# Tourism networks - interdependent relationships among public policy actors

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## ABSTRACT

This chapter dialogues with the field of studies and analysis of public policy, which has its pioneering work in the 1940s and is in constant development. Given the various definitions of public policies, there is a convergence that these include articulations between various actors - public and private - which makes it important to consider the relational perspective for analysis purposes. Governments have been dedicated to formulating public policies in specific domains, seeking to guide, regulate, as well as develop certain activities, such as tourism. In this sense, the municipality of Ouro Preto, a World Heritage Site, a tourist destination with a highly relevant historical and cultural heritage, which has established public tourism policies and tourism management tools, becomes a potential locus for investigation. In this context, we seek to investigate the interactions, from the perspective of the network approach, between the actors that make up the municipal public management of tourism in the city of Ouro Preto, Brazil, considering the multidimensionality of political interest in the public-private sector. The contribution of this work continues to improve the understanding of the implications of network management in tourist destinations, articulating the themes of governance and policy networks that circumstantially pass-through discussions on social networks. Thus, contribute to the field of studies on collaborative forms in tourism planning and management. Finally, it is concluded that the application of this theoretical-methodological model allows to assess the articulations and behaviors of the actors within spaces of participation, as well as the positions and exchanges that affect the results facing the construction of public tourism policies.

## 1. Introduction

The field of public policy analysis is in constant development, ever since studies on public policies began in the first half of the 20th century. Its perspectives, both classical and recent, range from the pioneering studies of the 1940s and 1950s, the policy cycle, implementation theories, new institutionalism, as well as its critiques, and even the applied models that insert discussions on policy design and/or program transfer. They also involve emerging themes in political science, such as contemporary democratic theory, deliberation, and the legitimacy of the actions of the state through its governments.

The actors and their interactions have always had a relevant place in the reflection on public policies through their flows and dynamics. It is known that there is a multiplicity of distinct definitions of public policies (Dye, 1972; Haas, 1992; Börzel,

1997; Frey, 2003; Campbell, 2002; Faria, 2003; Fisher,2003, among others); however, there is a convergence of ideas in the sense of considering public policies as a network of decisions that are within a dynamic process, with complex interactions among political actors. Thus, understanding how this dynamic process occurs through the interactions between political actors within this decision network would bring elements to apprehend the essence of public policies in certain fields of action in different governments.

In specific fields, governments have been engaged in formulating public policies to solve problems, as well as developing and planning certain activities in order to secure gains for society. Considering the different ways in which governments act, the interest of this research is to understand the network of interactions between the actors that make up an instance of public tourism

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management in the municipality of Ouro Preto, Brazil.

This important tourist destination has a historical and cultural heritage that is internationally recognized for its relevance and historical preservation. It is located in the central region of Minas Gerais, a state among the 27 states that make up the Federative Republic of Brazil. Its cultural heritage is mainly composed of material assets (churches, chapels, and museums) of Portuguese cultural influence from the 17th, 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries, existing in its region, which is recognized by the colonial history of Brazil and Portugal. Ouro Preto was the first Brazilian city to have its historic center declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.

In this context, the following question arises: how are the interactions, from the perspective of the network approach, among the actors that make up the public municipal tourism management in the municipality of Ouro Preto, Brazil, considering the multi-dimensionality of political interest of the public-private sector? To answer this question, we used a mixed methodology, qualitative and quantitative, by means of semi-structured interviews with the members of the Ouro Preto Municipal Tourism Council.

Among the guiding parameters of tourism public policies, some requirements stand out, such as the sustainability element, intersectoriality, and the need to involve related sectors and encompass multiple players – governments, markets, and the community – for developing this activity. In this work, we focus on the involvement of multiple actors, because this comprehensiveness is essential to achieve the goals of the tourism public policies at hand, according to some authors ( Jamal and Getz, 1995; Dredge, 2006; Hernández, 2007; Scott, 2011; Tuohino & Konu, 2011; Muñoz-Mazón & Velasco, 2015).

Thus, the aim is to improve the understanding of the implications of network management in local tourism destinations, seeking to reconcile theoretical and methodological frameworks that address the structure and dynamics of relationships between local tourism players and the strength of relational ties. In addition, we seek to delve deeper into the conception of social networks by counterpointing the works that deal with tourism public policies and that go deep into the themes of governance and policy networks, but that circumstantially go through the discussions on social networks.

The use of theories and methodologies need to be discussed in order to understand the ability of tourism actors to seek collaborative and cooperative partnerships. Thus, the theoretical framework will consider, in a broad way, concepts on social networks and tourism public policies, which will help in data collection and analysis on local government actions, which will direct the information survey through the investigation of actions related to the tourism development of the domain in question.

## 2. Analysis of Actors and their Relationships for Reflecting on Public Policies

Actors have always been a central element of public policy analysis, and reflection on their position, form of action, and relationships is a line of work that has accompanied the discipline since its origins.

In this paper, we are interested in highlighting the relationship of a consolidated research methodology, Social Network Analysis, with the broadest reflections taking place in political science on the concept of governance and, linked to this, the concept of policy networks. We briefly describe the three frameworks.

### *Social Network Theory*

The literature on networks is quite extensive, considering the various disciplines that somehow couple in the field of studies its theoretical-methodological usefulness for scientific investigation. We understand a social network as a set of actors linked by social relations, through connections that involve symbolic language, cultural boundaries, and power relations, and is a field present at a given time and structured by links between individuals, groups, and organizations built over time (Marques, 1999; Granovetter, 1985; Capra, 2002).

Social network analysis attempts to establish an objective means of identifying the ties or relationships between actors within a system, enabling visibility of relationship networks rather than individual attributes. It seeks to understand the organizational structures "spanning the public and private sectors that shape collective action" (Dredge, 2006, p. 270).

According to Dupuy & Gilly (1995), two structures can be considered: the intra-organizational and the inter-organizational. The first collects the individual experiences and discoveries that take place within the organization, and the second arises from the interactions of distinct organisms

that cooperate, formally or informally, for a common project. Complementarily, the analysis of a social network can be carried out by means of structural and morphological characteristics, as well as an analysis that considers the composition and nature of the network.

Density and centrality are two basic characteristics of networks: the former is calculated as a proportion of the number of existing relationships compared to the total number of possible relationships; the latter is used more to measure the ability of a given actor to control the flow of information along the structure.

The centrality measure can also be seen as a measure of leadership, such as a central actor who is extensively involved in relations with other actors, which makes him/her more visible. He will then begin to be recognized by them as an important channel of relational information, and in this capacity, he will be given a higher status. Central individuals are better informed, have more control over uncertainty and more information over a larger number of people, which reinforces their maintenance of the central position (Varanda, 2007, p.215).

Therefore, it is important to define the types of relationships that one wishes to understand among the analyzed actors, and to understand them, the following questions arise: does an actor know a certain actor? How frequent are the contacts? What is the effectiveness of the communications? What are the competencies of the actors in the network? Thus, it becomes necessary to know not only who knows who in the network, but also the relationships that reveal the potential for information sharing, those that reveal the degree of collaboration, and those that disclose what a given actor knows about the skills and knowledge of others in the network (Cross & Parker, 2004).

Thus, the network analysis methodology complements many other approaches focused on analyzing the position of actors in policy processes by bringing the relationship between actors as an investigative foundation. This can be used to understand social phenomena by incorporating a set of elements that form the "constitutive networks of societies centered on states, their organizations, surroundings, and activities. The concept allows incorporating dynamically the various actors and processes present in the production of public policies" (Marques, 2019, p.09). Finally, we highlight two themes that can be understood as correlated to network studies,

governance and policy networks, and which are also related to each other and make sense in the debate at hand.

*Governance- opening up governments' decisions*
For Kooiman and Van Vliet (1993), the idea of public governance can be considered as a pattern or structure that comes into existence in a sociopolitical system as a common result of efforts in the intervention of all agents involved. These agglomerations encompassing diverse actors external to the formal policymaking institutions internal to governments control policy and, in the most categorical sense, these networks have come to dominate public policy, according to Peters & Pierre (1998).

> *Moreover, in most extreme versions of the argument, if governments attempt to impose control over policy, these networks will have sufficient resilience and self-organizing capacity (Kooiman & Van Vliet, 1993; Marsh and Rhodes 1992; de Bruijn and ten Heuvelhof 1997) to evade government control (Peters & Pierre, 1998, p. 225).*

The concept of governance suggests that the recent transformations that have occurred in the state have inserted various actors for the production of policies. However, this concept is polysemic, complex, and brings together different theories and practices.

> *Definitions tend to suggest recognition of a shift in political practices increasingly involving, among other things, globalization, the emergence of networks across the public-private division, the commodification of the state, and increased institutional fragmentation (Hall, 2011, p. 439).*

Although there is already enough literature to state some limits, the idea of governance is connected to the idea of government; therefore, the simple processes of cooperation with the private sector for tourism development are not part of it. Governance does not respond to hierarchy or market principles, but seeks to approach collective decision-making from new perspectives, improving the degree of cooperation between actors and, in its most operational version, implies the establishment of channels that enable a plurality of actors to work together and design new management and development processes for the public and collectivity (Velasco, 2014, p.20).

Due to the current demonstration of the benefits of these articulations, the nature of these relationships is embodied in the stimulus of governance at different scopes – local and regional – to the various social actors of specific contexts to articulate themselves in the formation of networks, precisely in the sense of the possible benefits of this conformation.

*Governance occurs at different geographic scales that can be transnational, national, regional, or local. Because of widely different situations in different places, governance functions and activities often vary within and also across spatial scales (Bramwell & Lane, 2011: 416).*

Some papers seek to articulate research on governance with some other theoretical cuttings. Endres & Pakman (2019) explore a theoretical methodological framework anchored in institutional theory and social network analysis to understand specific deliberation spaces that can strengthen new governance. The search for knowledge on governance institutions and their structures among new forms of collective decisions is also part of the research agenda that contributes to the field, understanding network governance as a new political paradigm (Trentin, 2014; Trentin, 2016). Others examine the concept of regional governance bodies and problematize the role of direct state interference in these colleges (Bamtin, Fratucci & Trentin, 2020), as well as Coutinho & Nóbrega (2019) address the discussion on constructing governance in specific domains, such as tourism, in addition to discussing the concepts of governance associated with notions of actor networks.

Therefore, the influence of the State, in its role as coordinator, inciting strategic articulations for the development of some public policies, is an emerging perspective in several countries.

In this sense, "the formation of networks and their impact on social organization is another characteristic of the new forms of governance" (Muñoz-Mazón & González, 2015, p. 313). Thus, public institutions play a key role in this process with the responsibility of promoting cooperation among agents. Therefore, the relational structures in which the state interacts with society to produce public policies as a potential study area, also disseminated by the concept of governance, can be analyzed through network analysis.

According to Dredge (2006, p. 270) "in the last decade, changes in government structures and the shift toward governance have generated interest in the social relations between government, business, and civil society." In this sense, this topic has been addressed in the network approach as an application to incite a link between actors.

Therefore, the collaborative logic that integrates different understandings for the formulation and implementation of public policies constitutes the set of elements for achieving collective goals within the public management processes.

*Policy Networks - Range of Actors in Political Processes*

While it is true that reflection on governance processes continues, one of its dimensions has been especially fruitful: we refer to governance as networks of actors.

If the actors have been analyzed from the origin of the discipline of public policy, the fact that we find different actors around a certain issue that articulate with the intention of being part of it is also at the core of public policy thinking. This set of actors has been analyzed under different perspectives that have given rise to different concepts. For Carlsson (2000), policy networks can be considered a broad generic category, divided into several other sub-categories: iron triangle; policy community; epistemic community; issue networks; implementation structure; and advocacy coalitions.

In the 1990s, Börzel (1998) discussed the lack of a common understanding of what policy networks actually are, between method, analytical tool, or theory. It seeks to systematize some of these concepts through its state of the art and contributes fundamentally to the differences between the German conceptions, which treat it as an alternative form of hierarchization between public and private actors, while the Anglo-Saxon conceives it as a model of relations between these actors in a given area.

Advancing in this perspective, there are also attempts to expand the possibilities of studies beyond the analysis of public policies, a field of political science related to a critical approach, the field of sociology, crossing aspects of networking with social capital to investigate the relationships between actors that integrate participatory instances (da Mata, Pimentel & Emmendoerfer, 2019).

In a study on tourism from this perspective, network analysis can provide valuable information on information flows and the exchange of resources between them. Network analysis in tourism indicates that the variables leadership and communication have a significant influence on collaborative behavior (Baggio, 2011; Beritelli, 2011).

There are several advantages to collaboration, most notably: it avoids conflict resolution costs; it increases legitimacy and improves coordination; it allows upfront work to avoid the negative impacts of the activity (Bramwell & Lane, 2000). Furthermore, all studies indicate the important role of collaborative networks in finding innovative solutions to complex problems through the sharing

of knowledge, skills, and ideas, and by the constructive management of differences and mutual learning processes among multiple actors.

Thus, the relationship between social actors who group together to perform certain actions can be seen through the social networks concept. This occurs in various contexts and fields, immersed in specific sectors or not, in delimited regions, close or far away. The need to delimit the possible variables that coexist in the field of networks is evident.

## 3. Tourism Public Policy Investigation - Public Management through the Interdependent Relationships of Tourism Networks

The socioeconomic impact of tourism alone justifies governments' growing commitment in formulating and implementing policies to guide and qualify the development of this activity. Governments in various regions are alert to the opportunities for income generation and employment growth resulting from this activity (Dwyer & Spurr, 2012), as it has strengthened the image of tourism in broad and narrow circles, in political and geographical terms, public and private, which has encouraged its development in continents, countries, regions, and municipalities (Jafari, 1994). Thus, tourism, as a socio-economic fact, acquires a protagonism within local politics (Hernandez, 2007).

Despite the fact that the responsibility of the State for tourism development must consider regional peculiarities in promoting the articulation among several sectors and localities, the central policies have an outstanding importance to work equally the social, cultural, environmental, and economic aspects of tourism. In this case, tourism development becomes a public good in the sense that its benefit is shared by several people; thus, reconciling these interests and desires to ensure sustainable development is the task of public management (Jamal & Getz, 1995).

Therefore, among the guiding parameters of tourism public policies, some requirements stand out, such as the need to involve related sectors and encompass multiple players – governments, markets, and the community – for the development of this activity. Thus, forcing tourism public policies without seeking discussions and consensus with the various public and private stakeholders in the process should not be a guideline to be adopted

by public managers. Muñoz-Mazón & González (2015, p. 312) advocate that the "public administration of tourism should not impose its policies without trying to agree with the rest of public and private actors."

In Brazil, tourism policies have a recent history, and the most relevant ones emerged during the authoritarian regime, in the mid-1960s. Although tourism has had a relatively greater importance for Brazilian governments since then and was given a specific national program in 1994 under Fernando Henrique Cardoso (FHC), the National Program of Tourism Municipalization (PNMT[1], in Portuguese), as part of the decentralization movements underway in Brazil since the late 1980s, the sector still shared portfolios with other areas. With the creation of a specific Ministry in 2003, the Ministry of Tourism, together with the launching of the National Tourism Plan (PNT, in Portuguese) and the Tourism Regionalization Program (PRT, in Portuguese), lines were established for tourism planning in Brazil. Since the beginning of this Ministry, the premise of decentralization of government actions was followed.

In this way, the Brazilian policy follows a global trend, outlined by several countries, which have decentralization as a strong guideline that directs their specific policies (Abrucio, 2007), a consequence of the "strong participatory ideology that marked the transition process from military to democratic regime in the country" (Almeida et al., 2015, p.255) at the end of the 1980s.

The policy institutionalization process highlights the practices they tried to establish, as well as their effects; therefore, the institutional approach helps to highlight the effect of institutions on the behavior of actors at different times of the normative acts of the government in the tourism field (Pimentel & Pimentel, 2018).

In this perspective, there are important contributions in relation to the involvement between various actors in the tourism value chain, which has complex cooperative processes linked to commercialization (Mielke & Silva, 2017). On the other hand, there is evidence that management decentralization has led to social innovations at the regional level (Emmendoerfer, Silva & Lima, 2011). The cluster concept is also used to understand the policies that stimulate these

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[1]The PNMT aimed at "raising awareness, stimulating, and enabling the various Municipal Monitors to awaken and recognize the importance and dimension of tourism as a generator of employment and income, reconciling economic growth with the preservation and maintenance of environmental, historical, and cultural heritage, and having, as a result, community participation and management in the Municipal Plan for Sustainable Tourism Development" (Brazil, 2002).

participative instances, considering the systemic perspective of the tourist activity, where the actors seek mutual cooperation for tourism development purposes (Gomes, Silva & Santos, 2008).

Therefore, several specific policies, such as tourism, are influenced by this action decentralization process, seeking to legitimize civil society control arenas by means of local governance instances and more accentuated participation of the population in public policy definitions. Thus, Dredge (2006) suggests that network theory provides us with an important analytical approach to study the relationships between public and private actors and the local community, as well as the tourism development of destinations.

*Instances of Governance – The Challenges of Public Tourism Management and the Participation of Local Actors*

The municipal public administration organizes the tourist activity at local level. Whenever the organizational and strategic planning reflexes related to tourism occur, they expose the way the municipality deals with the activity. The economic, social, and infrastructure relations related to tourism are established in the context of the municipality, which is the protagonist in planning tourism activity.

Both the PNMT (1994) and the PRT (2003) generally aimed at the decentralization of the tourist activity, emphasizing more the municipal public management, following a recommendation of the Municipal Tourism Organization – OMT (2003), and, subsequently, encompassing the regionalization, interiorization, and segmentation of tourism. In this sense, the Municipal Tourism Council (COMTUR), as well as the Municipal Tourism Policy, the Municipal Tourism Plan (PMT) and the promotion of tourism activities through the Municipal Tourism Fund (FUMTUR) are mechanisms of municipal public management that optimize the effectiveness of tourism public policies (Minas Gerais, 2014).

Considering this context, the municipal councils of public policies aim to be a link between society and State, in order to make society exercise its citizenship in all aspects safeguarded by the 1988 Constitution. However, these councils are not new in the history of public management as a form of organized collectives of civil society, as they date back centuries, such as the municipal "councils" of the 12th and 15th centuries in Portugal, which at that time had already been adopted as a political-administrative form, as Gohn (2004) points out.

These councils are currently the fruit of political and social achievements in more recent years, especially in post-military regime Brazil, at the end of the 1980s, aiming to value work and the individual based on the principle of human dignity, thus seeking to offer education, health, leisure, work, housing, culture, and the environment, through a participatory process (Presoto & Westphal, 2005; de Lima, 2014). In view of their importance as a participatory model, policy management councils are adopted nationwide (Almeida, 2015) contextualized in various areas.

According to Scott (2011), tourism public policy studies provide useful information on who gets what, when and why in the tourism policy process. Tourism policies are formulated and implemented in dynamic environments where there is a complex pattern of decisions, actions, interaction, reaction, and feedback.

Arguing about the complexity of the current tourism system, Munõz-Mazón and González (2015) suggest that only with the collaboration of various actors can the problems that arise in tourism activity be solved. Hence the need for democratic and participatory institutions, such as the council format, so that diverse actors can be brought together to discuss, advise, and deliberate on public tourism policy.

The decentralization process of the tourist activity has led Brazilian states and municipalities to plan and manage their activities, as the best way to organize local tourism. Following this premise, the municipal tourism council becomes a potential locus of study. However, despite the advances and gains related to the dialogue between public authorities, the private sector, and civil society in the tourism activity, it is necessary to strengthen the tourism structures at all levels, especially seeking to improve the quality of the participation of the various players that make up the activity.

*Tourism Networks and the Complexity of their Public-Private Dynamics*

The approach to studies of interorganizational relations broadly suggests two streams: the exchange perspective and the resource dependence perspective. Given that collaboration can be stimulated or inhibited by institutions (Jamal & Getz, 1995), it is evident that network analysis is essential to understand the structure and dynamics of relationships. In the tourism context, where it is advocated the stimulation and creation of instances that bring together actors - individual and collective - to seek common understandings on

the directions of tourism policies and planning, the network theory approach helps to understand these relationships.

Therefore, it becomes imperative that this understanding brings benefits and insights into "the nature of network capacity and the opportunities and constraints for building productive public-private partnerships." (Dredge, 2006, p. 270). This public-private partnership is embodied in the foundation of collaboration and cooperation between actors, through different structures. Muñoz-Mazón and González (2015, p. 315) state that "a key piece for articulating a stable cooperation framework are the organizations that bring actors together, position themselves, and collaborate through different structures.

Therefore, the network concept provides elements to analyze these relationships that frame tourism planning and policy processes to open a range of understandings on how the web of interactions between various tourism actors takes place. This network approach matches the axiom of tourism, bringing it as a multidimensional area that brings together diverse actors with varied interests (Dredge, 2006).

Understanding governance in tourism domains becomes vital to analyze the relationship of stakeholders, aimed to assess the interaction and collaboration of actors in this process (Tuohino & Konu, 2014). Thus, network theory assists in this understanding.

The present investigation used a mixed methodology, qualitative and quantitative, by means of semi-structured interviews with the counselors of the Municipal Council of Tourism of Ouro Preto (COMTUR-OP), allowing quantifying and qualifying the formulation and implementation actions for developing tourism in this locality.

In order to answer the research questions, an interview form was prepared for the 16 COMTUR-OP counselors, which are divided into two groups with eight representatives each. The first is the **State**, namely: The Municipal Department of Tourism, Industry, and Commerce; Municipal Department of Culture and Heritage; Municipal Department of Environment; Military Police of Minas Gerais; Federal University of Ouro Preto (UFOP); Federal Institute of Minas Gerais (IFMG); National Historic and Artistic Heritage Institute (IPHAN); and the Ouro Preto City Council. The second has eight representatives from **civil society**: Commercial and Business Association of Ouro

Preto (ACEOP); Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB); Heritage Collection Area; institutional, ecclesiastical, and private museums; Federation of Associations of Residents of Ouro Preto (FAMOP); Association of Tourist Guides of Ouro Preto (AGTOP); Ouro Preto Development Agency (ADOP); Receptive travel agencies and tourist transportation; and Brazilian Association of Hotel Industry (ABIH) Regional Golden Circuit.

The interview form was formatted in four different axes of analysis, as follows: Part 1 - Perception of Tourism in Ouro Preto today and in the future; Part 2 - Strengths and weaknesses of Ouro Preto as a tourist destination; Part 3 - Role to be taken by public and private entities to improve the situation (adapted from Muñoz-Mazón and González, 2015) and; Part 4 - Relationship network. And it was applied between the months of October 2018 and January 2019.

Of the 16 COMTUR-OP board members, only one of the eight public authority representatives and one of the eight civil society representatives was not willing to answer the survey, all the others did, totaling 14 answered forms. In the analysis of Part 4 - Relationship network, the totality of council members was considered, since those who declined to participate in the research were mentioned by other members of COMTUR-OP. The Pajek network analysis program was used to obtain sociograms.

The analysis categories consider the theoretical-methodological framework based on categories anchored in the field of social networks, governance, and policy networks (Table 1)).

This approach allows analyzing the spaces for participation in public tourism policies, as well as the behaviors and relationships among the players that make up this governance instance. The interactions built (or not) in these instances can reveal the multidimensionality of the political interest, as well as the positions and exchanges between the players, which will affect the collective results of their efforts.

## 4. Analysis and Discussion
When apprehending the function performed by the political actors that compose the tourist activity in Ouro Preto, it was found that part of the council members is not very active in terms of planning the tourist activity in the municipality, focusing only on their routine work activities. This fact becomes explicit when they highlight their constant

**Table 1**: Categories of Social Network Analysis

| Categories | Description | Theoretical Background |
|---|---|---|
| Intra-organizational and inter-organizational | Relationships between actors of the same organization and relationships of actors between organizations. Endogenous and exogenous aspects; and internal and external to the group and group members. Complex pattern of interactions; multidimensional area of political interest; | Depuy & Gilly, 1995; Marques, 1999; Marques, 2006; Marques, 2007. Taka´cs, Janky & Flache, 2008. Munõz-Mazón and González, 2015; Scott, 2011; Scott, 2011; Dredge, 2006; |
| Structural Aspects | Centrality; leadership; and positioning of network actors. Structural position of members; heterogeneity of participants; and number of group members. Information flow; resource exchange; | Mizruchi, 2006; Quandit & Souza, 2005; Varanda, 2007; Steiner, 2006. Gould, 1993; Olson, 1999 [1965]; Ostrom, 2007. Baggio, 2011; Beritelli, 2011. |
| Nature and characterization | Strong and weak ties; strength and content of the articulations between actors. Intensity of preference; selective incentives; social norms; cost/benefit ratio; and face-to-face communication among members. Common result of collective efforts; plurality of actors; collective decision making; impact on social organization; collaborative behavior; exchange perspective; resource dependence; productive public-private partnerships; | Cross & Parker, 2004; Granovetter, 1973; Granovetter, 1983; Granovetter et al., 2000; Marteleto & Silva, 2004; Mizruchi, 2006. Elster, 2006; Gould, 1993; Olson, 1999 [1965]; Ostrom, 2007; Taka´cs, Janky & Flache, 2008. Kooiman & Van Vliet, 1993; Peters and Pierre, 1998; Velasco, 2014; Muñoz-mazón and González, 2015; Baggio, 2011; Beritelli, 2011; Jamal and Getz, 1995; Dredge, 2006 |

*Source: Authors*

absences in the ordinary meetings of COMTUR-OP, contrary to Article 12 of Municipal Law No. 659/11, which states:

*The councilor who misses, without justification accepted by the majority of the councilors, 03 (three) consecutive meetings, or 06 (six) alternate meetings, ordinary or extraordinary during the term in office will lose the mandate, occasion on which the substitute will fill the vacancy, and the entity will indicate another substitute.*

This initial observation is already concerned with the interference in this collaborative logic that is instituted in the concept of tourism public policies, aiming at tourism development. Next, the axes of analysis that guided the investigation at hand are systematized, as a form of arrangement of the present study.

### Perception of Tourism in Ouro Preto today and in the future

There is a disparity in councilors' perception of tourism in Ouro Preto, where most representatives of the State evaluate Ouro Preto tourism as very poor and regular, while those from civil society evaluate it as good and regular. This asymmetry draws attention because these actors make up a network of collaboration and cooperation where they should work together for the "resolution of problems derived from the planning and coordination of local tourism development" (Jamal & Getz, 1995), but have different visions in this regard.
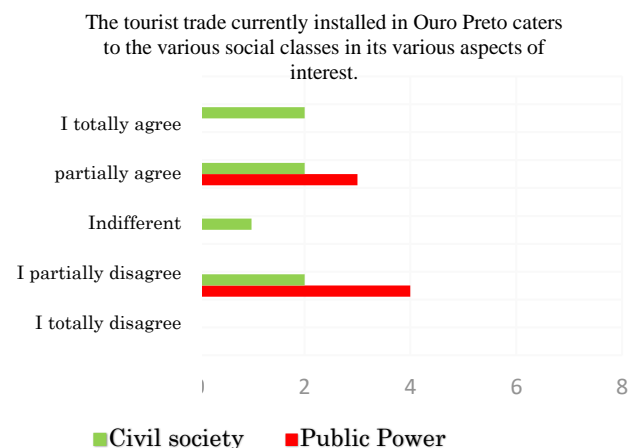
Among the justifications for the negative evaluations, the lack of professionalism in the activities that make up the tourism sector stands out since, according to them, the professionals do not go through any kind of training and/or course, making the services provided average, besides

marketing deficiency for the destination, as well as the interest in a quick and superficial profit.

For the positive ones, the importance of the legal framework that the city has stands out, namely: instituted Municipal Tourism Policy; Municipal Tourism Plan in force; Municipal Tourism Council; and Municipal Tourism Fund. In this aspect, this strengthened institutional framework that supports social networks can hypothetically generate positive externalities for the proper functioning of the system (Muñoz-Mazón & González, 2015).
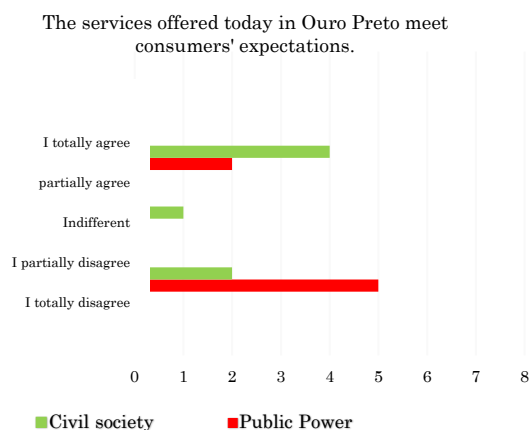
At the core of concerns, planning plays a significant role in the issues raised by the councilors, who, despite the positive projections, point out problems that should be observed as soon as possible.

**Figure 1:** Agreement regarding the service of the trade installed in Ouro Preto.



The tourist trade currently installed in Ouro Preto caters to the various social classes in its various aspects of interest.

*Source: Research data.*

**Figure 2:** Agreement about the services provided.

The services offered today in Ouro Preto meet consumers' expectations.



*Source: Research data.*

Most members of civil society fully and partially agree that the trade currently installed in the city meets the different social classes and their interests, but most members of the State partially disagree on this statement (Chart 01). Similarly, most members of civil society partially agree that the services offered today in Ouro Preto meet consumers' expectations, while among the representatives of the public sector most partially disagree with this statement (Graph 02).

*Strengths and weaknesses of Ouro Preto as a tourist destination*

The main strengths of Ouro Preto as a tourist destination are its historical and cultural attractions, which move an expressive number of visitors to the city. The easy access and good roads help in this flow of tourists received by the city. However, there is a concern with the diversification of the destination's attractions, since there are places with tourism potential, such as the city's districts, which are still little explored and that can diversify tourism segments, such as ecotourism and rural tourism.

Three main points regarding the weaknesses of Ouro Preto as a tourist destination should be mentioned. The first point to be highlighted is the weakness of the destination marketing. Once again, we note issues related to the responsibility in the investment for advertising the city among the public and private actors of the destination. On one side, the private sector says that it is the government's responsibility to make the investments to promote the destination; on the other side, the public sector sees the private sector as responsible for promoting the destination.

The second point is the lack of trained professionals in the various sectors that make up the trade and,

thirdly, the lack of unity among the actors that make up the tourism sector in Ouro Preto. Thus, the perception regarding the weaknesses of the trade becomes even clearer since, by not being in consonance with each other, the probability of lack of planning is evident, even showing their prominent concern.

It should be noted that the consolidation of Ouro Preto as a tourist destination should not only be based on the idea of a historical city. There is a disagreement among the players about the fact that the title of World Heritage Site only brings advantages to the destination, besides the fact that tourists do not consume different tourist products when they visit the city.

*Role to be assumed by public and private entities to improve the situation*

It is unanimous among the actors that the Ouro Preto City Council presents a still incipient participation with regard to tourism activity in its entirety. At specific moments, the City Council has taken part more incisively in decisions taken with COMTUR-OP, when legislation related to tourism was discussed, or even on another occasion, when the Municipal Tourism Plan (PMT) was approved. The unanimity of perceptions regarding the incipient performance of the City Council is worrisome, because, as Ouro Preto is a nationally and internationally recognized tourist city, the representatives of the people together with the State should have a primordial role regarding the discussions of structuring issues in the tourist planning of the destination.

As for the performance of the Secretariat of Tourism, there is the perception of a greater engagement of this body regarding tourism planning in the city. The PMT was one of the goals achieved by the secretariat; however, in the same intensity, it was stated that its execution in practical actions is still not seen. This fact often occurs due to budget problems, not only for the secretariat, but for the entire municipal public machine.

A significant point raised by the actors is related to COMTUR-OP's technical staff that, despite having the representation of several sectors involved in the tourism trade, many only fill the chair temporarily so as not to leave it vacant, since they are not aware of the discussions and provisions of the board and do not have a significant presence at the meetings.

The State, in its majority, disagrees that there are mechanisms that agglutinate all the interests of

those involved with tourism, and for the civil society there is an agreement with the existence of these mechanisms. In contrast, a similarity is evident regarding the perception that COMTUR-OP's actions are insufficient for the tourist development of Ouro Preto, and that it is the public sector that should take the initiative in this development.

*COMTUR-OP's Stakeholders Relationship Network*

The fourth axis of analysis sought to measure the interaction among COMTUR-OP councilors. To do so, the free software Pajek was used in order to delineate the sociograms related to the interaction among the councilors. At this point, even though only fourteen (14) of the sixteen (16) councilors answered the questionnaire, they were all represented in the network, because the two (2) non-respondents – ADOP and Public Safety – were mentioned by other members at specific moments, since their representation within the sociogram is important.

To analyze the exposed network, the representatives of the **State** are identified by the color red and are listed according to the following legend: (1) Secretariat of Tourism, Industry, and Commerce; (2) Secretariat of Assets and Development; (3) Secretariat of Environment; (4) Public Security; (5) UFOP; (6) IFMG; (7) IPHAN; and (8) Ouro Preto City Council. The **civil society** representatives are identified by the color green and are listed according to the following legend: (9) ACEOP - Commercial and Business Association of Ouro Preto; (10) Museum System; (11) Convention & Visitors Bureau; (12) FAMOP - Federation of Associations of Ouro Preto Residents; (13) AGTOP - Association of Ouro Preto Tourist Guides; (14) ADOP - Ouro Preto Social and Economic Development Agency; (15) Receptive Travel Agency and Tourist Transport; (16) ABIH - Brazilian Association of the Hotel Industry.

**Figure 3:** All Degree.
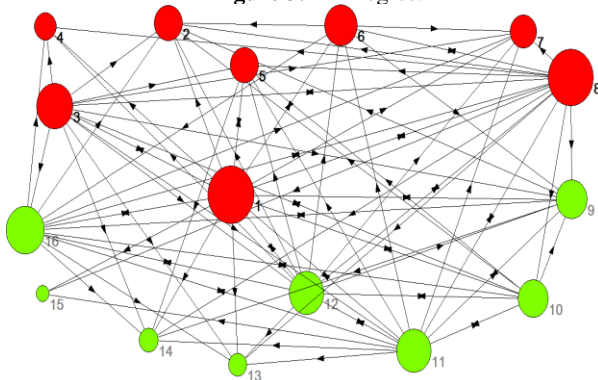
The COMTUR-OP counselors representing the public authority have a greater relationship, number of connections, with the other actors in the network, as evidenced by the number of contacts between them and the other network members. This becomes evident because the network hub, the element with the most weight, represented by the node with the greatest number of links to other network members, is the Secretary of Tourism, Industry, and Commerce.

It corroborates the conception that the government is the coordinator and responsible for public policies on tourism. Naturally, this agent is the one who initially stimulates the formation of relationships among the members of this network in order to seek collaboration, guidance, and foster discussions, since it is the agency responsible for implementing municipal tourism policies.

This fact becomes explicit when analyzing Figure 2 (Input Degree) and Figure 3 (Output degree). It can also be seen that the perceptions of interaction among board members are not mutual; thus, there is a certain domination of board members who have greater interaction and prestige within the network.

The results and analysis of the answers that preceded the relationship network endorse the points highlighted here by the sociograms, complementing the inferences suggested by this work. On the part of most of the civil society representatives and some State representatives, there is sometimes a feeling of not belonging to the municipal tourism context, and sometimes individualistic views that make it difficult to plan the activity in an integrated and organized way.

**Figure 4:** Input Degree.
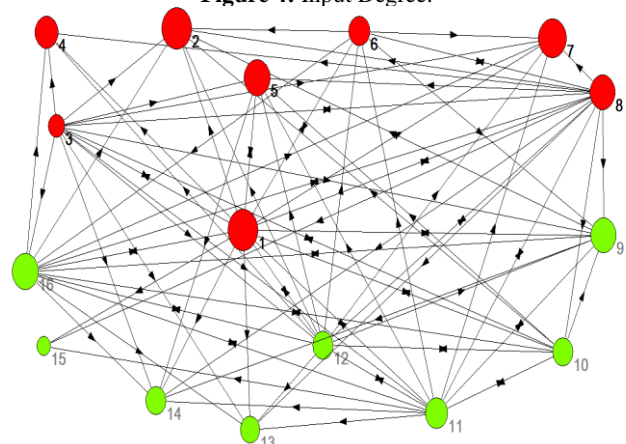
A greater equivalence among the councilors can be seen when analyzing the degree of entry into the

network[1], even if this is not uniform, and the representatives of the public authorities still have a certain predominance over the councilors representing civil society. The reciprocity in the relations among the COMTUR-OP board members is a primordial factor for the propulsion of the tourist activity in the municipality.

Thus, there is a significant and organized interaction between several entities favoring something greater, when the relationship between different entities and organizations is reciprocal and proportional, a fact that, according to the analyses, was not evidenced with the output degree[2] as shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Output Degree.
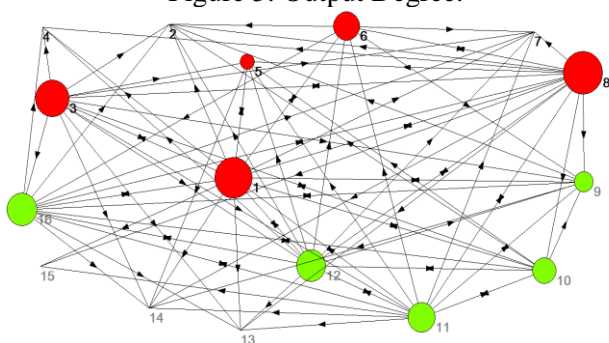


*Source: Research Data.*

With the sociogram that demonstrates the Output Degree of this network, once again, the councilors representing the State occupy a prominent role with regard to the interaction among the actors of COMTUR-OP. However, when comparing the Input Degree and the Output Degree, it is evident that the councilors who should be immersed in the planning of the tourist activity, primarily in relation to the historical-tourist heritage of the municipality, do not feel they solidly belong to the local tourism context. Special mention is made here of councilors representing the State: (2) Secretary of Culture and Heritage, (7) IPHAN; and advisors representing Civil Society: (13) AGTOP; and (15) Receptive Travel Agency and Tourist Transport.

These councilors showed no interaction with the other COMTUR-OP members to deal with issues related to tourism, and the only contact with the other members is in the ordinary COMTUR-OP meetings. Yet, most of them stated that the actions developed by the council are often not substantial, standing at the margins of a proper and structural planning and sticking to details that, although important for the city, are punctual.

Another point worth mentioning is the fact that two of the councilors representing the State – (1) Secretary of Tourism and (8) Ouro Preto City Council – retain greater interaction power within the measured network. Such prestige can be worrying, since their centrality within the network compared to the others, in a dense network such as the one exposed, can prevent strategic information from reaching all members. Thus, reciprocity in relationships is weakened, and these two members representing these institutions can impose some sort of social control on the other board members through this filter.

On the other hand, one identifies the importance and responsibility of the public authorities in building bridges and fostering discussions about the tourism domain among the public and private actors that make up the sector so as to make certain decisions and implement public tourism policies that are debated among the local tourism agents.

In this sense, the degree of centrality in this interaction network shows that the actors with greater centrality are those who theoretically would be more active in formulating, designing, and implementing public policies, since they are actors linked to the State, executive and legislative. Therefore, they have institutional mechanisms, not only in the prerogative of instituting legal normative acts, but also in the form of legitimacy of legal representation, which capitalizes them in the flow and exchange of information in the relationship with other actors.

However, the quantity of interactions does not necessarily make them more active and effective in the tourism policy processes. This is evident in the case of the Chamber representatives having an incipient participation in this instance, although their position in the network allows them to be more important precisely by mastering the flow of information and exchanges between the actors. And not only proactivity, but also the technical mastery of the issues raised in the debates and deliberations in this instance of governance tends to have more weight, because the most proactive action that meets the demands of the municipality presented by the players is what becomes more relevant for the construction of tourism public policies.

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[2]*Input degree of the network is when an actor suggests/mentions that it has a relationship with another.*
[3]*Output degree is when one actor is mentioned by another in inferring a relationship between them.*

## 5. Final Considerations

The public policy analysis field of study needs to frequently improve itself to reach the complexity of the dynamics of social situations that change from time to time. In this context, network theory emerges as a possibility to quantify and qualify relationships between social actors in their most diverse characteristics. This implies sustaining theoretical and methodological approaches that contemplate the complex and dynamic situations of contemporary society through a relational bias, making visible the characteristics of the relationships between actors in the field of public policy studies, especially in the field of tourism.

When dealing with tourism public policies, one must consider not only the group of regulations and planning that aim at organizing and developing the activity, but also the relations between the actors that make up tourism through the strategies of relationship, structure, and nature that establish its organization. This is because the aim of its outcome is to strengthen tourism through public and private management, thus ensuring the levels of interdependence and desires among the various agents at play.

In this course, democratic and participative institutions are necessary to guarantee the complex pattern of decisions, actions, and interactions among the actors in order to legitimize the tourism policy process. The council format brings together various actors that discuss, advise, and deliberate on tourism policy, making it a necessary mechanism within the possibilities of governance instances in this domain at hand. And by the nature of its constitution, a conglomerate of agents with diverse interests that relate to each other, it is evident that the theory and analysis of networks can contribute to understanding this structure and the dynamics of this web of relationships in which the planning and processes of tourism policies are framed.

In the empirical approach of this study, it was possible to see that these relations do not have an a priori linear pattern of interdependence between public and private actors in the field of tourism public policies. It is clear that, even if there are normative guarantees for the performance of these diverse actors in the constitution of these participative instances, the collaborative logic is not necessarily guaranteed, because the abstention of some can weaken the collective decisions in favor of tourism development. Differences between perceptions of the domain situation also become conflicting within the network of interactions, causing reality to be perceived through confrontation rather than cooperation and collaboration.

The construction of the interaction network through the sociogram clarifies the situation of the connections between players, their structure, and the nature of these relationships. It proves the abstention of some regarding the responsibility of their role as legitimate representatives of the tourism activity and verifies the potential and importance of others in the process of promoting interactions among the network players. Thus, even with the inductive nature of the structuralism of social network analysis in formal organizations and institutions, such as this one, network analysis helps us understand the connections that could generally suggest convergent strategies and practices among the political actors present in these structures through the nature of these interactions.

Some limitations of this model are observed in that it does not allow conclusions to be drawn from a longitudinal analysis that would enable comparisons of the differences and similarities in the interactions between the actors over time, considering that the people representing the institutions that make up this participatory forum change according to the mandate, although the institutions remain the same. In this sense, this opens up the possibility of future studies, since these pictures of reality could suggest the effectiveness of deliberations in different relational conformations, and also studies that show that indeed there are significant transformations in the reality of these policies and their results in the domain in question, given the articulations of the actors who are members of these instances of governance.

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## INFO PAGE

# Tourism Networks - Interdependent Relationships among Public Policy Actors

## Abstract

*This chapter dialogues with the field of studies and analysis of public policy, which has its pioneering work in the 1940s and is in constant development. Given the various definitions of public policies, there is a convergence that these include articulations between various actors - public and private - which makes it important to consider the relational perspective for analysis purposes. Governments have been dedicated to formulating public policies in specific domains, seeking to guide, regulate, as well as develop certain activities, such as tourism. In this sense, the municipality of Ouro Preto, a World Heritage Site, a tourist destination with a highly relevant historical and cultural heritage, which has established public tourism policies and tourism management tools, becomes a potential locus for investigation. In this context, we seek to investigate the interactions, from the perspective of the network approach, between the actors that make up the municipal public management of tourism in the city of Ouro Preto, Brazil, considering the multidimensionality of political interest in the public-private sector. The contribution of this work continues to improve the understanding of the implications of network management in tourist destinations, articulating the themes of governance and policy networks that circumstantially pass through discussions on social networks. Thus, contribute to the field of studies on collaborative forms in tourism planning and management. Finally, it is concluded that the application of this theoretical-methodological model allows to assess the articulations and behaviors of the actors within spaces of participation, as well as the positions and exchanges that affect the results facing the construction of public tourism policies.*

**Keywords:** *tourism public policies, relational perspective, network analysis*

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