

ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

Understanding the governance of smart destinations: The case of Florianopolis in Brazil

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to analyze the process of tourism governance based on innovation in the use of ICT as a factor in the development of a smart tourism destination, and its relationship with public-private networks. The empirical analysis refers to the case study of the city of Florianopolis, Santa Catarina, Brazil. Therefore, the following methods were used: literature review, documentary analysis, in-depth and semi-structured interviews with tourism agents of the destination, and content analysis. The Atlas TI 8 software was used for data processing, which enabled a more detailed analysis in the understanding of the object of study of the research, through networks and conceptual maps in the cross-referencing of information. The results show that public-private relationships based on trust, joint decision-making, informal structures, strategic consensus, and the use of ICTs, seem to have a positive impact on the level of development and innovation in the smart tourism destination.

Keywords: governance; public-private networks; smart tourism destinations; innovation; ICT

1. Introduction

Tourism is a dynamic, multidisciplinary and complex socio-economic activity, therefore it is essential that the management of tourist destinations develops sustainable and innovative strategies with the application of information and communication technologies (ICT) and the effective participation of stakeholders, to turn tourist destinations into smart territorial spaces.

AN intelligent tourist destination (ITD) can be understood as an innovative space based on a territory with a state-of-the-art technological infrastructure, committed to sustainability (environmental, social and economic) and equipped with an information system (IS), to analyze and understand situations in real time and facilitate the interaction between tourists and the surroundings, significantly improving the tourist experience^[1,2].

Governance emerges as a fundamental factor

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for the development of ITDs. Buhalis and Amarangana^[3] point out that tourism governance is one of the most important aspects for the implementation and operation of ITDs, through public-private and civil society participation with government support.

Based on the literature, tourism governance is understood to be a process of governing tourism destinations through coordinated and synergistic efforts between governments at different levels and functions, civil society representing the host communities, and the private sector related to the functioning of the tourism system.

The present research work is an empirical analysis of a case study of the city of Florianopolis, capital of the Province of Santa Catarina in the southern region of Brazil, with an estimated population of 480 thousand people. The city's economic development is based on tourism, technological innovation and the service sector. It can be highlighted that Florianopolis is considered one of the most important smart cities in Brazil by the Urban Systems study^[4] and is positioned among the most entrepreneurial Brazilian cities^[5].

Based on the above premises, this paper seeks to answer the following questions: What is the perception of tourism agents of Florianopolis in a smart tourism destination? What would be the main positive and negative factors of Florianopolis governance that influence tourism development? Based on these questions, this study seeks to contrast the perception of members of the Municipal Council of Tourism and the Municipal Council of Innovation of Florianopolis, regarding the main factors of governance, supported by innovation and the use of ICTs, that influence the development of tourism.

2. Literature review

Faced with the challenges of globalization, such as demographic growth, the increased use of ICTs, climate change, the process of urbanization of cities, the growth in the number of international travelers

annually, the process of participatory decision-making, among other challenges, it is essential that tourist destinations become dynamic, sustainable and innovative territorial spaces.

The concept of ITD arises from the expansion of the concept of smart cities, which from the inclusive point of view, Fernandes^[6] points out that it refers to “an urban structure that uses ICT to improve life, working conditions, maximize sustainability and transform good governance, urban planning and management practices”.

Not only is it not enough just for cities to have technologies so that they are considered smart spaces, it is important that there is a commitment from politics (governments) and private initiative (investors) to generate economic, social and environmental value^[6].

In the report “Mapping Smart Cities in the EU”, a smart city is enabled by excellence by the use of ICT to improve competitiveness and ensure a more sustainable future, by the symbiotic union of networks of people, companies, technologies, infrastructures, consumption, energy and spaces^[7].

The State Society for the Management of Technologies of Innovation and Tourism S.A (la Sociedad estatal para la Gestión de Tecnologías de Innovación y Turismo S.A.—SEGITTUR)^[8], defines DTI as:

An innovative tourist space accessible to all, Consolidated in a state-of-the-art technological infrastructure that guarantees the sustainable development of the territory, facilitates the interaction and integration of the visitor with the environment and improves the quality of their experience in the destination and the quality of life of the inhabitants^[8].

Regarding the dimensions that constitute the ITD models, ICT, Innovation, Accessibility, Sustainability and Governance stand out^[8,9]. As for the governance dimension, it is linked to the strategic vision and development of the tourism destination, and to the interaction of multiple agents, whether from the public or private sector, and civil society.

The Governance process is essentially based on the Theory of Complexity and Uncertainties, on the Theory of Clusters, Local Productive Systems and

on Neo-institutionalist Theories—Industrial Organization and Social Capital^[10]. see in **Table 1**, the referred theories and their respective approaches.

Table 1. The concepts of the theories. Source: Own elaboration based on Torres Salcido and Ramos-Chaves (2008:89)

Theories	Concepts
Theory of Complexity and Uncertainties	It is revealed as a fundamental characteristic of the new capitalist relations and as a framework for decision-making processes.
Theory of Clusters and Local Productive Systems	They consider sectorial agglomerations in which the territory is specialized.
Neo-institutionalist theories	They help to understand the role of social organization, changes, networks and institutions in local development processes.

In this sense, Torres Salcido and Ramos-Chavez^[10] define governance as “a process of economic coordination, capacity building, creation and strengthening of local institutions aimed at reducing transaction costs from the point of view of neo-institutional economics and sociology”.

Governance refers to a new process of governing, which is not based on the resource or authority of government, but on a structure of order based on the relationship and interaction between public and private agents^[11–13].

In the field of tourism, according to Flores^[14], tourism governance is understood as a process of destination management, through the coordination and synergy of governments at different levels and functions, with the private sector and the community.

Based on the United Nations Development Program^[15], Edgar et al.^[16] affirm that for good governance to exist, five essential principles must be understood: legitimacy and voice, direction, performance, responsibility and justice (see **Table 2**).

Good governance arises through compliance with all the principles at least to some extent and that the conflicts inherent in the principles are considered so that a balance can be found between them^[16]. Therefore, it is possible to understand that not all principles are always fulfilled and that the existence of conflicts is part of the process of destination gov-

ernance. It is important to emphasize that good governance is based on the equity of these principles.

From the perspective of networks or agent interactions, “governance refers to inter-organizational organizational networks characterized by interdependence, resource sharing, rules of the game and significant state autonomy”^[12,17].

Different studies on governance and public-private partnerships or interrelationships demonstrate that these networks of actors function as critical factors for the development of a tourism destination^[17–25].

In the first place, it is assumed that a good public-private relationship can effectively collaborate to the development to take advantage of the competitive advantage of tourist destinations. However, it should first be understood that there is a complexity of actors in a destination, where different actors may have different interests and therefore also have different perceptions of reality.

According to Gomes^[26], in the case study of the city of Coimbra (Portugal), he points out that the agents responsible for the public management and promotion of tourist destinations play different roles, based on a variety of disciplines and backgrounds, which often leads to a conflict of objectives and interests. This being so, it is very complicated and difficult to reach consensus and solve problems jointly^[17].

Table 2. Principles of Good Governance. Source: Own elaboration based on UNDP^[15] and Edgar, Marshall and Bassett^[16]

Dimensions of Good Governance	Variables	Description of variables
Legitimacy and voice	Participation	Everyone should have a voice in decision making, either directly or through legitimate intermediary institutions representing their interests.
	Consensus orientation	Good governance mediates divergent interests to reach broad consensus on what is in the best interest of the group and, where possible, on policies and procedures.
Address	Strategic vision	Leaders and the public have a broad, long-term perspective on good governance and human development, along with a sense of what is necessary for such development.
Performance	Responsiveness	Institutions and processes seek to serve all stakeholders (agents)
	Efficiency and effectiveness	Processes and institutions produce results that meet stakeholder needs while making the best use of resources.
Fairness	Accountability	Decision-makers in government, the private sector and civil society organizations are accountable to the public, as well as to institutional stakeholders.
	Transparency	Transparency is built on the free flow of information. Information is provided to stakeholders so that they can understand and monitor it.
	Fairness	Everyone has opportunities to improve or maintain their well-being.
	Rule of law	Legal structures must be fair and impartially enforced.

Secondly, it is identified that there are certain dependencies due to limited resources among the actors that are important dynamic factors and this should be understood. Finally, it is perceived that public-private interaction in the destination is an aspect of the multi-stakeholder situation, that is, the formal and informal relationships between local government and the tourism industry can be of fundamental importance for the development of the tourism destination^[17].

Taking into consideration innovation and ICT, according to Bolivar and Meijer^[27], they conceptualize a model of smart governance (Smart Governance). For them, the strategy to implement smart governance is based on ideas (integrated vision) and actions (legislation, policy and organizational transformation). Once the strategy is defined, “smart governance should facilitate the process of collaboration and participation, internal coordination, decision making and electronic administration, which will result in changes in the organization of the government, in the government’s position vis-à-vis other urban actors and improvements to the city”^[27].

Another concept found in the literature, starting from the use of ICT, is e-governance (E-governance). According to Dawes^[28] e-governance involves the use of ICT “to support public services, administration, government, democratic processes and the relationships between citizens, civil society, the private sector and the state”. Complementing this thinking, Saxena^[29] asserts that e-governance “can transform not only the way most public services are delivered, but also the fundamental relationship between government and citizens”.

In short, the use of ICTs and innovative capacity in ITDs can stimulate the application of good governance principles, facilitate interaction and connection between tourism stakeholders, and enable effective management based on open data, sharing and big data.

3. Methodology

The present research work refers to a qualitative descriptive study that aims at describing some fundamental characteristics. The method used is a case

study, content analysis and construction of a conceptual map, through bibliographic and documentary research procedures, semi-structured interviews with local tourism agents and direct observation of the city of Florianópolis, Santa Catarina, Brazil.

The case study method, according to Gil^[30] is a research modality widely used in the social sciences and “consists of a deep and exhaustive study of one or a few objects, in such a way as to make possible its broad and detailed knowledge, a task practically impossible by means of other delineations already considered”.

For Bardin and Santos-Júnior, et al.^[2,31] content analysis is “a set of techniques for the analysis of communications using systematic and objective procedures for describing the content of messages”. The purpose of this method or technique would be to make inferences of knowledge related to production conditions through the use of quantitative indicators or not^[31].

Still on content analysis, Sampieri et al.^[32] proposes that the measures of the analysis indicate the segments of the content of communications that are characterized or individualized for later categorization, establishment of relationships and inferences from them.

Regarding concept maps, for Cañas et al.^[33], “they represent the significant relationships between concepts in the form of simplified propositions or phrases: two or more concepts linked by words to form a semantic unit”. Thus, it is understood that the concept map “is a graphic representation of a set of concepts and their relationships with respect to a given area of knowledge”^[33]. The construction of concept maps facilitates the representation and organization of knowledge.

The methodological structure of the research is divided into three phases: (1) Bibliographic and documentary research; (2) Semi-structured interviews with tourism agents in the city of Florianópolis and direct observation; (3) Content analysis and construction of the conceptual map.

In relation to the bibliographical research, the concepts of governance, innovation, ICT and smart tourist destinations were mainly analyzed. The documentary research was supported mainly in the documents: Sectoral Strategic Routes for the Catarinense Industry 2022: Tourism, from the Federation of Industries of Santa Catarina^[34]; Smart tourist destinations report: Building the future, by SEGITTUR^[8]; Entrepreneurial Cities Index, by Endeavor^[5]; and Ranking Connect Smart Cities, by Urban Systems^[4].

The interviews were conducted with two members of the Municipal Council of Tourism and with four members of the Municipal Council of Innovation, in 2017, through a questionnaire with 15 semi-structured questions related to the principles of good governance^[15,16], innovation and ICT. Direct observation allowed a vision of the smart actions developed and applied in the city.

Finally, the data obtained from the interviews conducted with the six tourism agents in Florianópolis were processed using Atlas.ti 8 software, which made it possible to identify the various categories and to carry out a content analysis and the construction of a conceptual or network map.

4. Analysis and discussion of the results

The case study was conducted in the city of Florianópolis, capital of the State of Santa Catarina, located in the Southern Region of Brazil, with a territorial area of 675,409 km². **Figure 1** provides a geographical overview of the destination. According to information from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics^[35], the city presented a GDP per capita of 39,678.10 reais, which is equivalent, on average, to \$10,583.10, with an economy based on information technology, tourism and service sector. The city is known for the high level of quality of life—HDI 0.847 (one of the highest in Brazil), for its paradisiacal beaches and creative gastronomy—recognized by UNESCO in 2014.

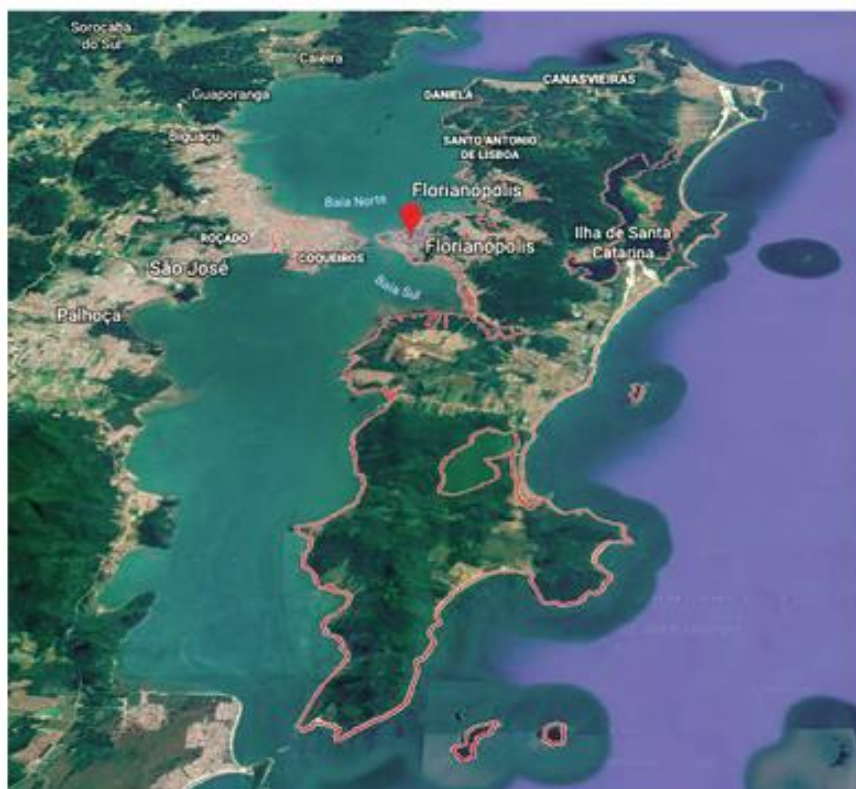


Figure 1. Map of Florianópolis. Camera: 27km 27°51'26 "S 48°27'10"WV.
Source: Google Earth (2018).

Among the smart actions observed, it is important to highlight that in 2017, Florianópolis, through the Associação Catarinense de Empresas de Tecnologia (ACATE), Associação Comercial e Industrial de Florianópolis (ACIF) and the City Hall, signed an agreement to develop an Urban Innovation Lab, which had as an initiative the installation of Wi-Fi routers and smart cameras. The Urban Innovation Laboratory has the support of companies from the technology sector, through innovative solutions - Algar Telecom, Intelbras, Kronos, TeltecSolbras and Seventh.

With the change in the management policy of the city of Florianópolis, in January 2017, the Municipal Secretary of Tourism, Technology and Economic Development was created, and the municipal councils were reformulated. Therefore, to conduct this research, six agents of the Municipal Councils of Tourism (two representatives) and Innovation (four representatives) of the city of Florianópolis were identified and interviewed, which resulted in the construction of a conceptual or network map, represented in **Figure 2**.

The findings of the present research are developed through the suggestions of these tourism agents, about how governance intervenes in the development of tourism in the city, and what would be the importance of innovation and ICT and the existence of a fundamental actor for the development of the tourist destination as intelligent.

Both the Municipal Council of Tourism - CMTur and the Municipal Council of Innovation - CMI aim to allow agents from the public, private and civil society sectors to participate directly in the actions and public policies for the scientific, technological, economic and tourism development of the city of Florianópolis. However, through municipal decrees, a greater centralization of public power in the CMTur is perceptible.

As can be seen in **Figure 2**, according to the stakeholders' vision, tourism development depends essentially on the quality of the services provided, new tourist attractions, basic infrastructure, cooperation and marketing. The success of the tourism destination depends on public-private relations, tourism

Regarding the importance of public-private participation in tourism development, it was noted: the creation of the Municipal Innovation Fund and the Tax Incentive Program for Innovation; the creation of the innovation roadmap that will add new opportunities to attract visitors; the technological development of the city; the validation of policies, the use of the fund, the legitimacy of the acts; the integration between the actors and the Municipality of Florianopolis can orchestrate tourism development; and the agglutination of the efforts of the entities around a single agenda.

It was noted that the city of Florianopolis is included in the study Strategic Sectorial Routes for the Catarinense Industry 2022: Tourism, which encompasses twelve tourist regions in the state of Santa Catarina. In order to consolidate this territorial space as intelligent, it is necessary to comply with strategic axes technologies for governance, technologies for tourism, technologies for tourism competitiveness, technologies for health, technologies for security, technologies for mobility and urbanism, technologies for energy and sustainability, which encompass actions for the following macro-segments of the region: tourism of oral, tourism of natural areas, tourism of theme parks, MICE tourism and historical and cultural tourism.

The interviewees consider that the use of ICTs seems to have a positive impact on the level of development and innovation in the tourism destination. For example, “[...]the development of Smart Cities applications can greatly help the tourism sector”; “[...]the Internet, as a real-time operationalization tool, offers subsidies that facilitate the choice of tourist itineraries, the purchase of tickets, hotel reservations, and other services independently, in addition to making it possible to find new means of customer service and establish relationships between suppliers, intermediaries and users”.

According to the agents, ICTs are tourism facilitating tools, especially for the events segment of the city, which occur throughout the year, without seasonality, “Many tourists who come to events stay at

home using AirBnB—Therefore, it is possible to make agreements with hotels, restaurants, and these people enjoy the city more and intend to return with their families”—Innovation and technology dimensions^[8].

Basically, the vision of the agents is very much directed to tourism marketing, being in that way in agreement with the study developed in the province of Paraná, Brazil^[36]. Through the responses, it was not possible to identify some concrete ICT actions developed or in the implementation phase in the tourist destination. According to the opinion of the interviewees, there should be a greater approximation between tourism entities and technology development agents, and this could collaborate in marketing, information and knowledge management.

Regarding the governance of the Florianopolis destination, it was observed that this is a very difficult process to implement. This aspect is fully supported in the theoretical foundation, which deals with conflicts and seeks the equity of the principles of good governance^[16,17].

In addition, tourism stakeholders believe that the success of Florianopolis as a smart tourism destination depends on: good, reputable tourism products; repairing a number of flaws in its basic infrastructure; improving tourism and leisure infrastructure; improving tourism signage and accessibility^[8]; the quality of services provided could be expanded to offset the price of the destination; creating more attractions and marketing—through strengthening inbound operators; developing a more welcoming and less seasonal tourism; investment in security, mainly in the areas of tourist attractions; better organization and union of the business sector - perspective of cooperative and integrated work in organizational networks^[17]; a united and cohesive trade, undoubtedly, the destination management would be able to advance in many challenges imposed by the dynamic and complex market.

5. Final considerations

In conclusion, the interviewees perceive that innovation and the use of ICTs collaborate significantly in the development of smart tourism in Florianópolis, as well as enable cooperation between public-private initiatives, investments in quality of services, development of new tourist attractions, basic infrastructure and marketing - commercialization. However, they were not able to cite specific ICT actions applied to the tourism sector.

On the other hand, it is observed that the existence of a coordinator or manager in the councils contributes to an increase in the level of trust in cooperation and public-private relations. It is understood that public-private relations depend on the formal and informal structures among the member agents and are associated with the cooperation of resources and the capacity for development of each representative institution.

Regarding governance, the city of Florianópolis has two very important councils for the development of smart tourism, in addition to having studies and innovation and ICT projects in the implementation phase. According to Santos-Júnior et al.^[2], in the case study of the city of Marbella, it is highlighted that the development of strategic tourism documents, which promote innovation and sustainable development, as well as the existence of a tourism council, are essential for the effectiveness of tourism development programs, projects and plans.

Finally, as a significant requirement for good governance of Florianópolis as a smart tourism destination, would be greater integration and knowledge sharing among the agents involved, to minimize possible conflicts that may arise and to strengthen and expand the development of innovative tourism projects.

Regarding the limitations of the research, the low number of interviewees for various reasons should be considered. However, the information obtained has enabled us to make a general reflection on the governance process of the tourist destination under study, and its relationship with innovation and

technology.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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