

Tourism destination **governance**: The case of **UNESCO World Heritage** Site of Oporto city

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Abstract | The main aim of this work is to examine the concept of governance and its particular relation with tourism destinations, and to investigate this concept in the particular case of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Oporto city, through a set of specific objectives: (i) to understand and discuss the importance of interactive governance on the tourism level; (ii) to identify the governance structure of the Site in focus; (iii) to identify the power-holding entities responsible for the Site; and (iv) to investigate the levels of collaboration between the identified entities. So as to fulfil these objectives, a qualitative methodology approach was chosen to be used for elaboration of this work. Within this approach, three methods of data collection were identified as most suitable to conduct, these being: (i) critical examination and analysis of the mentioned empirical study; (ii) content analysis of the existing material concerning this study; and (iii) semi-structured interviews conducted at the Site.

Keywords | Governance; Tourism; World Heritage; Oporto city.

Resumo | O principal objetivo do presente trabalho é examinar o conceito de governança e a sua relação com os destinos turísticos, e investigar este conceito no caso particular do Centro Histórico do Porto, zona definida pela UNESCO como Património Mundial. Os objetivos específicos são: (i) compreender e discutir a importância de governança interativa ao nível do turismo; (ii) identificar a estrutura de governança do Sítio em foco; (iii) identificar as entidades responsáveis pelo Sítio; e (iv) investigar os níveis de colaboração entre as entidades identificadas. De forma a cumprir estes objetivos, foi escolhida uma abordagem metodológica de natureza qualitativa. Dentro desta abordagem, três métodos de recolha de dados foram identificados como mais adequados: (i) a análise crítica do estudo empírico mencionado; (ii) a análise de conteúdo do material existente com respeito a este estudo; e (iii) entrevistas semi-estruturadas.

Palavras-chave | Governança; Turismo; Património Mundial; Cidade do Porto.

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1. Introduction

Tourism is an extremely composite and controversial phenomenon, consisted of a large number of interrelated entities joint in a system. In the present we are living in – with most societies being capitalism-orientated, forcing a fierce competition in all industrial sectors, which often causes exploitation of the available resources; with vertiginously rapid information and knowledge flow and the world turning into one big global village –, tourism market is sentenced to constant changing and evolving, accordingly forcing the destinations to continuously adjust, develop and improve the existing activities and governing strategies towards a win-win outcome for all parties involved, paying special attention to the question of sustainability. Simultaneously with the destinations' growth and development, grows the need for strategic decisions on management and governance, policy-making, partnerships and networking, long-term planning, product enhancement, sustainability, etc., all this with a final objective of maintaining competitiveness. Hence the need for complex governance approaches, in order to simultaneously deal with multiple aspects of tourism destinations. This study, therefore, aims at examining the concept of governance, focusing on levels and modes of governance, and its implications for tourism. In order to understand more closely governance in tourism, the case of UNESCO World Heritage Site of Oporto served as an empirical study of a concrete governance system.

2. Literature review

2.1. Conceptualizing governance

Governance has become "a virtual synonym for public management and public administration" (Frederickson & Smith, 2003, cited by Frederickson,

2005, p. 285), though it was traditionally associated with government, i.e., practicing of power by political leaders (Kjær, 2004). It is a term with dozens of different meanings (Frederickson, 2005; Kjær, 2004), that can, accordingly, be interpreted in many different ways, depending on the area in focus. Nowadays, the idea of governance appears in diverse academic areas, such as sociology, geography, economy, public administration, planning, political science, etc. (Bevir, 2011), causing the academic literature that deals with conceptualization of governance to be quite complex, broad and ambiguous (Lynn, Heinrich & Hill, 2001; Pierre, 2000). It can be defined as "the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority necessary to manage a nation's affairs" (OECD, 2006, cited by OECD, 2012, p. 14).

According to Pierre (2000), the concept has a dual meaning. On the one hand it refers to empirical manifestations of state adaptation to its external environment and, on the other hand, it denotes a theoretical representation of coordination of social systems and, primarily, the role of the state in that process (Pierre, 2000, p. 3). The latter meaning can further be divided into two categories (Peters, 2000), first of them dealing with questions related to steering of society and the economy by the state, what can be referred to as the old way of governance; and the second one being more generic and dealing with questions of co-ordination and different sorts of formal and informal types of public-private interactions and, most predominantly, the role of policy networks. Thus, the first approach is more state-centred, due to its main research problem being to what extent the state has the political and institutional capacity to steer the society and how the role of the state relates to the interests of related actors; and in the second approach, which is more society-centred, the focus is on co-ordination and self-governance, manifested through different types of networks and partnerships (Rhodes, 1997, cited by Pierre, 2000).

Williamson (1996, cited by Lynn et al., 2001, p. 5) explains governance as a term that includes both

“global and local arrangements, formal structures and informal norms and practices, spontaneous and intentional systems of control”. Rhodes (1997, p. 43, cited by Hall, 2010, p. 10) defines it as a “new process of governing; or a changed condition of ordered rule; or the new method by which society is governed”. In its broader sense, governance suggests that not only the state but also the non-governmental actors within the market and civil society have prominent roles in the governing of modern societies at different levels, from local to international ones (Kooiman, Bavinck, Chuenpagdee, Mahon & Pullin, 2008).

There has been a growth of interest in governance during the 1990s, which resulted in highlighting the forms of cooperation between the state and civil society (Peters & Pierre, 2007). As the state is no longer being able to steer the society and the economy alone, it has to develop cooperative practices with other society actors, such as enterprises, the third sector, public organizations and citizens. The interdependent nature of the state and the public administration, on one side, and the mentioned society actors, on the other side, is underlined by the concept of governance, which is used to denote “all forms of organisational relationships” (Edwards, 2002, cited by Beaumont & Dredge, 2010, p. 8).

The literature on new governance highlights the role of markets, networks and non-state actors at the expense of the role of the state, arguing whether or not has the power of the state declined, or has the state simply altered the way it rules (Bevir, 2011). The opinions regarding this matter are different, but it might just be the most logical to say that the concept of governance does not necessarily have to be observed as a substitute of the state and the power of the state, but rather as its supplement. Pierre (2000), for example, considers that the emergence of governance should not be seen as a proof of the decline of the power of the state, but rather as a proof of the state’s ability to adapt to external changes. The role of the state has simply

been transformed from one of hierarchical control, analogous to traditional notions of government, to one in which governing is dispersed among a number of separate, non-government entities (Hall, 2010). Governance regime should be designed in a way to be able to ensure attention to some particular ideas and objectives, and to enable their incorporation into the regime.

Summing up the previous statements, the matter of governance concerns the performance of one of the three following types of entities (Hill & Lynn, 2005; Provan & Kenis, 2007):

- i) Governments, or the public sector, i.e., public administration and management;
- ii) Markets, business companies, or the private sector;
- iii) Non-profit organizations, individuals, groups, or society.

In public administration and management, i.e., the public sector, governance refers to “regimes of laws, rules, judicial decisions, and administrative practices that constrain, prescribe, and enable the provision of publicly supported goods and services through formal and informal relationships with agents in the public and private sectors” (Hill & Lynn, 2005, pp. 175-176), which Provan and Kenis (2007, p. 230) interpreted as “funding and oversight roles of government agencies, especially regarding the activities of private organizations that have been contracted to provide public services. In its broadest sense, it refers to relationships between the authoritative decisions and the government performance.

When it comes to private sector, governance has focused on the role of directors’ boards in representing and protecting the interests of the associated stakeholders (Fama & Jensen, 1983, cited by Provan & Kenis, 2007, p. 230), and can refer either to organization of an individual company, i.e., the direction of multi-product and multinational operations, or to the maintenance of the stability of markets by the institutions (Lynn et al., 2001).

In the non-profit context, the focus has generally been put on the importance of boards of trustees in representing and protecting the interests of society members or other politically important constituencies, which are subject to public scrutiny and depend on these constituencies for resource acquisition (Provan, 1980; Provan & Kenis, 2007). All in all, the concept of governance is nowadays commonly used in both public and private sectors, though it is quite a lot more complex in public sector applications than in the private ones (Heinrich et al., 2004; Lynn et al., 2001).

2.2. Levels of governance

Governance implies a defined allotment of authority and control at different levels, existing in political and organizational life (Lynn et al., 2001). The actors that hold a share of that control on different levels are operating within a certain environment whose aspects depend on different global, national and cultural factors. Under the realm of these factors, different levels of governance are concerned with different objectives, relations, and processes. Following this logic, Lynn et al. (2001) distinguished three levels of governance, them being institutional, managerial and technical levels (Figure 1), which ultimately lead to stakeholders’

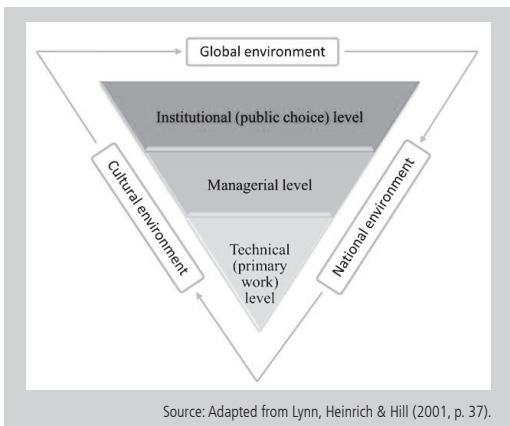


Figure 1 | Levels of governance.

evaluation of government performance, i.e., political assessment of work done within these levels.

The institutional level of governance deals with the establishment of governing relations and strategic arrangements between the public, i.e. the stakeholders and legislators, between legislative choices and the formal authorities governing public agencies and, lastly, between the structure of formal authorities and the organization and management of those public agencies. The managerial level of governance is concerned with further development of governing relations and the elaboration of governing strategies by the organizational actors, i.e. public agencies. It involves relationships between the organization, management and administration, and the core technologies and primary work of public agencies. The technical level of governance is concerned with further shaping of governance at primary work level, where governing strategies are being implemented and operationalized. It implies relationships between the primary work of public agencies and its results or outcomes for service recipients, i.e. the stakeholders.

2.3. Modes of governance

Typologies play an important role as instruments in developing more general insights into the ways in which key concepts and ideas can be framed, so as to facilitate comparative studies and map empirical and theoretical change (Collier, Laporte, & Seawright, 2008, cited by Hall, 2011, p. 438) and have been recognised as an important tool for governance categorization at different levels. Across the social and political sciences, different authors argue different classifications of governance approaches, i.e. modes or forms of governance. Kooiman (2003), for example, argues three principal modes of interaction at the governance level (Kooiman et al., 2008): (i) hierarchical governance; (ii) self-governance; and (iii) co-governance. These modes of governance are shortly discussed in the text that

follows, with the addition of the interactive mode of governance.

Hierarchical governance is the form of governance considered as the most rigid, centralized, rationalized and bureaucratic, but yet the most classical one (Kooiman, 2003). But, although the idea of hierarchy may suggest a uni-directional type of governance, it does not have to be the case. It can also refer to a specific form of societal interactions, i.e. interventions, which are the most vertical of all societal interactions, meaning that the position of each party within the system is clearly defined, that is, it is evident who the governing are and who is being governed (Kooiman, 2003). As Hill and Lynn (2005) nicely explain, variables at virtually every level of the governance hierarchy both influence and are influenced by variables at other levels. Therefore, hierarchy does not necessarily have to be purely vertical.

There are various theoretical positions regarding the term of self-governance. Despite some of the theoretical approaches being divergent and having emerged rather as a reaction to an existing approach, they all stand upon the same basis of the autonomy and power to exercise control over itself, meaning that the actors are outside of purview and control of the government (Kooiman et al., 2008). There is a line of thinking which argues that the communications, not actors, are the essence of the self-referentiality of social systems, because communication can exist and reproduce itself independently of the actors, meaning that the systems autonomously and self-referentially 'decide' what is relevant and what conveys meaning (Kooiman, 2003). Following another line of thinking, self-governance can be understood as actor constellations, concerning only the self-governing tendencies exhibited by societal sectors which are intervention resistant (Kooiman, 2003).

Co-governance implies "utilising organized forms of interactions for governing purposes" (Kooiman, 2003, p. 97), which in social-political governing represent the key forms of horizontal

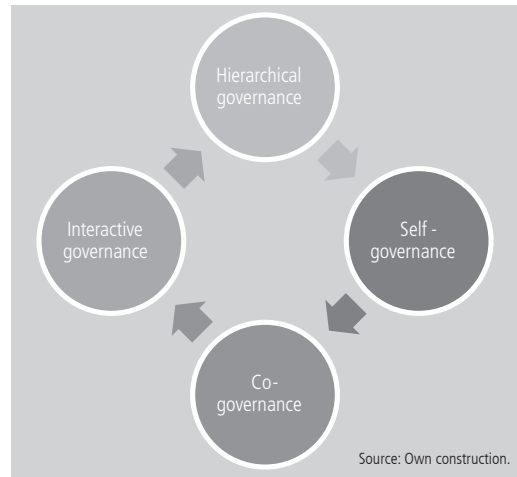


Figure 2 | Modes of governance.

governing, meaning that the actors communicate, collaborate or cooperate without a centralized or dominant actor, as it can be the case in a more general category of societal interplays with a hierarchical order. The fundamental point of the concept is that the interacting parties have some common objective or an interest to pursue together, that in some way the autonomy and the identity are at stake (Kooiman et al., 2008). Governance theory contains several manifestations of co-governance, including communicative governance, public-private partnerships, networks, regimes and co-management (Kooiman, 2003).

The interactive governance emphasizes solving societal problems and creating societal opportunities through interactions among civil, public and private actors (Kooiman et al., 2008). It occurs at different societal scales, from the local to the global and with overlapping, cross-cutting, the authorities and responsibilities. The perspective proceeds from the assumption that societies are governed by a combination of governing efforts. The context of interactive governance has been used in other related fields of study, such as, for example, innovation and planning. Accordingly, a school of collaborative planning has originated from the opinion that planning is a result of interactive governance based

on power sharing, relation building, mobilization of local knowledge and mutual learning supported by sustainable institutional designs (Torfing, Peters, Pierre & Sørensen, 2012).

2.4. Governance and tourism

Governance is becoming an increasingly discussed concept in tourism public policy literature (e.g. Beaumont & Dredge, 2010; Hall, 2008, 2011; Hall & Jenkins, 1995, 2004; Ruhanen, Scott, Ritchie & Tkaczynski, 2010). OECD (2012) indicates that governing bodies are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of tourism as an economic development driver, as well as a tool for achieving their stated policies and goals. There is also the need to incorporate tourism thoroughly across all levels of government when it comes to policy development and implementation, and to cooperate effectively with the private sector (OECD, 2012). Developing strong public sector management capabilities and a multi-actor system of governance, including public-private partnerships and a greater horizontal and vertical coordination of relevant government bodies, is marked as a priority in many of the world's economies (OECD, 2012). There is also the ever-needed consideration for elements of "good governance", them being accountability, responsibility, efficiency and effectiveness, responsiveness, forward-looking vision, and the rule of law, which often play a crucial role in the delivery of tourism at national, regional and local levels (OECD, 2012).

There has been an increase in government treats and regulations relating to tourism, which came as a result of both intra-governmental (between the government(s) on a country level, i.e., national, regional, or local) and inter-governmental cooperation (on an international level, between countries' governments) (Swarbrooke, 1999), which is becoming more evident nowadays. According to OECD (2012, pp. 9 and 13):

- Effective governance practices must reflect the changing business and policy environment, and the evolving roles and competencies of government tourism organisations;
- Good governance practices can help facilitate an integrated, "whole-of-government" approach to tourism development;
- Governance can be improved through both institutional and human capacity building, ensuring that institutions have well defined objectives and clear mandates, as well as effective leadership and political support.

The responsibilities of governments and governmental agencies towards tourism are set out by the national tourism laws that

[...] provide a constitutional basis for tourism policy in the long term, and are more shielded from short term political influence than non-statutory tourism strategies. Laws – in the way that they describe tourism and the purposes of government intervention in the sector – can provide a vehicle for underpinning sustainability. [...] and also provide the basis for enabling the control and licensing of activities specific to the tourism sector (such as hotels) and for the undertaking of certain actions to support tourism development (e.g. provision of financial assistance). (UNEP & WTO, 2005, p. 79).

3. Research objectives and methodology

The present study is based on a specific set of objectives that have guided this research towards certain conclusions on the topic and that have helped to determine the most appropriate research methods for reaching these conclusions. The principal objective was to understand the concept of governance and its specific relation with tourism, and to investigate this concept in the particular case of a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Historic Centre of Oporto city,

through a following set of specific objectives:

- To understand and discuss the importance of interactive governance on the tourism level;
- To identify the governance structure of UNESCO World Heritage Site of Oporto city;
- To identify the power-holding entities responsible for the Site;
- To investigate the levels of collaboration between the identified entities.

So as to fulfil these objectives, a qualitative methodology approach was chosen to be engaged in this study. Within this approach, three methods of data collection were identified as most suitable and practical to conduct, these being the critical examination and analysis of a particular case study – UNESCO World Heritage Site of Oporto city –, content analysis of the existing material concerning the mentioned case study, and semi-structured interviews conducted at the Site. The case study of UNESCO World Heritage Site of Oporto served as a practical application of the reviewed literature on governance. The content analysis of strategic and management reports, manuals and plans led to a clearer understanding of the governmental and organizational structure of the Site. And, lastly, the semi-structured interviews with the representatives of governing entities served as a final step towards the comprehension of governing and decision-making structure of the Site, these entities being Porto VIVO SRU – *Sociedade de Reabilitação Urbana* (Society for Urban Rehabilitation) and the Tourism Department and the Department of Culture of the Oporto City Council.

¹ The Almada period refers to the 18th century period of Oporto city. It was named after João de Almada e Melo, a military commander and the chairman of the Committee of Public Works at the time, credited for the urban plan of Oporto city (the Almada plan), which was one of the first plans of a kind to appear in Europe. The Almada plan intended to renew the old town and control the growth within the medieval city walls that was carried out in a spontaneous and chaotic way, especially since the mid-seventeenth century (Costa, 2001).

4. Empirical study

4.1. UNESCO World Heritage Site: Historic Centre of Oporto city

The historic centre of Oporto comprises an urban mesh of great historical, cultural, aesthetic, artistic and architectural value, witnessing an urban development that dates back to the Roman, medieval, the Almada¹ and the Industrial Revolution era (Losa & Alves, 2002, par. 6 and 15). There are numerous planned and unplanned interventions over the mentioned eras allowing to be studied. The rich and varied civil buildings of the area express the cultural values of Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque, neoclassical and modern architecture (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2013b, par. 4), reflecting the cultural values of successive eras and adapting perfectly to the social and geographic structure of the burgh.

The Historic Centre of Oporto was selected for inscription to the World Heritage List in December 1996 by the UNESCO Committee, on the basis of cultural selection criteria, demanding for the heritage “to be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history” (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2013a). The Committee considered the Site to be of outstanding universal value, as the urban fabric with its many historic buildings bears a remarkable testimony of the development, over the past millennium, of a European city, which has looked outward to the west for its cultural and commercial links (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2013b, par. 2).

4.2. Governance (management) structure of the Site

There is a significant number of stakeholders at the local, regional and national level, included

in the management, activities and dynamics of Oporto World Heritage Site (Figure 3). Who deals with cultural heritage at the national (country) level is IGESPAR, the principal entity in charge of the management of the country's heritage, with the headquarters in Lisbon and different divisions across the country. Apart from IGESPAR, another entity on the national level is the IHRU, which, together with IGESPAR, reports to the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Regional Development. At the regional level, who is in charge of Oporto's heritage is the Regional Directorate of Culture of the North (*Direcção Regional de Cultura do Norte*), with the headquarters in Vila Real. However, this entity, despite being mentioned by one of the interviewees as responsible for heritage of the region including Oporto's World Heritage, has actually proven to have little, if any, authorization when it comes to the specific case of the World Heritage Site of Oporto, even though it is responsible for the remainder nationally protected heritage, such as castles, ruins, monasteries and churches, including a few in Oporto city.

When it comes to the local level institutions, the one that has the most specific and concrete duties, when it comes to organization and management of the Historic Centre, is the Oporto City Council. This entity is responsible for the preservation of the major part of the Historic Centre and, therefore, has the major interest in its preservation and improvement. It reports to the aforementioned entities on superior levels that, consecutively, report to UNESCO at the international level. In other words, the Oporto City Council is directly dependent on IGESPAR and IHRU, while IGESPAR and IHRU are dependent on UNESCO, which is the international body that manages all classified heritage worldwide.

Thus, the principal entity and power-holder when it comes to decision-making relating to the Site is Oporto City Council (Representative of Oporto City Council, personal communication, October 16th, 2013). This entity is the one that controls and directs all the activities and the actors that undertake these

activities at the area protected by the UNESCO on the public level. The City Council has to collaborate with the City Council of Vila Nova de Gaia, which is responsible for a small part of the protected area at the other side of the Douro River, and periodically collect some information from them.

Under the Oporto City Council, the next responsible entity is the Porto VIVO SRU, who depends directly on the Council. It has been given the responsibility for elaborating the Management Plan by the Oporto City Council, and one of its working units (the Cabinet for monitoring that the plan) also responds to the City Council. Porto VIVO then collaborates with the Parish Boards, proprietors, investors, residents and different associations, with the police for public safety, cultural institutions, such as theatres, archives, foundations and museums, and with different departments of the City Council, such as the Municipal Directions of Culture, of Tourism, of Public Roads, of Environment and Urban Services, etc.

All these stakeholders collaborate and cooperate in a joint mission to protect, preserve, valorise and promote a national good of priceless value, which serves as an inspiration for current and, hopefully, future generations (Câmara Municipal do Porto & Porto VIVO SRU, 2010). Due to the two-tiered nature of the Site, it being a living city and a classified property, it makes it more difficult to fulfil the mission. This is why the actors have to constantly deal with the Site's nature, emphasize its potentialities and combat the challenges that prevent these potentialities to reach their peak.

As regards the public policies concerning the cultural heritage, the entity that has the power of decision-making processes is the Portuguese Government, including multiple guidelines from UNESCO when it comes to World Heritage Sites, including Oporto's. There is a national law for the heritage, but also a number of UNESCO conventions that must be respected. On the other hand, there is a Master Plan that includes all the information concerning the issue of heritage protection. There

is legislation both at the national level and the local level. The Oporto City Council also published a document called *Sim Porto*, in order to make an analysis and evaluation of the assets, and who afterwards makes decisions about what is needed to be done in the protected area is Porto Vivo SRU, but still dependent on the decisions of the Regional Division for Culture of the North. Thus, everything that is done at the level of the protected area has to have their approval and support, even though all legislation comes essentially from the State.

4.3. Levels of collaboration between entities

The most important finding of the practical part of the study concerns the inexistence of an officially

assigned protocol when it comes to the question of collaboration between the numerous stakeholders involved in activities and dynamics of the World Heritage Site of Oporto. The only assigned protocol exists between the Porto VIVO SRU and the Oporto City Council, with the latter responding to and being inferior to the former. There is definitely a network of actors that collaborate and cooperate at local and regional level, including both public entities and private organizations and companies, but it is not officially protocol led, defined, or stated as a network. Each of the actors is led by their own principles and objectives, and not by a group of joint objectives concerning merely the prosperity of the Historic Site. However, strong collaboration and cooperation between the stakeholders, as well as their contributions to the successful functioning of the Site makes them important parts of the

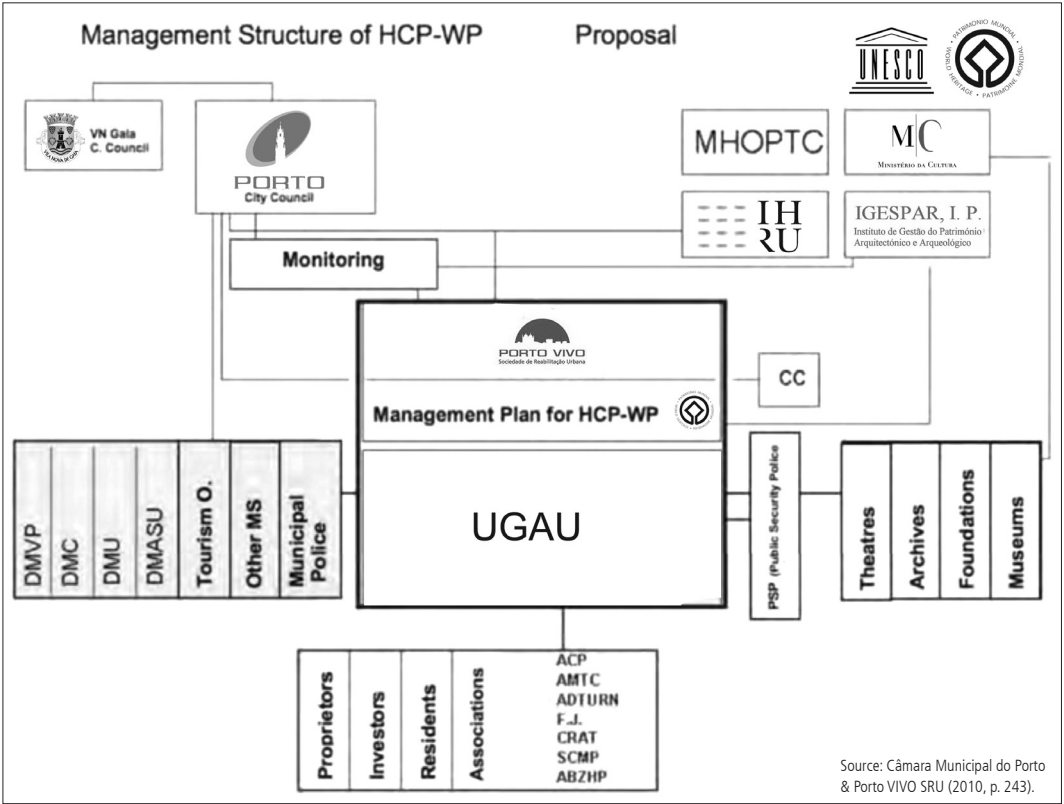


Figure 3 | Governing (management) structure of Historic Centre of Oporto – World Heritage.

management structure. If this structure were to be an official network, it could be defined as a lead organization-governed network, due to the fact that it is not the participants who have an equal share in decision-making process, and that the principal entity in charge of the Site is not established by the network members themselves, or mandated as part of the network formation process in the initial phase of network's existence. It does not have an executive director, staff and an operating board that externally control the activities of the stakeholders, but is established and governed by the City Council, who then collaborates with the inferior members of the management structure.

5. Summary and conclusions

Governance has become a synonym for public management and administration. There are numerous approaches to the concept, some being more state-centred and others more society-centred. The new governance approach highlights the role of markets, networks and non-state actors at the expense of the role of the state. However, the matter of governance concerns the performance of different types of entities pertaining to the public sector, i.e. public administration and management, the private sector, and the non-profit organizations, individuals, groups, or society. As for tourism public policy literature, governance is becoming an increasingly discussed concept, due to governing bodies becoming increasingly aware of the importance of tourism for economic development.

This study examined the concept of governance and its particular links with tourism, investigating this concept in the particular case of UNESCO World Heritage Site of Oporto city. It discussed the importance of interactive governance in tourism, especially when it comes to governing composite and multifaceted areas such as World Heritage Sites,

where a whole set of stakeholders have to collaborate and cooperate in order to protect, preserve, promote and sustainably develop tourism at these Sites. The study also permitted the identification of governance structure of the Site in focus, including all the partakers that participate, in any way, in activities and dynamics of the Site, as well as the hierarchy between them. It has been identified who the power-holding entities responsible for the Site are, which level do they operate on, as well as the levels of collaboration between them.

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