




# Social Innovation Ecosystem in Petrópolis-RJ: contextualization and first impressions of the research

*Ecossistema de Inovações Sociais de Petrópolis-RJ: contextualização e primeiras impressões da pesquisa*

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**Abstract:** This article presents the first impressions of the field research for the project "Cartography of the Social Innovations Ecosystem in Petrópolis-RJ". As a first product of the research, we consider it appropriate to present in detail its theoretical framework, which starts from a critique of the tradition of studies based on the perspective of Rational Analysis of Public Policies, and points to the main inspirations that guide the work, such as John Dewey's pragmatist philosophy, the Argumentative Turn in the study of Public Policies, reaching studies located in the Brazilian reality, such as those carried out by Carolina Andion. Next, we present a socio-historical contextualization of the municipality of Petrópolis, dealing with its colonial and imperial past in Brazil, the process of industrialization and the decline of the textile industry and the current efforts to reorient the economy in order to establish itself as a scientific-technological hub in the state of Rio de Janeiro. Based on the methodology developed by Andion, Alperstedt and Graeff (2020), the field research mapped actors who support

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and implement social innovations in the city. Preliminary results are presented based on 36 interviews conducted with these actors, which address the main public problems pointed out by the interviewees, the dilemmas of influencing municipal public policies and the challenges of social participation.

**Keywords:** Social innovations; public policies; social participation; democracy.

**Resumo:** Este artigo apresenta as primeiras impressões da pesquisa de campo do projeto "Cartografia do Ecossistema de Inovações Sociais de Petrópolis-RJ". Como primeiro produto da pesquisa, consideramos oportuno apresentar de maneira detalhada o seu marco teórico que parte de uma crítica à tradição dos estudos baseados na perspectiva da Análise Racional de Políticas Públicas, e aponta para as principais inspirações que guiam o trabalho, como a filosofia pragmatista de John Dewey, a Virada Argumentativa no estudo das Políticas Públicas, chegando aos estudos situados na realidade brasileira, como os realizados por Carolina Andion. Na sequência apresentamos uma contextualização sócio-histórica do município de Petrópolis, tratando de seu passado colonial e imperial no Brasil, o processo de industrialização e decadência da indústria têxtil e os esforços atuais de reorientação econômica com intuito de firmar-se como pólo científico-tecnológico do estado do Rio de Janeiro. Com base na metodologia elaborada por Andion, Alperstedt e Graeff (2020), a pesquisa de campo mapeou atores que apoiam e que implementam inovações sociais na cidade. São apresentados resultados preliminares a partir de 36 entrevistas realizadas com estes atores onde são abordados os principais problemas públicos apontados pelos entrevistados, os dilemas da incidência nas políticas públicas municipais e os desafios da participação social.

**Palavras-chave:** Inovações sociais; políticas públicas; participação social; democracia.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The study of social innovation has been gaining ground in Brazil since the work carried out by Andion and his team at the Center for Social Innovation in the Public Sphere at Santa Catarina State University (NISP/UDESC). Abroad, the Centre de Recherche sur les Innovations Sociales de l'Université du Québec à Montréal (CRISES/UQAM) has accumulated more than 30 years of research on the subject.

Based on these references, this paper presents research into the Social Innovations Ecosystem of Petrópolis-RJ. With financial support from FAPERJ,

the research mobilizes a network of actors involved with the issue of social participation in the city's public policies, including universities, civil society organizations, private initiatives, collectives and social movements.

Started in August 2023, the research is based on the following research question: **How is configured the network of interactions and transactions of the social actors in the Social Innovations Ecosystem of Petrópolis-RJ?** As this research is in its early stages, we have tried to present the theoretical basis on which we base our research, which is described in the section that follows this introduction. We then provide a detailed analysis of the socio-historical context of the municipality of Petrópolis. We explore its trajectory from the colonial and imperial periods in Brazil, highlighting the industrial development that the city experienced, especially in the textile sector, until the phase of decline of this industry. In addition, we discuss contemporary initiatives that seek to redirect the local economy beyond tourism, with the aim of transforming Petrópolis into a center of technological innovation within the state of Rio de Janeiro. In the third part, we situate the socio-historical context of the municipality and describe the methodological procedures adopted, based on the pioneering work carried out by the Social Innovation Observatory of Florianópolis (Andion et al., 2020)<sup>4</sup>. In the fourth part, we present our initial impressions from 36 interviews conducted with representatives of civil society organizations and supporters of social innovations in the city. Finally, we make a few comments on this brief research journey and its future developments.

## **2. INNOVATION, SOCIAL PARTICIPATION AND PUBLIC POLICIES**

The study of public policy, like the social sciences in general, is strongly influenced by positivism. Recently, however, analytical proposals have emerged that seek to overcome this paradigm.

In the different streams of Rational Public Policy Analysis, government action is expressed through official decision-making records such as laws,

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<sup>4</sup> Details of the methodology used in this research are available on the Florianópolis Social Innovation Observatory website: <https://observafloripa.com.br/methodology#cartography>

minutes, regulations and official reports. The locus of analysis is the government and the focus is on the results and their relationship with what was planned/formulated. The evaluation is based on a supposedly neutral and rational analysis, above all of a quantitative nature that makes calculations with the intention of maximizing the cost/benefit ratio. Public problems are understood as something given a priori, substantiated by official analyses and statistics produced by technically specialized bodies, focused on the efficiency, efficacy and effectiveness of decisions and processes. The central players in public policy are government actors and technical experts. The relationship between the actors is instrumental, with occasions for bargaining. It is governed by government-centered governance, hierarchical in a top-down sense, government → society.

According to Souza and Rodrigues (2023), interpretivist criticisms of positivist approaches are based on the propositions of Stone (1988) and Majone (1989). Stone (1988), highlighting the role of the ideas and perceptions of the actors, criticizes the excessive rationalism of traditional approaches. From this perspective, the definition of public problems goes through a process of representation, where subjectivities are exposed through a 'battle for ideas': the definition of public problems necessarily involves a dispute between actors over concepts, classifications and delimitations of ideas (Stone, 1988). Majone (1989), in line with this, claims that "public policies are made of language" and highlights the role of argumentation and persuasion, laden with beliefs and values, in the policy process (Majone, 1989), highlighting the limits of approaches based on instrumental rationality that focus on decision-making.

Subsequently, the work of Baumgartner and Jones (1993), Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1993) and Kingdon (2003) put ideas at the heart of the analysis, highlighting the interaction of values, norms, beliefs and different forms of knowledge. However, according to Capella (2016), these theoretical models have not yet reached the point of clarifying the concept of ideas for the analysis of public policies, and deepening this concept is a fundamental theoretical issue.

These approaches constitute the approach called Interpretive *Policy Analysis*. Such critical and interpretive approaches to public policy research focus on understanding policies and policy processes from the interpretive lens and meanings situated in socio-historical contexts and the social construction of human subjectivity in these processes. These approaches emphasize how public policies are shaped by communicative practices, underpinned by hegemonic powers and values, and are driven by a broader goal of promoting democracy, social justice and sustainability. These approaches form the cornerstone of critical public policy research, challenging the positivist and scientific frameworks that still dominate much of the study in this field.

Faria (2003) makes an inventory of the approaches that focus on cognitive aspects to the detriment of the focus on decisions and the technicalization of policy formulation and management processes. In his analysis, the post-positivist strand defends the primacy of ideas and the centrality of discourse, argumentation and interpretation (Faria, 2003, p. 23). The main analytical strands shed light on the role of actors in the public policy process, highlighting the analysis of policy networks, epistemic communities, advocacy coalitions, public policy diffusion and transfer processes, and studies on policy learning, all of which highlight the role of ideas and knowledge in the policy production process. However, his analysis also highlights the influence of foreign authors and their residual impact on public policy analysis in Brazil until the beginning of the 21st century.

The inflection brought about by analysis based on ideas led to an 'Argumentative Turn' in public policy analysis studies, especially since the work of Fischer and Forester (1993), updated by Fischer and Gottweis (2012). This shift is characterized by a critique of objectivity, the strictly technical nature of the public policy analyst and the scientificism that has constituted the tradition of the field based on the supposedly axiologically neutral positivist approach.

The Argumentative Turn in Policy Analysis (Fischer & Forester, 1993) sought to reorient the analysis of public policies beyond the focus on rational decision-making and the utilitarian calculation of consequences. Purely technical and empiricist approaches give way to analyses that seek to

understand the assumptions that inform and the communicative processes that mediate the formulation and implementation of public policies. Thus, the processes of social interaction involved in the construction and implementation of solutions to public problems are focused on.

Influenced by the seminal work of Berger and Luckmann (1967), Interpretive Public Policy Analysis (IPPA) starts from a self-reflexive recognition of the 'world' as a human artifice, a product of the 'social construction of reality'. Such recognition can provoke a 'defamiliarization' or 'denaturalization' of conventional categories, typifications and procedures that would otherwise simply be taken for granted. Thus, interpretivist research poses a challenge to political elites in contemporary society by demythologizing assumptions accepted as naturally valid, taken for granted, true per se.

In this approach, the objectives of improving both practical knowledge and democracy are connected by the focus on the idea of democratizing public policy research (Fischer & Forester, 1993; Fischer & Gottweis, 2012). According to Fischer et al. (2015), democratizing research is not enough to democratize society and governance on its own, but it has an important component of genuine democratization, as it aids the development of cognitive and deliberative capacities between citizens and institutions. Thus, the agenda of critical studies in public policy from the argumentative turn is both influenced by and supportive of social movements with agendas that support democratization (Fischer et al., 2015).

The argumentative turn emphasizes the investigation of communicative practices of argumentation and discourse, including discursive coalitions. Thus, we see efforts to formulate and employ means of encouraging debate, deliberation and participation also in public policy research (Souza & Rodrigues, 2023). This renewed interpretivist approach emphasizes the importance of contextual understanding, ordinary knowledge, narratives and discourses, emotional expressions and communicative practices in general. The understanding of public policies shifts from the exclusive domain of experts, which Fischer will classify as 'expertocracy', to a more fundamental emphasis on the domain of citizens and civil society organizations (Fischer et al., 2015).

The critique of positivism has opened up space to include theoretical and empirical work on discourse analysis, deliberation, deliberative democracy, citizen councils, consensus building, participatory governance, expertise policies, as well as participatory policy analysis and collaborative planning, local and tacit forms of knowledge, interpretive and ethnographic methods, among other interpretivist approaches (Fischer et al., 2015). The emergence of approaches focused on racial and feminist issues have also brought major contributions to these lines of research that focus on communication and argumentation processes, particularly in the use, mobilization and access to the communicative practices involved in the interpretation and praxis of formulating and analysing public policies.

The debate on positivist and post-positivist approaches to policy analysis seems to be in line with the discussion on Social Innovations, since it proposes to adopt a pragmatist perspective that places the social actors involved in public problems, with their different interpretations, conceptions and understandings, at the center of the analysis.

Influenced by Dewey's pragmatism (1927; 1938), the analysis of public action began to emphasize the notion of experience and experimentation. These concepts are at the heart of the discussion on Social Innovations. Andion and Magalhães (2021) systematize the contributions of pragmatism to the analysis of public policies and its distinctions in relation to interpretivist analysis. According to the authors, in pragmatism the notion of public action is broader than that of public policy, in terms of the response to public problems, as it involves a process of experimentation, co-definition and co-domination of problematic situations; the locus of analysis is not only the government or the organizations involved in public policies, but also involves considering public arenas, negotiated articulations and networks of actors. While interpretive analysis looks more at the process and the political character of policies, pragmatism seeks to understand experiences and politics as they are happening from the multiple framings, engagements and visions of the actors situated in the respective contexts. The understanding of public problems not only involves multiple dimensions and interpretations, but also refers to the

shared perceptions in the processes of codefining and codominating situations perceived as problematic that provoke the mobilization of various actors who start to act collectively in public arenas. Thus, it is not just a question of considering different interpretations and discourses in a participatory governance process, as interpretivist analysis proposes, but of collaborative and experimentalist governance (Andion & Magalhães, 2021).

Magalhães, Andion and Alperstedt (2020) propose investigating the processes of democratic experimentation in public actions as a way of understanding the relationship between democracies and the processes of social innovation, i.e. how the various "publics" engage in processes to tackle public problems and reinvent the established. Social experiments in tackling public problems are thus understood as living laboratories of social innovation. Public research, therefore, is the response that people give to public problems, which materializes in the form of concerns, questions, investigations, experiments, discussions around problems in order to define them, determine their causes and effects and assign responsibility. "Democratic experimentalism" is based on public research aimed at understanding public policies and their governance in order to build ways of making them more reflective, effective, democratic and situated.

The way in which public problems are solved is understood based on concepts such as collaborative governance and democratic experimentalism. In the search for solutions to these problems, people get together, organize themselves, take the floor, testify, evaluate, argue, criticize, deliberate and challenge public opinion and powers. Collective dynamics then allows new policy agendas to emerge at the same time as new publics, as well as publicizing and recognizing public issues more broadly (Andion & Magalhães, 2021).

This highlights the symbolic aspect underlying the common purpose shared by the community. Interactions and transactions do take place and the interdependence of the actors is what produces the resulting effects, but these interactions and the results they produce are mediated by communication processes that mobilize symbols. Participation in activities produces not only

effects, but also meanings. For these results to be shared, communication is a prerequisite. The activities and results promoted can only be seen, considered, understood, judged and regulated through their signs and symbols. What is shared, therefore, through communication processes are the meanings of the results. Experience understood under the pragmatist approach influenced by Dewey is thus an aesthetic experience, as Stone and Majone claimed, laying the foundations for the interpretative and pragmatist policy analysis.

Problems and public goods are therefore seen as the primary materials in the processes of problematizing, activating and maintaining the public sphere. It is these materials that give life to public policy arenas, which together result in the public sphere. Social actors act in defense of the public interest in the context of a specific public policy arena (Cefaï, 2017a; 2017b). Public arenas are configured beyond the institutional, technical or legal devices of public action and the spaces of structured positions. They are places of confrontation, combat, disputes, but also of agreement-building and performances that promote effects on public action (Andion & Magalhães, 2021).

Repertoires of experience establish an active and direct contact between individuals and certain situations, since these situations mobilize them and allow them to identify the interventionist nature of their actions and, in this way, they develop activities to co-produce a situated meaning (Cefaï, 2009), where individuals have significance in their contexts of action. Therefore, the actors are faced with situations in which they experience a reality directly linked to their ways of engaging and intervening and, in this way, give their own actions meaning.

Public action, therefore, is understood as the set of responses to public problems that go beyond public policy, as it is conventionally understood as rational government action through formal institutional channels. Public action comes to be understood as these processes of experimentation, codefinition and codomination of problematic situations. The locus of investigation ceases to be the government and goes beyond the diversity of the actors themselves, becoming interested in public arenas (Cefaï, 2017), negotiated articulations and

networks, especially with regard to the dynamics of interaction that occur in these spaces (Andion & Magalhães, 2021).

What we are trying to understand, in short, are policies as meaning-laden, aesthetic experiences, while they are being made and happening, and the multiple framings, engagements, implications and visions of the actors. Public problems are interpreted based on shared perceptions of situations perceived as problematic, which provoke the mobilization of various actors who start to act collectively in public arenas. We are interested in understanding the multiple forms of relationships, characterized by processes of cooperation, competition and co-opetition between the multiplicity of actors, interests and forms of engagement articulated in experiences that are sensitive and knowable to the actors engaged in the production of meaning in participatory processes.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The methodological approach of this research follows the procedures adopted and described in the study by Andion, Alperstedt and Graeff (2020), developed in Florianópolis-SC. We replicated the methodology proposed by the authors in Petrópolis-RJ, following the strategy of creating and making publicly available a collaborative digital platform called Observatório de Inovação Social de Petrópolis (Obisp)<sup>5</sup>.

From their perspective, the research methodology favors: i) a multi-scalar and multidisciplinary perspective, as it involves actors from multiple spheres (government, business and civil society) and from various segments or causes (education, health, the environment, children and adolescents, among others); ii) a longitudinal and socio-spatial analysis, through georeferencing and the longitudinal monitoring of different "democratic experimentations" in the city; and iii) a collaborative approach that promotes experiential learning, creating spaces (workshops, symposiums and dialogue spaces) at each stage for the

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.observapetropolis.com.br>

actors to construct their own explanations and theories, valuing and stimulating public research processes (Andion et al., 2020).

There are four stages in the methodological approach of Andion et al. (2020): 1) Territorial and institutional inscription of the SIE; 2) Mapping of the city's social innovation ecosystem; 3) Monitoring of public arenas and social innovation practices; and 4) interrelationship of scales. At the current stage of the research, we have only used stages 1 and 2 of the methodology, which are described below, highlighting the territorial inscription and some initial notes from the interviews conducted.

According to the authors, mapping and observing the experiences of SIEs is a way of understanding how the dynamics of democratic experimentation or public research take place in public arenas. In other words, how different publics engage, interpret, discuss, publicize and/or promote solutions to the public problems they face (Andion, Alperstedt and Graeff, 2020). To this end, two categories were used to classify the organizations interviewed: 1) social innovation initiatives, which are those that engage in processes of public investigation and democratic experimentation in tackling the city's public problems; and 2) support actors, which are those organizations that support SI initiatives in some way, through training, research and extension activities, funding, technical support, coordination, promotion of dialogues, reflections, information exchange, incubation, acceleration and certification and related activities.

### *3.1. The socio-historical context for identifying Public Problems*

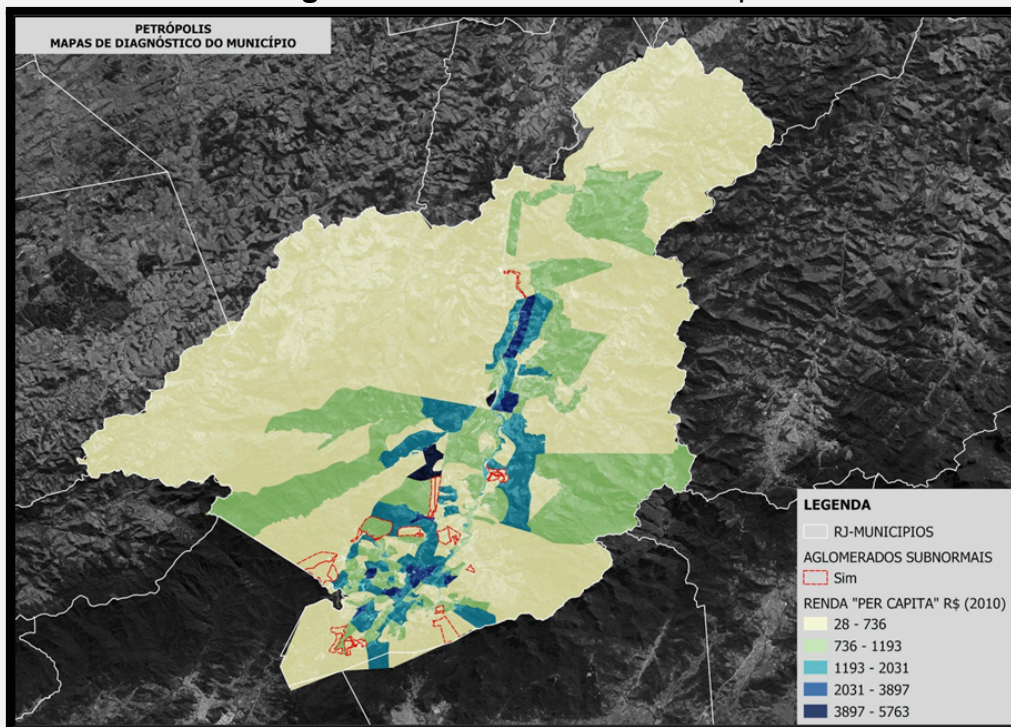
The historical context in which Petrópolis was formed and expanded points to the specificities of its urban conformation over time. Drach et al (2020) highlight the city's urban evolution, how its initial layout was drawn up from the Imperial Palace (at the historical center) and, above all, how social classes and groups were conditioned to occupy the place based on a specific spatialization predetermined by the urban plan. This plan guaranteed the settlements closest to the Palace to those social groups that the emperor was most interested in

living with, while the more distant areas were destined for people with little or no connection to the social nuclei of the nobility.

Like many Brazilian cities, only the initial nucleus of the urban formation of Petrópolis followed an urban plan. Subsequently, the urban space in the municipality expanded spontaneously or without a global planning instrument. By analyzing some maps, it is possible to see how certain social phenomena relate to the urban pattern that characterizes the city.

Figure 1 shows how the majority of census tracts with higher average incomes are concentrated in the central region of the city, although there are other urban agglomerations with the same characteristics further away from the center of Petrópolis. The rural areas of the municipality are predominantly occupied by the lower income brackets, which permeates some areas of the central region as well.

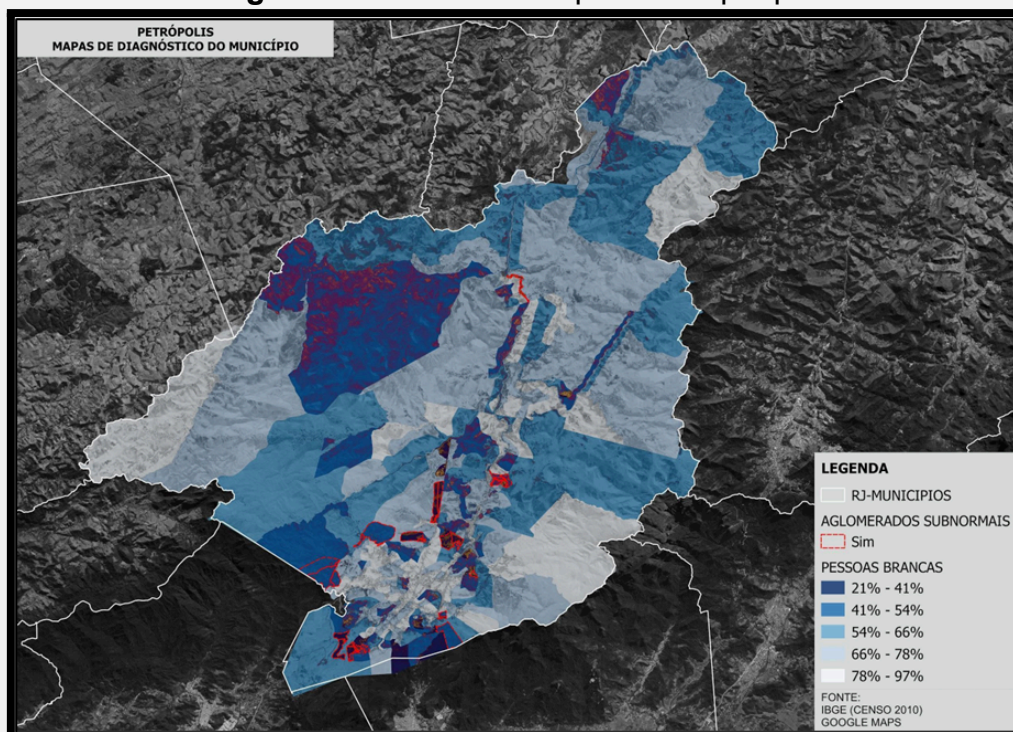
**Figure 1:** Income distribution map



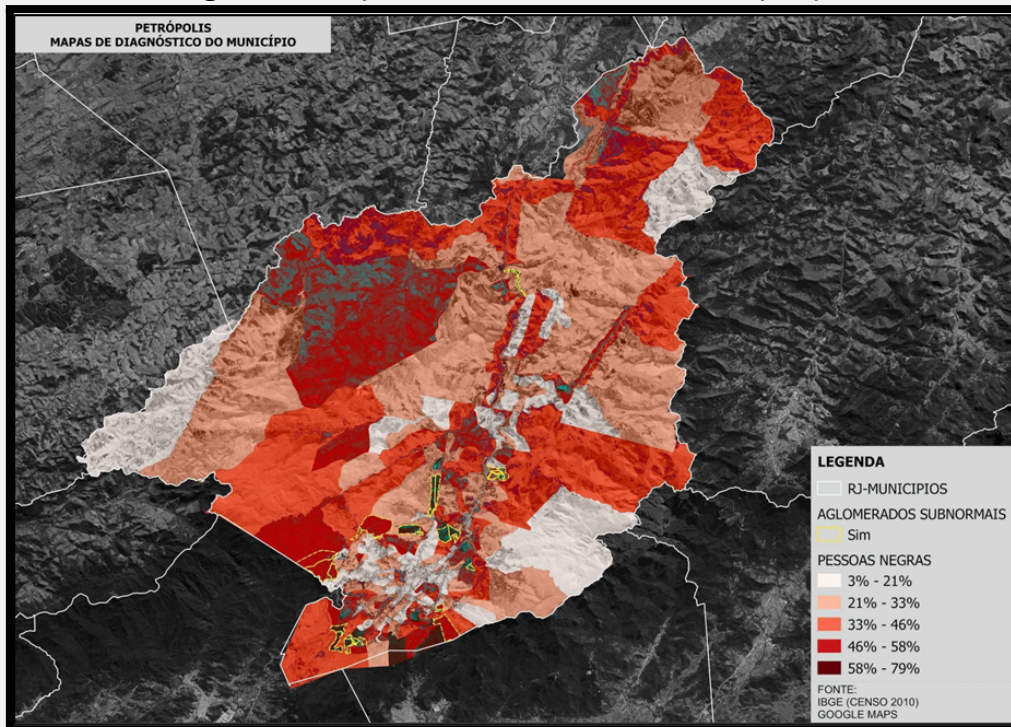
An analysis of the city's racial distribution (Figures 2 and 3) shows that the wealthier and more central areas overlap to a large extent with the whiter areas of Petrópolis. Census tracts with a black majority predominate on the

peripheries of the city's urbanistically consolidated center. Another phenomenon that can be seen on these maps are the areas classified by the IBGE in the 2010 Census as "Subnormal Agglomerations", renamed for the 2022 Census as "Slums and Urban Communities".

**Figure 2:** Distribution map of white people

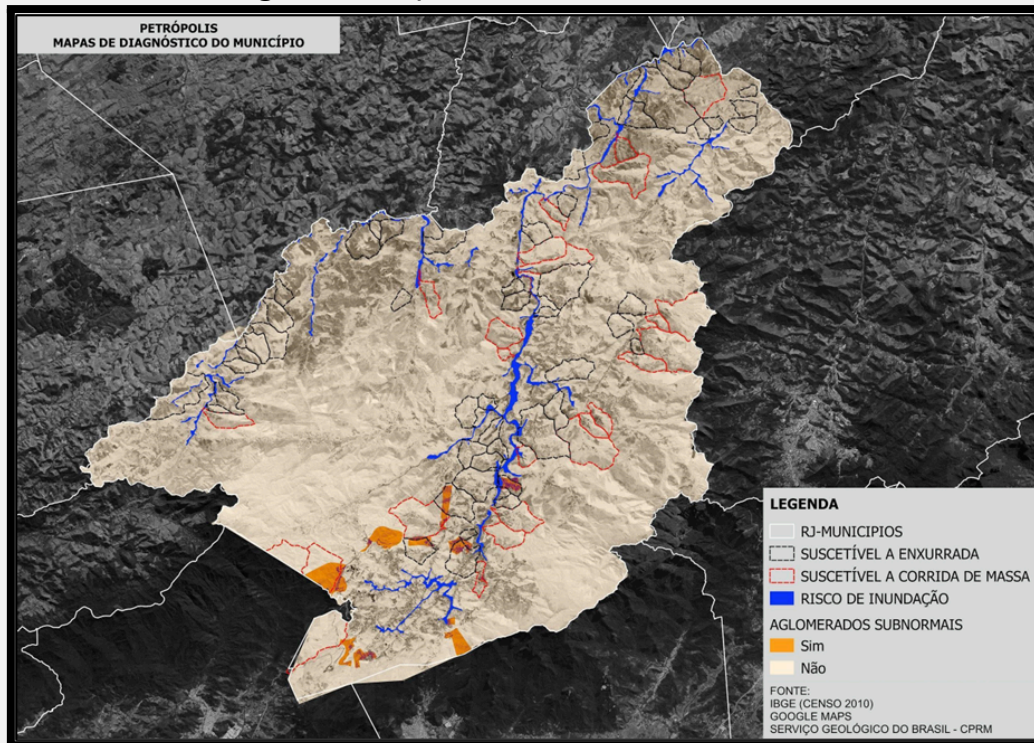


**Figure 3:** Map of the distribution of black people



These areas are characterized, among other things, by precarious urban planning and/or insecure urban land ownership. It can be seen that sectors of slums and urban communities predominate in areas with a black majority, lower average income and further away from the city's historic center, which is marked by the presence of a white majority. The areas considered to be at environmental risk (Figure 4), although not exclusively located in these areas, often occur in and around the favelas.

Figure 4: Map of environmental risk areas



These spatial analyses point to the unequal forms of occupation and appropriation of the city, as well as the forms of access to urban and environmental infrastructures. Housing conditions, mobility, stabilization of slopes or sanitation, among others, are determining urban-environmental factors for dealing with the risks that fall on the city.

The diversity of public problems observed from the social innovation initiatives mapped by the research are in constant dialogue with the urban and environmental context that characterizes Petropolitan social formation. Although some of the causes are not directly oriented towards the specificities of these issues, they are crossed by them. This is a determining factor in formulating responses to the public problems faced by each social innovation initiative. These are therefore issues that also underpin the analytical and methodological construction of this research.

Based on the survey and mapping of secondary data, a preliminary group of potential Public Problems was defined - issues that affect a large contingent of the population that are of public order - that affect the city, as well as the initial set of Supporting Actors - institutions, agencies, state bodies,

civil society organizations that offer some kind of support to Social Innovations in tackling a Public Problem.

Once the Public Problems had been identified, a search was launched for Supporting Actors that aim to tackle some of these problems, understanding which Social Innovations these actors support and insert into the network of interactions and transactions of the Petrópolis Social Innovations Ecosystem.

### *3.2. Fieldwork, active search and databases*

The fieldwork began with interviews with organizations that provided support for social innovation initiatives. In addition to identifying and getting to know these actors, the interviews sought to reach other important actors that had not yet been mapped out preliminarily. There were 10 Support Actors interviewed and they made a total of 194 recommendations for organizations (including other partner support actors, Social Innovations they support, and other recommendations that have no links to the institution interviewed).

Preparations then began for fieldwork with the initiatives that carry out social innovations. Between organizing the materials already collected and drawing up the questionnaire for the fieldwork with Social Innovations, alternative ways of contacting the initiatives were considered, given that scheduling and contacting the organizations had proved to be one of the project's biggest difficulties in the previous phase.

To this end, a short questionnaire was drawn up in the form of a pre-registration form so that initiatives interested in being part of the Petrópolis Social Innovation Ecosystem Map could register themselves. The form was disseminated in two main ways. The first was developed in partnership with the Philippe Guédon Institute (IPG). This institute organized a press release for the local press, which led to an article in the newspaper *Diário de Petrópolis* and other media.

The second way was through the creation of a profile on the social network Instagram for the research project called "EIS Petrópolis". With the aim of contacting the initiatives in an alternative and more effective way, the profile

was consolidated as a more dynamic way of scheduling interviews. In addition, the process of preparing the research was shared on the social network, creating a link between the researchers and innovations that began to understand the project empirically and wanted to be part of the research. A total of 25 social innovation initiatives were interviewed. They recommended a total of 215 organizations to be investigated by the project.

Using two distinct and complementary research techniques, the research seeks to organize the first data in order to answer the following research question: "How is the network of interactions and transactions of the social actors of the Social Innovations Ecosystem of Petrópolis-RJ configured?". The first research technique was "Snowballing" and the second was the extraction of secondary data from databases provided by the Map of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) platform made available by IPEA.

The first research technique, the "Snowball" - a system of indications capable of identifying a network of interactions between organizations in the Social Innovation Ecosystem - obtained a total of 409 indications. Of this total, 215 came from interviews with TIs and 194 with Supporting Actors. In these nominations, 113 organizations were mentioned more than once. The most cited were: Instituto Todos Juntos, Ninguém Sozinho (11 nominations); Rede Bonfim Mais Verde (6 nominations); Coletivo Denegrindo, CUFA, Maracutaia and SOS Serra (5 nominations); ACIPE, AUÁ Hostel, Projeto Araras, Serratec and UMAS (4 nominations). Therefore, after removing the duplicates, a total of 296 nominations of organizations were found.

Initially, 94 initiatives were contacted. Of these, 25 were interviewed and the other 69 organizations didn't get back to us or it wasn't possible to arrange dates for interviews and are waiting for a new contact - the conversion rate for interviews is 26.6%.

The second research technique consisted of identifying the initiatives from the IPEA databases, available on the Mapa das OCSs platform. An analysis was made of the numerous databases, with different themes and variables, to identify those that met the demands of the research. Despite the large volume of information in these databases, it was not possible to use most

of this information at this early stage of the research, due to the need to make primary and secondary data compatible. In other words, the information gathered from the IPEA databases should converge with that obtained from the interviews conducted with the social innovation initiatives, so that there is cohesion in the final set of information about these organizations.

This means that the IPEA database only serves as a starting point, from which only basic registration data is used to identify and locate these organizations: name, address, telephone number, email address, social networks and type of activity. Based on this essential information, we identify and make initial contact with the initiative, with the aim of scheduling an interview. The interview is essential to ensure that the same information is collected as with the initiatives mapped using the "snowball" method. In this way, IPEA's database was fundamental to expanding our radius of identification and mapping of organizations beyond the indications from the interviews. In any case, the questionnaire still needs to be applied.

The IPEA databases identified a total of 1,387 civil society organizations based in the municipality of Petrópolis. A first cut was made of those whose type of activity was classified as "social rights", resulting in a total of 461 organizations. From this cut-off, it was found that 49 organizations did not converge with the object of the research. Then, among the remaining organizations in the established cut-off, 57 initiatives were selected as a priority to contact (mapped), preferably via social networks. Of these, 38 did not have their social networks located, 15 initiatives have already been contacted and are in the process of scheduling an interview and 4 have not yet been contacted. After this stage, a new selection of priorities will be made to start a new cycle of contact with the initiatives.

Based on this survey, the research faces three challenges: 1) Increasing the conversion rate of contacts with organizations into interviews; 2) Obtaining basic information on the initiatives already identified, such as address and contact telephone number, so that they can be classified as "mapped": 3) Establishing a rigorous criterion for consolidating the classification between Supporting Actors and Social Innovations.

Given that there are a large number of initiatives identified in the primary data collection and a low conversion rate of interviews, an alternative path is to look remotely for the basic data of these organizations as a way of mapping them in order to move forward with the Social Innovation Ecosystem Mapping. This alternative is capable of forming a base register of innovation initiatives in the municipality. With this, some analyses can already be made or deepened, considering the expansion of the number of actors that make up the network of these organizations, enabling more readings of the connections that characterize this ecosystem.

#### **4. PRELIMINARY RESULTS AND ANALYSIS**

##### *4.1. Supporting actors*

Eleven interviews were conducted with social innovation support actors. Analysis of the profile of the support actors interviewed points to some interesting dynamics. There is relative diversity both in terms of the sectors in which these actors operate and the causes of the initiatives they support. In terms of the type of organization, there is a predominance of public authorities and non-profit organizations. However, it is also possible to observe the presence of educational and research institutions, as well as informal associations and collectives. This shows that the capacity to organize and coordinate the development of this type of support does not lie solely with traditional state institutions, in the three spheres of government and in the three branches of government.

**Figure 5:** Summary of the main information on the Supporting Actors

Name of Organization	Neighborhood	Start Year	Type of Organization	Scope	Main form of support	Target audience (most frequent)
Petrópolis Human Rights Defense Center	Center	1979	Non-profit organization	National	Training	Communities
Serratec - Technology park in the mountain region	Quitandinha	2019	ICT - Science and Technology Institution// Association// Non-profit organization	Regional	Training	Private company, Networks (Support)
School of Industrial Design - Rio de Janeiro State University	Center	2016	Public education	International	University Program	Students in training and their relationship with the city
Phelipe Guedon Institute for Participatory Management	Quitandinha	2013	Non-profit organization	Location	Articulation	Other support actors
Coordination for the Promotion of Racial Equality	Center	2011	Public authorities	Location	Acceleration, Technical support, Articulation, Communication and dialogue, Financing, Training, Government program	Associations, Informal collectives, Cooperatives, Individual entrepreneurs, Companies with a social mission, Social movements
FAMPE - Federation of Petrópolis Residents' Associations	Forest	-	Association / Social Movement	Location	Technical Support	Community residents
Municipal Department of Protection and Civil Defense	Morin	2021	Public authorities	Location	Training, Networking	Informal collectives

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Popular Feminist Collective	Center	2013	Informal Collective, Public Power	Regional	Articulation, Communication and dialog, Training, Promotion of public policies	Associations, Informal collectives, Social movements
Municipal Institute of Culture of Petrópolis	Center	2021	Public authorities	Location	Government Program	Individual entrepreneur
Habitaes Common Housing - ESDI/UERJ Extension Project Petrópolis Campus	Center	2020	Extension Project	Regional	University Program	Associations
Arthur Sá Earp Neto University Center UNIFASE	Center	1967	University	National	Training	Informal collectives, Networks (Support), Public network support

Another important characteristic of this group of organizations is their diversity in time. There are institutions that have been active since 2021, as well as those that began their activities in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. It can be seen from this that the longest-lasting forms of support and mobilization do not prevent new organizations from emerging to deal with long-standing public problems or relatively recent social issues. These institutions provide a wide range of forms of support for social innovation, including training, technical support, coordination, communication and dialogue, as well as government programs and university extensions. These initial findings are in line with the categorization of support actors proposed by Andion, Alperstedt and Graeff (2020).

The organizations that act as support actors are predominantly regional in scope, although they establish multi-scalar relationships due to various factors. In some cases, there are support actors linked to the organizational structure of public and private universities with a national scope. There are also organizations linked to technology centers that house multinational companies,

as well as constant contact with a network of reference organizations for a given cause. This creates a web of dialogues and links that go beyond the regional scale on which these organizations operate directly.

As types of organizations, there are mostly support actors from civil society and the municipal government. However, it is important to note that, as with the scale of coverage, complex relationships are also established here. As a result, civil society organizations build links and partnerships with institutions in the executive, legislative and judicial branches, as well as rapprochement with the business sector. On the other hand, support actors linked to universities, such as research and extension projects, establish joint actions with social movements, popular collectives and other spheres of organized civil society. In some cases, funding instruments, such as calls for proposals, are the bridge between the various state and non-state spheres of organizations that work to support social innovation initiatives.

In most cases, these support organizations are located in the city center and support a diverse set of initiatives, made up of associations, formal and informal collectives, communities, residents, private companies, among others. It's important to note that the location mentioned here refers to the place indicated as the organization's headquarters. For the most part, the scope of each organization's actions is not directly related to the neighbourhood or region of the city in which its headquarters are located. This issue varies according to the causes they support, as well as the target audience and the problems faced by each initiative supported by a given organization.

These institutions provide a wide range of forms of support for social innovation, including training, technical support, coordination, communication and dialogue, as well as government programs and university projects with communities. Direct financial support is present, but it is not the main form of support among the actors interviewed. In most cases, the support offered is not restricted to a single form of support. The actors seek to support the initiatives based on their demands and shortcomings in technical, political and social action, always taking into account the limitations of each organization in providing these support activities.

#### *4.2. Social innovation initiatives*

The 25 interviews with social innovations generated some interesting preliminary analyses, especially regarding the type of organization, the cause it works for and its location in the city. Most of the Social Innovations interviewed identified themselves as "Companies with a Social and Environmental Mission" or as "Informal Collectives" and "Non-profit organizations". This aspect reinforces the relevance of non-state sectors in tackling and determining agendas related to the city's public problems.

In the questionnaire, initiatives could indicate up to three main causes, although other complementary causes could be cited. "Environmental conservation and preservation" was the most cited cause, along with "Education", "Culture and Art", "Activism, Political Mobilization and Volunteering" and "Community Development". Based on the diversity of causes, it is possible to see a wide variety of themes addressed by the organizations interviewed, although there are some themes that occur more frequently.

In terms of location, the neighborhoods of Centro and Correias have the largest number of Social Innovations identified so far. Quissamã, Itaipava, Valparaíso, Posse, Mosela, Contorno, Araras/ Vale das Videiras, Pedro do Rio, Vincenzo Rivetti, Vale das Videiras and Cascatinha have one Social Innovation already interviewed.

It is important to note that, in some cases, themes and causes are mixed up in the understanding of a public problem from the perspective of an initiative, which is decisive for the ways in which these organizations mobilize and take action. This demonstrates how the classifications used in the research as methodological resources cannot be taken as static and watertight characteristics of the initiatives.

Similarly, another characteristic observed in the interviews with Supporting Actors and Social Innovations is that an organization can sometimes be classified by its peers as a Social Innovation and by others as a Supporting Actor. Carrying out this process of reclassification or multi classification can be

a challenge, but it is necessary in order to provide in-depth and complex readings on the roles of each agent in the constitution of the innovation network in the municipality of Petrópolis. It is essential to be able to understand how positions are exchanged in this web of articulations, dialogues and actions that specifically characterize this ecosystem of social innovation initiatives.

Urban and environmental issues can be identified as central to the set of causes that mobilize social innovation initiatives in Petrópolis. In a way, there is a strong relationship between these issues and the socio-historical context of the city's formation, discussed above. The urban, environmental and climatic problems, in the ways they impact the municipality, highlight the spatial dimension of the inequalities that permeate Petropolitan society. Therefore, they also determine the ways in which this city is disputed.

In this context, a very objective problem, such as the increase in bus fares, can be the fact that sparks a new social innovation initiative, whose initial agenda is to take a stand against the fare increase and the justifications given for it, which involves pointing out the deficiencies in the city's transport infrastructure. From this initial confrontation, the idea arises to focus on improvements related to urban mobility, which are often used as a justification for further increases. As it develops and expands its causes, this initiative is also expanding its forms of political action, pushing for improvements in the transport system and, for example, mobilizing the population to occupy the Municipal Transport Council.

There are other initiatives aimed at tackling urban public problems, denouncing a pattern of urban mobility centered on the individual car, the lack of adaptation of urban space to the climate crisis, the need to map areas at risk of flooding, levels of soil permeability, and river water retention devices.

These initiatives understand that they are contributing to the promotion of a sustainable urban mobility model, with the prioritization of active and collective modes of transport, efficiency in the use of space and as mobilizers of this process of demanding the decision-making system in the public sphere. They are looking for a public policy model in which the population plays a more active role in decision-making and in the various forms of demanding public authority.

The lack of decent housing for families who have been victims of socio-environmental tragedies in Petrópolis is another cause directly related to the urban and environmental problems that characterize the city. According to the interviews, there are more than 30,000 families in risk areas, requiring around 3,500 housing units for families who are living on social rent. To this end, they make demands and hold dialogues with the public authorities and emphasize the importance of representatives getting to know the leaders of these movements.

The environmental problem in the city of Petrópolis is also considered from the point of view of its insertion in the regional scale of this issue. The analysis of the interviews highlights the need for an integrated view of the current socio-environmental crisis and criticizes Cartesian readings of environmental education. They emphasize the rivers that originate in the mountainous region and, in some cases, specifically in the Serra dos Órgãos National Park, and which flow polluted into Guanabara Bay. They denounce chemical pollution, solid waste and the lack of basic sanitation.

The environmental theme also runs through initiatives that provide tourism services and ecological practices. From the hiking trails and mountaineering practiced in the region, to accommodation services that seek to align ecological tourism with actions aimed at environmental education, including raising visitors' awareness about the preservation of fauna and flora, to fostering community-based local development.

Another cause related to the historical process of the city's formation is tackling racial inequalities. The work of the Coordination for the Promotion of Racial Equality (COPIR) as a supporting actor points to various initiatives aimed at this issue, perceived in a broad way.

From the interviews, it is possible to see that the actions of the Black Movement in Petrópolis are organized into innovative initiatives that act on various fronts of social struggle. The capoeirista collectives and masters have strengthened themselves by calling for the formation of a capoeira league in the city, from which they can access some funding resources and thus make an important set of actions viable. There are initiatives aimed at combating

religious racism and guaranteeing the rights of umbanda and candomblé sites (called terreiros). The policy of patrimonialization elements of black culture and memory in Petrópolis is also an avenue for action, as is the dispute over the cultural agenda promoted in the city.

Quilombola communities also work together to promote social innovation in their process of political affirmation and social development. As a result, memory circuits are created in quilombo territories, and local knowledge, such as cooking, is valued. Many of these actions are articulated around the practice of community-based tourism. It's important to note that, in addition to the existence of a set of combined actions, one of the quilombos' central agendas is the process of titling their territory.

The first data from the research allowed us to identify some public arenas (Cefaï, 2002) in which these actors compete for public action, either in a more institutionalized way with the municipal government, as is the case with COPIR, tourism and the Municipal Transport Council, or in a less institutionalized way, as is the case with community mobilization organizations and residents' associations, which deal with environmental issues. In line with the theoretical framework, the research indicates that there are processes of experimentation, codification and codomination of the city's problematic situations, which will be addressed in future work.

## **5. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

In this article we try to provide a theoretical, social and historical context for the research "Cartography of the Social Innovations Ecosystem in Petrópolis". Based on the theoretical framework of Interpretive Policy Analysis, an approach influenced by Dewey's pragmatist philosophy, and the approach of the Argumentative Turn in public policy analysis proposed by Fischer et al, we present the analytical basis of the research project.

The socio-historical context points to a great diversity of public problems faced in the city of Petrópolis, including environmental issues, such as the problem of rainfall, which periodically produces catastrophic impacts; cultural

issues, related to the colonial and slave-owning history; economic issues that permeate the city's commercial aptitudes, once linked to issues of imperial administration in Brazil, passing through a period of industrialization with a focus on the textile sector that went into decline and a reorientation of activities at the beginning of the century, privileging the city's tourist vocation and, more recently, the induction of investment in the scientific and technological development sector; as well as sectoral issues relating to more specific public policies, such as mobility and housing.

Based on secondary data made available by IPEA, we identified a set of organizations and initiatives that would be able to contribute to our research objective. Based on the methodology proposed by Andion, Alperstedt and Graeff (2020), 36 interviews were carried out in the second half of 2023, 11 with support actors and 25 with initiatives that produce and implement social innovations in the city. The interviews were exploratory in nature, to create a database on social innovations in the city. As the article covers the first six months of the project, the results presented are not intended to be conclusive, but are preliminary in nature and should be considered as an overview of the field.

Due to this initial effort to recognize the field and the fact that the initiatives interviewed work on causes and tackle public problems that are very different from each other, the research did not reveal specific aspects relating to one policy or another. In this sense, we believe it is necessary to go a little further with the research at this exploratory stage so that, at a later stage, once the database is more consolidated and more actors have been identified, it can be segmented by policies, causes and public problems addressed, to delve deeper into specific themes and problems in the municipality, in line with the methodological approach used.

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