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A PREPARAÇÃO COMO PROCESSO FULCRAL**

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## GOVERNANÇA COLABORATIVA DE FESTAS POPULARES: A PREPARAÇÃO COMO PROCESSO FULCRAL

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### ABSTRACT

Because popular festivals have a collective organizational structure, the use of the concept of collaborative governance becomes extremely relevant. One of the most central moments within the governance of popular festivals is the initial process, in which everyone involved must be prepared. Despite this central relevance, the description of this process remains poorly detailed, systematized and discussed in literature. Therefore, it is necessary to develop a more detailed and systematic knowledge about preparation at the risk of compromising the success of the collaborative process. The aim of this research is to systematize and discuss the preparation of the governance of popular festivals, describing its activities and considering the dimensions of collaboration, cultural identity and conflict. The research methodology is inductive and exploratory in nature, based on documents and interviews. The research findings provide a practical process of consolidated initiation of collaborative governance in popular festivals. The results contribute to rethinking the theorization and practice of the management of popular festivals as forces for territorial and regional development.

**Keywords:** Governance, Popular Festivals, Collaborative Governance, Cultural Identity.

### RESUMO

Como as festas populares possuem uma estrutura organizativa coletiva, o uso do conceito de governança colaborativa torna-se, prioritariamente, relevante. Um dos momentos mais fulcrais dentro da governança de festas populares é o inicial, em que todos envolvidos devem ser preparados. Apesar da relevância central, a descrição desse processo permanece pouco detalhada, sistematizada e discutida nas pesquisas. Por isso é necessário desenvolver um conhecimento mais detalhado e sistemático sobre a preparação sob o risco de comprometer o sucesso do processo colaborativo. O objetivo desta pesquisa é sistematizar e discutir a preparação da governança de festas populares, descrevendo suas atividades e considerando as dimensões de colaboração, identidade cultural e conflito. A metodologia de pesquisa é de natureza indutiva e exploratória, baseada em documentos e entrevistas. Por proporcionarem um processo prático de iniciação consolidada da governança colaborativa, os resultados contribuem para repensar a teorização e a prática da gestão de festas populares como forças de desenvolvimento territorial e regional.

**Palavras-chave:** Governança, Festas Populares, Governança Colaborativa, Identidade Cultural.

## INTRODUCTION

Popular festivals have a collective organizational structure. Consequently, traditional management theories, centered on the figure of a leader and hierarchical, do not work when applied to popular festivals. Instead of management and leadership, the most appropriate concept for organizing and coordinating popular festivals is that of governance (Davel; Dantas, 2019). Popular festivals play a strategic role in the development of several territories. However, studies on the governance of popular festivals are rare, even though city halls and governments need this knowledge to resolve practical situations to reduce management problems. Collaborative governance process models sometimes describe collaboration as a staged development. Some studies have already associated popular festivals with concepts of collaborative governance (Cabral; Krane; Dantas, 2013, Almeida Filho; Davel, 2024).

The popular festival governance technology (TGPop), proposed by Almeida Filho and Davel (2024), is a viable alternative because it considers various agents (public, private, organized civil society, and the like) who join public discussions to make collective decisions based on consensus. They seek to deliberate, create, implement, or administer public policies (Ansell; Gash, 2008). TGPop consists of stages (preparation, strategy, execution, and evaluation) and dimensions (collaboration, cultural identity, and conflict). Preparation is the most decisive stage for successful governance. Despite its central relevance, its description remains poorly detailed, systematized, and discussed.

Relationships between several stakeholders underpin collaborative governance, requiring careful planning and preparation before implementation (Gash, 2012). Terms like preparation, problem configuration, and pre-negotiation describe this pre-implementation process (Ansell; Gash, 2008). Without an adequate and well-conducted planning process, governance technology is highly vulnerable to failure because consensus and alignment may not be achieved.

Preparation is the most important moment in popular festival governance. It involves mapping, data collection, and interviews, as well as selecting participants, forming committees, establishing principles, formalizing procedures, and training committees for collaborative work. Therefore, it is necessary to have more detailed and systematic knowledge about preparation. Ignoring key elements or including less significant ones can lead to an unclear cultural identity in the collective view, and the public may not identify with the festival. Another risk is possible underrepresentation or imbalance in representation,



which can harm the collaborative process. Tensions and conflicts may arise because of diverse perspectives and interests in the governance committee.

This research aims to systematize and discuss the preparation phase of the governance of popular festivals, as it is the first and most crucial phase of the technology. The emphasis on collaborative governance reflects the quest to improve the relationship between the various agents involved in the process of organizing the festival. The focus on cultural identity reflects the concern with linking the production of the popular festival to its substantive, territorial, and sociocultural purpose. The importance of conflict lies both in its inseparable presence in collective processes and in the possibility of it being mobilized as an aggregating element, generating innovation and social transformation (Oliveira Neta, 2016).

This professional and technological study focused on producing accessible and applicable knowledge for agents involved in organizing popular festivals. To systematize the preparation of popular festival governance, the research is guided by an inductive and exploratory methodology, based on documents (academic productions, reports, press articles, and photos) and interviews.

Due to its professional and technological nature, the contribution of the results of this research opens new paths for renewing the practice of territorial governance regarding cultural manifestations. This favors the strategic consideration of the cultural dimension of regional development. In addition, indirectly, the results are also relevant for activating the field of research on territorial management and development, by highlighting the cultural and governance dimensions as levels that must be considered in the theorization of regional development (Buttenbender; Sausen, 2020; Marques De Oliveira, 2021; Theis et al., 2022).

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with those responsible for governing the Bonfim Washing in Salvador (Bahia), such as public managers and representatives of cultural and religious organizations. To ensure the anonymity of participants, identities were preserved using an alphanumeric coding system (e.g., E1, E2, E3), where “E” represents the respondent followed by the number in order of collection. The following individuals were interviewed: a representative of the Tourism Department (E1), a representative of the Senhor do Bonfim Brotherhood (E2), a



representative of the association of acarajé vendors (E3), the director of a traditional Afoxé group (E4), the cultural producer of a carnival entity (E5), a representative of a capoeira association (E6), a representative of SALTUR (E7), a COMCAR member (E8), and a representative of IPHAN (E9). In addition, three interviews were conducted with those responsible for the governance of the Demétrio Ribeiro Itália Mia Cultural Exhibition, which takes place in João Neiva, Espírito Santo. The following individuals were interviewed: a representative of the Association of Residents and Rural Producers of Demétrio Ribeiro (E10), a writer and member of one of the founding families of Demétrio Ribeiro (E11), and a cultural producer (E12).

The analysis of the empirical material was complemented and refined by the first author's accumulated experience (more than seven years) in producing artistic attractions at popular festivals in Salvador (Bahia), mainly at the Festa do Senhor do Bonfim and Carnival. Based on thematic analysis (Guest; Macqueen; Namey, 2012), the empirical material was analyzed to identify and develop themes related to the activities in the governance system, either through existing practices or practices that should exist to avoid several problems described.

In the first analysis stage, all emerging themes on festival governance, identity, and conflicts were listed. The second stage analyzed these themes for connections. Here, themes of activities in the preparation of the collaborative popular festival governance were formed, with identity and conflict set as important dimensions. The third stage used all the empirical material to detail each governance preparation activity, explicitly integrating identity and conflict. Emblematic examples were chosen and explored to show crucial moments. These results systematize the knowledge public managers need for organizing popular festivals and highlight what is crucial for successful governance.



## THEORETICAL BASIS

### POPULAR FESTIVAL GOVERNANCE

TGPop was developed based on studies of collaborative governance and popular festivals (Almeida Filho; Davel, 2024). Collaborative governance differs from other types of governance such as corporatism, associative governance, public networks, and public-private partnerships in terms of the criterion of collaboration. The concept of collaborative governance as a model for solving complex management problems is guided by consensus and the collective production of results (Ansell; Gash, 2008), collaboratively integrating public agencies with other types of social stakeholders. In addition, criteria found in collaborative governance studies (Ansell; Gash, 2008) were considered:

1. The forum is initiated by public institutions.
2. Participants include non-governmental stakeholders.
3. Participants are directly involved in decision-making and are not merely “consulted” by public agencies.
4. The forum is formally organized and meets collectively.
5. The forum aims at consensus-based decision-making (even if consensus is not reached).
6. Focus on collaboration in public policy and public management (results).

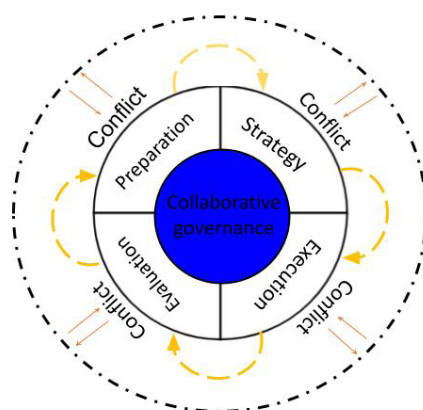
Collaborative governance process models sometimes describe collaboration as a staged development. There seems to be a consensus among scholars that, prior to the implementation of collaborative governance, previous stages need to be designed and practiced: “preparation”, “problem configuration”, and “pre-negotiation”. Thus, TGPop was developed based on four structural phases: preparation, strategy, execution, and evaluation. Each phase is guided by cultural identity, playing roles at specific moments in the technology: signifying (preparation), designing (strategy), materializing (execution), and institutionalizing (evaluation) (Almeida Filho; Davel, 2024).

The proposed TGPop (Almeida Filho; Davel, 2024) is structured in four phases (Figure 1): preparation, strategy, execution, and evaluation. This technology seeks to reconcile the specificities of popular festivals, such as collective governance through collaboration, the accommodation of diverse identities through mutual construction, and considering the conflict arising from these intersections as



an aggregating and innovative element. Its phases are interrelated and interdependent. It has a circular and continuous structure, starting with preparation and ending with the production of information for the next edition.

**Figure 1** | Schematic diagram of TGPpop.



Source: Almeida Filho and Davel (2024)

## GOVERNANCE OF POPULAR FESTIVALS AND COLLABORATION

The governance of popular festivals presupposes a balance of relations between the agents who organize them. This balance proves particularly challenging when considering the complex dynamics between these different stakeholders, their roles, competencies, and interests. Collaboration allows these aspects to coexist, proposing difference as an element that generates dialogical and more democratic relationships in the governance experience, with the need for collaboration increasing as institutional infrastructures have become more complex and interdependent (Ansell; Gash, 2008).

The criterion of formal collaboration is highlighted to distinguish collaborative governance from other more casual formats and conventional forms of interaction between public authorities and interest groups (Gash, 2016). This means an explicit and public strategy for organizing these stakeholders. Popular festival governance is thus collaborative, and is a formal activity that involves joint activities and structures and shared results (Walter; Petr, 2000). It presupposes the development of a “structured arrangement” (Padilla; Daigle, 1998). Thus, this formal arrangement implies organization, structure, and a focus on shared results. Decisions regarding the governance of popular festivals are guided by consensus, and although public agencies should have the final

authority to decide (Connick; Innes, 2003; Seidenfeld, 2000), collaboration's ultimate goal is achieving some degree of consensus among stakeholders. These multiple stakeholders meet in a deliberative, multilateral, and formal forum to discover areas of possible consensus for decision-making focused on shared results.

## **GOVERNANCE OF POPULAR FESTIVALS AND CULTURAL IDENTITY**

Popular festivals are a social production; they generate material, communicative, symbolic, and meaningful products, the broadest of which is identity. Cultural identity is shared in social time and space (Guarinello, 2001) and occurs at various levels and in various forms during the festival, including in its organizational process, despite the mutability of the form of perception and meaning attributed to a set of values and beliefs over time. Popular festivals produce identity, whether in the similarities or differences in the diversity that constitutes a society (as well as this diversity also being present in the various social stakeholders that make up the festival's governance), as they are "affective territories" that symbolically represent the clash between different social stakeholders, absorbing, digesting, and transforming into bridges the allegedly irreconcilable opposites (Amaral, 1998).

This collective construction of identity aims to "bring together the subjects involved with the dynamics, production, circulation, and consumption of cultural goods, whose authenticity will only be preserved and maintained in their specific context", recognizing both their symbolic value and their material support (Santana, 2011). In this way, it can awaken or reinforce the sense of belonging among its representatives, encourage more conscious and committed action, stimulate positive social interactions, facilitate the organizational process, and outline the contours of this identity, which manifests itself in multiple ways at popular festivals (Davel; Santos; Dantas, 2016).

Building consensus on cultural identity is a challenge, as identity is not a homogeneous, single-faceted entity. On the contrary, identity is a collective construct that manifests itself heterogeneously and multiscale-wise. These different scales coexist through material and symbolic exchanges apprehended and renewed over time and space, activated in collective and individual instances, for their constant (re)construction (Castells, 1999). Understanding this dynamic is the first step toward solving the challenges of cultural identity as a matrix for development and applicability in the governance of popular festivals.



## THE PROCESS OF PREPARING FOR THE GOVERNANCE OF POPULAR FESTIVALS

Preparation is the most extensive process in the governance of popular festivals. It involves mapping, data collection, and interviews, as well as the selection of participants, the formation of committees, the establishment of principles, and formalization, up to the training of committees to be able to work collaboratively. In the preparation phase, cultural identity aims to give meaning. The elements (expressions, practices, and organizations) found in the mapping are the expression of the festival in symbolic (expressions), material (practices), and human (organizations) terms. The main activities of the preparation process are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1** | Preparatory activities in the collaborative governance of popular festivals

Activities	Purpose	Risks
Mapping expressions and practices linked to the identity of the popular festival.	Identify the main expressions and practices that represent and symbolize the cultural identity of the festival.	Do not identify any fundamental elements or practices of the festival's identity due to ambiguity and abstractions.
Mapping organizations operating in the territory of the popular festival.	Identify the various organizations that are relevant and representative of the festival.	Do not identify organizations representative of the festival that are visible for political or traditional reasons.
Composition of the governance committee.	Compose a committee that ensures adequate representation of the main organizations previously mapped.	Do not include members due to political or economic issues.
Establishing a collaborative culture.	Establish a work and organizational culture conducive to collaboration, based on principles, rules, procedures, and responsibilities.	Fail to identify and select key elements of a collaborative culture due to concerns about excessive pragmatism and immediacy.
Composition of the executive committee and communications committee.	Form a committee to ensure proper communication and execution of the party, in accordance with the collaborative culture and guidelines established by the governance committee.	Include members who do not have the appropriate skills and adherence to the collaborative culture necessary for the governance of the party.
Training for collaborative culture.	Prepare members of the three committees to perform governance activities (strategy, execution, and evaluation) in accordance with a collaborative governance culture.	The content and process of the training will be vague, theoretical, and boring.

Source: Authors.



The criteria found in collaborative governance studies (Ansell; Gash, 2008) are used during the preparation phase:

- a. The forum is initiated by public institutions. Government agencies will initiate the technology for governing popular festivals. This institutional predisposition is necessary both in the formal structuring and in the financing of the technology's implementation.
- b. Participants include non-governmental stakeholders. It is essential that, in addition to government agencies, participants represent the diverse interests related to the festival.
- c. Participants are directly involved in decision-making and are not merely "consulted" by public agencies. The governance committee must have deliberative autonomy to develop shared actions and results.
- d. The forum is formally organized and meets collectively. The formalization of the governance committee lends legitimacy to the decisions made by the committee and strengthens collaboration and interdependence among committee members.
- e. The forum aims at consensus decision-making (even if consensus is not reached). Consensus is seen as a constant process of negotiation.
- f. The focus is on collaboration in public policy and public management (results) to enhance decision-making and practices adopted during the collaborative process.

## **MAPPING EXPRESSIONS AND PRACTICES LINKED TO THE IDENTITY OF POPULAR FESTIVALS**

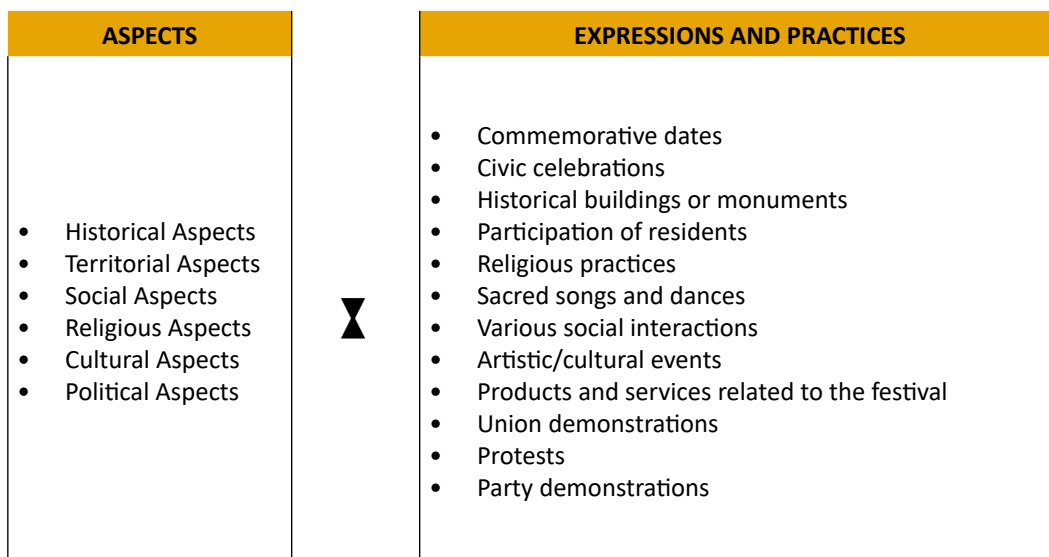
The first activity in preparing governance for popular festivals is to map the expressions and practices linked to the identity of the popular festival. Popular festivals have histories that are intertwined with the histories of the territories where they are held. Identity and territory influence each other because relationships and social interactions occur in both physical and symbolic spaces (Davel; Santos; Dantas, 2016). Given the multiple, complex possible relationships between these elements and practices, a structured survey based on the history of the festival and the territory where it takes place is necessary.



In general, the municipal government should initiate the process of preparing governance. The government has the institutional capacity and responsibility for financing the preparation phase of the governance of popular festivals. This responsibility can be shared with the state or federal government, but this is only possible with political affinity and legal mechanisms for the transfer of funds. It is not uncommon for political disagreements between municipal and state authorities to make collaborative interorganizational agreements unfeasible (Cabral; Krane; Dantas, 2013). In any case, the municipal authorities are most directly involved in the organization of popular festivals.

During the implementation of this activity, it should be considered that (a) the history of the popular festival is inseparable from the history of the territory and the identity that emanates from that history, (b) the identity of the festival is fundamentally composed of practices, representations, expressions, knowledge and techniques, objects, artifacts, and cultural places associated with them, and (c) that this set of elements is subject to change over time due to historical, social, economic, and cultural transformations. Based on these statements, this represents establishing a correlation between the various aspects that underpin the festival’s identity (history, culture, religion) with elements and practices that express these aspects. Figure 1 proposes a graphic scheme that summarizes this idea.

**Figure 1** | Example of correlation between aspects and expressions and practices linked to the festival



Source: Research data (2023)

In methodological terms, documentary research on the festival should be conducted using documents (books, theses, dissertations, academic articles, and government reports), publications in newspapers, magazines, and social media, in addition to research in photographic or videographic records. In addition, interviews should be conducted with cultural groups, social representatives, and organizers of recent editions. After analyzing this material, triangulation is necessary to produce an effective mapping so as not to run the risk of failing to identify any fundamental elements or practices that explain the cultural meaning of the festival due to ambiguity and abstractions.

Below are suggestions for useful questions for carrying out this activity. They aim to integrate both objective information (numerical data, research, and official documents) and subjective information (sensations, feelings, and affections) into the process to compose a set of information that encompasses the material, symbolic, and political dimensions of the festival, without losing sight of their intersections:

1. *Historical aspects:* What is the history of the festival? What documents recount this history? What historical events have marked the festival? Who are the people whose testimonies can provide a historical account of the festival? What are the marginalized stories that have been or are still left out of the official history of the festival? Are there buildings and monuments in the territory associated with the festival?
2. *Territorial aspects:* What is the territorial scale: zone, network of territories, neighborhood, city, state, nation, group of neighborhoods, group of cities, group of nations? What is the natural characteristic that identifies this territory: climate, topography, fauna, flora, biodiversity?
3. *Social aspects:* What are the socioeconomic, ethnic, and religious characteristics of the population that lives or circulates in the territory where the festival takes place? What value do residents or visitors attribute to the festival? How much importance is attached to the sociability associated with the festival?
4. *Religious aspects:* What set of values, symbols, and beliefs can be observed in the festival?
5. *Cultural aspects:* What is the set of expressions, symbols, cultural practices, and identities that can be observed at the festival? What are the unique cultural manifestations associated with the festival?
6. *Political aspects:* What are the political manifestations during the festival? What are the objectives of these manifestations during the festival?



For example, in *Lavagem do Bonfim* (washing the front steps of the Bonfim basilica), the identifying elements mainly involve three segments: religious, cultural, and political. These segments are linked to the history of the festival. The origin of the festival begins with the construction of the church and the arrival of the image of Nosso Senhor do Bonfim, which was brought from Portugal in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. With miracles attributed to Senhor do Bonfim, popular devotion grew stronger and the Devotion to Senhor do Bonfim was established. It became a civil society entity linked to the Catholic Church, formed mainly by members of the sugar cane production elite, which was so prosperous in the capital and the Recôncavo region at that time. The *Lavagem* began in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, with enslaved people being forced to wash and decorate the church for the mass that takes place at the end of the novena in praise of Senhor do Bonfim. The period of Catholic celebrations mobilized the entire community. In addition to the sacred rites, the festival also featured performances by philharmonic bands, samba circles, atabaques, and all kinds of popular manifestations.

Shortly thereafter, enslaved followers of Candomblé incorporated the celebration into their rituals. With religious syncretism, the figure of the saint was associated with Oxalá, a deity of African origin. All this exuberance was not viewed favorably by the civil and Catholic religious authorities of the time. As a result, the archdiocese prohibited the washing inside the church. From then on, the washing took place outside: on the steps of the churchyard. In this way, the festival became even more popular, attracting various cultural manifestations such as philharmonic bands, afoxés, groups with atabaques, capoeira circles, samba, as well as social and political representations, making the event a great celebration that gathers the entire population and attracts many tourists.

Specifically, the “*Lavagem*” – as we know it today – is closely linked to the image of the *baiana*. It was from the task of “washing,” imposed on enslaved black women, that Thursday became dissociated from Catholic celebrations and gave new meaning to the festival until the present day. It is difficult to think of the washing without remembering the image of the Bahian women with their adornments, jars of “*água de cheiro*” (scented water), and brooms.



The various segments that make up the festival manifest themselves differently through varied practices and symbols: (a) in the expressions and practices of Catholicism and African-based religions, (b) in cultural manifestations such as samba, afoxés, capoeira circles, (c) in various socio-political groups, such as unions that use the festival as a mechanism to amplify their agendas or politicians who parade during the official procession. Some elements have disappeared over time, such as the tradition of decorated animal-drawn carts and large electric trios that climbed the Bonfim hill during the 1990s (Documentary research, 2023).

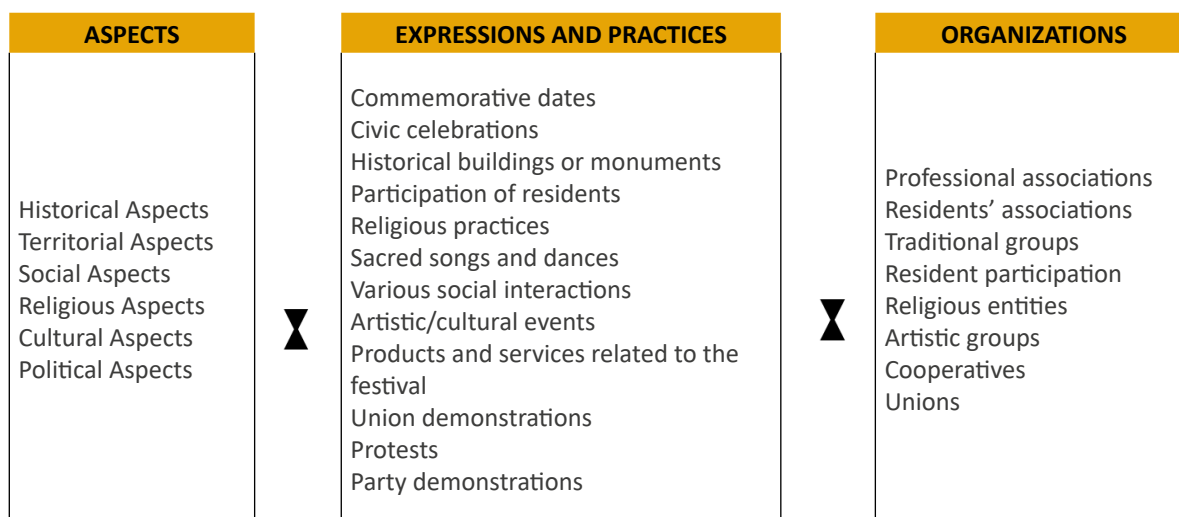
## **MAPPING OF ORGANIZATIONS ACTIVE IN THE TERRITORY OF THE POPULAR FESTIVAL**

The second activity in preparing for the governance of popular festivals is mapping the organizations active in the territory where the popular festival is held. During the implementation of this activity, the physical territory and its practices are the material and symbolic support of the festival. However, the organizations that operate in this territory are the essential human element of the popular manifestation.

The public authorities are responsible for producing this mapping. In methodological terms, adopting data from the previous mapping is the step usually suggested to map the organizations operating in the territory of the popular festival. The same data sources should be able to produce information about the organizations that are effectively involved in the festival. In fact, there is a correlation between the various aspects that underlie the identity of the festival and the elements, practices, and organizations that operate at the festival. Figure 2 proposes a graphic scheme that summarizes this idea.



Figure 2 | Example of correlation between aspects, expressions, practices, and organizations linked to the festival



Source: Research data (2023)

The carnival in Bahia is an example of this correlation between history, expressions, practices, and representation of organizations active in popular festivals (Documentary research, 2023). The trajectory of Carnival reveals how the evolution of expressions and practices (exemplified by the invention of the *trio elétrico* or the re-Africanization movement) transformed the festival into a more democratic event. This historical change required new forms of organizational representation: what was once managed by aristocratic clubs moved into the public and participatory sphere. This occurs when bodies such as FGM (Gregório de Matos Foundation), COMCAR (Municipal Carnival Council), and SALTUR (Salvador Tourism Company) take on the role of coordinating the multiple political, financial, and cultural interests that sustain the festival (Cabral; Krane; Dantas, 2013). In addition to institutional representatives, COMCAR includes representatives from *blocos* (*trio blocos*, *Afro blocos*, *afoxés*) and a range of carnival entities, as well as representatives from various associations and unions.

The material obtained from the mapping phase needs to be analyzed and triangulated to produce a result capable of encompassing the diverse, active organizations in the festival, regardless of their size, at the risk of not identifying representative organizations that are not visible for political or traditional reasons. Failure to identify representative organizations may generate dissatisfaction among relevant groups in the festival, in addition to undermining the legitimacy of the governance committee that will be formed.

## COMPOSITION OF THE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

The selection of organizations and representatives to compose the governance committee must also represent the diversity of skills, competencies, and interests in the object of governance. These representatives are directly linked to the organizations identified in the mapping of organizations. The individuals who will constitute the governance committee must possess qualities that allow the committee to consider institutional, geographical, cultural, and political aspects (Gash, 2016). The selection of these individuals must follow at least the following three types of criteria:

1. *Skills and competencies* – These skills should complement the skills and competencies of the members of the technical committees (executive committee and communications committee) that will be formed shortly thereafter. Objective: to make the governance committee as effective and efficient as possible.
2. *Representation* – Representation is essential to legitimize the committee in the eyes of society and the press. Objective: to ensure diversity and legitimacy of representatives regarding both the festival and the territory.
3. *Interest* – The individuals who make up the governance committee should represent formal and informal organizations that include the multiple interests that permeate the festival: institutional, geographical, economic, cultural, political, and the like. Objective: To create a network of partners representing diverse interests and emphasize the importance of voluntary participation by members throughout the collaboration process.

In this implementation, attention should be paid to the following: (a) Maximum impartiality should be sought during the selection process, (b) There is no fixed number of representatives on the governance committee (it should be as varied as the segments that make up the festival), and (c) The presence of government representatives is essential, especially in areas such as public health and safety, given the importance of technical recommendations.

For example, in the *Lavagem do Bonfim*, meetings to organize the festival are held with representatives of the Catholic Church (such as the rector of the Senhor do Bonfim Basilica and the judge of the Senhor do Bonfim Brotherhood), as well as representatives of government agencies (such as the municipal tourism agency, the Municipal Secretariat of Public Services and Violence Prevention, Superintendence for Control and Planning of Municipal Land Use, the Municipal Secretariat for Labor, Social Assistance, and Citizen Rights, the Secretariat for Transportation and Infrastructure, the Municipal Civil Defense, the Superintendence for Traffic and Transportation, and the Municipal Secretariat for Communication). The duties of the government agencies involved in



the festival are diverse: (a) licensing and supervision of carnival or folkloric entities, floats, and similar entities, (b) installation and operation of special services, boxes, bleachers, stages, and similar facilities, (c) noise emission levels, (d) display of advertising in general, (e) regulation of informal trade, (f) public transportation and traffic systems, (g) provision of health services, (h) health surveillance actions, and (i) urban cleaning and collection, treatment, and management of solid waste and waste of any kind. In the case of *Lavagem do Bonfim*, representatives linked to other segments of the festival do not participate in the decision-making processes.

During the governance process, dissatisfaction may arise among representatives and organizations that are important to the structure of the festival. In the case of *Lavagem do Bonfim*, cultural entities repeatedly complain about the organization of the route after the main procession leaves. After the main procession, the route is left without any order for the parade of social entities and cultural groups. “*It would be something simple to resolve*”, said a representative of a cultural entity that participates in the festival.

Also, in the case of the *Lavagem do Bonfim*, the representative of the association of *baianas de acarajé* expressed great dissatisfaction at not having been consulted in the process of recognizing the Festa do Bonfim as intangible heritage. Although the process of recognizing the festival as intangible heritage is separate from the organization of the festival, this representation of a symbol is closely associated with the baiana with her jug and broom. Thus, the baianas felt that they were not consulted on issues related to the festival.

In addition to damaging the image of those responsible for the festival, this type of dissatisfaction can lead to non-participation and even boycotts by certain groups. This creates a negative cycle that weakens the expressions and practices associated with the festival. This negative cycle reduces the points of identification associated with the public, which, as a result, decreases their participation in the festival. Over time, this intensifies the non-participation of young people, which can ultimately lead to the disappearance of the festival (Interviews and documentary research, 2022).

## COLLABORATIVE ESTABLISHMENT OF PRINCIPLES, RULES, PROCEDURES, AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

After the governance committee has been formed, it is necessary to establish, in a participatory manner, the principles, rules, procedures, and responsibilities of the governance committee. These elements should underpin the decision-making process of the members of the governance committee, legally constituting the governance committee. During the implementation of this activity, the collaborative governance criteria must be respected:

- Participants are directly involved in decision-making and are not merely “consulted” by public agencies.
- The forum is formally organized and meets collectively.
- The forum aims at consensus decision-making (even if consensus is not always reached).
- The focus is on collaboration in public policy and public management.

In applying this activity, the following sequence is suggested:

- a. Meetings for the collaborative creation of a charter of principles. This document will express the principles, values, and objectives of the governance committee.
- b. Meetings for the collaborative creation of internal regulations. This document constitutes the set of rules established to regulate the functioning of the governance of the popular festival, detailing its composition, respective existing competencies, and internal and external relationships.
- c. Consolidation of the governance committee’s bylaws and legal constitution. Only after the legal constitution of the governance committee does the institutional body that initiated the governance process transition from primary responsibility to co-participant as a member of the committee.

Formalization implies, in any case, an explicit and public strategy for the organization and legitimacy of the governance committee. Incentives to participate depend, to a certain extent, on stakeholders’ expectations regarding the actual results obtained from collaborative processes, especially regarding the balance of time and energy that collaboration requires. Members will withdraw from the collaborative process if they perceive that their own contribution is merely advisory or ceremonial (Futrell, 2003). Thus, the greatest risk during this activity is failing to identify and select central elements of the culture of collaboration due to concerns about excessive pragmatism and immediacy.



## COMPOSITION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

With the governance committee established and legally empowered to act, the technical committees must then be formed: the executive committee and the communications committee. These technical committees will be responsible for implementing the decisions made by the governance committee. The selection of their members must follow technical and operational criteria.

The technical committees should be composed of professionals with experience in their respective areas and should be remunerated. There is no predetermined number of members. Both the number of professionals and the areas of competence of the technical committees vary according to each structure and need. However, they should have administrative, legal, marketing, and action and project execution knowledge. The governance committee will deliberate at regular meetings, and the technical committees (executive and communication) will execute the demands and provide information and data to the governance committee for monitoring activities and decision-making. In this sense, the operational importance of the executive and communication committees presupposes a great deal of technical capacity (Figure 3).

**Figure 3** | Example of knowledge required for committee membership

DESIRABLE KNOWLEDGE	COMPLEMENTARY KNOWLEDGE	USEFUL INFORMATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public administration</li> <li>Financial administration</li> <li>Event management</li> <li>Accounting</li> <li>Tax legislation</li> <li>Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms</li> <li>Legislation on tax incentives for culture</li> <li>Organization, systems, and methods</li> <li>Quality management</li> <li>Information technology</li> <li>Tourism</li> <li>Marketing</li> <li>Communication vehicles and media in general</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>History of Brazil</li> <li>History of culture</li> <li>Sociology</li> <li>Folklore</li> <li>Architecture</li> <li>Urbanism</li> <li>Knowledge of mythology, dance, music, festivals, and regional traditions</li> <li>Physical geography</li> <li>Political geography</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sound systems</li> <li>Lighting</li> <li>Copyright</li> <li>Understanding how third sector entities work</li> <li>Consumer protection code</li> <li>Statute of the child and adolescent</li> </ul>

Source: Research data (2023)



Technical committees may be composed of various professional categories, such as public administrators, economists, social managers, cultural managers, accountants, lawyers, secretaries, statisticians, event producers, systems analysts, tourism experts, advertisers, journalists, public relations professionals, social media specialists, writers, and designers.

## **TRAINING FOR A COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE CULTURE**

The last activity in the preparation phase is to train committee members (governance, executive, and communication) in a collaborative governance culture. Relationships are the determining factor in collaborative governance. Efforts should be made to assess the degree of trust and mutual respect between potential partners before the collaborative governance structure is implemented (Ansell; Gash, 2008).

During training, it is necessary to work on concepts such as building trust, developing commitment, shared understanding, focus on shared results, and cultural identity as a matrix for development. The process will consist of workshops with concepts and theories, case studies, and group dynamics. For the application of the training, we suggest a minimum of five 50-minute classes divided as follows:

- Lesson 1: Collaborative governance and popular festivals (application of concepts and theories)
- Lesson 2: Collaborative governance of popular festivals (application of case studies for teaching)
- Lesson 3: Cultural identity in collaborative governance (application of case studies for teaching)
- Lesson 4: Implementation of collaborative governance of popular festivals: preparation phase (application of group dynamics)
- Lesson 5: Implementation of collaborative governance of popular festivals: strategy, execution, and evaluation phases (application of group dynamics)



At the end of the training, participants are expected to: (a) understand concepts and theories of collaborative governance and popular festivals, (b) understand how collaborative governance contributes to the realization of popular festivals, (c) understand the importance of cultural identity in popular festivals, (d) understand how cultural identity contributes to the governance of popular festivals, and (e) apply TGPop (popular festival governance technology, see Almeida Filho; Davel, 2024) in a practical context.

The greatest risk during this activity is that the content and learning process become vague, theoretical, and boring for participants. Concepts related to cultural identity have a degree of abstraction and diversity that can often lead to confusion in their understanding.

## **IDENTITY AND CONFLICT**

In addition to collaboration, two other dimensions are considered in the preparation of the governance of popular festivals: cultural identity and conflict. In preparation, identity explains how the public identifies with the festival. This collective identification is perceived through the various expressions, practices, and organizations that represent the festival in its symbolic, material, and human dimensions. This set of meanings is a collective construction of identity. The preparation phase focuses on identifying the elements that constitute the identity of the festival. The aim is to “bring together the subjects involved in the dynamics, production, circulation, and consumption of cultural goods, whose authenticity will only be preserved and maintained in their specific context,” recognizing both their symbolic value and their material support (Santana, 2011, p.41). The elements (expressions, practices, and organizations) in the mappings are the expression of the festival in symbolic (expressions), material (practices), and human (organizations) terms. In this way, it can awaken and/or reinforce the sense of belonging both public (who consume and participate in the festivals) and members of the governance committee. This can encourage more conscious and committed action, stimulating positive social interactions, facilitating the organizational process, and outlining the contours of this identity that manifests itself in multiple ways in popular festivals (Davel; Santos; Dantas, 2016).



Conflict is an element present in any collective process, constituting a pillar of democratic society (Hirschman, 1995). In the preparation phase, conflicts are essential during the formation of the governance committee. The conditions at the beginning of the collaboration can facilitate or discourage cooperation between stakeholders, between public authorities, and between public authorities and stakeholders. Stakeholders may have a history of conflict over a local issue with high emotional charge and consider others as “enemies.” They may also have different views on what they would like to achieve through collaboration. Tensions and conflicts may exist due to the diverse perspectives and interests in the governance committee, but its members must develop the ability to dialogue and creatively manage conflicts (Machado, 2016). Consequently, through mutual understanding and shared needs, they will be able to promote deliberation and debate and, in doing so, promote credibility and legitimacy among members.

For collaborative governance to become more than just a mixture of diverse interests and ideas, its members must, together, develop and adopt a collective consciousness separate from their own identities, preferences, and motivations (Gash, 2012). In this sense, conflict can play: (a) the role of exchange, in that governance committee members must be able to put themselves in each other’s shoes (or at least have the ability to imagine the other’s point of view) in order to arrive at a joint perspective, and (b) the role of innovation, in that non-traditional forms can emerge from the diverse perspectives in the governance committee.

## **CHALLENGES IN PREPARING FOR THE GOVERNANCE OF POPULAR FESTIVALS**

Preparation is a key phase in ensuring the success of the governance of popular festivals. Proper preparation directly affects the success of the implementation of the entire festival governance process. In this process, we can reflect on some challenges: exacerbated ambiguity, underestimated diversity, and weakened engagement. The first challenge that arises is the possibility of creating exacerbated ambiguity when defining cultural identity. As concrete as the idea of cultural identity may be, there is also an abstract element that involves the conceptualization of the term. Elements and practices in the festival are not universally absorbed and identified by the same group. Hence the need for consistent identifications during the mapping of expressions, practices, and organizations



that express the festival's identity. Care must be taken not to fail to identify fundamental elements, avoiding the inclusion of elements that are not so significant. The inclusion of these elements can generate a concept of cultural identity that is ambiguous or dubious in the collective perception, possibly leading to a lack of identification of the public with the festival.

Another challenge is the underrepresentation of the multiplicity of forces in the governance committee, that is, in the decision-making power during the festival's governance. The committee structure presupposes the legitimacy of powers through its members. The criteria used in the composition of the governance committee seek to create a plural, balanced, and representative range of the various interests at the festival. This diversity should be expressed in the members of the governance committee so that diversity is not underestimated, resulting in representation concentrated in a few organizations (usually the more traditional organizations that exert greater influence) to the detriment of smaller or more discreet organizations. Both under-representation and imbalance in representation compromise the success of the collaborative process and, consequently, the realization of the festival.

The third challenge in preparing the governance of popular festivals is maintaining the engagement of governance committee members despite the long duration of the phase. The level of engagement of participants is affected by the time factor, especially considering the voluntary nature of the participants. Often, some stakeholders do not have the time, energy, or freedom to engage in lengthy collaborative processes. They may also perceive that the investment of time will not bring an adequate return. To this end, the deliberative nature of the governance committee's representations should be reinforced. The perception that their interests have a strong influence on decision-making leads to better engagement and satisfaction during the process.



## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Our research aimed to systematize a phase of utmost importance for the governance of popular festivals, organizing their activities and describing the purposes and risks inherent to each activity. In this way, it seeks to gather aspects related to governance, now adapted to the organizational specificities of popular festivals. This approach is often overlooked both by public managers responsible for organizing popular festivals in their territories and by researchers in the fields of cultural management (who are more focused on individualized cultural organizational models) and popular festivals (who are more focused on anthropological and sociological aspects).

One potential impact of the research is to alert public authorities (especially municipal governments) to structure collaborative models together with civil society to act in complex decision-making processes that necessarily require dialogue with various sectors of civil society. Most of the activities involved in preparing the governance of popular festivals are led by public authorities, more specifically by executive bodies linked to culture and tourism, such as municipal and state agencies and departments. This predisposition requires interest, organization, and funding. It is assumed that governance will seek the means of financing for its maintenance and for the festival itself. However, these results will only be obtained in the edition following the implementation of governance. The financing of the implementation of popular festival governance technology (TGPop) is the responsibility of the public authorities.

The research aims to describe the preparation phase of popular festival governance, detailing the activities that comprise it, integrating its dimensions of collaboration, cultural identity, and conflict. Thus, it emphasizes that the preparation process is central to the collaborative governance of popular festivals. In effect, it systematizes the knowledge necessary for public managers involved in the organization of popular festivals, highlighting the crucial aspects for successful governance. In practical terms, the initial phase of the governance of popular festivals paves the way for the positive development of the following phases, whether in raising awareness within the governmental structure where the collaborative process will begin, or in creating a collaborative management culture that can be adapted to other initiatives that require cooperation between public and non-governmental entities. In conceptual terms, the preparation of the governance of popular festivals allows various social representations to jointly construct concepts and practices that (re)signify values, (re)affirming the identification and belonging of the several groups among themselves and with the territory they occupy.



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