UNDERSTANDING THE TERRITORIALITY OF URBAN GOVERNANCE:
The Network, the Ties, and the Webs in Florianópolis, Brazil

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to understand the urban governance of Florianópolis through the political ecology of actors mobilized around the city's public problems. It seeks to contribute a localized and situated perspective of urban governance, focusing on daily processes and fields of experience, thereby recovering the diversity of political ecologies within territories. The research is part of the scope of the Observatory of Social Innovation of Florianópolis (OBISF) and was developed using the methodology of public arena ethnography through the Urban Issues Journey, an applied research process in partnership with the EcoSocial Governance Forum of Florianópolis (Forum Ecoar). Recognizing this plural political ecology allowed the identification, through interactions among mapped actors, of the connections between them and a series of "webs" that form the ecosystem network aimed at addressing a variety of issues. These "webs" represent highly typical and closely engaged modes of interaction with the city, each having a unique narrative about its "city project," along with strategies and concrete actions to implement it. Through deeper cartography, twelve webs were identified within the ecosystem, with nine of them studied in greater depth. This approach made it possible to identify a plural political ecology that provides deeper insights into how actors engage, act, and influence city governance while coproducing social innovation.

Keywords: urban governance; public arenas; research-transfer; engaged science; democratic experimentalism; social innovation.

COMPREENDENDO A TERRITORIALIDADE DA GOVERNANÇA URBANA:
A REDE, OS LAÇOS E AS TEIAS EM FLORIANÓPOLIS

RESUMO

Este estudo tem como objetivo compreender a governança urbana de Florianópolis a partir da ecologia política dos atores mobilizados em torno das questões da cidade. Busca-se contribuir com uma perspectiva territorializada e situada da governança urbana, voltada aos processos cotidianos e aos campos de experiência, recuperando a diversidade da ecologia política dos territórios. A pesquisa faz parte do escopo do Observatório de Inovação Social de Florianópolis (OBISF) e foi construída com base na metodologia da etnografia de arenas públicas, por meio da Jornada sobre Questões Urbanas, um processo de pesquisa aplicada e implicada em parceria com o Fórum de Governança EcoSocial dos Bens Comuns de Florianópolis (Fórum Ecoar). O reconhecimento desta ecologia política plural permitiu identificar, a partir das interações entre os atores mapeados, os laços entre eles e uma série de "teias" que conforma a rede do ecossistema voltado a responder a uma diversidade de questões. Essas "teias" dizem respeito a modos bastante típicos e próximos de engajamento com a cidade, tendo cada teia uma narrativa singular sobre o seu "projeto de cidade", bem como estratégias e ações concretas para colocá-lo em prática. Com o aprofundamento da cartografia foram evidenciadas 12 teias que conformam o ecossistema, sendo 9 delas mais aprofundadas neste estudo. Com isso, foi possível identificar uma ecologia política plural que permite compreender, de forma mais profunda, como os atores se engajam, agem e influenciam na governança da cidade e coproduzem inovação social.

Palavras-chave: governança urbana; arenas públicas; pesquisa-extensão; ciência engajada; experimentalismo

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INTRODUCTION

Brazil has a distinct urbanization development (Santos, 2009). Although it remains more rural than official assessments suggest (Veiga, 2004), in recent decades, the country has experienced rapid urbanization, leading to significant and far-reaching consequences (Souza, 2007). As a result, Brazilian cities are marked by profound inequalities, frequent conflicts, and various forms of mobilization and collective action, which have transformed urban dynamics and governance.

A key factor in this transformation is the evolution of Brazilian urban policy, which has been shaped by a long-standing process of confronting urban problems and fostering interaction between civil society and the State. Its direct roots lie in the Urban Reform movement of the 1960s (Koury; Oliveira, 2021) and in the rise of social movements advocating for the recognition of the city's and property's social function throughout the 1970s and 1980s. This process led to the Constituent Assembly and the approval, after an intense debate with a variety of actors, of Articles 182 and 183 in the 1988 Constitution, which established the principles of Urban Policy, enshrining the right to the city and democratic urban management. The alliances and conflicts among these actors set the tone for the regulation of these principles, which only occurred 13 years later with the enactment of the City Statute under Law 10257/2001. This statute laid out the objectives and instruments of Urban Policy (Battaus; Oliveira, 2016; Brasil, 2001).

Social movements saw the City Statute with cautious optimism and celebrated it as an achievement, though not all of their demands were met (Saule Júnior; Uzzo, 2010). According to Rolnik (2001), the statute introduced innovations in three key areas: (i) new urban management tools; (ii) a new democratic approach to managing urban spaces, encouraging citizen participa-tion; and (iii) an expansion of opportunities for land regularization in urban areas. Despite these regulatory advances, implementing these tools at the local level and aiming to foster more democratic and socially just urban development has faced – and continues to face – numerous challenges (Battaus; Oliveira, 2016; Koury; Oliveira, 2021).

Twenty-three years after the creation of the City Statute, numerous studies have examined its scope and the challenges associated with its application (Rolnik, 2012; Costa, 2016; Oliveira; Lopes; Sousa, 2018). Positively, implementing Master Plans and incorporating the Statute's mechanisms into their frameworks stand out, as do advances in urban zoning, housing, and transportation policies (Santos Júnior; Montandon, 2011). As for limitations, one prominent criticism is the challenge of reflecting and acting on the city's development within an urban governance structure that is subject to strong technocratic influences, as well as interests and speculation from the real estate market. Research also highlights the difficulty in applying the statute in smaller municipalities and problems in financing and managing infrastructure for urban policy (Marguti; Costa; Galindo, 2016). Moreover, there is an increasing recognition of the need to extend urban policy beyond individual municipalities to include metropolitan and territorial dimensions in analyses. These issues have become even more pressing in recent years, especially with the escalating impact of the climate crisis on municipalities, as evidenced by the increasing frequency of emergencies, such as the recent events in the state of Rio Grande do Sul.

From a practical standpoint, Brazil's urban management challenges are immense. However, on the academic front, the debate has significantly expanded in recent decades,

becoming increasingly interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary (Battaus; Oliveira, 2016; Corrêa, 1989; Kowarick, 2009; Santos, 2009; Souza, 2007; Spink; Burgos; Alves, 2022; Sugai, 2015). Studies on urban management span various fields, most notably urban and regional planning, architecture and urbanism, engineering, and geography. They also involve a range of social sciences, such as anthropology, sociology, political science, economics, and psychology. Other areas of inquiry include law, tourism, health, ecology, environmental sciences, and, to a lesser extent, administration. As Andion and Chimenti (2024) point out referring to the interdisciplinary field of urban management and planning in Brasil, analyses and research groups with a background in public administration are less common and emphasize planning, infrastructure, and the design of cities as geographic spaces. In this study, we explore urban management from a public administration perspective to understand "urban governance" based on interactions coproduced by socio-state interfaces involving various actors and sectors, examining how these interfaces are embedded in the territory and form the political ecology of the city.

Recent discussions on urban governance reveal a gap in addressing the territorial perspective, particularly the need for a deeper debate to understand daily processes regarding governance practices – the "field of experience" – and the diverse actors involved. A more pluralistic approach is needed to capture the complexity and diversity of political ecology within urban governance and its territorial expression.

This study aims to contribute to the debate by focusing on the urban governance of Florianópolis, the capital of Santa Catarina, in southern Brazil. Over the past 40 years, the city's population has more than doubled, from 187,800 in 1980 to approximately 537,211 inhabitants in the most recent census in 2022 (IBGE, 2023). This rapid growth is linked to the city's many attractions and sociocultural landscape, including high quality of life indicators (among the best in the country), cultural and environmental diversity, professional opportunities, higher and technical education offerings, and strong technology and innovation sectors. However, this accelerated urban growth has been marked by exclusion and socioespacial inequalities, especially in recent decades.

The accelerated urbanization process in Florianópolis leads to contradictions and gentrification. Despite having the highest Municipal Human Development Index (MHDI) among Brazilian capitals (PCS, 2020) and being considered an "oasis of human development," the city is also marked by vulnerabilities and segregation (Sugai, 2015). According to data from the Municipality of Florianópolis, the city has 67 settlements/areas of social interest where approximately 65,000 people reside, including about 25,000 children and adolescents (ICOM, 2016). Socioeconomically, 24% of the population lives on an income of up to three minimum wages as registered in the federal government's social assistance database. Only 29% of registered families are beneficiaries of the conditional cash transfer program *Bolsa Família* (Brasil, 2023). Florianópolis consistently ranked among the Brazilian capitals with the most expensive basic food baskets (DIEESE, 2023), and it recorded the second-highest increase in residential rent among the capitals in 2023, with a 27.68% rise, according to the FIPE Zap Residential Rental Index (Fipe, 2023).

The Urban Master Plan for the Municipality of Florianópolis was established by Municipal Complementary Law 482/2014 (Florianópolis, 2014) and later revised with the approval of Municipal Complementary Law 739/2023 (Florianópolis, 2023). The revised plan sets out guidelines for land use, urban instruments, the management system, and the municipal urban

development policy. The current and updated Master Plan emerged from a contentious and controversial process. Although the population participated throughout a long process, the local administration largely disregarded this input during the drafting and approval phases of the 2014 Plan and its 2023 revision.

According to the online platform "Popular Preliminary Project" – which documents the history of urban management in the city and systematizes proposals from various groups, associations, and civil society movements – the approval and revision processes of the Florianópolis Master Plan were flawed by "bulldozing tactics" and legal irregularities aimed at minimizing public participation. Key criticisms surrounding the approval of Law 482/2014 include:

The approval of Complementary Law 482, enacted in January 2014, resulted from a coup orchestrated by the city's real estate sector in collusion with a majority of city council members. In the final minutes of 2013, defying Internal Regulations and employing a summary procedure, most council members approved 305 amendments out of nearly 700 presented. This rushed approval occurred without any discussion in plenary and amidst intense police repression against protesting citizens. Prior to this, representatives of the local government had "negotiated" these amendments individually with various council members and their blocs, disregarding the preliminary draft developed through discussions in the Participatory Master Plan (PDP) since late 2006. This genuine "parliamentary coup" culminated in the so-called "Frankenstein" law – LC 482 – still in effect today. This controversial law is riddled with unconstitutional provisions, imposes a project inconsistent with district deliberations at the time, and contains numerous internal contradictions. As a result, a judicial process was initiated by the Federal Public Ministry (MPF), concluding in 2017 under the administration of Mayor Gean Loureiro. Loureiro appealed to the Superior Court of Justice (STJ) in Brasília, successfully suspending the ongoing review process of the Master Plan on the grounds that it was not within the MPF's jurisdiction to intervene at the municipal level (Movimento Popular, 2023).

REGARDING THE MASTER PLAN'S UPDATE:

In January 2021, the local government submitted a package to the City Council during the parliamentary recess, which included the "Floripa mais Empregos" (Floripa More Jobs) program. Despite its title, the initiative sought to modify the Master Plan without conducting public hearings or obtaining prior analysis and approval from the City Council. When this project was voted on as an urgent matter, the council narrowly defeated it. In December of that year, amid the pandemic, the local government attempted to advance its agenda again, proposing just one public hearing after hastily publishing a draft that had not undergone scrutiny by the City Council. The courts rejected this proposal due to significant public mobilization, particularly with support from the Public Ministry of Santa Catarina (MPSC). This mobilization compelled the government to conduct 13 district public hearings and one municipal hearing throughout the first half of 2022. Despite requests from various entities to hold community, district, and thematic workshops prior to the hearings, the executive unilaterally decided to organize the public hearings mandated by the courts. Their stated purpose was to "listen" to the population, yet a heavy police presence and the absence of a formal draft proposal complicated the process. Although several versions of the text circulated behind the scenes, the lack of a clear proposal undermined the integrity of the hearings.

The hearings exposed the population's widespread discontent with the process's undemocratic nature and the content presented by the local government's representatives during the initial sessions. Ultimately, after conducting all the public hearings mandated by the courts, the executive compiled a preliminary draft that disregarded the demands articulated by the community, both individually and collectively. This turned the participation process into a premeditated charade of "make-believe." Furthermore, the local administration completely marginalized its technical staff throughout this process, instead appointing a select "team of experts" to compile the preliminary draft. After a tumultuous review by the City Council, this draft was later presented to the council for approval (Movimento Popular, 2023).

This highlights the challenges of establishing a more democratic and participatory urban management process in the city which is also analysed in various studies about the city's urban management (Coelho, 2012; Cunha, 2013; Pereira, 2011; Siqueira; Chaves; Gonçalves, 2020). This problematic situation proposes a critical question regarding urban governance in Florianópolis: *how do various collectives and their city projects interact – or fail to interact – with each other and with the city's urban policy institutional framework?*

The rising controversies surrounding the Florianópolis Participatory Plan, coupled with the growing distrust between civil society and public authorities, have created a scenario that emphasizes the importance of the recognition of actors engaged in urban governance. These actors navigate their territories through connections, self-recognition, and mobilization. From a pragmatic perspective, this study considers the controversies, problematic situations, or moments of testing as crucial opportunities that reveal the constitution of the local social fabric, thereby creating valuable avenues for research to deepen the understanding of urban governance (Corrêa, 2014).

This article aims to understand the urban governance of Florianópolis through the lens of the political ecology of the actors mobilized around the city's issues. The research-extension process that underpins this study emerged from the collaboration and mobilization of multidisciplinary knowledge and co-construction processes addressing the numerous urban challenges faced by Florianópolis. The results discussed here stem from an action research process conducted in partnership between the Observatory of Social Innovation of Florianópolis (OBISF) and the EcoSocial Governance Forum of Common Goods of Florianópolis (Ecoar Forum). This co-construction of knowledge took place through the Urban Issues Journey, a series of seven workshops aimed at recognizing the network of actors engaged in urban matters, identifying urgent needs, strengths, and demands within each district of Florianópolis, and collaboratively developing a diagnosis to inform the design and implementation of research-extension actions in partnership with local stakeholders and universities.

THEORETICAL AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK: UNDERSTANDING URBAN GOVERNANCE THROUGH THE LENS OF PRAGMATISM

This section summarizes the theoretical and analytical framework that supports the research-extension process of the Urban Issues Journey and the development of this article. We begin by examining the current landscape of urban governance studies in Brazil, presenting findings from a systematic review conducted alongside the field research to discuss and present the gaps in the existing literature and discuss ou theorectical contribution. Subsequently, we

outline the methodological approach employed in this research, drawing on the input of sociological pragmatisms more broadly and the ethnography of public arenas in particular.

Studies on urban governance in Brazil

A systematic literature review was conducted to investigate the field of urban governance studies in Brazil, exploring five databases: EBSCO, SciELO, Scopus, Spell, and Web of Science. The search was carried out on January 16, 2023. Using the search terms (“*urban governance*” OR “*governança urbana*” AND (“*brasil*” OR “*brazil*”)), we identified 188 articles. After removing duplicates (38), we analyzed 150 abstracts based on the following inclusion and exclusion criteria: (i) the work must be a theoretical or theoretical-empirical article published in academic journals; (ii) the authors must be Brazilian and/or the studies must focus on the Brazilian context; and (iii) the works must directly and explicitly address the theme of Urban Governance. This process led to the exclusion of 89 articles that did not meet the study's criteria, resulting in a final set of **61 articles for thematic analysis**.

We used six dimensions to guide the analysis of the articles: (i) the centrality of discussions on urban governance; (ii) main thematic axes addressed in cases where “urban governance” was not the primary focus; (iii) relationships with theories and models of public administration and public policies; (iv) the format of theoretical or empirical research; (v) specific approaches and theories related to urban governance; and (vi) the key components and actors involved in urban governance.

Our analysis revealed that the national debate on urban governance has significantly expanded since the 2000s, particularly from 2006 to 2022. It was possible to observe that “Urban Governance” was not the central focus of the discussion in many articles. Instead, the topic was frequently mentioned as a secondary explanatory element, primarily concerning institutional dimensions, with minimal depth and mainly to justify the implications of the central themes. These central themes varied widely, encompassing public participation (Hernández-Medina, 2010), urban planning (Bento et al., 2018), smart and sustainable cities (Fernandes et al., 2019), public-private partnerships (Taşan-Kok; Atkinson; Martins, 2021), urban image (Beck; Ferasso, 2022), infrastructural inequalities (Coates, 2022; Pilo, 2021), and mega-events and large urban projects (Derks; Koster; Oosterbaan, 2020; Sørbøe, 2021).

The academic production in this area demonstrates a balance between empirical and theoretical research; however, it lacks specific theories and approaches to urban governance. In contrast to discussions on public governance – which often carry a strong normative component (Andion, 2023) and feature several prescriptive theoretical models – urban governance studies are primarily concerned with describing and understanding processes derived from practical experiences, exhibiting a more empirical and interdisciplinary nature.

In examining the components and key actors in urban governance, studies highlight the roles of public and private institutions, particularly focusing on partnerships and the use of technologies and information systems to support management, planning, and decision-making. Communities, civil society, and academic institutions are also recognized as essential players in fostering effective governance and co-producers of knowledge and local power. This collaborative approach acknowledges the complexities and uncertainties characterizing contempo-

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rary cities, requiring new interactive governance models rooted in partnerships and ongoing dialogue among government entities, civil society, and citizens (Frey; Czajkowski, 2005, p. 300).

These studies primarily use three approaches. The first connects urban governance to the democratization of public management, extending beyond the confines of state institutions and emphasizing popular participation as crucial for effective democratic governance (Caldeira; Holston, 2015). The second approach adopts a critical lens and interprets current urban governance as a byproduct of neoliberal policies that aim to reduce and modernize state management (Frey, 2007; Oliveira, 1999). The third approach incorporates elements of "good governance" and "consensual governance," framing the phenomenon as vital for government effectiveness and the state's capacity to act (Clementino; Almeida, 2015). Each of these approaches is explored below.

The discourse on democratizing public management is prevalent in many studies. Researchers assert that governance "is not characterized by specific organs, but by procedures and practices; it is not a structure, but a process" (Hainard; Verschuur, 2001, p. 50). This process is heterogeneous (Pilo, 2021) and emphasizes initiatives to coordinate various actors in local administration, particularly focusing on civil society and recognizing the role of new social actors in governance. The prevailing perspective is that "no actor alone holds the knowledge and resource capacity to solve problems unilaterally " (Stoker, 2000, p. 93), thus promoting collective actions despite the increasing gap between society and public life (Frey, 2007). Concepts of "accountability" and "public good" are also emphasized to highlight shared responsibilities among all involved actors (Postigo, 2011).

Particular attention is given to employing tools tailored for diverse contexts, such as peripheral areas and informal settlements, to foster local knowledge and engage young people and civil society organizations (De Carvalho et al., 2021). This body of research also evaluates the effectiveness of new forms of public participation in mediating and mitigating existing social conflicts and enhancing urban governance and democratic legitimacy of political decisions (Frey, 2007, p. 137). Despite the importance of participation and co-production in this framework and the pressing need to promote "better integration of emerging social actors in the governance processes and building on the social capital of urban residents" (Mont et al., 2020, p. 7), the lack of institutionalized cooperation mechanisms stands out, considering the ongoing limitations in participatory processes.

The second approach – critical studies – examines the reorganization of the State in alignment with market forces and the reconfiguration of its role. These studies explore the absence of new arrangements and more participatory governance models aimed at enhancing public policy effectiveness, efficiency, agility, and coordination (Tendler, 1997). Research within this approach highlights the limitations of decentralized policies adopted from the New Public Management perspective, which employs shared management (Frey, 2007; Cardoso; Vasconcellos Sobrinho; Vasconcellos, 2015) and interactive management (Frey; Czajkowski, 2005) to address escalating urban challenges through public-private partnerships and ongoing dialogues (Goulart et al., 2010). However, these mechanisms can also undermine the State's performance.

This approach shares similarities with the first, particularly in emphasizing the co-production of services and knowledge in response to societal demands and encouraging the creation of new forms of citizen participation. These studies reveal that the established mechanisms often

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lack transparent citizen participation in policy processes, excluding various segments of society (De Jesus, 2013). Moreover, due to their market-oriented nature, power coalitions emerge seeking resources and private funding without adequate state oversight, thereby perpetuating socio-territorial inequalities in the areas they affect (Harvey, 1996, 2005). Consequently, the State frequently adopts the role of "business regulator," enacting its own rules and codes (Barbosa, 2016). Empirical research within this approach highlights the disparities between State and other stakeholder actions in urban governance. This includes the examination of contested scenarios where social movements engage in activist strategies, indirectly participating in policy formulation to influence governance structures (Dias et al., 2021). This dynamic can occasionally lead to the judicialization of these policies.

The third approach incorporates elements of good governance and consensual governance, viewing urban governance as a critical axis for governmental effectiveness and action capacity (Clementino; Almeida, 2015). The key actors identified include the public sector (local, state, and national governments) and the private sector. In this sense, "governance refers to how the government interacts with society, or the overall capacity of implementing the government agenda" (Clementino; Almeida, 2015, p. 206). This concept is based on innovative strategies to make "government structures more agile and resilient" (Fernandes et al., 2019, p. 3). From this perspective, government actors assume a central role, tasked with the technical-political construction of governance (Clementino; Almeida, 2015). Governance arrangements must transcend institutional fragmentation and promote cohesion and integration among entities to ensure quality and efficient service while safeguarding citizens' social rights. Public policies can sometimes be instrumentalized to favor a free-market perspective (Wolff, 2014), heavily influenced by powerful coalitions and dominant interests such as real estate capital and contractors – "deeply rooted in the economic structures underpinning urban accumulation in Brazil" (Melo, 2021, p. 46). In this context, significant accountability challenges persist in the privatization of the urban sector. Furthermore, popular participation and collaborative networks are recognized as strategic for achieving good governance. These actors may intervene directly or through hybrid arrangements in urban governance, involving the business sector, public-private partnerships, civil society organizations, community groups, and various other networks of actors that continually reshape urban trajectories (Carvalho et al., 2020, p. 144).

This literature review shows that most studies primarily focus on analyzing governance models and their limitations as institutional mechanisms, often neglecting a broader engagement with the fields of public administration and public policies. This gap presents an opportunity to advance the debate in these areas. Although the relationship between public administration and urban studies is evident (Coelho et al., 2020), few works foster this interdisciplinary dialogue. Despite the breadth and diversity of existing research, there is a lack of studies that delve into the everyday processes of living, thinking, and shaping urban spaces – essentially, the experiential aspects of urban governance. It is crucial to develop research that examines the diverse array of actors involved in urban governance from a pluralistic perspective, highlighting the complexity of the political ecology surrounding urban territories. Such studies should emphasize the significant role of public actions initiated by civil society in collaboration with various stakeholders who shape the territory. This understanding forms the basis for the contributions of this article, which will be further elaborated in the following sections detailing its theoretical, analytical, and methodological lenses.

A pragmatist and territorial approach to urban governance

We begin with the concept of territory to illustrate and characterize the environment in which urban development dynamics unfold, aiming to understand the connections between events in neighborhoods, districts, and the overarching institutional structure of the city. From this perspective, space is understood dynamically, representing the material dimension of social relations (Benko; Lipietz, 2000). This definition draws on the contributions of critical geography, particularly as advocated by Milton Santos. According to Santos, space is constituted by "the set of representative forms of social relations of the past and present and by a structure represented by social relations that manifest in real-time through various processes and functions" (Santos, 2002, p. 153).

Consequently, we interpret territory not as a static entity defined by geographic or administrative boundaries, but rather as a field of forces with dynamics unique to each case. Thus, territory is "the central stage of urban development dynamics: a unit endowed with active, specific, and non-transferable resources unique to each region" (Carrière, 2004). This understanding leads us to conclude that territorial dynamics are neither identical nor universal, nor do they adhere to a fixed model.

Grasping the intricacies of socio-spatial dynamics is vital to this study. This involves recognizing that the geographic space within a municipality is shaped by multiple "processes of territorialization." As discussed by Gumuchian et al. (2003), these varied territorialities reflect the strategies – whether individual or collective – employed by social actors to appropriate and transform specific spatial, cultural, and temporal contexts. These territorialities may interact with one another or remain isolated and unrecognized.

We propose a pragmatist and territory-focused reading of urban governance to unveil and analyze these diverse territorialities. This approach is informed by the concepts of "publics" and the "democratic state" as articulated by the pragmatist philosopher John Dewey (2004). Dewey advocates a perspective on associative life, State formation, and democratic existence that diverges from traditional philosophical and political science frameworks. Rather than attributing causality to external forces beyond human action, Dewey emphasizes the perception and management of consequences arising from interactions among individuals (Dewey, 2004). The author says that the starting point of his theory is the idea that human acts have consequen-ces – some of which are acknowledged, often with efforts to control them in order to guarantee some and avoid others. This perception and action to control the consequences occurs in a collective of people directly and indirectly affected, referred to by Dewey as "publics."

French theorist Daniel Cefaï, who specializes in the sociology of public problems, revisits and revitalizes Dewey's theoretical constructs alongside those of other thinkers from the Chicago School. Cefaï suggests that when a group confronts a problematic situation perceived as having disastrous consequences, it initiates a process of investigation. In this process, participants strive to define the issue, identify its root causes, hold accountable those responsible, organize themselves, appoint leaders, and mobilize actors around the situation. Cefaï asserts that "this collective dynamic leads to the emergence of a problem and its public" (Cefaï, 2017a, p. 188).

The Deweyan notions of State and democracy arise from the emergence of public problems, the collective efforts to address them, and the social dynamics that unfold as a result. According to Dewey, "all modes of associated behavior may have extensive and enduring

consequences which involve others beyond those directly engaged in them" (Dewey, 2004, p. 71). Therefore, it is essential for individuals and institutions to systematically address these consequences. Among these institutions is the State, whose officials should represent the diverse interests of organized publics (Dewey, 2004). A more democratic State emerges when the government serves as a genuine instrument of the public. For Dewey, the central issue of the democratic state is the extent to which the public recognizes itself as having an essential part in the "selection of official representatives and in the definition of their responsibilities and rights" (Dewey, 2004, p. 98).

The State's structure, practices, attributions, and responsibilities should be established, questioned, revised, and redefined through constant experimentation and rediscovery of the State itself (Dewey, 2004). In this context, the concept of democratic experimentation is currently discussed among pragmatists, viewing democracy as a provisional, exploratory, creative, and collaboratively defined process. These reflections foster a connection between science and democracy, where the goal is to align democracy more closely with scientific principles while simultaneously democratizing science. This is grounded in the belief that experimentalism is a fundamental characteristic of democracy and that all participants in the democratic process can evolve and collectively learn in a continuous and broad dynamic of public inquiry. This gives rise to the notion of "citizen-scientists" (Ansell, 2012, p. 168). Thus, democracy is not merely an institutional matter concerning forms of government and legislation; it is an individual and collective way of life (Cefaï, 2017b).

This vision of democratic experimentation is deeply linked to processes of social innovation and the co-construction of knowledge within urban contexts, as explored by Andion (2023) and Andion and Alperstedt (2023). It requires a reinterpretation of collective actions and the experiments they inspire as vital vectors of the democratic State. Thus, public actions extend beyond government initiatives, encompassing activities promoted at the intersection of institutional authority and social autonomy through societal-state interactions that address public problems.

The emergence of public problems within urban environments occurs amid processes of cooperation and contestation, as well as problematization and publicization, driven by the need to define and resolve the challenges, as mentioned before. In this context, participants are motivated by the intention to identify and address the situation, seeking knowledge that empowers their actions (Cefaï, 2017a).

A public arena emerges around problematic situations shaped by the diverse "publics" and issues in a given environment, providing a stage for social innovations to arise. Through the collective experiences associated with these challenges, distinct fields of expertise develop, each with its own repertoires of action and institutionalities. Over time, these contribute to the redefinition of public problems and the institutionalization of management approaches (Cefaï, 2017a). Consequently, the public arena can be understood as "an organized set of accommodations and competitions, negotiations and arrangements, protests and consents, promises and engagements, contracts and conventions, concessions and commitments, tensions and agreements that are more or less symbolized and ritualized" (Cefaï, 2017a, p. 208). We encounter public arenas when these elements are organized to achieve a public good or prevent public harm (Cefaï, 2017a). They are characterized as political ecologies (Latour, 2019), consisting of heterogeneous constellations of actors with varying perspectives on urban life who

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interact and transact with each other, non-human entities, and the living environment in which they construct their experiences (Dewey, 2018).

In this context, analyzing the public problems that arise, the "publics," the actors who mobilize and engage with the issues, the devices and institutions created, and the controversies that emerge – as well as the co-constructed knowledge – enables a deeper understanding of the public arena, its interactions, and effects. This analysis allows us to comprehend how public action is constituted and how it may transform the trajectories of territories.

This analytical perspective positions urban governance as a phenomenon rooted in the everyday experiences of citizens and their involvement in everyday politics of territories. This is the premise of the theoretical-analytical framework of the Ethnography of Public Arenas, co-constructed alongside the establishment of Observatory of Social Innovation of Florianó-polis (Andion, 2020, 2021; Magalhães; Andion; Alperstedt, 2020; Magalhães; Andion; Manoel, 2022; Andion, 2023). Anchored in pragmatisms authors (philosophical and sociological), this approach studies public policies (Andion; Magalhães, 2021), public governance (Andion, 2020, 2023), and social innovation ecosystems (Andion; Alperstedt; Graeff, 2020; Andion et al., 2021). The framework comprises five key stages: (i) mapping and analyzing the public arena network; (ii) identifying and observing scenes of reciprocal adjustment; (iii) monitoring different publics and their lived experiences; (iv) reconstructing and analyzing the trajectory of the public arena; and (v) collaborating, sharing, and validating research findings with the affected publics. This approach has shaped the methodological path of this study, which aims to promote a public inquiry process in and for the city.

METHODOLOGICAL PATH

The results presented here are anchored in the experience of OBISF, which connects teaching, research, and extension through a collaborative online platform (observafloripa.com. br) designed to map, monitor, and strengthen the social innovation ecosystem in Florianópolis (Andion, 2021; Andion; Alperstedt; Graeff, 2020;). This research employed the ethnography of the public arena via the "Urban Issues Journey," an extension project that emerged in response to the needs expressed by various collectives and community associations across multiple districts of Florianópolis. These groups approached OBISF researchers in May 2022 to seek collaboration.

Following an initial meeting for mutual recognition, where the collectives and associations articulated their demands and aspirations for partnership with the university, the subsequent workshops were co-constructed in collaboration with members of the EcoSocial Governance Forum of Common Goods of Florianópolis (Ecoar Forum). This forum is a space for collective action that has been concurrently developing during this process. As of the time of writing, six workshops have been conducted, bringing together representatives from various districts in Florianópolis.

During the first workshop in June 2023 (see Figure 1), participants engaged in mapping and cartography activities concerning the Forum's associations and collectives, and represen-tatives from the initiatives registered on the OBISF platform with support from the research team. The registration form collects essential information, including the type of initiative (e.g.,

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association, informal collective, social movement, foundation, or social enterprise), its leaders, the causes they champion, the publics they engage with, the primary public problems they aim to address, the actions they implement, and the technologies and methodologies they use. Additionally, the form requests information about the organizations with which the initiative maintains relationships or partnerships, whether other social innovation initiatives or support entities providing funding, technical assistance, training, or coordination. A more comprehensive discussion of the OBISF's analytical framework and methodologies can be found in the works of Magalhães, Andion, and Alperstedt (2020), Magalhães, Andion, and Manoel (2022), Andion (2021 and 2023), and Andion, Alperstedt, and Graeff (2020). The data entered into the platform are organized to ensure they are accessible to the public in a user-friendly format, presented as maps, lists, and graphs. They are also systematized for research purposes. For instance, data regarding partnerships and interactions help to delineate networks representing the overall ecosystem of each public arena and the individual actors within it. This process has enabled a more profound recognition of the public arena network addressing urban issues in Florianópolis, enhancing our understanding of its dynamics.

Figure 1 – First workshop of the applied research process Urban Issues Journey

Source: Collection of Obisf (2024).

In the second workshop, held in July 2023, the initial results of the mapping were presented and validated, marking the first step in assessing each territory's urgencies, strengths, and priorities using social mapping techniques. The third workshop, conducted in August, aimed to unify parallel efforts by the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC) and the Federal Institute of Education, Science, and Technology of Santa Catarina (IFSC), creating collaborative spaces for joint action.

Subsequent workshops focused on producing a participatory diagnosis of the city's territories based on local residents' perceptions and supported by the OBISF team. Between May and September 2023, the Forum, UFSC, UDESC, and IFSC disseminated a survey form to collect insights from residents and representatives of local collectives and associations regarding the urgencies, strengths, demands, and priorities of their neighborhoods and districts. After this period, the team analyzed the form's data, which provided a diagnosis of the districts and

revealed new social innovation initiatives. This methodological analysis and the preliminary results were shared and validated during the fourth workshop in October 2023.

The 388 responses to the form, covering the urgencies, strengths, demands, and priorities, were categorized by the city's 18 districts. The network encompassed 234 initiatives registered with OBISF through completed or ongoing research processes associated with the Urban Issues Journey. During the first workshop, 15 other initiatives registered with OBISF, and 50 new initiatives were identified through the form responses. Altogether, the network analyzed in this study comprised 299 initiatives – 84 were observed directly, and 215 were mapped. During the workshop, participants emphasized the need for validation and a more in-depth diagnosis in each district, which local coordinators would oversee.

Following this deliberation, the OBISF team prepared the first version of the technical report titled "Participatory Diagnosis of Urban Issues in Florianópolis: A Look at the Demands and Networks of Initiatives in the Districts." This version was presented and validated at the fifth workshop in November 2023. During this meeting, district representatives selected coordinators responsible for validating, refining, and expanding on the results, both in terms of the cartography and the diagnosis itself. The final validation was shared with the collective at the sixth workshop, held in February 2024 (Figure 2), which served as a platform for mutual exchange and learning. Nine districts of the city, mobilized by representatives of the Ecoar Forum, validated the diagnosis during the workshop.

Figure 2 – Sixth workshop of the applied research process Urban Issues Journey

Source: Collection of Obisf (2024).

The final stage of the Urban Issues Journey involved the development of the latest version of the diagnosis by the OBISF team, carried out between February and June 2024. This

phase also incorporated academic research that applied a survey regarding extension activities conducted by the three public universities in the city – UDESC, IFSC, and UFSC – and a cross-referencing of these actions with the priorities identified by the districts. On June 13, 2024, the report's final version, "Participatory Diagnosis of Florianópolis: Districts' Views on the City,"[4] was delivered to representatives of the Ecoar Forum. Subsequently, on June 24, 2024, the report was presented at an event that brought together representatives from the extension programs of the three universities, along with pre-candidates for the City Hall and City Council, in anticipation of the upcoming municipal elections. Below, we highlight key results and present an analysis of the networks and webs that constitute the public arenas surrounding urban issues in Florianópolis.

THE POLITICAL ECOLOGY OF URBAN GOVERNANCE IN FLORIANÓPOLIS

The mapping enabled us to identify the network that constitutes the publics arenas of urban issues in Florianópolis, composed primarily (67%) of informal associations and collectives. This composition reflects their deep territorial and community roots. These groups strengthen communities by promoting local development, empowerment, civic participation, and socio-environmental sustainability.

A more detailed analysis of the interactions among the actors revealed the various territorialities that shape the city of Florianópolis and influence its urban governance. These territorialities expose multiple forms of collective actions, projects, representations of the city's future, and strategies to impact urban development. They manifest as "webs" or "action systems" consisting of collective actors – institutionalized or not – that engage in multiple interactions, mediated by norms, subjectivity, and/or power dynamics. The metaphor of "webs," shown in Figure 3, through the graphic representation of the network retraced by the OBISF platform, emerges from the varying degrees of connection and proximity between the mapped actors. This reflects distinct modes of engagement with the city, where each web holds a unique narrative of a "city project" along with specific strategies and actions to bring it to life.

As the mapping deepened, nine distinct webs became more evident: urban agriculture, traditional communities and resistance, environmental protection, animal rights, culture and arts, social assistance, businesses, architecture and urbanism, and community associations – the last of which includes the Ecoar Forum. Additionally, emerging dynamics related to urban issues were observed, although they are less prominent in the mapping thus far. These include sports, urban mobility, security, and a small group of organizations not connected to any of the 12 webs. Table 1 below presents the number of social innovation initiatives mapped, per web, while Figure 3 illustrates the network of identified actors, as detailed by OBISF.

Table 1 – Number of initiatives of the Public Arena of Urban Issues of Florianópolis (per "web")

Webs	Number of initiatives
Web of community associations	65
Web of urban agriculture	49
Web of traditional communities and resistance	44
Web of environmental protection	41

Web of animal rights	30
Web of culture and arts	28
Web of social assistance	26
Web of sports	3
Web of urban mobility	3
Web of security	3
Web of businesses	2
Web of architecture and urbanism	1
Other initiatives	4
Total	299

Source: Elaborated by the authors (2024).

Figure 3 – Network of the Public Arenas of Urban Issues of Florianópolis
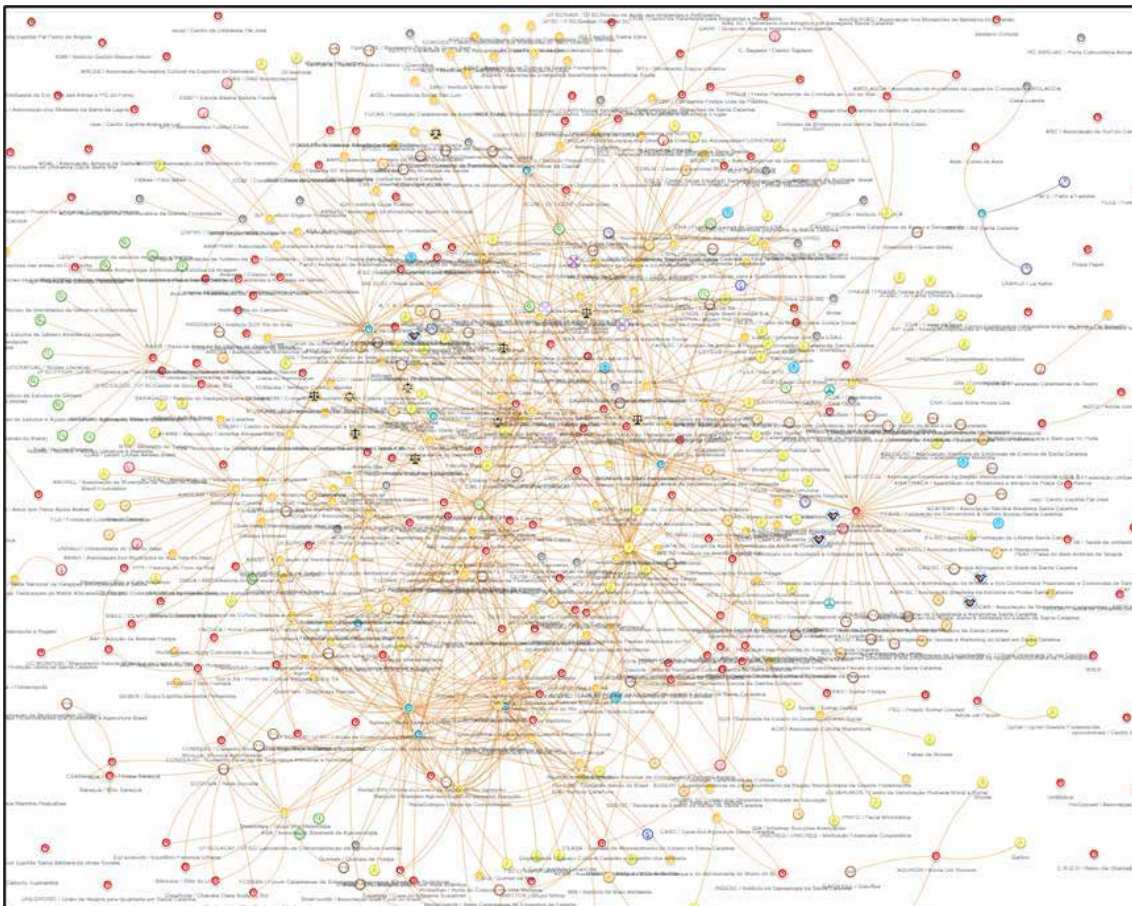
Source: OBISF (2024)

The web of community associations has 65 initiatives and is represented graphically in Figure 4. It gathers local associations and collectives operating in the communities, neighborhoods, and districts of Florianópolis. Of the 65 initiatives, 46 responded to the information about the year they were created, and 54% of them were founded before 2000. This data suggests that community associations have an important history of action in the construction of the city. These actors work directly with community and urban development,

with emphasis on the culture of fishing, flour mills, and traditional pottery. It is a network with decentralized connections, counting on local and district forums. The actors in this web are deeply engaged in discussions on urban governance, as in the case of the city's Master Plan and the Municipal Basic Sanitation Policy.

Figure 4 – Graphic representation of the web of community associations
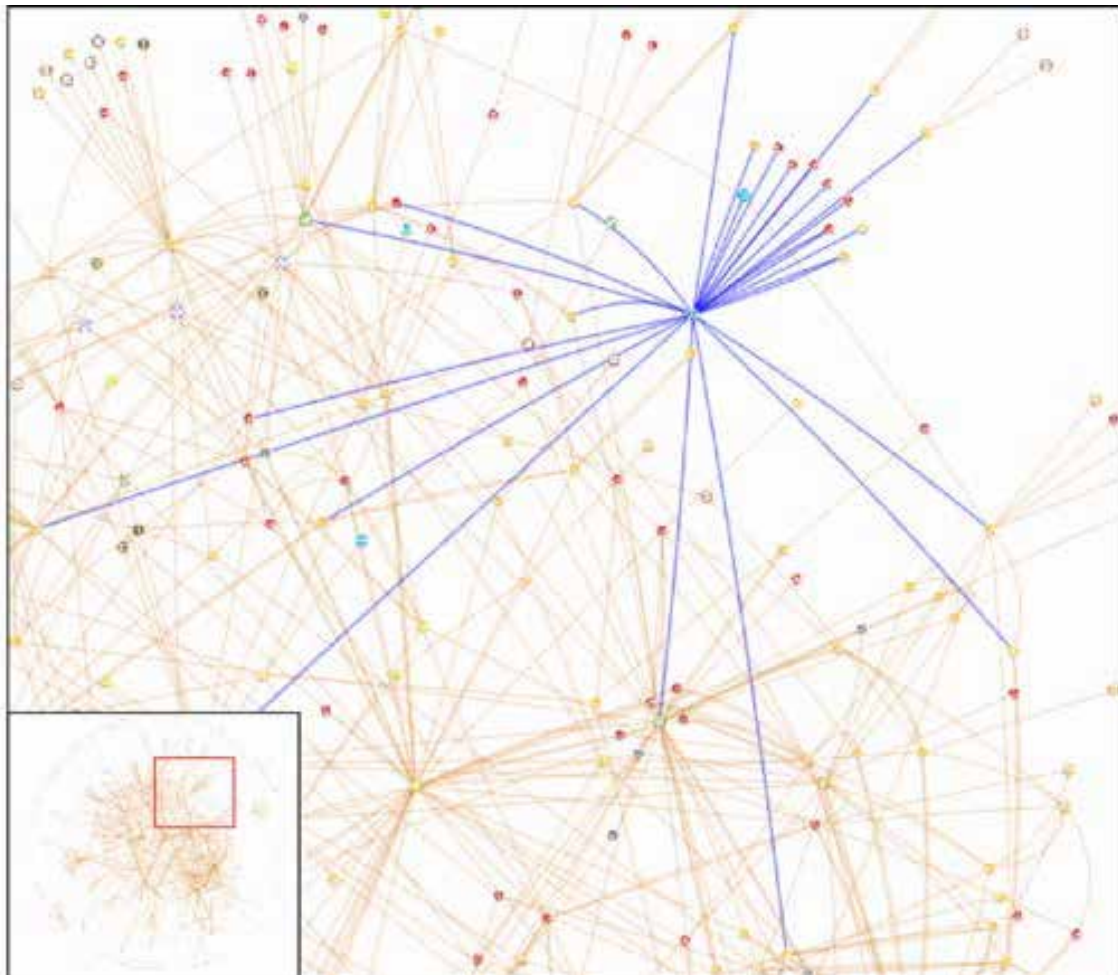
Source: OBISF (2024)

Its impact on the public sphere primarily involves discussions on urban governance, regulatory instruments, and community mobilization. It seeks to foster an ongoing dialogue between the university and the executive, legislative, and judicial branches to address public problems. This is achieved through active citizen participation and social oversight in municipal forums, conferences, residents' associations, community councils, social observatories, the Florianópolis City Council, and public hearings on the city's Master Plan. Additionally, it plays a key role in conserving historical, cultural, and natural heritage through public actions such as cleaning, conservation efforts, health promotion, and defending the rights of artisanal fishermen. Other focus areas include rural and urban zoning, signage, and promoting local economic development through community-based tourism initiatives.

The analysis of resource mobilization and financing processes suggests that these initiatives primarily address local problems through their own efforts. This is because they do

not engage with highly influential support actors, as seen in other networks. Only 15% of the initiatives report receiving some form of funding, and those that do are connected to local business actors. A few civil society organizations are also mentioned as support actors, such as the Instituto Comunitário Grande Florianópolis, Ação Social Arquidiocesana, and Movimento Nacional ODS Santa Catarina. Additionally, government entities such as the Fundação Cultural de Florianópolis Franklin Cascaes, the City Hall of Florianópolis, the Ministério Público do Trabalho in Santa Catarina, and the Municipal Department of Education of Florianópolis are noted as providing support.

The web of urban agriculture, consisting of 49 initiatives, brings together associations, collectives, and movements that promote agricultural practices such as urban gardens and actions related to food and nutritional security, community management of organic waste, and production-consumption cycles. Of the initiatives identified in this web, 40 reported their founding year. Of these, 70% were established between 2010 and 2020, reflecting a recent strengthening of this movement in the city, as noted by Manoel and Andion (2023).

Agroecological practices and organizations are prominent in this web and have been consistently mobilized to advocate for public policies centered on these issues. Of the 49 identified initiatives, 20 engage in advocacy actions within the public sphere, particularly through participation in municipal, regional, and state councils, committees, and forums. These include the State Council of the National Program for Strengthening Family Farming (Pronaf), the State Commission for Organic Production, the State Council for Rural Development, the State and Regional Solidarity Economy Forums, the State Committee for Alternatives to Tobacco Cultivation/DFMDA, the State Council for Food and Nutrition Security (Consea/SC), the Municipal Council for Sustainable Food and Nutrition Security (Comseas/Florianópolis), the Municipal Council for School Feeding (CAE/SC), the Santa Catarina Forum for Combating the Impacts of Pesticides and Transgenics (FCCIAT), and the Florianópolis Public Policy Forum (FPPF), among others. Moreover, although not widespread among all initiatives, some have established partnerships and receive support from local legislative and executive branches through direct funding, agricultural supplies, or technical advice for creating community gardens and composting areas. Members of this web also participate in broader networks, such as the Alliance for Adequate and Healthy Food, the Thematic Network for Diversification in Tobacco-Grown Areas, the Monte Cristo Network, the Ecovida Network, and the Semear Network. An interesting aspect of this web is the connections between urban agriculture efforts and other rights-based movements in the city, including those advocating for the homeless, food and nutritional security, and the preservation of local traditional food cultures, particularly those of traditional fishing and indigenous communities.

Regarding resource mobilization, only 15% of the initiatives in the network have some type of financing, primarily through partnerships with the public sector and philanthropic organizations. These include the local government, the waste management authority (COMCAP), the Santa Catarina Cultural Foundation, the Florianópolis Municipal Environmental Foundation, and business entities such as Latam Linhas Aéreas Brasil, the Coca-Cola Institute, the Florianópolis Commercial and Industrial Association, the Brazil Foundation, and the Oi Institute of Innovation and Creativity. Government actors like the Banco do Brasil Foundation and Caixa Econômica Federal are also involved. Additionally, the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC) plays a crucial role in supporting the network, particularly through research and extension centers such

as the Environmental Education Center (Neamb) and the Center for Studies and Promotion of Group Agriculture (Cepagro).

With 41 initiatives, the environmental protection web comprises organizations and collectives dedicated to environmental conservation and urban solid waste management. Of the 25 initiatives that reported their founding date, 44% were established between 2010 and 2020, 24% before 2000, and 28% between 2000 and 2010. A key focus of these initiatives is addressing the climate crisis and its impacts on the city, along with preserving common goods and promoting sustainable development. Only nine initiatives reported having an impact in the public sphere, indicating that their actions and coordination are more localized and territorialized within specific neighborhoods. Nevertheless, some initiatives associated with COMCAP take part in instances such as the Interinstitutional Commission for Environmental Education (CIEA/SC) and the Technical Chamber for Environmental Education of the Municipal Council for the Defense of the Environment (COMDEMA).

Regarding funding, only 24% of the initiatives report receiving grants from supporting actors. These actors include public, private, and civil society organizations operating on both local and national scales, such as the National Development Bank, the Foundation for Research and Innovation Support of the State of Santa Catarina (Fapesc), the Government of the State of Santa Catarina, the local government of Florianópolis, the Federation of Industries of the State of Santa Catarina, the Banco do Brasil Foundation, the National Institute for Colonization and Agrarian Reform (Incra), the State Secretariat for Social Development, the Municipal Secretariat for Education of Florianópolis, the Social Service of Commerce – Florianópolis (Sesc), the Union of Municipal Education Directors, the Federal University of Santa Catarina, the Santa Catarina Association of Technology Companies, Impact Hub Floripa, Social Good Brasil, and the Municipal Environmental Foundation of Florianópolis, among others. Also noteworthy in this web are the municipal, state, and federal conservation units present in the municipality, such as the Córrego Grande Ecological Park and the Pirajubaé Marine Extractive Reserve.

The web of traditional communities and resistance, comprising 44 initiatives, focuses on peoples and communities that have resisted processes of segregation and invisibility throughout the city's historical trajectory. These initiatives include Quilombo Vidal Martins, several Umbanda and Candomblé temples, the Goj ty Sá Indigenous Culture Point, the Marielle Franco Occupation, and programs that support the migrant population in the city. In addition to their work within the communities and their ongoing efforts to combat racism and religious intolerance in society, these initiatives influence the public sphere through the Forum of African--Based Religions of Florianópolis and Region (FRMA) and the National Network of Afro-Brazilian Religions and Health (RENAFRO).

The four webs described so far – community associations, urban agriculture, environmental protection, and traditional communities and resistance – represent a broad set of initiatives, accounting for 199 of the 299 identified, and demonstrate a strong territorial presence in the city's neighborhoods and districts. In this context, urban territory is understood as both a space and a way of life, and its governance must reflect the perspectives and actions of the districts. These webs are interconnected with the territories and engage in institutional participatory spaces, such as public hearings for the Master Plan and the City Council, to ensure that the insights gained from their experiences with the city are integrated into public policies and

governance. However, the institutional framework of urban governance systematically ignores this wealth of knowledge about the city, its challenges, and potential solutions.

The web of culture and arts, comprising 28 initiatives, encompasses a variety of groups, organizations, and collectives that represent the city's diverse artistic expressions. This web includes *Escolas de Samba*, *maracatu* groups, and various hip-hop battles. Additionally, it features folklore groups and organizations that preserve traditions rooted in the city's Portuguese and Azorean heritage, such as *rendeiras* (lace-making) and *boi-de-mamão* groups. Among the initiatives within this network, 32% indicate that their influence on the public sphere occurs through participation and collaboration in the Municipal Council for Cultural Policies, particularly highlighting the Hip-Hop Sector of the council and efforts to advocate for public notices that promote culture and art in the city. Some initiatives mentioned they have been awarded the title of "*utilidade pública*" (i.e., recognized as an organization of public interest) by the local and state government, as well as mentioned to have signed contracts with government foundations such as the Franklin Cascaes Cultural Foundation of Florianópolis, the Santa Catarina Foundation for Culture, and the Program for the Promotion of Traditional Cultural Crafts from the Ministry of Culture. Furthermore, initiatives that receive financial support constitute 39% of the total and report partnerships with entities such as the Municipal Council for Cultural Policy of Florianópolis, the Somar Foundation of Florianópolis, the University of the State of Santa Catarina, the Cooperative Financial Institution (Unicred), and the Government of the Autonomous Region of the Azores in Portugal.

The web of social assistance, composed of 26 initiatives, is linked to a group of civil society organizations that primarily focus on community development and provide services within the scope of public policies, including those for Children and Adolescents, Social Assistance, Education, and, to a lesser extent, Culture and Art. In this web, public advocacy in the Municipal Councils stands out as a space for social control of public policies, with 43% of the initiatives participating in these councils. Notable councils include the Municipal Council for the Rights of Children and Adolescents (CMDCA), the Municipal and State Councils for Social Welfare, the Municipal Health Council, the Public Policy Forum of Florianópolis, and participation in networks such as the Philanthropy Network for Social Justice, the local committee for the sustainable development goals (SDGs), and strategic networks for community philanthropy in Brazil and worldwide.

Regarding funding, 42% of the initiatives report receiving support from the local government and philanthropic resources. Major funders include the local government, the Government of the State of Santa Catarina, the Municipal Department of Education of Florianópolis, and the Municipal Department of Social Assistance. Supporting actors that offer philanthropic resources include Baesa Energética Barra Grande, the Oi Institute of Innovation and Creativity, Asas Incorporações e Habitat Ltda., Eletrosul, Engie Brasil Energia S.A., and the Itaú Social Foundation. To a lesser extent, resource mobilization occurs through the Law of Incentive to Culture project and campaigns for specific causes and support from religious institutions, such as the Santíssima Trindade Parish.

The webs of culture and arts and social assistance exhibit forms of influence on urban governance that are both similar and distinct from the four previously presented webs. While these initiatives respond to urban public issues and directly relate to public policies, their participation in urban policy discussions is relatively limited. Their involvement mainly occurs in public

policy councils, where they advocate for improvements in service quality and seek to increase funding opportunities. Additionally, these actors are often overlooked in discussions of urban management processes.

The web of animal rights, consisting of 30 initiatives, has emerged in recent years in the city and focuses on community development related to issues of abandonment and violations of the rights of animals, particularly domestic animals. This web primarily involves collective actions and animal protection organizations.

The web of businesses consists of only two initiatives and multiple supporting actors. It encompasses a set of corporate and union associations, movements, and organizations linked to the business sectors that hold a significant share of the city's economy. The construction, services – especially food and tourism – and commerce sectors, along with their business associations, stand out. Although this network has fewer actors, it played a leading role in the development of the Florianópolis Master Plan, viewing it as an essential instrument for the city's modernization, growth, and expansion. Consequently, its public influence is strongly connected to projects with the local government, such as "Adopt a Square" and the "Florianópolis Indicators Report**." Another web with limited numerical representation but great relevance is the web of architecture and urbanism, which includes only one initiative**. The organizations affiliated with this initiative, such as the Architecture and Urban Planning Council of Santa Catarina and the Union of Architects and Urban Planners of Santa Catarina, play a fundamental role in urban governance and policy, primarily due to the technical – sometimes technocratic – nature of their instruments. This network is mainly composed of "experts," professionals with specialized training in fields such as architecture, urban planning, and engineering. Some of these technicians are linked to the city project and are represented by the webs of community associations, urban agriculture, environmental protection, and traditional communities and resistance. However, most actors in this web are committed to the city project of the business network, technically supporting desires for verticalization and urban expansion. They also have privileged access to urban governance institutions, particularly discussions regarding the Master Plan.
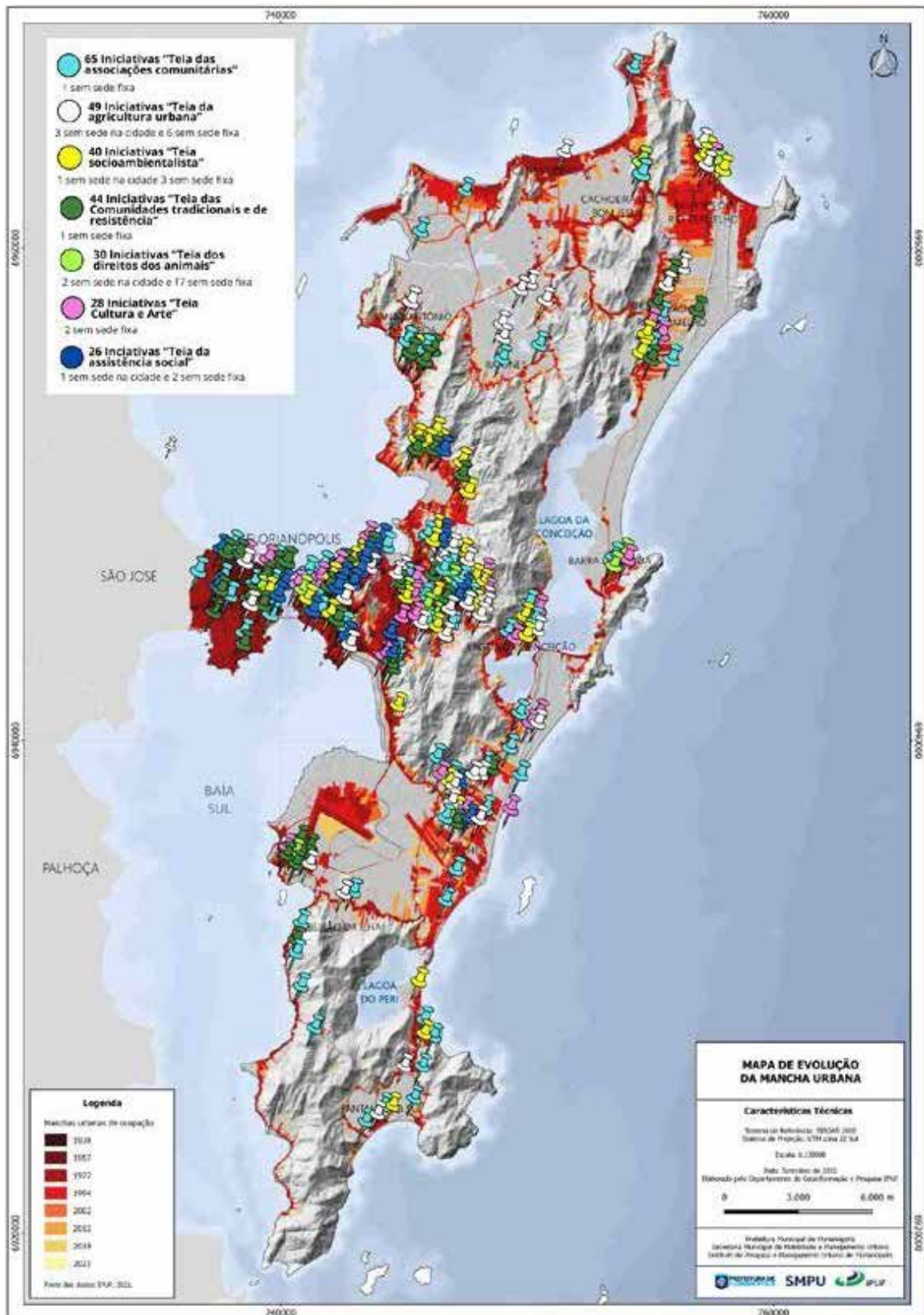
This constellation of heterogeneous actors reveals the political ecology that shapes urban governance in Florianópolis. Beyond the individual webs, this political ecology is characterized by the interactions among these webs and their influence on the production of urban governance, especially concerning the Florianópolis Master Plan. In this context, certain webs emerged and clashed during discussions to revise the Master Plan, which occurred in the city between 2021 and 2023. On one side, the webs of community associations and environmental protection united in favor of city governance that promotes social justice and ecological responsibility. Their concerns include combating socio-spatial segregation and real estate speculation, recognizing the biogeophysical limits of the city – especially considering that most of the city's territory is situated on an island – environmental preservation, safeguarding the ways of life of the city's traditional peoples and communities, and adapting the city to climate change. Notably, these two webs collectively encompass 106 of the 299 identified social innovation initiatives. Furthermore, they mobilize several partners in other webs, particularly urban agriculture, traditional communities and resistance, culture and art, and parts of the web of architecture and urban planning, thereby expanding the expression of this city project.

On the other side of the dispute surrounding the Master Plan is primarily the business community. Despite its small numerical representation, this form of engagement finds allies with significant economic and media power, including the city's prominent businesspeople and traditional media outlets, which use their editorials, news coverage, and television programs to defend this city project. This project revolves around the city's expansion and its vision not as a place to live but as a large market and a significant investment opportunity. This group of actors has easy access to the institutional framework of Florianópolis' Urban Policy and has had its perspective privileged in the review of the Master Plan, often to the detriment of the various other ways of living in the city. This observation reinforces findings from studies that demonstrate the financialization of urban land and the city's neoliberal, consensus-oriented mode of governance, which leaves little room for conflict and privileges the view of the city as a commodity (Rolnik, 2019). Moreover, it supports the perception of governments not as agents of democratization in urban governance but as promoters of so-called urban entrepreneurship and competitiveness (Rolnik, 2012).

Finally, the research highlights a series of democratic experiments (Ansell, 2012; Andion, 2023) that challenge and contribute to urban governance beyond mere discourse and within institutional spaces of participation. This diverse and thriving political ecology envisions another possible city and works toward its realization daily. Thus, urban governance extends far beyond the institutional and macro dimensions typically emphasized in studies, as found in the systematic literature review. The approaches to urban governance identified do not lose their significance; highlighting the importance of democratizing urban planning and management and emphasizing participatory spaces on the one hand (Caldeira; Holston, 2015) and criticizing the process of neo-liberalization and financialization of urban governance on the other (Frey, 2007; Oliveira, 1999) are both fundamental. The proposed approach, grounded in the collective experience of the city and a pluralistic perspective, allows for an understanding of the procedural nature of urban governance: working with the state, against the state, or beyond it; similarly, in favor of neo-liberalization, against it, or despite it.

This analysis clarifies the procedural dimension of urban governance and the trajectories of urban development, illustrating that these are phenomena collectively constructed through a "political craftsmanship" of various actors who make up the built territory of the city (as shown in Figure 5). Actors do not act in isolation but rather through negotiated articulations within these different webs and living spaces that comprise the city's political ecology, which is permeated by power relations and socio-spatial inequalities. Therefore, studying urban governance processes from this perspective entails unraveling the workings of these webs and their dynamic interactions in the territory, identifying and interpreting collective representations, the strategies employed by actors, and the conflicts and commitments at play.

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Figure 5 – Map showing the urban expansion of Florianópolis and the territorial distribution of initiatives within the local arena of urban issues

Source: Adapted from Prefeitura de Florianópolis (2023).

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FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study aimed to explore urban governance from the perspective of the political ecology of actors mobilized around urban issues in Florianópolis. The research, which emerged from a collaboration between research, extension, and teaching, was carried out through the experience of the "Urban Issues Journey," an initiative of the Observatory of Social Innovation of Florianópolis. This process of university-community collaboration made it possible to understand the plurality of actors and territorialities that compose the city's political ecology. These dynamics are illustrated by distinct "webs," each with its typical modes of engagement, unique narratives about urban projects, and concrete implementation strategies.

The network of actors is far from homogeneous; it is shaped by asymmetries and inequalities in power relations, with certain networks exerting more influence than others. Through a pragmatic socio-spatial analysis, we identified that although community-based initiatives are numerous and active in these public arenas, they are systematically marginalized and rendered invisible within institutionalized urban development processes.

Even when these initiatives operate in the same neighborhoods and serve similar populations, the webs sometimes do not recognize each other and are overlooked by authorities. Our analysis reveals a diversity within the political ecology of the territory that is often ignored both in the literature and in urban governance practices, typically seen as the domain of public managers, urban planners, engineers, and other experts.

Grounded in critical and pragmatist approaches, we explored how cartography and ethnography of public arenas highlight the value of this political ecology by focusing on collective practices and experiences. This approach recognizes the networks that constitute the city's social innovation ecosystem, revealing elements of urban governance that have been neglected in other approaches adopted in the literature. The plurality of collective actions and their interactions exposes the intricate "urban webs," offering new ways of seeing the city and acting over its various projects while highlighting power dynamics and unequal access to institutionalized urban policies.

Thus, urban governance can be viewed as the (always provisional) coordination of these diverse webs of actors, whose interactions and transactions with the environment generate collective actions and outcomes in response to city issues. Although these webs are numerous and diverse, they are often rendered invisible by traditional conceptions of urban governance, which focus predominantly on institutional dimensions. Political anthropology that follows the processes of "experimentation" in and for the city allows for a deeper understanding of these actors and their webs and interconnections, fostering structures that could contribute to building a more just and sustainable urban environment.

Therefore, as discussed and exemplified in this study, the cartographies and ethnographies of public arenas serve as both analytical and methodological tools for identifying and following the actors involved in urban governance. They can also shed light on urban conflicts, controversies, and silence while illuminating processes of self-identification, engagement, collective construction, and responses to the latent demands of territories in their interface with public action.

Analyzing governance from this perspective involves problematizing the conventional dichotomies of opposition or partnership and questioning the naturalized separation between the state and civil society. It requires addressing the forces that drive, reinforce, and promote governance and those that impede, obstruct, and hinder the exercise of democracy. Rather than viewing governance through its adjectives, this approach treats governance as a substantive, constructed process – central to the reinvention of cities and territories.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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desenvolvimento em QUESTÃO

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THE NETWORK, THE TIES, AND THE WEBS IN FLORIANÓPOLIS, BRAZIL
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