

The Orla Project as a positioning strategy for a coastal tourist destination¹

O Projeto Orla como estratégia de posicionamento para um destino turístico costeiro

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyze the marketing strategies of the Orla Project, exploring the opportunities for tourist promotion of Ponta Negra beach, in Rio Grande do Norte (RN). A study was conducted on the management and organization of the Orla Project, with a focus on Ponta Negra/RN, a relevant tourist attraction in the "sun and beach" category in Brazil. Methodologically, the research is classified as qualitative, exploratory, and descriptive, using a convenience sample. Interviews were conducted with public managers linked to the Orla Project's management committee through a semi-structured script. As a result, it was found that marketing plays a crucial role in improving services, increasing credibility with the population, which expects excellence in public services. This reinforces the relevant role of marketing in public administration, through interaction among the actors involved, aiming at improving service performance and satisfaction of both the population and tourists. It is concluded that it is important to involve and value the local population,

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boosting the economy and generating businesses, investments, jobs, income, and opportunities for residents, always with respect and preservation of natural attractions. This work validates the relevant and influential role of the Orla Project in tourist marketing and public management of the waterfront. For future studies, it is suggested to investigate the implementation and performance of the municipal management committee, as well as the responsibility of the sectors involved, aiming at continuous improvement of the quality of structures and services, which will be reflected in tourism and the quality of life of residents.

Keywords: Orla Project, tourist marketing, planning, Rio Grande do Norte.

INTRODUCTION

According to a study by Map Biomas, in Brazil, in the last 37 years between 1985 and 2021, beaches, dunes, and sandy areas lost 15% of their area, with 47% of their area being in conservation units, decreasing from 457,000 hectares in 1985 to 389,000 hectares in 2021, representing a 15% retraction. Among the factors that led to this loss of 68,000 hectares is the pressure from the real estate market and the consequent advance of urban infrastructures, among others. The protection of beaches and dunes is fundamental to control erosion and protect coastal areas and their biodiversity, says César Diniz from the coastal zone mapping team at Map Biomas (Map Biomas Brasil, 2022).

Coastal management arises from the need to manage and protect the natural resources of coastal areas and can be defined as a dynamic process of continuous action through which decisions are made to protect coastal areas, with the development and sustainable use of marine resources (Brasil, 2002).

The importance of preserving beaches and dunes is highlighted, as well as the challenges faced, such as the loss of area due to pressure from the real estate market and the advancement of urban infrastructures (MapBiomas Brasil, 2022). The impacts caused by socio-environmental disasters are also cited by Fonseca and Oliveira (2021), which have the potential to directly impact tourist destinations, businesses, communities, and tourists, such as the



case of the oil spill, which spread over more than 70% of the 3,300 kilometers of coastline in Northeastern states (Brazilian Institute of the Environment and Renewable Natural Resources - IBAMA, 2019).

Additionally, according to Diniz et al. (2024), another issue is the touristic exploitation of sandy beaches, which leads to a decrease in ecological integrity, resulting in natural conditions that are inadequate for the population's needs and generating adverse socioeconomic impacts.

The Orla Project proposes a decentralized, integrated, and participatory public policy, which emerges as a new tool to improve performance and coordination among different actors in the public and private sectors, working towards the construction, in society, of activities compatible with the sustainable development of the waterfront (Brasil, 2022). It can be analyzed that the Orla Project is a relevant initiative for the protection and sustainable management of these areas, being important for the sustainable development of the coastal waterfront, enabling strategies for destination marketing.

Mafra et al. (2023) support that it is possible to create an image and associate it with tourist destinations through marketing and promotion strategies. This study aims to analyze the marketing strategies of the Orla Project, exploring the tourism promotion opportunities of Ponta Negra Beach/Rio Grande do Norte. The Orla Project is one of the main areas of action of the Ministry of the Environment (MMA) and now, together with the Ministry of Tourism (MTUR), manages the country's territorial waters, in addition to coordinating environmental, urban planning, and heritage policies assigned to coastal states and municipalities.

The study highlights the importance of marketing strategies, from the perspective of public managers, with the following question: how can the Orla Project influence marketing strategies in the tourist destination of Ponta Negra Beach, Natal/RN-Brazil?

The study sought to deepen the understanding of coastal management and the organization of the waterfront at Ponta Negra Beach, RN, due to its



relevance to the city's image as a tourist destination and main attraction in the "sun and beach" segment.

The theoretical framework is presented next, divided into two topics: Tourism Marketing and Place Marketing, and Tourism and the Orla Project. The methodology used comprised a qualitative and exploratory approach, based on data collected in interviews with public managers, which is further clarified in the course of the study. The research results are presented, as well as the conclusion and the references used.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Tourism Marketing and Place Marketing

It can be analyzed that "the interconnection between marketing and tourism dates back to the beginnings of organizing tourism on commercial bases" (Venâncio, 2022, p. 65). Rodrigues and Oliveira Alexandre (2023) corroborate this by mentioning that "it is possible to relate marketing to the various sectors of tourism, since it is a phenomenon that relates to several activities for its development."

Destinations play a central role in tourism and are widely considered one of the most challenging areas to manage and promote (Saqib, 2019). The understanding that effectively applied and well-planned marketing strategies are essential for the success of a tourism product. Melgar (2017, p. 60) defines tourism marketing as:

[...] the set of activities that develops a productive sector of the tourist activity, compiling financial, human, and physical efforts and identifying current and potential needs in specific segments of emitting tourist markets, as a way of generating products that can meet these needs and at the same time provide an economic benefit to investors.

According to Suzart (2005, p. 24), "the primary factor of tourism marketing is the provision of tourist services, aiming at satisfying the needs and desires of consumers," regardless of the motivations that lead them to take their trips.



The main objective of geographic marketing is to develop a mobilization project that makes the region economically and socially sustainable, seeking to explore its characteristics and resources, improve its competitiveness, and develop its potential. In this context, a place's brand is seen as an important asset for its development, allowing them to stand out and improve their positioning (Gouveia, Aragonez & Saur-Amaral, 2015).

Based on these statements, it can be considered that at the center of attention are consumers, their needs, desires, expectations, and satisfaction, as well as the expectations and needs of local communities. It can be analyzed that the goal of destination marketing should be to fully understand consumers and local communities so that products or services can fully meet their respective needs.

Thus, it can be understood that a market study should be conducted to better serve consumers and structure the services offered, requiring the analysis of demand and competition. Demand analysis deeply investigates consumers for their aspirations, peculiarities, lifestyle, and characteristics that define a segment, enabling the development and improvement of services suitable for customers.

Ardigó (2006) emphasizes that the development of a city or municipality has basically nothing to do with its location, climate, or natural resources, but is directly related to the people, that is, with their competencies. Thus, it can be said that place marketing is a management process developed in cities to better meet individual needs and desires, creating a sense of fulfillment in people

In this sense, place marketing can be considered as the promotional activities of local governments to develop spaces with the purpose of enhancing the city's image, aiming to satisfy the needs of tourists, investors, and residents.

It is analyzed that place marketing affects the development of a place and includes the needs and desires of citizens, tourists, and investors, and



different publics have different needs, as what is useful for tourists is not necessarily useful for residents (Eshuis, Braun & Klijn, 2013).

It can be interpreted that marketing becomes a matter of developing the place that people want, applying elements in the definition of development, policies, and urban planning. Marketing is not only about sending messages but also about receiving messages. It is a government strategy that includes managing processes for urban development and also includes managing the image of a city.

According to Reyes-Antonio (2010), one of the most important strategies of place marketing is the appropriate management of the image, aiming to be perceived as something unique and different for residents and visitors. Marketing research in place almost always addresses the concepts of brand and image, taking into account consumer behavior in decision-making (Gouvêa, 2009, cited in Vieira-Inácio, 2016).

Kotler and Gertner (2002) define the image of a destination as a set of characteristics that affect the beliefs, attitudes, knowledge, experiences, and learning of people and their impressions about the place, which can be individual or collective mental representations.

Therefore, it is important to study the image of a place, as it can identify the strengths and weaknesses of the place, effectively disseminate the relationship between the destination and the target market, promote tourism development in a geographical area, and ensure the competitive success of the location.

Tourism and the Orla Project

Tourism encompasses multifaceted actions related to cultural, social, and natural factors that reveal important practices in everyday social realities. It is not only through leisure, tourism, and vacations, but also through scientific investigation. Institutionalized as an academic program, it is considered a



complex phenomenon due to the interdisciplinary nature of its operation in multiple fields (Fonteles, 2004).

Tourism activity, along with the real estate market, natural resource extraction, and industry, among other activities, are responsible for accelerating the process of uncontrolled use, occupation, and degradation of coastal areas and beaches (Harvey & Caton, 2003).

In 2004, Federal Decree N^o. 5,300 was promulgated to formally incorporate coastal planning into public policies affecting coastal areas. In this sense, the decree defines a new geographic space for territorial management - the waterfront, whose planning is expressed by a detailed roadmap commonly known as the Orla Project (Brasil, 2004).

The detailed development and implementation guidelines for the Orla Projects are structured to contribute to optimizing the planning of coastal territories within the scope of the union, in this case, the seaside, combining environmental, urban, and heritage policies.

In view of this, this management is a new tool to enhance actions and partnerships between different agents from the public and private sectors operating on the waterfront, developing institutional mechanisms for social mobilization for integrated management and stimulating socio-economic activities compatible with the sustainable development of the waterfront. To this end, it established a systematic planning action for local dynamics, aiming to transfer the management of this space to the municipality, currently allocated by the federal government (Brasil, 2006b).

This participatory planning action is called the Orla Project. To facilitate the application of general guidelines to regulate the use and occupation of waterfront areas, municipalities are encouraged to develop and implement an Integrated Management Plan - PGI, which compiles environmental and heritage information about the site and proposes a series of actions aimed at mitigating environmental impacts and promoting sustainable development of the region. It also contributes to improvements in infrastructure services,



environmental education, signage on beaches, resorts, tourist flow, among others.

The MTUR plays a crucial role in the national coordination of the Orla Project, giving greater dimension to the management of waterfronts and beaches and providing a visionary perspective on the economic aspects required by the project. With this action, the project "Brazil, this is our beach!" a partnership between the Department of Tourism of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte (UFRN) and the MTUR, stands out for the selection to develop the PGI in 10 Brazilian tourist municipalities, both in coastal and inland areas, which were selected through a specific tender and follow criteria defined by the National Coordination of the Orla Project.

Therefore, according to the elaboration manual (Brasil, 2022), an Integrated Management Plan (PGI) must be developed and implemented in a participatory manner among relevant public authorities, organizations, institutions, and social organizations. The development of the PGI is carried out through training workshops conducted by a specialized company involving local managers, universities, organized civil society, and private entities. With the support of a specific bibliography, exclusive to the Orla Project, with conceptual, methodological, and process flow guidelines, the Orla PGI is structured, which is similar to the Intervention Plan provided for in article 25 of Decree 5.300/04 (Oliveira & Nicolodi, 2012).

When ready, the PGI is legalized through a public hearing, and a Management Committee is established to oversee the execution, monitoring, and evaluation of the management plan (Oliveira & Nicolodi, 2012), in coordination with the National Technical Committee (CTE) and the GI-GERCO.

The municipalities interested in joining the project do so through the State Environmental Agency - OEMA and the Regional Management of the Union's Patrimony (GRPU/SPU) in their respective States, and all municipalities that sign the TAGP are responsible for developing the PGI, using the Orla Project methodology within three years after the signature is ratified.



The waterfront of the municipality of Natal is located on the eastern coast (East) of the state of Rio Grande do Norte in northeastern Brazil. According to the latest revision of the Natal Master Plan, Complementary Law n° 208/2022, the municipality's waterfront is part of the Coastal and Estuarine Special Area (AECE), consisting of the Maritime Waterfront and the Estuary of the Potengi and Jundiá rivers (CONSIGA, 2022).

The capital has approximately 26 km of coastline, and its waterfront includes the beaches of Ponta Negra, Parque das Dunas/Via Costeira, Areia Preta/Miami, Praia do Meio, Praia dos Artistas, Santos dos Reis, Praia do Forte, and Praia da Redinha. It is bordered to the North by the municipality of Extremoz, to the South by the municipality of Parnamirim, and to the East by the Atlantic Ocean (Municipal Secretariat of Environment and Urbanism - SEMURB, 2008), as can be better observed in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Map of the administrative division of the municipality of Natal/RN

Source: SEMURB (2008).

In the legal instruments incorporated by the Orla Project, the Coastal Zone is defined as "national heritage" (Article 225, § 4 of the Federal Constitution of 1988) and as "[...] the geographical space of interaction of air, sea, and land, including its renewable or non-renewable resources, covering a maritime and a terrestrial strip [...]" (Brasil, 1998), and, above all, Federal Decree 5,300/04, which establishes more specific rules for the use and occupation of the coastal zone (Brasil, 2004).

Its content demarcates the coastal areas towards the sea by the 10m isobath, while towards the land, the straight-line distance is 50m for urbanized areas and 200m for non-urbanized areas, from the high tide line (or the limit of the adjacent terrestrial ecosystem).

METHODOLOGY

This study is characterized as exploratory-descriptive, as it seeks to explore information related to a theme. Descriptive research is characterized by describing phenomena or establishing relationships between variables and aims to guide how data is collected by describing certain phenomena (Dencker, 1998).

In addition to being descriptive, the study is exploratory in nature as it aims to make people more familiar with the problem by making it more explicit. According to Gil (2017), exploratory research tends to be more flexible in its methods, aiming to increase the opinions, attitudes, and beliefs of the population. Furthermore, the author states that the objective of exploratory research is to provide an overview of the specific fact.

The research is characterized as qualitative. Gil (2017) argues that qualitative research maintains that there is an inextricable connection between the subject's subjectivity and the objective world, which cannot be described with numbers. Understanding events and assigning meaning are



fundamental elements in the qualitative research process and do not require the use of statistical procedures and techniques.

Therefore, in the technical procedures, a bibliographic research was used, through materials already elaborated, such as books and scientific articles, through documents made available by the Orla Project and information collected on official websites of the federal, state, and municipal governments.

The selection of interviewees was through a convenience sample, in which members of the competent bodies for the elaboration and implementation of the PGI on the waterfront of the municipality of Natal/RN were invited. The participants were defined as representatives of institutions and companies involved in the elaboration of the Orla Project and the most relevant for the research. The invitation to participate in the research was made individually and in person. Seven interviews were conducted, analyzing the perceptions of local managers, linked to Municipal Public Management, Public Inspection and Control Bodies and Private Company.

Some studies have analyzed the use of technology in qualitative studies, emphasizing email interviews as a valid form of data collection (Fielding & Lee, 2017; Flick, 2018; Tracy, 2019). The study presents a non-probabilistic sample, which according to Mattar (2006, p. 132) "is one in which the selection of elements from the population to compose the sample depends at least in part on the researcher's or interviewer's judgment in the field." The following institutions were part of the sample:

- State Secretariat of Tourism (SETUR-RN), represented by the Regionalization Coordination of Tourism;
- Superintendence of the Union's Heritage in Rio Grande do Norte (SPU-RN), represented by the Secretariat of Coordination and Governance of the Union's Heritage;
- Institute of Environmental Defense of Rio Grande do Norte (IDEMA), represented by the Coastal Management Coordination;



- Natal City Hall, represented by the Municipal Tourism Secretariat - SETUR;
- Natal City Hall, represented by the Municipal Secretariat of Environment and Urbanism - SEMURB;
- Urban Services Company of Natal (URBANA), represented by the Environmental Planning and Management Directorate;
- Consultancy in integrated systems and environmental management - CONSIGA.

The study was limited to a sample of seven interviewees because they are participants directly involved with the Projeto Orla. This sample size was deemed sufficient to capture different perspectives, as these managers have knowledge and interaction with the project.

To avoid creating expectations in responses, the interviewees' answers were anonymized using the alphabet, such as A, B, C, D, E, F and G. To collect data, a structured script was developed containing three open-ended questions to investigate, without limiting the answers, the topic studied in the research.

The first question analyzed the managers' opinion on the importance of the Orla Project for promoting a tourist destination. The second question asked how the manager evaluates the inclusion of tourism in the Orla Project. The last question aimed to analyze the benefits that the dissemination of the Orla Project can bring to the destination, thus benefiting the marketing of the place. The questions sought the purposes described in Table 1.



Table 1

Purpose of the questions

QUESTÕES (Q)	FINALIDADES
Q1: In your opinion, what is the importance of the Orla Project for promoting a tourist destination?	Identifying the importance of developing the Integrated Management Plan (PGI) through the Orla Project in promoting the tourist destination
Q2: How do you evaluate the inclusion of Tourism in the Orla Project?	Assessing the importance of including Tourism in the Orla Project
Q3: What benefits can the promotion of the Orla Project bring to Natal?	Show what benefits and contributions the Orla Project can bring to the city of Natal/RN.

Note. Source: Research data. Own elaboration.

The scope of this study was regarding the coastline of Natal/RN, specifically the Ponta Negra coastline, due to its relevance in coastal area planning and marketing strategies for the tourist destination, making it a key focus for this research due to being the most significant tourist attraction.

Regarding the field research, it was necessary, considering that it is a characteristic of qualitative researchers to collect data in the field and at the location where the participants experience the issue or problem being studied (Creswell, 2010).

According to Santos (2004), data collection is of great importance and should be conducted methodically, as it will have direct effects on data analysis. The data were collected from June 15, 2022, to July 18, 2022, and transcribed afterward.

Due to the availability of the target population for the research, which consists of individuals holding positions of high relevance within institutions, most interviews were conducted electronically, with five via email, one conducted remotely on June 23, 2022, via Google Meet, and one conducted in person on June 24, 2022. The last two interviews were recorded and later transcribed.

Qualitative data analysis aims to discover and understand an overall picture using individual information, without narrative limits. According to Dencker (2005), the objective of the analysis is to gather observations in a coherent and organized manner, so that it is possible to respond to the research problem.

In this sense, Bardin (2011) defends it as a set of techniques for analyzing communication that process the content of messages through systematic and objective procedures. After analyzing each variable, a matrix was elaborated, gathering all the collected information, presenting it, addressing the strengths, opportunities, weaknesses, and threats of the Orla Project for the municipality of Natal/RN.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The Importance of the Orla Project for the Marketing of a Tourist Destination

The interviewees were asked about the importance of the Orla Project for promoting a tourist destination. It was possible to ascertain that the construction of the Integrated Management Plan (PGI) through the Orla Project is essential, as stated by interviewee B.

Interviewee F complements by reiterating that its importance is entirely broad, considering that environmentally friendly adaptations and the orderly use of the beach constitute an improvement in the tourist destination. Interviewee C says it is fundamental.

"The planning outlined in the management plan dictates how the waterfront should be used. The Orla Project brings this planning, which, if implemented and continuously monitored, and if it is ingrained in people's minds that it is what should work, it is what will make this attraction permanent" (Interviewee C, 2022).



For interviewee D, the Orla Project itself wasn't specifically mentioned, as the municipality was already working on the waterfront. However, the project added value with the Integrated Management Plan (PGI) instrument.

"Planning, in my opinion, is what becomes most important; it's how we are going to use it, what use we will give to the waterfront, and in this way it will become more pleasant to see and consume, easier to monitor, and easier to enjoy everything that will be there. I think it gives visibility and makes it easier to sell the destination more, because we will have a waterfront in Ponta Negra, we will focus on Ponta Negra, which is our postcard. Today, it is chaos there, and when we have a Integrated Management Plan (PGI) that orders everything there and names names, who is responsible for what, and with fines, taxes, fees, etc., maybe in the near future, defining how it will be, I think the tourist destination can only benefit. Because it organizes everything and the population likes organized things, and so does the tourist, so I think everything becomes easier" (Interviewee D, 2022).

According to Interviewee G, the Orla Project can and should become a quality seal, reflecting a coastal area that is properly organized, with respect for ecological principles, environmental responsibility, social justice, and economic dynamism.

Interviewee A states that for a tourist destination to be considered attractive, it is extremely important to align environmental issues with economic development. They mention that an organized, clean, and safe waterfront depends on actions derived from management instruments and normative instructions, aiming to regulate the occupation of the territory and the activities developed therein.

Interviewee E stated that the Orla Project provides the necessary support to municipalities to manage beaches that are federal domain areas, established by the Beach Adhesion Agreement (TAGP). This agreement allows greater managerial autonomy for the municipality in the waterfront areas, enabling programs and projects aimed at tourism, such as zoning for use in urban beaches. Figure 2 summarizes the collected data.



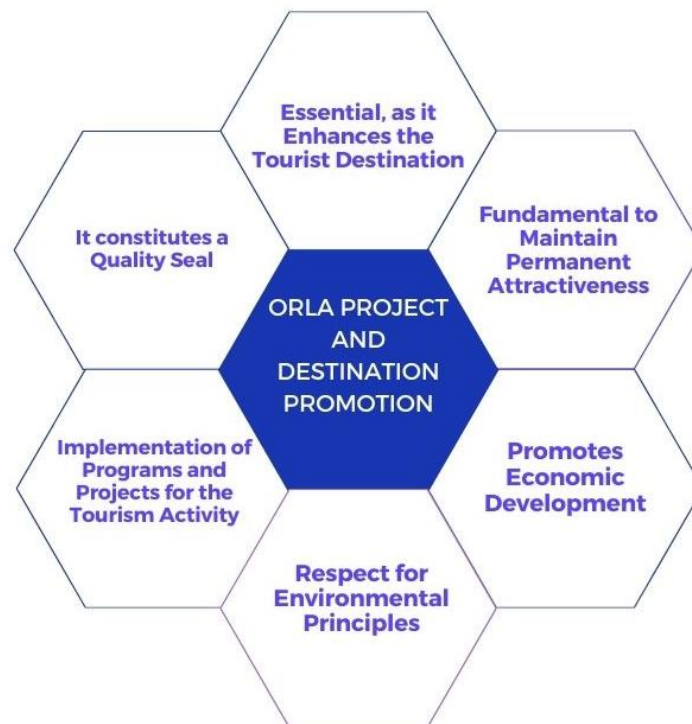


Figure 2. Orla Project and Destination Promotion

It is evident that the Orla Project is essential and fundamental in enhancing and promoting economic development, enabling programs and projects focused on tourism, with respect to the environment, presenting itself as a quality seal for the tourist destination.

Therefore, the use of marketing as a management and promotion strategy can be a more effective tool in improving the competitiveness and attractiveness of a location. The main objective of geographic marketing will be to develop a mobilization project that makes the region economically and socially sustainable, seeking to explore its characteristics and resources, improve its competitiveness, and develop its potential. In this context, a place's brand is seen as an important asset for its development, allowing them to stand out and improve their positioning (Gouveia et al., 2015).

The MTUR plays a leading role in the national coordination of the Orla Project, giving greater dimension to the management of waterfronts and beaches, providing a visionary perspective on the economic aspects required

by the project. With this action, the project "Brasil, essa é nossa praia," a partnership between the Department of Tourism at UFRN and the Ministry of Tourism, stands out for the leadership assumed, along with other institutions, in coordinating the project for the development of the Integrated Management Plan (PGI) in the selected municipalities.

When asked about the integration of Tourism into the Orla Project, it was possible to observe how positive and important the leadership assumed by the Ministry of Tourism was through its involvement in the National Coordination of the Orla Project, through the "Brasil, essa é nossa praia" program. This brought greater dimension to the management of waterfronts and beaches, providing the necessary economic perspective to the project.

Interviewee A states that the integration of tourism into the Orla Project can effectively contribute to planning the reconciliation of environmental preservation with economic development.

"Tourism is considered one of the most important economic activities within coastal areas, with a significant contribution to the GDP of various states and the country as a whole. Thus, the waterfront has a strong influence on tourist flows, positively favoring the sun and beach tourism segment, with the enjoyment of the sea, landscape contemplation, and other adjacent resources. Therefore, the integration of this segment into the Orla Project can effectively contribute to planning the reconciliation of environmental preservation with economic development; in improvements in security, hygiene, and food services; as well as in infrastructure and access points to the beaches, through the control of businesses that are established along the waterfront. The effective management of these aspects has significant and positive consequences for the future management of the coastal zone, thus contributing to the development of cities and the well-being of their residents, as well as the conservation of specially protected territorial spaces" (Interviewee A, 2022).

Interviewee G further states that since tourism is the main economic activity observed along the entire municipal waterfront, and all potentials are directly related to tourism, the integration of tourism into the Orla Project came



at an opportune time, but it should already be part of the organic structure of the Orla Project.

Interviewee E states that "the tourism sector has always been intrinsic to the Orla Project, but the federal program 'Brasil, essa é nossa praia' helped to emphasize the need to further improve the tourism sector in the Integrated Management Plan (PGI)."

Interviewee B evaluates it as the most important and essential action for the Orla Project, considering tourism as the main activity linked to the project. Interviewee C evaluates it as extremely important! A strategy to consolidate tourism in occupied or unoccupied areas and has been what drives economic development.

According to interviewee D, it was very positive because "it adds, enhances, and enriches the debate, environment, and tourism, how to live together in harmony, that success exists and just needs to be echoed that it is possible."

Interviewee F evaluates it positively! He affirms that it fosters the improvement of infrastructure, service provision, and the valorization and preservation of environmental areas, in accordance with legal provisions. According to the collected data, Figure 3 was elaborated.



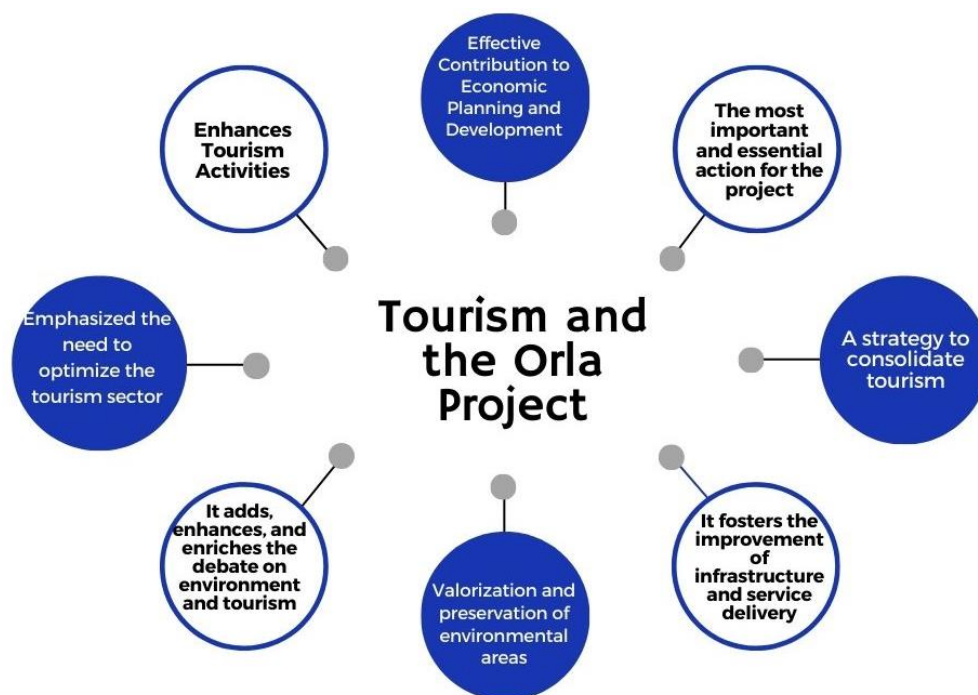


Figure 3. Tourism and the Orla Project

Marketing is seen as a fundamental area for tourism planning, as "it provides tools that allow monitoring the dynamics of the tourism sector and building an authentic image, based on creating value and a brand corresponding to local aspirations" (Nascimento, et al., 2023).

As previously highlighted and can be seen, tourism plays a strategic role in the Orla Project, with an effective contribution to the consolidation and enhancement of tourism activities, adding to the improvement of infrastructure and service provision, while also valuing and preserving environmental areas, effectively contributing to economic planning and development.

Benefits and Opportunities of the Orla Project for the Tourist Destination

It can be said that marketing becomes a matter of developing the place that people want, applying elements in the definition of development, in policies and urban planning, as a way to promote tourism development in a geographic area and ensure the competitive success of the location. From a

marketing perspective, increased competition among places is the main reason to explore the perceived image of places (Martínez, 2006).

To conclude the research, the interviewees were asked about the benefits and opportunities that the Orla Project can bring to the city of Natal, as can be seen in Figure 4.

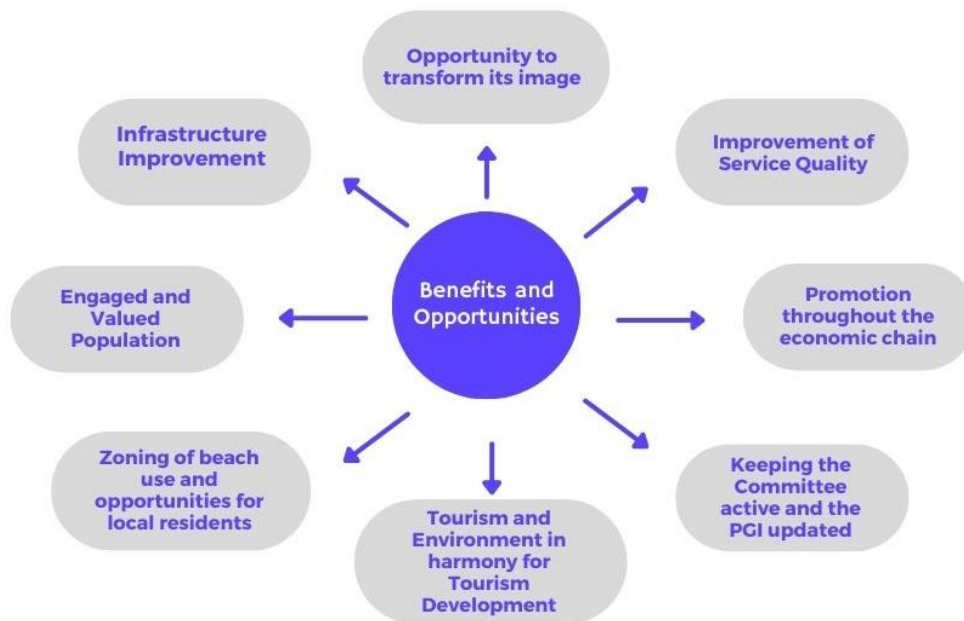


Figure 4. Benefits and Opportunities

Interviewee A states that: "once completed, implemented, and fully operational, the benefits will be very positive, seen by everyone, residents or visitors. The announcement of the start of the program is already generating very good comments, especially from the trade, and generating expectations among all involved."

According to Kotler and Keller (2006), the aspect of place in marketing can be divided into two parts: "place" and "marketing". The first is related to the image that the city sells as a product. And the second means a planned management, responsible for identifying, anticipating, and satisfying customer requirements.

Building on the statement of interviewee A, interviewee C states that the benefits are comprehensive, with the prospect of improving the quality of urbanization, infrastructure, supporting leisure, and zoning with open areas, making the waterfront more attractive to residents and tourists. Interviewee B emphasizes that besides the tourism boost, it will stimulate the entire economic chain.

Natal could transform its image from an abandoned waterfront to a vibrant and pleasant one, where both the local population and tourists can enjoy its preserved natural beauty, its sun and beach activities in a peaceful and safe manner, without disturbances from invasive vendors," highlights interviewee G.

Interviewee D says, "Designing our waterfront, our destination, combining the environment with tourism and the population, the population feels involved, heard, feels valued. This is good for them to understand that tourism is not destruction, tourism is growth, it is also progress."

Interviewee F mentions that the benefits consist of the improvement and use of the beach, with opportunities for local residents to properly enjoy the waterfront space, and with tourism development.

Finally, interviewee E reinforces the statements above, adding the observation that "the disclosure and continuity of the Orla Project in the municipality make it possible to keep the Orla Management Committee active and the PGI-Natal updated, both already integrated into the Master Plan (2022)."

One can observe that the Orla Project represents an opportunity to transform the image of the tourist destination, with improvements in infrastructure and the organization of beach use. This results in an improvement in the quality of services provided, with an involved and valued population. The project also promotes the development of the entire economic chain, generating more opportunities for local residents. Additionally, it provides



tourism in harmony with the environment and encourages actions to maintain an active and updated management committee.

Municipal managers face challenges such as rescuing local identities for development. The characteristics of cities with corporations and governments should pay more attention to the existing scientific knowledge of business management to support urban management due to its complexity, inequality, uniqueness, and little importance in relation to urban management (Fischer, 1998).

Finally, through the data presented in this study, it was possible to analyze the strengths and weaknesses, as well as the opportunities and threats identified through the SWOT matrix (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats), which, according to Martins (2007), is one of the most employed methods by companies focusing on strategic thinking and marketing, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Data collected applied to the SWOT Matrix

STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES	WEAKNESSES	THREATS
Implementation of the Integrated Management Plan	Attraction of more tourists	Formation of the management committee	Maintaining the effective participation of the management committee
Organization of economic activities	Generating more business with event hosting	Discontinuity of zoning actions	Changes in Municipal Management
Infrastructure improvements	Having spaces for Social and Tourist production	Disorganization and visible lack of qualification of services provided on the beach and boardwalk	Lack of Public Security
Improvements in service quality	Community-Based Tourism	Long deadlines for PGI revisions	Diversity of Waterfront Types
Hosting cultural and sports events	More promotion at Fairs and Events	Lack of training and knowledge of those	Environmental fragility of Natural



		who carry out the actions	Attractions
Specific actions with the population for awareness and education	Acquiring a quality seal	Crowding of beach stalls with tables and umbrellas over most of the sand strip	Lack of enforcement may lead to crowding of beach stalls with tables and umbrellas over most of the sand strip
Training of Travel Agents and Guides	Promotion throughout the Economic chain	Consensus and awareness among involved actors, public and private	Lack of regulation of economic activities
Easing conflicts in the zoning of sports and economic activities	Marketing campaigns highlighting the quality of the waterfront management	Conflicts of use of physical space	Integrating interests for the use of physical space
Beach improvement and use, with opportunities for local residents	Making more projects viable to maintain the attractiveness of the waterfront	Sports practices in different stretches of the waterfront without a specific location	Maritime erosion and sea advancement can influence waterfront fattening actions
Awareness and participation of the population in the reorganization and zoning process of the waterfront	Promoting potential economic and tourist development of the destination	Preventive and corrective maintenance of public equipment	Lack of sanitation and urban cleaning can impact the destination's image
Increase in the width of the beach	Valorization and Preservation of environmental areas	Sanitation and Urban Cleaning	
Variety of Marketing Tools for the promotion and dissemination of the destination	They can reach a larger audience for regional, national, and international tourism	Public Lighting and Precarious Transportation Public Insecurity	

Note. Source: Research data. Own elaboration.

A more in-depth analysis of the data obtained in the SWOT matrix was conducted to improve the understanding and applicability of the study's conclusions, as can be seen in Figure 5.

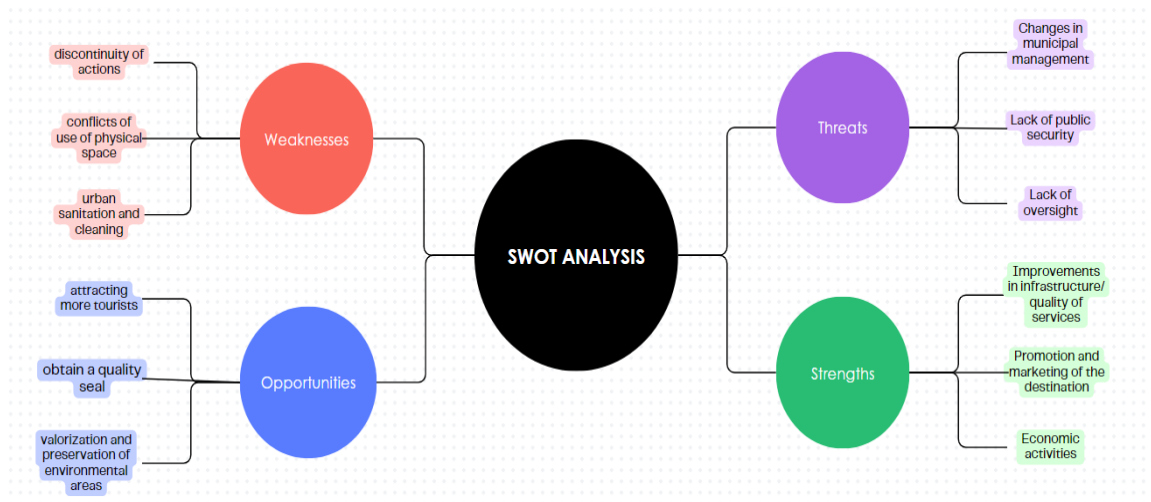


Figure 5. SWOT Analysis Synthesis

The three points evaluated for each variable in the SWOT analysis depict a synthesis of the managers' view regarding the Orla Project and the impact it has on the destination. The promotion of the destination and the benefits it receives from participating in the project are highlighted. The issue of discontinuity of actions reflects the difficulties in executing the planned activities.

It can be interpreted that the dynamics involving the destination's competitiveness, its strengths and weaknesses, and the external environment need to be regularly analyzed so that threats can be neutralized and market opportunities visualized. This should consider other factors, strategic measures, partnerships facilitated by the public sector, and the other sectors responsible for the destination's development (Brasil, 2015).

With the analysis of the SWOT Matrix, regarding the strengths of the tourist destination, it is emphasized here the city's dependence on sun and beach tourism. In this context, the implementation of the PGI, within the guidelines of the Orla Project, provides a great opportunity for improvement in all tourist infrastructure, in the quality of services provided, and in public safety. Because it is more tangible and perceptible, it will bring greater visibility to the destination.

Regarding the weaknesses identified, it is worth noting that the formation and effective participation of the management committee, within the implementation actions, monitoring of this zoning, and oversight, becomes the biggest challenge of this project.

Actions promoting public safety, integrating interests for the use of physical space with conflict resolution, maritime erosion, environmental fragilities in natural attractions, and changes in municipal management are presented as the greatest threats to the success of the zoning and management of the waterfront of Ponta Negra Beach in the city of Natal/RN.

It can be analyzed that developing a destination-focused strategy helps integrate it into the market, requiring partnership with public agencies to achieve objectives. Silva and Costa Junior (2020, p. 99) support that "tourism marketing should not only aim to attract tourists but also represent the management of strategies capable of facilitating the development of local objectives for tourism provision, ensuring that destination strategies succeed."

It is also worth noting that to ensure the sustainability of these areas, it is essential to promote tourism responsibly and consciously, integrating marketing strategies that promote not only the visibility of the destination but also the formulation of management actions that directly contribute to minimizing the impact of tourism activities.

CONCLUSION

The factors that impact the destination's image, such as improvements in infrastructure, service quality, environmental respect, and safety, were considered. All of these factors are important, but service quality and safety, being more noticeable, directly influence the city's image for tourists and residents, according to the interviewees' perception.

The importance of the Orla Project for a tourist destination was investigated. The results demonstrated its essential nature as a quality seal. It



represents an orderly coastal space, in accordance with ecological principles, social responsibility, and economic dynamism. It can be interpreted that this enhances the promotion of the tourist destination, with appropriate zoning and effective management in service quality, resulting in greater visibility for the waterfront, attracting more tourists, and boosting the local economy with investments, jobs, and income.

The limitation of the study was related to data collection, as not all interviews could be conducted in person. With the advancement of technology, it was possible to optimize the respondents' time, allowing them to participate through meetings using the Meet platform or by sending responses via email.

The gaps found in the strategies of the Orla Project concern the issue of marketing going beyond promotion, requiring the incorporation of values such as environmental respect, sustainability, and service quality. The lack of management based on these principles can have detrimental effects on the tourist destination, leading to a lack of competitiveness and devaluation of products and services. The discontinuity of actions brings difficulties for the execution of the planning carried out.

Therefore, there are many factors and elements that condition and influence the success of a tourist product, but quality remains the key point for a destination to enhance its image and competitiveness. In this sense, city marketing must adhere to differentiation, formulate marketing strategies appropriate to the specific characteristics of the place, establish incentives to retain and attract new partners, exchange the city's products and services in an accessible way, providing value to the city's image, promoting the advantages and promoting its distinct potentials, so that it becomes known.

For future research, it is suggested to investigate how the implementation and operation of the municipal project management committee that aims to maximize the destination occur, discussing the responsibility attributed to the responsible sectors.



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