

# MICRO-PRACTICES AND THE STAKEHOLDERS' ACTIONS: THEIR IMPACTS ON DESTINATION BRANDING

## MICROPRÁTICAS E AS AÇÕES DOS *STAKEHOLDERS*: SEUS IMPACTOS NO *BRANDING* DE DESTINOS

## MICROPRÁCTICAS Y LAS ACCIONES DE LOS *STAKEHOLDERS*: SUS IMPACTOS EN EL *BRANDING* DE DESTINOS

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### ABSTRACT

This study aimed to understand how the micro-practices of different stakeholders can impact the development of the destination brand of Florianópolis, Brazil. We adopted a qualitative and interpretive approach, based on the frameworks of Strategy as Practice and Destination Branding. After collecting and analyzing data from interviews with experts and reports from organizations related to tourism and/or destination branding in Florianópolis, we identified four main themes that encompass the micro-practices of stakeholders: Economic Development of Tourism, Environmental and Cultural Management for Sustainable Development, Strategic Marketing and Tourism, and Integrative Communication. We presented how these themes are converging to the literature on SAP and Destination Branding, and how they contribute to the co-creation and growth of the tourist brand in Florianópolis. The results suggest that empowering diverse stakeholders – including civil society and small business owners – can strengthen the authenticity and coherence of the destination brand. Moreover, effective governance mechanisms that foster collaboration and ongoing interaction among actors may contribute to more sustainable and inclusive place branding strategies.

**Keywords:** Micro-practices; Destination branding; Strategy as practice; Strategizing.

### RESUMO

Este estudo teve como objetivo compreender como as micropráticas de diferentes *stakeholders* podem impactar o desenvolvimento da marca de destino de Florianópolis, Brasil. Adotamos uma abordagem qualitativa e interpretativa, baseada nos referenciais da Estratégia como Prática (*Strategy as Practice* - SAP) e do *Branding* de Destinos. Após a coleta e análise de dados oriundos de entrevistas com especialistas e relatórios de organizações ligadas ao turismo e/ou ao *branding* de destinos em Florianópolis, identificamos quatro temas principais que englobam as micropráticas dos *stakeholders*: Desenvolvimento Econômico do Turismo, Gestão Ambiental e Cultural para o Desenvolvimento Sustentável, Marketing Estratégico e Turismo, e Comunicação Integrada. Apresentamos como esses temas convergem com a literatura de SAP e *Branding* de Destinos, e como contribuem para a cocriação e fortalecimento da marca turística de Florianópolis. Os resultados sugerem que o empoderamento de diversos *stakeholders* – incluindo a sociedade civil e pequenos empreendedores – pode fortalecer a autenticidade e a coerência da marca de destino. Além disso, mecanismos eficazes de governança, que incentivem a colaboração e a interação contínua entre os atores, podem contribuir para estratégias de *place branding* mais sustentáveis e inclusivas.

**Palavras-chave:** Micropráticas; *Branding de destinos*; Estratégia como prática; *Strategizing*.



## RESUMEN

Este estudio tuvo como objetivo comprender cómo las microprácticas de diferentes *stakeholders* pueden impactar en el desarrollo de la marca de destino de Florianópolis, Brasil. Adoptamos un enfoque cualitativo e interpretativo, basado en los marcos de la Estrategia como Práctica (*Strategy as Practice* – SAP) y el *Branding* de Destinos. Tras recopilar y analizar datos provenientes de entrevistas con expertos e informes de organizaciones relacionadas con el turismo y/o el *branding* de destinos en Florianópolis, identificamos cuatro temas principales que abarcan las microprácticas de los *stakeholders*: Desarrollo Económico del Turismo, Gestión Ambiental y Cultural para el Desarrollo Sostenible, Marketing Estratégico y Turismo, y Comunicación Integrada. Presentamos cómo estos temas convergen con la literatura sobre SAP y *Branding* de Destinos, y cómo contribuyen a la cocreación y fortalecimiento de la marca turística de Florianópolis. Los resultados sugieren que empoderar a diversos *stakeholders* – incluida la sociedad civil y los pequeños emprendedores – puede fortalecer la autenticidad y la coherencia de la marca de destino. Además, mecanismos de gobernanza eficaces que fomenten la colaboración y la interacción continua entre los actores pueden contribuir a estrategias de place branding más sostenibles e inclusivas.

**Palabras clave:** Microprácticas; *Branding* de destinos; Estrategia como práctica; *Strategizing*.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Researchers like Jarzabkowski (2003) and Whittington (1996, 2006) scrutinized organizational intricacies, exploring the daily actions of individuals and their impact on strategy formation. Not only internal actors but also external stakeholders influence organizational development (Kavaratzis, 2012; Whittington, 2006). Micro-practices, the daily actions of individuals, significantly contribute to strategy development (Jarzabkowski, 2003; Whittington, 2006). Both internal and external micro aspects contribute to shape organizations future directions by the inherent characteristics of each one (Jarzabkowski, 2003; Kavaratzis, 2012; Whittington, 2006). Unlike a focus solely on generic 'formal practices', a more nuanced understanding of how strategies can be molded for transparency and realism within the organizational context is offered by examining the specific strategizing practices – the actual activities involved in strategy making – as explored within the strategy as practice perspective. Drawing on work like that of Jarzabkowski (2005), these practices can be understood through types such as administrative practices (linked to established administrative processes for planning, budgeting, and monitoring, creating structural legitimacy) and discursive practices (involving face-to-face interaction and shaping meanings to establish interpretive legitimacy). Analyzing these various practices, as they occur in specific events or sequences (episodically), provides a deeper insight into the dynamics of strategy making.

From the greater attention to the details of organizations, innovative studies on Strategy as Practice (SAP) emerged, "inspired by the contemporary practice turn in social theory" (Burgelman et al., 2018, p. 532), having Giddens and Bourdieu as some of the pioneers (Jarzabkowski et al., 2007; Whittington, 2006). From this perspective, studies such as those by Regnér (2003) and Rouleau (2005) were able to highlight strategic actors transcended the high-level group of the organization, including people located on the periphery (Jarzabkowski et al., 2022). Thus, these findings reinforce the awareness that the participation of other members is also relevant to organizational strategies (Bellucci et al., 2023; Rocha et al., 2022; Whittington, 2006).

The importance of stakeholders (Bulgacov et al., 2015; Jarzabkowski et al., 2022; Kavaratzis, 2012; Neto & Borges, 2019) has been seen as a key strategic asset to develop an organization (Jarzabkowski et al., 2022; Neto & Borges, 2019) or a place (Kavaratzis, 2012). In this sense, places have been managed by governors and entrepreneurs considered as Top Management Team (TMT) of the place (Pedersen, 2004). However, since the 2010s, researchers such as Kavaratzis (2012) and Jain et al. (2022) argue the importance of different stakeholders

can improve or decrease the development of a destination brand. Nevertheless, there is a lack of studies that have concerns about the micro-practices realized by different stakeholders.

Although recent studies have advanced the understanding of strategic processes in tourism – highlighting, for instance, how social media functionality shapes destination image (Khatoon & Choudhary, 2024), or how tourism organizations respond to digital disruption through everyday practices (Högberg & Willermark, 2023) – there remains a lack of empirical research focusing on the emergence of strategies through micro-practices of diverse stakeholders involved in destination branding.

Particularly underexplored are settings where strategic agency is dispersed among actors beyond formal leadership structures, such as small business owners or peripheral collaborators, whose adaptive actions can significantly influence the strategic direction of a destination (Rammert, 2012; Kelly & Kelliher, 2022). While SAP literature emphasizes the importance of observing what individuals actually do in their organizational routines (Jarzabkowski, 2003), and Destination Branding literature has acknowledged the multiplicity of voices shaping place identity (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2021), few studies have effectively bridged these fields. There is thus need for investigations that connect everyday strategic action to the development of destination brands, particularly in complex, multi-actor environments such as Latin American cities (Iasbech & Lavarda, 2018).

Tourist destinations use destination branding to display their authenticity and identity, indicating the possibilities for tourists to obtain unique experiences in the places (Blain et al., 2005; Campelo et al., 2014; Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2021). To enhance social and economic development (Campelo et al., 2014; Ocke & Platt, 2022), differentiated approaches like Bassols and Leicht (2020) emphasize the importance of considerate how strategies are implemented and how place branding is perceived by professionals in distinct locations (de Noronha et al., 2017). To impact place brand in tourism (de Noronha et al., 2017; Kaefer, 2021; Kavaratzis, 2012), a better understanding of strategy creation and implementation is necessary.

Previous studies have revealed that micro-practices have impacted on organizations (Do Vale et al., 2021), highlighting the importance of practices in building strategies (Jarzabkowski, 2003, 2005). This raises questions about how micro-practices can affect destination branding, given that stakeholders can modify planned strategies for a place's development (Grebosz-Krawczyk, 2021; Kavaratzis, 2012; Sorokina et al., 2022).

This context given, and even with the increasing acceptance of SAP and destination branding as perspectives, new research needs to be conducted with distinct types of organizations that address the thematic (Brydges & Hracs, 2018) to go deep into the relationship between them. Added to this, considering the micro-practices of members outside the top management team of an organization (Adobor, 2019; Dobusch et al., 2019), actors' routines and practices must be taken into account with the intention of knowing what people actually do, since this understanding helps to reach different perspectives in management approaches (Bellucci et al., 2023; Hubler et al., 2024). Hence, this study seeks to understand *how the micro-practices conducted by different stakeholders can impact the development of the destination brand*.

## 2 STRATEGY-AS-PRACTICE (SAP) AND ITS STRENGTH OF CHANGE STRATEGY AS PRACTICE

Mintzberg (1978) proposed that strategy refers to a set of consistent behaviors that an organization establishes to reach its goals, while the term "strategic" refers to the organization's response to environmental changes. However, Whittington (1996) suggested further research on strategy development as practice,

emphasizing the role of human behavior in shaping strategic decisions (Regnér, 2003). Adobor (2019) argues that the traditional concepts do not accurately reflect how organizations use strategy. Recent studies have shed light the importance of emergent actions and the practical aspect in the development of organizational strategy (Bellucci et al., 2023; Doeleman et al., 2021; Rocha et al., 2022; Rouleau, 2005). Researchers (MacKay et al., 2021; Regnér, 2003, 2008) have focused on how social practices affect company performance through strategies formulated by top management team (Jarzabkowski et al., 2022).

Whittington's (1996) reflections harmonized with the social science movement called the praxiological turn, or practical turn, in the 20th century (Vaara & Whittington, 2012; Rocha et al., 2022; Whittington, 2006). This transformation means that social reality is built from interrelated actions and activities among stakeholders (Burgelman et al., 2018; Heinzen et al., 2024; Jarzabkowski et al., 2022; Rocha et al., 2022; Whittington, 2006). In this sense, there is a reinforcement of this turn, as well as the identification of the power to change the strategy held by other individuals who do not belong to the TMT, since, by having knowledge of daily practices, middle managers (Jarzabkowski, 2003; Jarzabkowski et al., 2007; Lavarda & Gomes, 2023; Regnér, 2003; Rouleau, 2005; Splitter et al., 2023) or even other individuals outside the organization (Vaara et al., 2004; Whittington, 2006) can positively impact the organization's results.

We highlight that emerging strategy, formulated outside top management, don't replace deliberate strategies; instead, they complement each other, aiming to enhance organizational efficiency (Burgelman et al., 2018). SAP studies emphasize reality within organizations, urging researchers to scrutinize daily activities, prioritize qualitative analyses over large statistical databases (Bellucci et al., 2023; Splitter et al., 2023). While top-down studies persist, others underscore the vital role of individuals in bottom-up strategy development (Jarzabkowski, 2003; Kim et al., 2014; Regnér, 2003; Rocha et al., 2022; Whittington, 1996).

In the Strategy-as-Practice (SAP) literature, micro-practices are understood as the situated and socially accomplished activities through which actors shape strategic outcomes (Jarzabkowski, 2003). These practices may assume formal characteristics – such as structured routines and planned actions – or emerge in informal ways, rooted in tacit knowledge and improvisation (Regnér, 2003). This distinction allows us to understand the complexity of strategy formation beyond a purely rational and top-down process. Moreover, actors involved in these practices operate at different levels of agency, ranging from TMT to middle managers and external stakeholders (Whittington, 2006; Vaara et al., 2004). These diverse positions influence not only what practices are enacted, but also how strategic intentions are interpreted and modified through action.

In summary, the SAP literature highlights the evolution from viewing strategy as predominantly deliberate and hierarchical to appreciating it as a dynamic, socially embedded construct. In this context, scholars as Whittington (2006) and Johnson et al. (2007) advocate exploring everyday strategic practices, emphasizing individuals' pivotal roles. Strategic actions are shaped by institutional frameworks and local interpretations across organizational hierarchies (Jarzabkowski et al., 2007). Additionally, transient strategies reveal divergences between intended and realized actions due to ongoing adjustments (Mirabeau et al., 2017). Together, these insights stress the importance of viewing strategy as emergent and socially embedded. Thus, by embracing the dynamic interplay between deliberate intentions and emergent activities, the SAP perspective deepens our understanding of strategy as a continuous, socially constructed process, shaped by everyday practices, institutional contexts, and individual agency.

### 3 DESTINATION BRANDING AND STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION

In the 1980s, the concept of place branding emerged as an extension of brand management practices and theories (Pedersen, 2004). This shift in culture saw governments recognizing the potential of territories and places to attract people and resources (Ocke & Platt, 2022; Pedersen, 2004). Place branding, therefore, serves as a tool to enhance the image of a place and deliver value to stakeholders (Ocke, 2017), increasing its legitimacy (Pedersen, 2004, p. 78).

Recent research underscores the decentralized and competitive nature of place branding (Björner & Aronsson, 2022; Kavaratzis, 2012). Kavaratzis (2012) highlights three key aspects of involving stakeholders in place branding development: (i) the public and political scope, (ii) participatory branding, and (iii) digitalization. These principles are echoed in studies by Hereźniak and Anders-Morawska (2021), Casais and Monteiro (2019), and Lima et al. (2022). Hereźniak and Anders-Morawska (2021) contend that contemporary societies, grappling with economic crises and technological shifts, experience a trust deficit in elites. They propose that employing place branding strategies can address these challenges, fostering unity among diverse groups and enhancing overall quality of life.

By leveraging marketing initiatives, effective communication strategies, and the development of unique and memorable tourist experiences, destination branding aims to shape a positive and distinctive perception of the destination, emphasizing its unique attributes and delivering value to all stakeholders involved. Thus, destination branding strives to enhance the image and reputation of a specific tourist destination, enabling it to competitively position itself in the global market and unlock its full potential in attracting visitors and driving local economic development (Cleave & Arku, 2020).

In summary, the strategy-as-practice framework sheds light on the actions and responsibilities of Destination Management Organization (DMO) managers in crafting branding strategies for a location. Although existing research extensively explores DMO managers' success evaluation, there's a noticeable gap in understanding the process of branding strategy formation and their accountability in this context (Sorokina et al., 2022; Uchinaka et al., 2019). Exploring the dynamics of branding strategy formulation helps clarify its effectiveness, considering the role of various stakeholders and how their involvement shapes the strategic direction at different levels (Jarzabkowski, 2003; Kohtamäki et al., 2022). Examining the practices, decisions, and actions of DMO managers provides valuable insights into the role of destination branding within the broader context of strategy-as-practice.

### 4 METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

To understand how the micro-practices conducted by different stakeholders can impact the development of the destination brand, we follow the Stake's (2005) recommendations in regarding the development of a case study. Thus, this research has a qualitative and interpretative character, since the micro-practices have distinctive characteristics in each field that are studied according to Lavarda and Bellucci (2022).

With the aim to create a delimitation of space and to understand the singularity of a particular case (Stake, 2005), the tourism in Florianópolis, in Santa Catarina, Brazil, was selected due to its variety of tourist attractions (ND Mais, 2022; Prefeitura de Florianópolis, 2022). With several ways to attract tourists, Florianópolis has been

a place quite discussed regarding how to create and implement strategies that improve the attractiveness of a place. In this sense, forums and events [e.g., Silva (2022), Moura (2022), Summit Cidades (2022)] are developed by different stakeholders of the public and private sectors that seek to discuss the current Florianópolis situation and what paths the public and private management should follow to become the local more competitive and attractive. Thus, we perceived that actions are developed to a macro result: boost Florianópolis' destination brand.

However, the heart of our matter is understanding the micro-actions realized by people that are involved not only in those forums and events but in any action whose goal is to improve Florianópolis' destination branding, since the SAP studies point out that the micro-practices have the power to change and create new ways more efficiently than the strategies already deliberate to reach the macro result. Therefore, these reflections lead us to establish the data collection through *interviews and archival documents*.

The study conducted *interviews* with different stakeholders involved in the development of Florianópolis' destination branding. The interviews were conducted with groups of individuals who had worked in management or marketing and had expertise in destination branding. Four experts were interviewed, including a professor at the Federal University of Santa Catarina (encoded as PFU), a Marketing Agent of an Airline (encoded as MAA), a Marketing Analyst of a hotel chain (encoded as MAH), and a partner in a technology and innovation company (encoded as PTI). These interviews lasted an average of 38 minutes each and took place between December 2022 and March 2023. It is important to reinforce that these interviews assist the understanding how the micro-practices are executed in fact, that is, in the real practice, what help to aim the goals proposed in this manuscript.

In addition to interviews, *archival documents* such as the master plan of the city, organizational charts of large companies, and city officials were collected to understand how the initiatives of the stakeholders aligned with the development of Florianópolis as a destination brand. Seven reports developed by different organizations and foundations such as Fecomércio-SC, Senac, Sesc, and Florianópolis Citizen Monitoring Network were also examined. The findings provide insights into how the practices of different stakeholders can align with those of institutional organizations to develop a destination brand.

Even though SAP is still not seen as a theory (Jarzabkowski et al., 2022), and destination branding has been a recent term to be called a theory, gaining visibility in the 2000s (Blain et al., 2005), these concepts were selected as lenses to analyze our collected data since there is a discrepancy between theory and practice of destination branding (Kladou et al., 2017) and SAP can support us to understand this phenomenon (Jarzabkowski et al., 2022). Thus, the data analysis occurred through narratives excerpts and pattern matching between theories and data from the field (Trochim, 1989), since this serve us to compare if the relationships of different concepts are aligned with the practice from the collected data.

Previously, we used IRAMUTEQ® software (Souza et al., 2018) to statistically process textual data collected. We employed the Descending Hierarchical Classification (CHD) - Reinert's Method to group Text Segments (TS) in the *corpus* that had similar words and were distinct from TSs of other classes (Lessa et al., 2021). To explore the alignment between the collected reports and interviewees' speeches, we created two textual *corpora*: (i) a *corpus* that covered all interviews; and (ii) a *corpus* that highlighted the main points of the collected documents related to tourism and/or destination branding. Through the lens of SAP and Destination Branding, we examined the convergence or divergence of themes for each *corpus*. Finally, we identified the main themes that encompassed all collected documents and interviews.

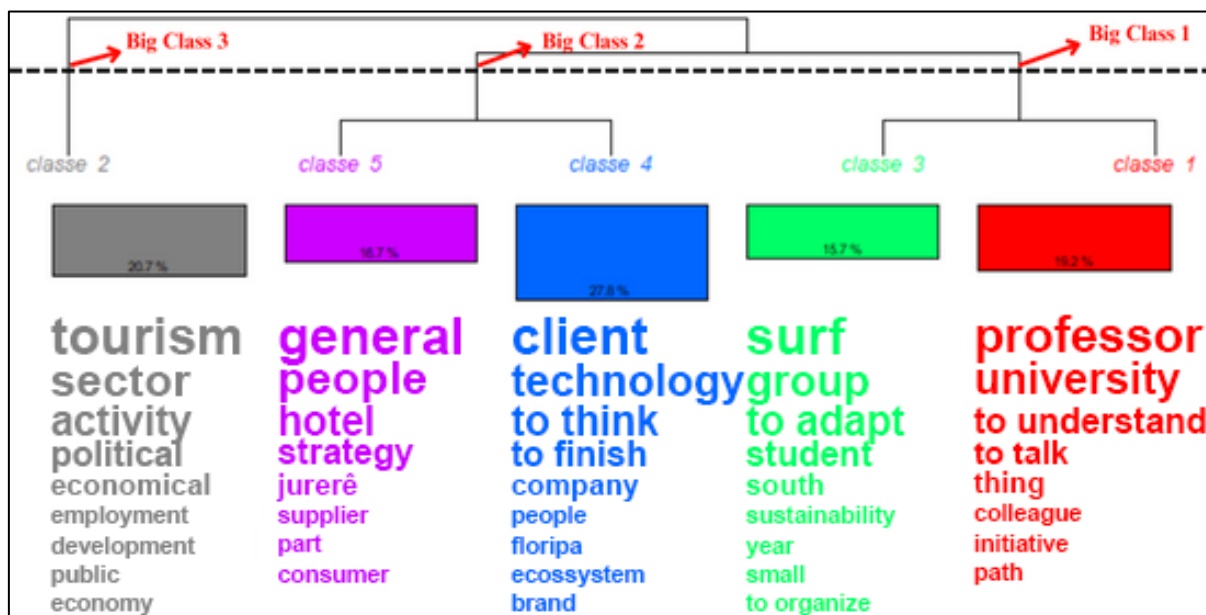


To organize the data collected, we developed the CHD only of the interviewed. We perceived that there was two big class segmented by their narratives: (i) *Big Class 1*, which could be interpreted as *Tourist Entrepreneurship* due to its main words: client, technology, business, to use, connection, destination, general, strategy, Hotel, impacts; and (ii) *Big Class 2*, which could be visualized as *Integrative Communication* due its main words: to talk, thing, professor, co-worker, sport, university, community, to help, together, demand, cycle, to stay, to call, context.

After developing the CHD of the interviews, the document analysis CHD was also created. From this perspective, we identified three large classes: (i) *Big Class 1*, which could be interpreted as *Business Assistance Organizations* due to their strong link and representative words (federation, productive, confederation, commerce, Brazilian, national) about the origin of collected documents; (ii) *Big Class 2*, interpreted as *Economic and Social Development* due to the main words highlighted by the existing repetition in the documents (e.g. public, private, action, event, Santa Catarina, Island); and (iii) *Big Class 3*, seen as *Environmental and Cultural Management*, having, as main keywords: plan, leisure, include, cultural, related, edge, regulation, maritime, director, attribute, preservation, appropriate, urban, landscape.

When analyzing all the files collected for the research, three broad categories were identified: (i) *Big Class 1*, which includes keywords such as professor, university, to understand, surf, group, and to adapt, was categorized as *Environmental Education and Regional Development*; (ii) *Big Class 2*, which includes keywords such as client, technology, find, general, people, and hotel, was classified as *Strategic Marketing and Tourism*; and (iii) *Big Class 3*, which includes keywords such as tourism, sector, activity, political, and economic, was classified as *Tourism Economic Development* (Figure 1).

Figure 1 - Dendrogramme from the corpus of all archives



Note: this figure displays five classes from text segment frequency in interviews and documents.

From this careful examination of the main themes that exist among all the collected files, we identified that some themes have strong relationships: (i) Tourist Entrepreneurship; Business Assistance Organizations;

Economic and Social Development; and Tourism Economic Development, as they all refer to the development of tourism as an economic sector; and, (ii) Environmental and Cultural Management as well as Environmental Education and Regional Development, given that both entail the management and conservation of the natural and cultural environment in support of sustainable development. Thus, to avoid excessive repetition of themes, *Economic Development of Tourism* shall be the one that represents the themes that have a strong relationship (i), and *Environmental and Cultural Management for Sustainable Development* shall be the other one that represents the themes that have a second strong relationship (ii).

In short, the themes *Economic Development of Tourism*, *Environmental and Cultural Management for Sustainable Development*, *Strategic Marketing and Tourism*, and *Integrative Communication* are guiding the results and discussion section from the interviews and documents data collected.

## 5 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Since we have organized the interviews and document collected, we start presenting the results and the discussion in an integrative analysis considering the four themes grouped according to their strong relationships.

### 5.1 Economic Development of Tourism

The Florianópolis Master Plan seeks to guide urban development to guarantee an adequate infrastructure for the reception of tourists and the promotion of sustainable tourism. In its eleventh article, it is highlighted that the Master Plan aims at territorial and urban development and, throughout the plan, reinforces the need to develop the economy, as well as preserve the environment:

Art. 11. The following strategies will be adopted to meet the principles, objectives and guidelines of the Urban Development Policy: I – promotion of territorial organization based on sustainability criteria, combining the preservation of the environment with the optimization of natural, cultural, economic vocations and technologies of the Municipality (Prefeitura Municipal de Florianópolis, 2014, p. 11).

To avoid internal conflicts that could impede the development of the Florianópolis destination brand, strategic actors must wield their influence judiciously (da Cunha et al., 2022; Kavaratzis, 2012). In this context, we've identified alignments among various strategic entities capable of steering the direction of companies influencing the city's tourism. For instance, the National Confederation of Trade in Goods, Services and Tourism – Sesc/Senac (2022) underscores the imperative to "implement policies that encourage the preservation and enhancement of the State's material and immaterial cultural heritage, allowing the inclusion of traditional communities in tourism activities." Consequently, in coordination with the Municipality of Florianópolis, entities such as the National Confederation of Trade in Goods, Services and Tourism expand their initiatives, using their alignment with legal guidelines to highlight how tourism contributes to a city's economic development:



[The] tourism can help create even more jobs in the country promote social and economic improvements and protect the environment the tourism entrepreneur also wants a more sustainable development with effective and structuring public policies that can increase competitiveness and consolidate the sector (Confederação Nacional do Comércio de Bens, 2022, p. 16).

Although these excerpts come from institutional organizations, we noticed that the practices conducted by these institutions are not exclusive and are also adopted by other stakeholders who have less influence on the macro environment. We emphasize that the analysis of the behavior of the different actors that act in a certain scenario must be conducted considering the particularities of each context, in order to avoid mistaken generalizations. In this way, different stakeholders highlight the importance of tourism, but perceive the difficulty of impacting the environment in which it is inserted, as stated by the PFU interviewee:

I need to register, on an island where there is the second (...) GDP component is tourism, the first is already the technological unfortunately base, we have neither, at the Federal University of Santa Catarina, nor the UDESC [State University of Santa Catarina], there is no tourism course, so it is a difficult thing to explain (PFU, December 13, 2022).

As much as there is a lack of tourism courses in federal and state educational institutions, the PFU interviewee points out that different actors within them conduct practices with the aim of developing the tourist brand of Florianópolis, as emphasized:

I do not know, but I assure you that there are several colleagues who have a foot and something in tourism or who will influence the tourist destination with some study, some theme, some extension, some research, something along those lines (PFU, December 2022).

Even major institutions like the Federal University of Santa Catarina, despite their strategic objectives, may adopt emerging strategies that contribute to the growth of Florianópolis' tourist brand. This aligns with findings in other studies (Burgelman et al., 2018; Doeleman et al., 2022; MacKay et al., 2021; Regné, 2003), suggesting that small factions within large organizations may pursue activities not entirely in line with the organization's intentional strategy. The groups identified within PFU are focused on activities linked to the city's tourism development, consistent with insights from other studies (Grohs et al., 2020; Kádár & Klaniczay, 2022; Lemmetyinen et al., 2021; Oliveira & Panyik, 2015). These studies highlight the co-creation of destination brands through diverse initiatives, often independent of deliberate strategies by stakeholders such as large companies or government actors.

## 5.2 Environmental and Cultural Management for Sustainable Development

The Master Plan of Florianópolis strongly highlights the question of the balance between economic development and environmental preservation (City Hall of Florianópolis, 2014). Not only that, the preservation of cultural heritage is also extremely important for understanding the history of a city, since its culture is a fundamental element for the identity of a place (Caprioli et al., 2021). This statement can be corroborated both with excerpts from the master plan, underlining, as one of its strategies, the “promotion of territorial organization based on sustainability criteria, combining the preservation of the environment with the optimization of natural,

cultural, economic and technologies of the Municipality” (Prefeitura Municipal de Florianópolis, 2014, p. 11), as well as in the narrative of the interviewee MAH:

So, last year, in the 12 months of the year, we had twelve exhibitors, of these twelve exhibitors, eight were ‘*manezinhos*’, artists from here on the island. So, bringing this culture to people in general, I think it is very cool and I think we can impact many more people because of this extremely assertive analysis that we do within all the markets that we manage to be inserted (MAH, March 2023).

According to the Florianópolis City Hall Master Plan and the MAH interview, cultural preservation plays a fundamental role in building the city's identity and reputation. In addition, the practices of place branding and destination branding highlight the importance of co-creating the value of the place brand (Grohs et al., 2020; Kádár & Klaniczay, 2022; Kavaratzis, 2012; Oliveira & Panyik, 2015), through the collaboration of different stakeholders in favor of strengthening the city's image before external audiences. In this sense, the preservation of cultural heritage not only contributes to the appreciation of memory and local diversity, but can also become a competitive differential, attracting investments and tourists who recognize the value of authentic and preserved places (Ocke & Platt, 2022).

In addition to the advance in theoretical and practical coherence that exists for the co-creation of value in the city, micro-practices were also identified when asking respondents about the impact of their actions on the development of Florianópolis' tourist brand. In this sense, one of the most significant testimonies on this issue was given by the PFU who reported that:

So, I want to talk about this path and see how we can do something more formal or with support not only from one professor or another, but from the institution to leverage this [the brand of tourist destination]. And then you need action, [...] you need to have this approach. And then you need to have a plan of how you can work together and what you can do. Because I am not saying that this conversation doesn't exist. There is, but it is punctual [...] (PFU, December 2022).

This phenomenon of realizing actions that are not entirely premeditated through an organization's strategic planning is commonly referred to as "emerging strategies" in the SAP literature (Jarzabkowski et al., 2021; Rocha et al., 2022; Whittington, 1996). In addition, the need to "work together" emphasized by the PFU interviewee adds to the idea that small actions by small groups outside the administrative summit can change the strategies deliberated by the TMT, which is widely discussed in SAP literature (Bouty et al., 2019; Jarzabkowski, 2003; Regnér, 2003; Wikhamn et al., 2022).

Stakeholders in Florianópolis shape the development of the tourist brand through micro-practices such as preserving cultural heritage and implementing context-specific initiatives. Their collaboration highlights the importance of formalized efforts to strengthen the destination's brand. Consistent with the SAP literature, small-scale actions by local groups contribute meaningfully to strategic outcomes (Regnér, 2003; Rocha et al., 2022). Therefore, ongoing stakeholder cooperation is necessary to co-create and support the growth of the tourist brand in Florianópolis.

### 5.3 Strategic Marketing and Tourism

Although tourism has historically been the predominant sector in Florianópolis, being known as the "star of the Brazilian summer" (Lins, 2011), the technological sector has shown exponential growth and has become the

main sector in the city. However, these sectors do not compete, but seek an interrelation for the development of the city, as emphasized by Lóssio (2008). Thus, it is possible to identify the need to develop strategic planning that promotes local development through two sectors that can work together to strengthen the tourist brand of Florianópolis.

The *Turismo em Movimento* Report, developed by Senac, identifies the legislation as a critical factor for the articulation and elaboration of the Regional Tourism Marketing Plan (Moritz et al., 2018). From this perspective, we noted that influential organizations, such as Senac, have developed deliberate strategies to maintain a strategic alignment between all interested parties. In this sense, the idea of the existence of the TMT remains relevant since SAP does not seek to minimize the importance of deliberative guidelines. On the contrary, studies such as that by Dobusch et al. (2019) indicates that TMT is necessary for decision-making in situations where the strategy is completely open and without a precise direction.

To succeed in uncertain times, a capable TMT supports the ability to make decisive strategic choices (Adobor, 2019; Holstein & Rantakari, 2022). Recognizing that strategy is dynamic and responsive to external forces, including unforeseen events like the pandemic, the ability to form emergent strategies becomes vital. These spontaneous strategies are necessary for a company to stay competitive and adapt to changing realities. Therefore, a well-prepared TMT, adept at handling unexpected situations, is essential for the company's long-term survival and success (Jarzabkowski et al., 2022; MacKay et al., 2021; Regnér, 2008).

After reflecting on the topic in question, the various stakeholders interviewed reveal an aligned view that external demands can significantly impact a company's planning. In this sense, the micro-practices adopted by employees may change to meet new opportunities or challenges that arise in a dynamic and uncertain environment, influenced by such external demands. In this context, we noted from the narratives of MAH, PTI, and PFU that there is alignment regarding the necessity of adapting to external demands, even though the organization may not have deliberate guidelines for such adaptation:

Well, I have the schedule here and I believe Floripa Conecta has been mentioned, which is a movement that encompasses several technology-related events that take place throughout the year in Florianópolis. When that happens, it undoubtedly has an impact on our customer. We try to fit in events like this, like last week, when there was the International Business Fair. We take several people from the commercial area of our clients to monitor and, eventually, approach opportunities. So (...) I believe that Florianópolis already provides companies here and companies from abroad that come, this type of change in the calendar and in the commercial area. There are always things happening (PTI, April 2023).

Yes, there is an external demand that can affect the strategy of our organization. (...) sometimes there is a barrier to accessing the community. The entire university is on hand to help, but sometimes it is hard to know how to get there. (...) But, in general, there is difficulty in finding a specific address to reach the university. For example, if someone needs a statistical study, they can go to the statistics department at the university. But if someone needs information about tourism, there is no specific address within the university for that. So, there is this difficulty (PFU, December 2022).

Absolutely, I think so. We went through some processes, and the pandemic was a huge turning point for the issue of destinations, you know? The entire consumer profile has changed and, when that happens, the strategy must change. Within the hotel industry, we can see that this change was complicated, as it is the area in which we currently have the most contact. The change in consumer behavior after the pandemic changed the entire strategy we had and impacted the entire company (MAH, March 2023).

The interrelation between sectors like tourism and technology is critical for Florianópolis' development and tourist brand (Dubinsky, 2022; Nathan et al., 2019; Ocke & Platt, 2022). Strategic alignment and decisive top management are necessary amidst uncertainty and change (Dobusch et al., 2019; Kavaratzis, 2012; Ocke & Platt, 2022). Emergent strategies may be needed in response to external demands, as stakeholders' micro-practices adapt to a dynamic environment (Jarzabkowski et al., 2022; Ocke & Platt, 2022). Understanding these micro-practices is required for strategic and urban development, since it is through them that broader transformations are enacted (Jarzabkowski et al., 2022; Ocke & Platt, 2022).

#### 5.4 Integrative Communication

The relationship between technology and tourism is evident, as indicated in the report on Proposals and Recommendations for Public Tourism Policies. This document emphasizes the importance of programs that promote and facilitate access and use of technology by actors in the tourism sector, to improve management, processes and communication (Confederação Nacional do Comércio de Bens, 2022). In other words, technology is a decisive factor in driving tourism efficiency and performance. In addition, communication strategies are used to prepare external groups for what is in Florianópolis, especially when these groups do not even know the city, as mentioned by interviewee MAH:

We work on two fronts, this front outside, in fact, [...] is presenting the destination, because, in fact, the people here we present it in a different way, the people inside Brazil, they know Florianópolis, you know that it exists, so there are two different segmentations of content, so for the outside, we present it as a destination, first the state, first the city, and then we present the hotels. And then, for Brazil as a whole, we present the destination [...], it is already a little more parochial, you know? So, it is more focused on the neighborhood (MAH, March 15, 2023).

However, obtaining an efficient strategic alignment for the development of Florianópolis' destination brand does not depend only on communication between stakeholders and its external public. The interviews conducted revealed the importance and need for effective communication to avoid conflicts of interest within the organization and ensure strategic cohesion. In this sense, some companies encourage their employees to provide strategic suggestions to meet the demands of the external public, while others have deficiencies that are identified by the employees themselves. These situations are exemplified in the statements of MAA and PFU respondents, respectively:

One of the things that I think is important in communication between employees and company directors is concern for the customer [...]. When dealing directly with customers, we can see patterns and trends, such as groups of students or seniors traveling at certain times of the year, for example. When this happens, supervision and base management end up taking these perceptions into account when making decisions. For example, we might suggest that certain flight times are not ideal for certain types of audiences, and based on that, the company can look for ways to improve the customer experience. Despite being a large company, directors always seek the perception of employees who are on the front line, because they are the ones who have direct contact with customers [...] (MAA, April 2023).

So [...], let us talk, let's articulate and let's offer a drawing something bigger than what happens. My perception is that we know little about what our colleague is doing and it's not just because he's from another department, because he's from another center, sometimes it's within the department. So, this lack of communication, this lack of curiosity, of knowing what is being done. So, this is a barrier, you know? Having a

more impactful movement, thus, a greater, broader initiative. So, this is something that needs to be worked on (PFU, December 2022).

The importance of technology and strategic communication for the tourism sector's efficiency and performance also was observed. Strategic collaboration and effective communication are necessary to avoid conflicts and ensure cohesion. Micro-practices impact Florianópolis' destination brand and visitor satisfaction, benefiting economic development, cultural heritage, and the environment. These relationships align with literature on SAP, Destination branding, and stakeholder impact (Abiola-Oke, 2019; Donaldson et al., 2021; Jawahar & Muhammed M.K, 2022) and micro-practice development (Burgelman et al., 2018; Jarzabkowski et al., 2021, 2022; MacKay et al., 2021; Rouleau & Cloutier, 2022).

The development of a destination brand in Florianópolis, Brazil, requires the collaboration of different strategic actors to balance economic development, environmental preservation, and cultural heritage. Micro-practices conducted by stakeholders can have a significant impact on the development of the tourist brand, emphasizing the need for both deliberate and emergent strategies. The co-creation of the destination brand is essential to attract investment and tourists who value authentic and preserved the place. The literature on SAP and Destination branding features the interconnectedness of different stakeholders and their micro-practices in impacting the destination brand. Therefore, stakeholders should work together to co-create and support the growth of the tourist brand in Florianópolis.

Sustainable development contributes to the economy, the environment, and society by promoting balanced and long-term progress (Colavitti & Usai, 2015; Encalada et al., 2017; Reyes-Menendez et al., 2020). Tourism must balance economic growth with environmental conservation and cultural appreciation (Dimitrovski et al., 2019; Reyes-Menendez et al., 2020). Public policies regulate cities to preserve the environment and promote economic development (Cassinger & Eksell, 2017; Cerda-Bertomeu, 2017). Micro-level practices of stakeholders impact the development of a destination brand for diverse market segments (Anholt, 2010; Johansson et al., 2018; Kohtamäki et al., 2022; MacKay et al., 2021).

## 6 FINAL REMARKS

The goal of this study, *understand how the micro-practices conducted by different stakeholders can impact the development of the destination brand*, was reached since it was possible to gather relevant information that detailed the practices of different actors with the purpose of developing the destination brand Florianópolis.

This study contributes to the Strategy-as-Practice (SAP) field by understanding how strategic micro-practices conducted by both internal and external actors – beyond the top management team – actively shape the positioning of tourist destinations. By incorporating the perspectives of peripheral stakeholders (Regnér, 2003), the findings expand the theoretical understanding of how dispersed agency and informal actions influence strategic outcomes in complex environments (Rocha et al., 2022).

Regarding Destination Branding, the study advances the field by revealing how the place brand is not only communicated through planned campaigns, but also co-constructed in practice through the everyday interactions of actors from different sectors. This calls for a revision of models that treat place branding as a top-down communication strategy, reinforcing the need for multi-actor, bottom-up approaches. From a practical standpoint, the findings offer useful insights for destination managers and public administrators.

The results suggest that empowering diverse stakeholders, including civil society and small business owners, can enhance the authenticity and coherence of the destination brand. Effective governance mechanisms that facilitate collaboration and continuous interaction among actors may lead to more sustainable and representative place branding strategies.

As limitations, the geographical delimitation can interfere with the findings of this research, since only the city of Florianópolis was considered as an object of study. In addition, although the number of interviewees was sufficient to draw the necessary discussions and reach the strategic goal, we observed that further interviews may lead to additional insights on how the SAP literature and destination branding can intersect with the practices of diverse stakeholders.

Future research can expand this study from different perspectives. One possibility is to analyze cities embedded in different contexts – with varying levels of governance, tourism infrastructure, or brand institutionalization – to compare how stakeholders' micro-practices influence place branding across diverse realities. Additionally, longitudinal studies could explore how these practices evolve over time and impact the continuity or change in destination branding strategies. Further studies may also include a broader range of respondents, incorporating new stakeholder profiles such as visitors, civil society organizations, and local influencers. Finally, we suggest the development of quantitative or mixed-method models to identify correlations between types of practices, strategic positioning, and perceptions of the destination image, contributing to more robust theoretical generalizations connecting SAP and Destination Branding.

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