism targets and markets are rapidly changing thanks to the globalization and economic dynamics.

The economical structure is important both at a provincial level where policy decisions are made but also at the district/area level. In fact, in areas with low tourism development, local actors (both TBOs and local governments) might be more attractive and thus more voluntarily cooperative in forming partnership for sustainable tourism. While areas whose economy relies strongly on mass tourism might be more laggard in the participation in the partnership activities. However, also areas whose economy is massively dependent on other sectors (such as intensive apple cultivation at Val di Non) might not see a great advantage in investing energy in sustainable tourism policies. What seems to be an overall trigger of change is the level of perception of the collaborative advantage. In fact, globalization dynamics with the increased competitiveness among tourism destinations and economic crisis might affect positively such perception, as the PNAB case manifests. The case of the QP shows however when the economic advantage might not play

a prominent role in the initial phase, when the trigger of change relied more on ethical beliefs and thus on a total acceptance and support of the PA's mission, but rather in a later stage, when expected economic results are lacking.

Considering the potential tensions between natural protection and tourism development at the local level, two aspects emerge important. At the provincial level, adequate legislative, technical and organization support and funding should be ensured to sustainability actions. It is important to be aware of the weight of tourism on the provincial economy and territory. In fact, in Trentino one can count almost 73 thousands accommodation facilities for a total of 479 thousands bed places (almost 5 millions of arrivals a year) but must also know that the province inhabitants are little more than 500 thousands (data are referred to 2011, Trentino Sviluppo, 2013). This huge pressure calls for stronger sustainability policies but however it also encounters obstacles in the status quo and in the current distribution of power, where mass tourism path dependency plays a major role. That is why a farsighted provincial strategy that first of all addresses sustainability in the whole tourism sector might be an important trigger of change at the local level, affecting the perception of the actors in participating to partnerships for sustainable tourism. Only a stronger provincial support to sustainability seems to be the condition for the partnership to enhance its outcome in a broader context (in terms of the last two levels of partnership activities) a provincial structural change is paramount.

For what concerns the *usi civici* associations, it is difficult to be confident about identifiable pattern of behavior. It seems that when these associations are bigger (in terms of the communities they represent) such the Regole of Spinale and Manez and/or own greater economic resources (i.e. Regole and ASUC Dimaro), are also likely to feel legitimated and empowered and thus more likely, when certain conditions are met, to establish collaborative arrangement. In fact, although through limited evidence, it is found that ASUCs in other areas have hold a passive or even hostile attitude to collaboration with other actors because of the lack of legitimacy (towards themselves and towards the PA's authority). A preliminary conclusion, that might be interesting to face with future research, entails that such ancient institutions for collective action have lost historically their economic-related subsistence function and thus their societal relevance and in turn legitimacy. Nevertheless, some of these, thanks to political unions and the ownership of land with high tourism value might have overcome legitimacy issues and assumed a relevant political and institutional role.

All in all, in the future Trentino will have to face many challenges to constitute a system of PAs where participatory processes pursue sustainable development through structured long-term interactions. Nevertheless, if this will be achieved, also the latter levels of Glasbergen' ladder of partnership's success might be said fulfilled. However, this will place Trentino as a model region for Alpine and other mountain areas proposing PAs as pivotal drivers for sustainable regional development.

10. References

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List of the abbreviations

ASUC – Associazione Separata Usi Civici

DBB – Dolomiti Brenta Bike

DBT – Dolomiti Brenta Trekking

ECST – European Charter for Sustainable Tourism

PAT – Provincia Autonoma di Trento (Autonomous Province of Trento)

PNAB – Parco Naturale Adamello Brenta (Adamello-Brenta Natural Park)

QP – Qualità Parco

SAT – Società Alpinisti Tridentini

ST – Sustainable Tourism

STCRC – Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Center

TBO – Tourism Board Organization

WCED - World Commission on Environment and Development

Annex 1 - Semi-structured interview form

Data:

Luogo:

Informazioni riguardanti il rispondente

1. Nome:
2. Organizzazione di riferimento:
3. Posizione ricoperta all'interno dell'organizzazione/azienda:
4. Durata del ruolo all'interno dell'organizzazione:
5. Da quanti anni ricopre questo ruolo:
6. Da quanto tempo ha a che fare con la strategia partecipativa attuata dal PNAB (sotto la CETS):
7. Zona geografica:

Informazioni riguardanti il rapporto tra organizzazione e CETS

8. Quando la sua organizzazione ha iniziato a partecipare alla strategia partecipativa?
9. Perché avete deciso di partecipare a questa strategia nel 2004?
10. E' la prima volta che l'organizzazione aveva a che fare con progetti basati su strategie collaborative?
11. Con quale obiettivo avete deciso di partecipare?
12. Quali sono gli obiettivi della CETS?
13. Li condivide?

Informazioni riguardanti i progetti specifici intrapresi dall'organizzazione

14. A quali progetti-tavoli di lavoro avete deciso di aderire e con quale ruolo?
15. Con quali partner avete lavorato?
16. Che tipo di impegni scritti avete stipulato?
17. Avete deciso di continuare questi progetti di collaborazione anche nel 2011 nell'ambito della rivalidazione della CETS?

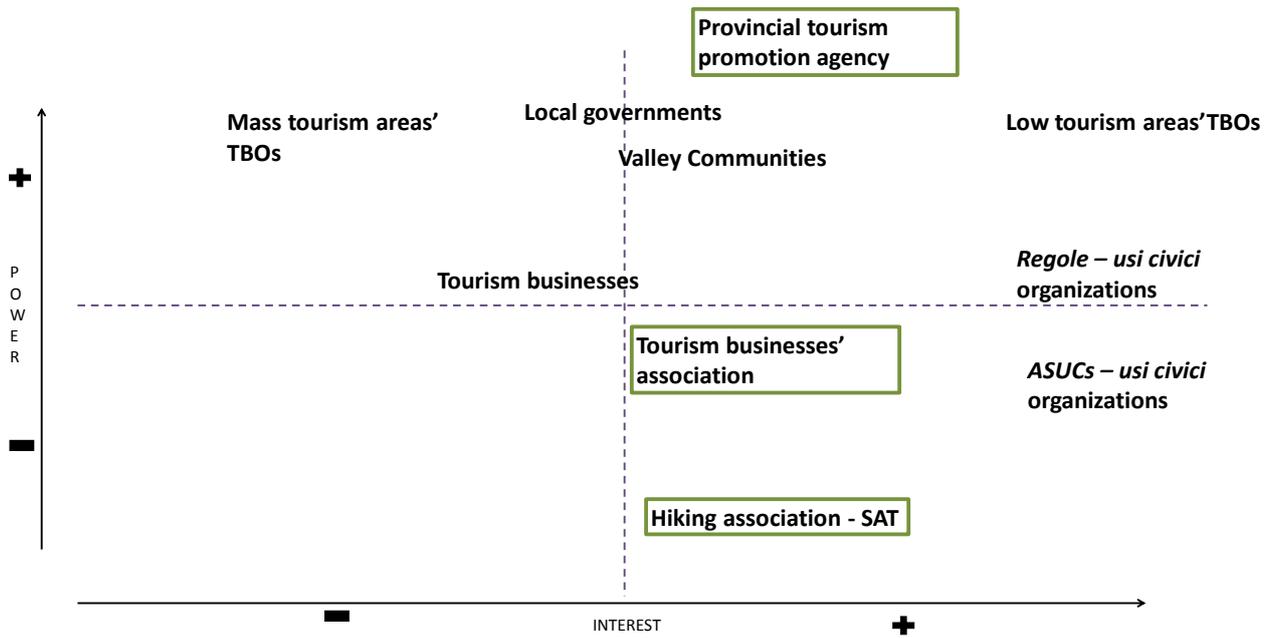
Compilare la seguente tabella, valutando da 1 a 5 i diversi items, spiegando a voce le motivazioni di tale valutazione.

Fase iniziale-strategica – Definizione strategia e progetti	Scala					Fase attuativa-operativa – Implementazione della strategia e dei progetti	Scala				
	I n s u f f i c i e n t e	Buono			E c c e l l e n t e		I n s u f f i c i e n t e	Buono			E c c e l l e n t e
18. Comunicazione- Coordinazione – livello di comunicatività e coordinamento efficace nel momento iniziale di coinvolgimento dei soggetti e pianificazione dei progetti	1	2	3	4	5	25. Comunicazione- Coordinazione - livello di comunicatività e coordinamento efficace dal momento in cui i progetti sono realmente partiti e attuati	1	2	3	4	5
19. Collaborazione – livello di collaborazione tra i soggetti coinvolti e livello di capacità di superare positivamente i conflitti nei momenti iniziale di coinvolgimento dei soggetti e pianificazione dei progetti e della strategia – come opposto di <i>conflittualità</i>	1	2	3	4	5	26. Collaborazione - livello di collaborazione tra i soggetti coinvolti e livello di capacità di superare positivamente i conflitti dal momento in cui i progetti sono realmente partiti e attuati	1	2	3	4	5
20. Inclusione – livello di inclusione di tutti i potenziali soggetti che hanno un interesse nel partecipare	1	2	3	4	5	27. Inclusione- livello di inclusione di tutti i potenziali soggetti che hanno un interesse nell'attuazione dei progetti	1	2	3	4	5
21. Trasparenza – livello di trasparenza delle decisioni prese e nella comunicazione delle informazioni a tutti soggetti	1	2	3	4	5	28. Trasparenza - livello di trasparenza delle decisioni prese e nella comunicazione delle informazioni a tutti soggetti durante la fase operativa dei tavoli di lavoro	1	2	3	4	5
22. Imparzialità – livello dell'imparzialità e neutralità nel trattare e considerare le idee di diversi soggetti senza che ci sia una parte che più di altre possa influenzare le decisioni da prendere	1	2	3	4	5	29. Imparzialità - livello dell'imparzialità e neutralità nel trattare i diversi soggetti senza che qualche parti possa influenzare più di altre le decisioni	1	2	3	4	5
23. Fiducia – livello di fiducia e mutuo rispetto tra le parti coinvolte nel momento iniziale in cui le parti per le prime volte si trovavano riunite intorno allo stesso tavolo	1	2	3	4	5	30. Fiducia - livello di fiducia e mutuo rispetto tra le parti coinvolte durante le fasi più operative dei tavoli di lavoro	1	2	3	4	5
24. Innovazione – Flessibilità – livello per cui il processo proposto dal PNAB è percepito come strumento innovativo e capace di approcciare in maniera nuova i problemi	1	2	3	4	5	31. Innovazione – Flessibilità – livello di flessibilità e di innovazione nell'affrontare i problemi emersi durante le fasi operative (sia da un punto di vista di prodotto che di processo)	1	2	3	4	5

Risultati della strategia partecipativa	Scala				
	I n s u f f i c i e n t e	Buono			E c c e l l e n t e
32. Soddisfazione dei risultati ottenuti – dal punto di vista dell'organizzazione dell'intervistato	1	2	3	4	5
33. Efficacia generale	1	2	3	4	5
34. Risultati in termini economici	1	2	3	4	5
35. Risultati in termini sociali	1	2	3	4	5
36. Risultati in termini ambientali	1	2	3	4	5

37. Come vede il futuro di questo tipo di strategie partecipative sia all'interno del PNAB che in altre realtà trentine?

Annex 2 - Power/interest grid of the PNAB stakeholders (in green the provincial stakeholders)



Postface and acknowledgements

This thesis addresses natural protection and tourism development, two aspects that have been very prominent in my life. In fact, I proudly come from a little village at 1000 meters above sea level (of nearly 200 inhabitants) in Val di Sole, a western valley of Trentino, an Alpine Italian province. This is why I also proudly present this work that focuses on my homeland and on sustainability-oriented solutions.

For years, as a teenager, I perceived those mountains as a limit for my mobility and social life and I saw those loads of tourists in summer and winter as an invasion of my daily normality. But afterwards, after escaping towards more urban settlements to study, one realizes the value and the luck of coming from the mountains of Trentino. Where one can sleep in the night with the main door open, where most of your neighbors are relatives and if not they behave like they were, taking care of your grandmother suffering of Alzheimers. Where one can have a big vegetable garden and raspberries all summer long. Where one can hike twenty minutes and be completely surrounded by a pristine environment. . However, as this research also shows, nature and quality of life are in these mountains often taken for granted by both the local residents and tourists. That is why we need farsighted provincial and local leaders and adequate supportive policies that can drive a transition towards more sustainability. And I wish I could contribute in first place to this shift both through the knowledge generated by the thesis and through my future professional experience.

This thesis for me meant more than an important research on an interesting issue; it has been a great personal discovery. It shed light on so many aspects I did not know about my area and my province, their history, people, culture and current dynamics that really helped finding a great enthusiasm along the whole process. This personal interest really made up for the frustration of disentangling governance elements that my research required clearly separated and explained through transparent reasoning whereas reality was presenting them in a mess of words and interwoven issues. All in all I can only hope that someone learns from reading it a fraction from all I have learned.

At the end of this process, not only of my thesis but of my whole academic course, I really feel thanking all the people that have contributed in different ways to this great achievement.

A particular gratitude goes to Alessandro Bazzanella and Paolo Grigolli, my supervisors at the Trentino School of Management where I did my internship. Thanks for having believed in me, in my experience and my work, for having let me work independently while making sure I had everything I might have needed. Thanks for the experience and the enthusiasm you shared with and especially thanks for having proposed me this topic and having made it becoming a valid scientific work.

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First of all, I would like to thank Utrecht, as a city, a university and for its social life. Studying at the Utrecht University, in the master of sustainable development, has been probably the first real challenge of my life, but it also turned out the best of me and now I am very proud and happy of having made such choice.

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