

The role of meso-institutions in public policies for technical assistance and rural extension: Evidence from urban and peri-urban farms in the largest Latin American Metropolitan Area

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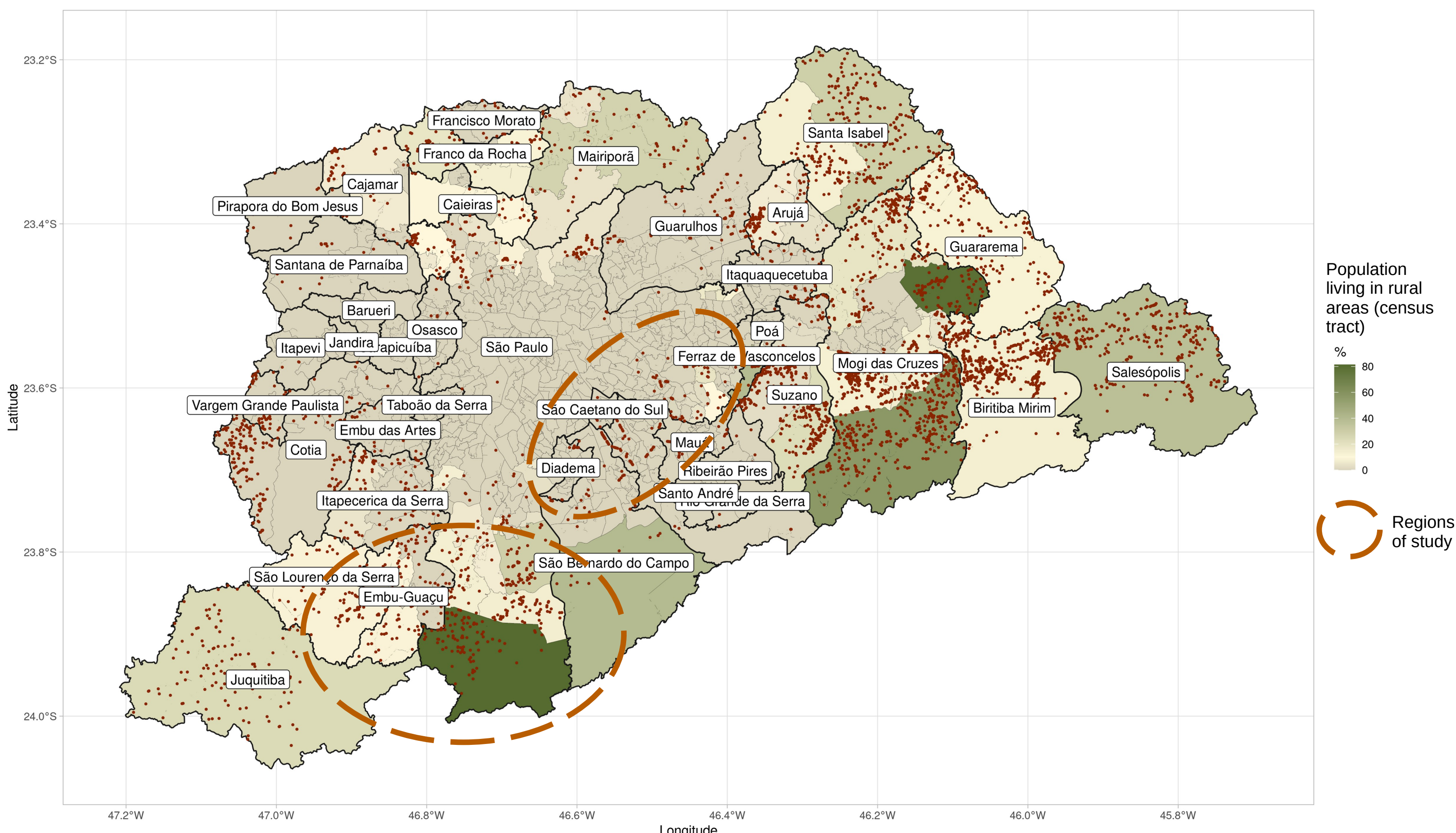
Relevance of Urban and Peri-urban Agriculture (UPA)

- There is a **growing urban population** that needs to access fresh, healthy foods.
- **Potentially environment-friendly:** urban agriculture also helps shortening the food supply chains. Small-scale production in (peri-)urban gardens is suitable to agroecological techniques that are labour-intensive – in contrast with capital-intensive in large-scale production.

Context

São Paulo Metro Area – SPMA is the largest Latin American metropolitan area (22 Mi inhabitants) and consists of 39 municipalities, including the state capital, São Paulo.

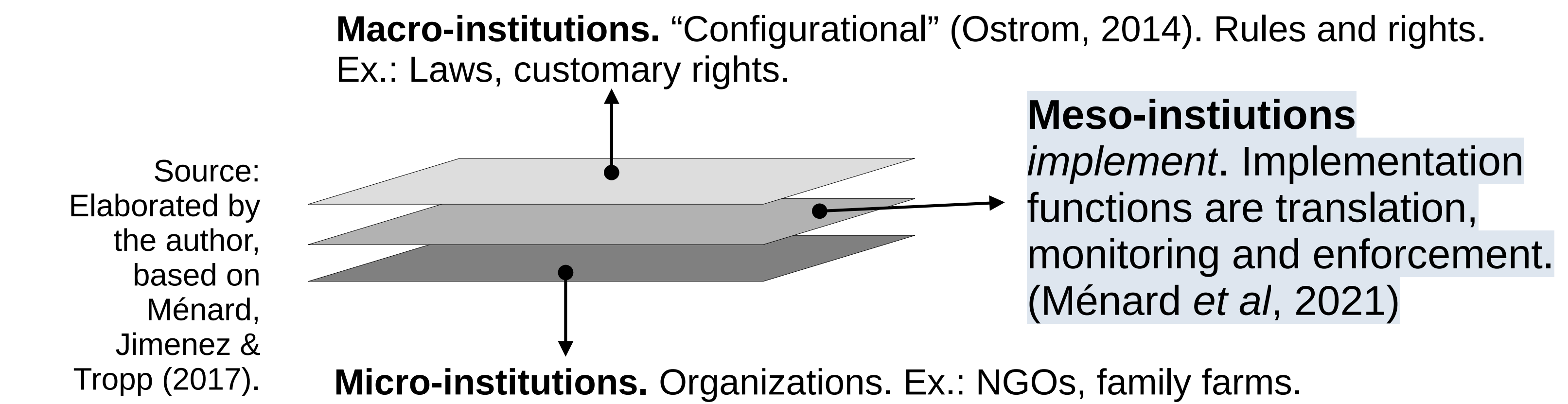
Fig 1. Location of urban and peri-urban farms/gardens of the SPMA



Source: Secondary data from the Brazilian Demographic Census (2010) and the Brazilian Agricultural Census (2017) (IBGE). Elaborated by the autor.

Technical Assistance is the main public service supporting UA in SPMA. There is a National Policy of Technical Assistance and Rural Extension (PNATER) since 2010, with guidelines and goals (agroecological transition, sustainable development, gender and ethnic equity, social control and participation), but implementation by different subnational governments leads to heterogenous results.

Meso-institutions



Research questions

1. Which institutions play the role of meso-institutions in the context of PNATER in the São Paulo Metropolitan Area, and what are their functions?
2. Do different meso-institutions lead to different policy results? How?

Design of the comparative case study

	High state capacity	Low state capacity
Southern Buffer	Southern São Paulo (capital)	Embu-Guaçu
Eastern Buffer	Eastern São Paulo (capital)	Diadema

Data collection. Qualitative: 26 In-depth interviews, and participant observations conducted over 18 months. Quantitative: survey (150 UPA units) on access to public policies, agricultural practices and socio-economic status.

Example of UA in the East Example of UA in the South



Source: The author. Pictures taken during the fieldwork.

Preliminary results

Meso-institutions of technical assistance differ widely.

Subnational entity	Meso-institution	Summary of relevant aspects (political context and capacity)
São Paulo municipality (the capital city):	Ecological Agriculture Houses (CAE) – one in the South, one in the East.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• High political priority, high budget• Very similar services, same coordination• 19 assistants and protocol to be followed
Diadema (municipality):	Secretary of Food Security.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• High political priority• 2 temporary assistants recently replaced by 1 civil servant
Embu-Guaçu (municipality):	Secretary of Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Low political priority at the moment• 1 civil servant without car
State of São Paulo:	Coordination of Integral Technical Assistance (CATI).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 civil servants working with field visits serving the whole SPMA

Those meso-institutions establish different kinds of relationship/interactions with civil society organizations (e.g. urban farmer’s associations): Secretary of Diadema fosters the creation of groups, while in São Paulo, the CAE’s creation has been deeply influenced by previously existing groups.

Packages of policies targeting family farming are not well adapted to urban farming, and this jeopardizes access to those packages, and hence, PNATER policy results in UPA.

Next steps: finish qualitative data systematization and assess policy results using the survey in order to compare policy results in different areas.