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Urban Integration in Social Housing in Brazil: A Comparative Critical Analysis of Methodological Evaluation Tools

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Inserção Urbana em Habitação de Interesse Social no Brasil: análise crítica comparativa de ferramentas metodológicas de avaliação

RESUMO

Objetivo – Analisar metodologias, de modo crítico e comparativo, utilizadas na avaliação da inserção urbana em empreendimentos de Habitação de Interesse Social (HIS), identificando convergências, divergências e lacunas na incorporação de dimensões relacionadas à mobilidade, acessibilidade, urbanidade e segregação socioespacial no contexto brasileiro.

Metodologia – A pesquisa caracteriza-se como qualitativa, exploratória e de natureza bibliográfica. O estudo foi desenvolvido a partir de levantamento bibliográfico e análise crítico-comparativa de cinco metodologias amplamente utilizadas no contexto brasileiro: Ferramenta de Avaliação de Inserção Urbana (FAIU), Matriz Metodológica do ITDP, Avaliação Pós-Ocupação (APO), Regiões de Influência das Cidades (REGIC) e Cadernos Minha Casa + Sustentável. A comparação foi realizada com base em categorias analíticas derivadas da literatura sobre inserção urbana, contemplando aspectos relacionados à mobilidade, acessibilidade, urbanidade, escala territorial e desigualdades socioespaciais.

Originalidade/relevância – Embora amplamente utilizadas em estudos urbanos e habitacionais, as metodologias de avaliação da inserção urbana são frequentemente aplicadas de forma isolada, dificultando a compreensão de suas complementaridades, limites e potencialidades analíticas. O estudo avança ao sistematizar e comparar diferentes instrumentos de avaliação da inserção urbana, evidenciando que distintas concepções de inserção urbana influenciam os resultados produzidos por cada metodologia.

Resultados – Os resultados demonstram que as metodologias analisadas convergem na valorização de indicadores relacionados à mobilidade, acessibilidade e acesso a serviços urbanos. Entretanto, apresentam diferenças significativas quanto à escala de análise, à natureza dos indicadores empregados e à capacidade de captar aspectos qualitativos da experiência urbana. Observou-se ainda que nenhuma das ferramentas contempla, de forma isolada, todas as dimensões associadas à inserção urbana, indicando a necessidade de abordagens complementares e multiescalares.

Contribuições teóricas/metodológicas – A pesquisa contribui para o avanço das discussões sobre inserção urbana ao organizar um quadro comparativo de metodologias aplicadas a HIS, permitindo identificar convergências, lacunas analíticas e possibilidades de articulação entre diferentes instrumentos de avaliação.

Contribuições sociais e ambientais – Os resultados oferecem subsídios para pesquisadores, gestores públicos e profissionais envolvidos no planejamento urbano e habitacional, contribuindo para a formulação de políticas mais inclusivas, sustentáveis e alinhadas aos princípios do direito à cidade.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Inserção urbana. Habitação social. Mobilidade urbana.

Urban Integration in Social Housing in Brazil: A Comparative Critical Analysis of Methodological Evaluation Tools

ABSTRACT

Objective – To critically and comparatively analyze methodologies used to assess urban integration in Social Housing (SH) developments, identifying convergences, divergences, and gaps in the incorporation of dimensions related to mobility, accessibility, urbanity, and socio-spatial segregation within the Brazilian context.

Methodology – This research is characterized as qualitative, exploratory, and bibliographic in nature. The study was developed through a bibliographic survey and a critical-comparative analysis of five methodologies widely used in Brazil: the Urban Integration Assessment Tool (FAIU), the ITDP Methodological Matrix, Post-Occupancy Evaluation (POE), the Regions of Influence of Cities (REGIC), and the Minha Casa + Sustentável Guidelines. The comparison was based on analytical categories derived from the literature on urban integration, encompassing aspects related to mobility, accessibility, urbanity, territorial scale, and socio-spatial inequalities.

Originality/Relevance – Although widely used in urban and housing studies, these methodologies are often applied independently, limiting the understanding of their complementarities, constraints, and analytical potential. This study advances the field by systematizing and critically comparing different assessment tools for urban integration, highlighting their strengths and limitations in analyzing the relationship between housing and the city.

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Results – The findings indicate that the analyzed methodologies converge in their emphasis on indicators related to mobility, accessibility, and access to urban services. However, significant differences were identified regarding the scale of analysis, the nature of the indicators employed, and the ability to capture qualitative aspects of urban experience. It was also observed that none of the tools, when used individually, encompasses all dimensions associated with urban integration, indicating the need for complementary and multi-scalar approaches.

Theoretical/Methodological Contributions – This research contributes to the advancement of discussions on urban integration by organizing a comparative framework of methodologies applied to social housing, enabling the identification of convergences, analytical gaps, and possibilities for articulation among different assessment instruments.

Social and Environmental Contributions – The results provide support for researchers, public managers, and professionals involved in urban and housing planning, contributing to the formulation of more inclusive, sustainable, and city-oriented public policies.

KEYWORDS: Urban integration. Social housing. Urban mobility.

Inserción Urbana en la Vivienda de Interés Social en Brasil: Análisis Crítico Comparativo de Herramientas Metodológicas de Evaluación

RESUMEN

Objetivo – Analizar de manera crítica y comparativa las metodologías utilizadas para evaluar la inserción urbana en proyectos de Vivienda de Interés Social (VIS), identificando convergencias, divergencias y vacíos en la incorporación de dimensiones relacionadas con la movilidad, la accesibilidad, la urbanidad y la segregación socioespacial en el contexto brasileño.

Metodología – La investigación se caracteriza por ser cualitativa, exploratoria y de naturaleza bibliográfica. El estudio se desarrolló a partir de un levantamiento bibliográfico y un análisis crítico-comparativo de cinco metodologías ampliamente utilizadas en Brasil: la Herramienta de Evaluación de la Inserción Urbana (FAIU), la Matriz Metodológica del ITDP, la Evaluación Postocupación (APO), las Regiones de Influencia de las Ciudades (REGIC) y los Cuadernos Minha Casa + Sustentável. La comparación se realizó con base en categorías analíticas derivadas de la literatura sobre inserción urbana, considerando aspectos relacionados con la movilidad, la accesibilidad, la urbanidad, la escala territorial y las desigualdades socioespaciales.

Originalidad/Relevancia – Aunque estas metodologías son ampliamente utilizadas en estudios urbanos y habitacionales, suelen aplicarse de manera aislada, lo que limita la comprensión de sus complementariedades, limitaciones y potencialidades analíticas. Este estudio avanza en la temática al sistematizar y comparar críticamente diferentes instrumentos de evaluación de la inserción urbana, evidenciando sus fortalezas y limitaciones para analizar la relación entre vivienda y ciudad.

Resultados – Los resultados muestran que las metodologías analizadas convergen en la valoración de indicadores relacionados con la movilidad, la accesibilidad y el acceso a servicios urbanos. Sin embargo, presentan diferencias significativas en cuanto a la escala de análisis, la naturaleza de los indicadores utilizados y la capacidad de captar aspectos cualitativos de la experiencia urbana. Asimismo, se observó que ninguna de las herramientas contempla, de manera aislada, todas las dimensiones asociadas a la inserción urbana, lo que evidencia la necesidad de enfoques complementarios y multiescalares.

Contribuciones Teóricas/Metodológicas – La investigación contribuye al avance de las discusiones sobre inserción urbana al organizar un marco comparativo de metodologías aplicadas a la Vivienda de Interés Social, permitiendo identificar convergencias, vacíos analíticos y posibilidades de articulación entre diferentes instrumentos de evaluación.

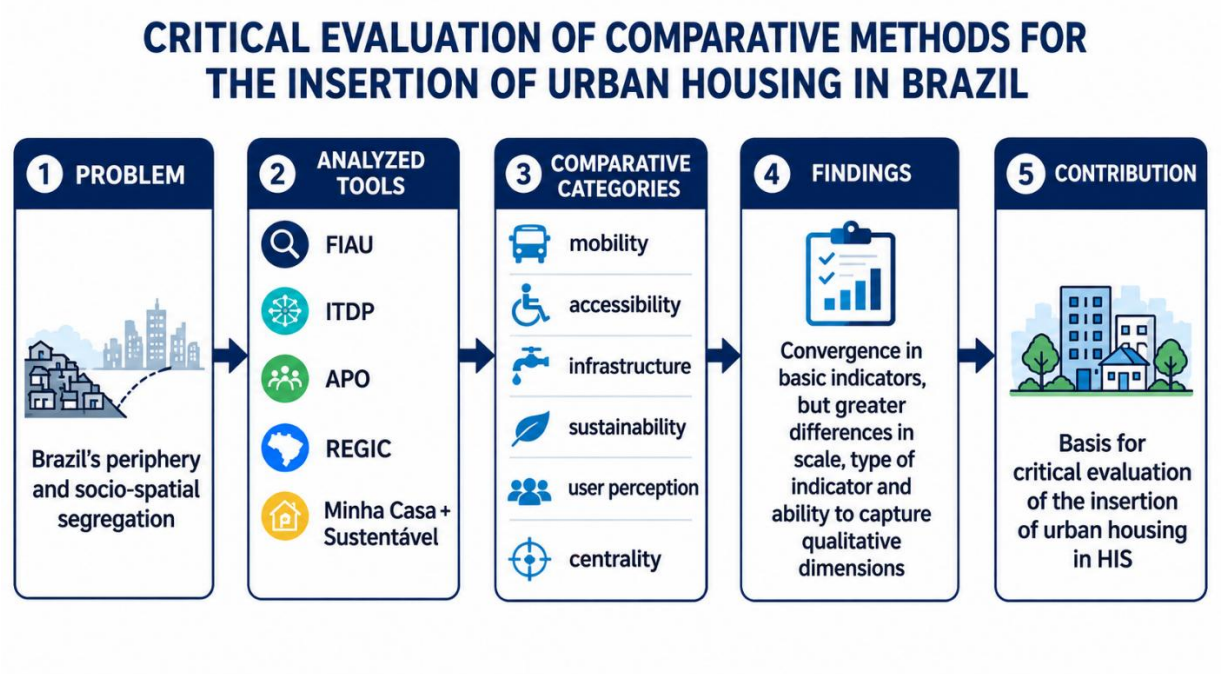
Contribuciones Sociales y Ambientales – Los resultados ofrecen insumos para investigadores, gestores públicos y profesionales vinculados a la planificación urbana y habitacional, contribuyendo a la formulación de políticas más inclusivas, sostenibles y alineadas con los principios del derecho a la ciudad.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Inserción urbana. Vivienda social. Movilidad urbana.

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RESUMO GRÁFICO



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1 INTRODUCTION

Throughout the last decades, the Brazilian urbanization process has consolidated itself in an unequal manner. This has occurred due to the way cities have expanded to further areas, and the urban infrastructure has been distributed in an irregular manner. According to Santos (2000), such a dynamic has occurred in a selective and exclusionary manner, producing territories that are characterized by different access levels to infrastructure, urban services, and socioeconomic opportunities, which has contributed to the formation of areas with distinct patterns of urban integration and access to the cities' available benefits.

In this context, the Social Interest Housing (SIH; in Portuguese, the acronym is HIS) has begun to play a central role in public policies aimed at reducing the populational deficit, especially after the implementation of the Program Minha Casa Minha Vida (PMCMV) in 2009. Even though the program has contributed to an increase in the access to formal housing, many studies indicate that a significant part of the ventures were implemented in peripheral areas, characterized by the low offering of public equipment and essential services. This configuration is associated with the very own production logic in urban ground, where it tends to direct the lower-income population to the least valued areas of the city while reinforcing social-spatial segregation processes (Maricato, 2011).

The literature regarding social housing highlights that the quality of the housing cannot only be understood as the physical characteristics of the housing units. The location of ventures and their relation to the urban fabric influences the population's access conditions to the public services, opportunities, and benefits. Considering this perspective, Rolnik (2015) emphasizes that precarious housing does not only involve the lack of proper housing but also the access limitations to the city and its opportunities.

This understanding widens the housing quality study upon consideration that it must be analyzed in articulation with the territory where it is located. This idea approaches the notion of a right to the city proposed by Lefebvre (1968); according to them, the urban space must guarantee effective conditions for participation in and enjoyment of urban life. Besides this, Harvey's (1980) work argues that the inequalities produced by the urbanization process tend to restrict the access of vulnerable groups to its infrastructure and its collectively produced benefits. So, the urban insertion process has been recognized as a relevant dimension to the habitational evaluation, encompassing aspects related to mobility, accessibility, walkability, proximity to public equipment, and integration into the consolidated urban fabric.

Despite the advances surrounding the discussions regarding housing quality, many HIS evaluations still prioritize the venue's physical aspects, giving far less attention with regard to the relation between housing and territory. In response to this limitation, methods such as FAIU, the ITDP Matrix, APO, the Minha Casa + Sustentável notebooks, and REGIC were developed, focused on the evaluation of the insertion of housing venues under different perspectives.

Even though they are commonly used, these methods usually are applied in isolation to each other; thus, the number of studies that critically analyze their contextual differences, application scales, potentialities, and limitations. This is the context where the present work is inserted. As a consequence, there are few works that seek to understand and compare how these tools interpret the urban insertion process and in what manner they can answer the territorial complexity present in the Brazilian context.

From this perspective, this study seeks to answer the following question: In what ways do different methodological tools assess urban integration in HIS developments, and what are their contributions to—and limitations for—interpreting territorial dynamics in Brazil? Thus, this article's objective consists in critically analyzing the selected methods identifying their applicability scales, analytical categories, potentialities, and limitations to the evaluation of the urban insertion in housing venues.

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To understand the scope of this study, the article is structured into four stages. The first presents the theoretical framework, covering concepts related to tools for analyzing urban integration. Next, the methodological procedures adopted for the comparative analysis of the selected tools are described. Subsequently, the results obtained are presented and discussed. Finally, the concluding remarks are offered, highlighting the study's contributions, limitations, and potential avenues for further research

This research is expected to contribute to deepening discussions on urban integration and housing quality, as well as to the critical systematization of the tools used to evaluate social housing (HIS). Furthermore, it aims to provide a foundation for future research and for the formulation of housing policies that are more closely aligned with urban planning.

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2 REFERENCIAL TEÓRICO

2.1 The urban insertion

The urban insertion process constitutes an important dimension to understanding the HIS quality, once the effectiveness of housing policies does not depend only on the provision of housing but also on the way the house venues interact with the urban structure. Under this perspective, the housing analysis surpasses the physical aspects of the housing unit, and it starts to consider factors related to the population's access to the urban structure, public equipment, job opportunities, and transportation systems.

The literature concerning housing and urban planning demonstrates that the location of the venues exerts significant influence on the living conditions of the benefited population. Rolnik (2015) highlights that the housing issues cannot be reduced to the access to formal housing, since the permanence in the city also involves the ability to enjoy its urban benefits. This understanding widens the concept of housing quality upon the incorporation of elements that extrapolate the housing unit's limits and reinforces the need to evaluate the integration conditions between housing and city.

In the Brazilian context, such discussions gain relevance in the face of the recurring implementation of housing venues in peripheral areas. Maricato (2011) argues that the housing production, destined to the low-income population has been associated with the occupation of distant areas from the urban centers, favoring the maintenance of this social-spatial segregation. More than a matter of location, this process evidences how the unequal distribution of infrastructure and of the urban services can increase the obstacles in accessing the city.

The relation between housing and territory is also highlighted by Ferreira (2012); their work defends that the habitational production must be studied as a part of the city's own building process. In this same direction, Cirino and Arruda (2024) highlight that the analysis of the urban insertion allows them to evaluate in a more comprehensive manner the impacts that the housing policies have on the quality of life of their residents. Together these contributions indicate that the evaluation of venues must not restrict itself to the building's characteristics, but it must also consider its capacity to be integrated into the urban fabric and access to the structures necessary to daily life.

This understanding is deepened by Linke et al. (2016), who associate the urban insertion to the articulation between daily mobility and the use of the land. The authors highlight that the location of the housing venues influences the capacity of the residents to access jobs, services, and other urban activities. Thus, the urban insertion process can be understood mutidimensionally, where it behaves not only as the housing's geographic position but also as their moving conditions and access provided by the urban space.

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In short, the urban insertion can be understood as the territorial expansion of the housing quality, once it evidences the conditions on how the venues are connected to the city's available opportunities, services, and infrastructure. In this perspective the evaluation of the housing venues is not restricted just by the buildings' physical characteristics, and it starts to consider the relations between housing territory and the access to the urban benefits.

Thus, urban insertion serves as an analytical category capable of revealing how different patterns of location and territorial integration influence the population's living conditions. This understanding justifies the development of specific methodologies for its assessment and underpins the comparative analysis of methodological tools conducted in this research.

2.2 Social-spatial segregation

The understanding that the urban insertion requires the analysis of the social-spatial segregation processes that accompany the formation and expansion of cities. Even though the urbanization process has promoted the economic growth and extension of the urban infrastructure, its benefits were distributed in an unequal manner between the many social groups within, thus producing territories that are marked by distinct access conditions to urban resources and services.

In this context, the social-spatial segregation can be studied by the materialization of the inequalities of the societal groups in the urban territory. To Castells (1983), this phenomenon expresses how social, economical, and political inequalities manifest themselves in the organization of the urban space. This interpretation highlights that the cities' organizations do not occur in a neutral manner but are influenced by the social relations that condition the access to urban land and the benefits produced by the urban development.

Vilaça's (2001) contribution expands this discussion by indicating that segregation does not limit itself to the physical separation of social groups. The author highlights that the location of individuals in the urban structure influences their access conditions to the infrastructure, services, and the city's central features. In this manner, the location stops representing just a geographical position, and it becomes a factor capable of expanding or restricting the access to the urban advantage.

This perspective approaches Harvey's (1980) reflections, to whom the urban space results in the economical and political processes that distribute investments and resources unequally across its territory. Sob essa lógica, determined areas concentrate infrastructure, opportunities, and economical value, while others remain on the margins of these benefits. Thus, the social-spatial segregation must not be understood as a natural condition of cities but as an expression of processes that produce and reproduce inequalities in the urban space.

In the Brazilian context, Santos (2000) contributed to this discussion by highlighting that this social-spatial segregation constitutes part of the city's very own territorial organizational logic. That way, the unequal distribution of the infrastructure and urban services transforms the territorial distance into an access barrier to the city, limiting a part of the population to the possibility of them benefiting from the urbanization process.

The contributions from Maricato (2011) and Rolnik (2015) reinforce this interpretation by demonstrating that the habitational production directed to the low-income population has been associated with the occupation of peripheral areas. More than a location issue, this process evidences how the conditions to access the infrastructure, mobility, and urban services influence the insertion of residents in the city's dynamic. In this sense, the segregation emerges not only due to the distances between social groups, but also by the differences in the available opportunities in each territory.

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Therefore, socio-spatial segregation can be interpreted as a process of producing and reproducing urban inequalities, manifested through the differentiated distribution of the population, investments, and opportunities across a territory. From this perspective, the location of social groups influences not only their position within the urban space but also their potential access to the resources and benefits generated by the city. Thus, socio-spatial segregation reveals how the relationship between housing and territory can either expand or restrict a population's participation in urban life. This understanding is essential for studies on urban integration, as it allows for an analysis of how various methodologies can identify and interpret the inequalities present within the urban space.

2.3 Mobility and Accessibility

The inequalities produced by the social-spatial segregation processes do not only manifest in the population's distribution in the territory but also in the access possibilities to the urban resources. The location of the residences, the services, the public equipment, and the job opportunities influence the integration conditions of the population regarding the urban dynamic. In this context the concepts of mobility and accessibility occupy a central position in the urban analyses, since they allow understanding of how the city's spatial structure conditions the ways to get around and access the available resources in the territory

Although they are used in many cases as equivalent concepts, mobility and accessibility correspond to distinct dimensions of the urban dynamic. Mobility refers to the capacity of people to move around with the available transportation modes. This concept involves factors such as the road infrastructure, collective transport, active modes of travel, and the distribution of urban activities. In this perspective, the mobility does not limit itself to the physical movement between different points in the city, but it is expressed by the conditions that favor or restrict the ways the population can travel around in their daily lives (Vasconcellos, 2012).

In the Brazilian context, the Urban Mobility National Policy (PNMU), instituted by the law nº 12.587/2012, associates mobility with democratic access to the city and the promotion of social inclusion. This interpretation expands the concept beyond the operational dimension of transport and highlights its connection to the "right to the city." Conditions for getting around directly influence access to employment, education, healthcare, and other urban resources; consequently, inequalities in the provision of transport tend to result in inequalities in access to urban opportunities.

However, the mere capacity to travel does not, in itself, guarantee adequate conditions for accessing the city. A territory may possess transport infrastructure and facilitate regular movement, yet still present barriers to access if jobs, services, and urban facilities remain concentrated in areas far from the population. This situation highlights a limitation in analyses focused exclusively on mobility, as the occurrence of travel does not necessarily mean that individuals are able to access urban opportunities in a satisfactory manner. It is in this regard that the concept of accessibility becomes relevant to understanding urban dynamics.

According to Hansen (1959), accessibility corresponds to the potential for interaction between different locations, resulting from the relationship between the placement of activities and the means available to reach them. The author's contribution lies in demonstrating that access to urban opportunities depends not only on the possibility of travel but also on how activities and services are distributed across the territory.

From this perspective, accessibility allows for an assessment of the actual conditions for accessing urban resources, incorporating elements that go beyond the mere act of traveling. Although Hansen emphasizes the relationship between location and urban opportunities, the discussion on accessibility also encompasses dimensions related to inclusion and equity.

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In this sense, the Law nº 13.146/2015, which establishes the Statute of the Person with Disabilities. By defining accessibility as the condition that allows for the reaching and use of urban spaces, transport, and facilities with safety and autonomy, the legislation introduces dimensions related to inclusion and equity. In this way, accessibility is no longer understood merely as a matter of movement; instead, it comes to encompass the conditions necessary for different social groups to enjoy the city on equal terms.

The dialogue between Hansen (1959) and Gehl (2010) allows for a broader understanding of the concept. While Hansen emphasizes the relationship between location and urban opportunities, Gehl directs his analysis toward the everyday experience of individuals within urban spaces. Aspects such as walkability, the quality of routes, the ability to linger, and the use of public spaces all influence the conditions for accessing the city. Based on this perspective, it becomes clear that accessibility cannot be reduced merely to indicators of distance or travel time, as the quality of the urban environment also shapes how people move through and utilize the city's spaces.

In this same direction, Newman and Kenworthy (1999) defend that more sustainable cities are not those that allow for covering greater distances in less time, but rather those capable of bringing housing, employment, services, and urban facilities closer together. The authors' contribution lies in shifting the focus from transport efficiency to the spatial organization of the city. From this perspective, reducing the need for long-distance travel becomes just as important as the provision of transport infrastructure, reinforcing the relationship between accessibility, land use, and urban integration.

Synthesizing these approaches reveals that mobility and accessibility are distinct yet complementary concepts. Mobility allows for the analysis of the conditions under which a population travels, while accessibility makes it possible to evaluate whether these movements result in effective access to urban resources. This distinction is particularly relevant to studies on urban integration, as it highlights that the integration of developments into the urban fabric depends as much on circulation conditions as it does on the location of urban opportunities.

Based on the contributions discussed, it is evident that accessibility provides a more comprehensive understanding of urban integration than an analysis of mobility alone. This is because accessibility simultaneously considers the location of urban activities and the conditions required to reach them. Consequently, housing developments may offer public transport options yet remain poorly integrated into the city if residents are still required to travel long distances to access employment, education, healthcare, and other urban services.

In the field of social housing (HIS), this discussion is of particular importance. Developments in peripheral areas may be served by public transport, yet still necessitate long daily commutes to access employment, public services, and other urban opportunities. In such cases, mobility exists, but accessibility remains limited. This situation demonstrates that any assessment of urban integration must account for both travel conditions and the territorial distribution of urban resources, as both factors influence the population's ability to take advantage of what the city has to offer.

For this reason, indicators related to public transport, road connectivity, walkability, proximity to public facilities, and land-use diversity have been incorporated into various urban assessment methodologies. Rather than merely measuring movement, these indicators help us understand how the location of a development influences the population's access to urban opportunities. In this sense, mobility and accessibility constitute fundamental dimensions for the comparative analysis of urban integration tools, as they allow for an assessment of the extent to which each methodology is capable of capturing the relationships between location, movement, and access to the resources offered by the city.

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2.4 Urbanity

Conditions of mobility and accessibility influence how individuals relate to the city. However, the mere presence of transport infrastructure, public facilities, or urban services does not, in itself, guarantee the quality of the urban experience. In this context, the concept of "urbanity" emerges as an analytical category capable of understanding how the configuration of urban space fosters coexistence, social interaction, and the collective appropriation of the city.

Although there is no single definition for the term, urbanity is associated with the capacity of urban spaces to foster encounters, social coexistence, a diversity of uses, and interaction among different social groups. The presence of people in public spaces is a central element of urban life, as it facilitates the formation of social bonds and expands the possibilities for the collective use of the city. (Whyte, 1980; Gehl, 2010; Jacobs, 2011). From this perspective, urban quality depends as much on the physical characteristics of the city as it does on the social relations that develop within it.

A second approach interprets urbanity based on the relationship between urban form and social behavior. Lynch (2011) argues that characteristics such as legibility, connectivity, and orientation influence the way individuals perceive and use the city. In agreement, Holanda (2002) highlights that certain spatial configurations foster circulation, co-presence, and everyday encounters. Although they draw from different frames of reference, both suggest that urbanity depends not only on social practices but also on the spatial conditions that make such practices possible. From this perspective, urban form ceases to be merely a physical backdrop and instead functions as an active element in the production of social interactions.

Beyond its morphological and behavioral dimensions, urbanity has also been understood from a social and political perspective. Lefebvre (2001) conceives the city as a space for encounters, coexistence, and collective appropriation, arguing that the "right to the city" entails more than just physical access to the territory. For the author, participation in urban life is a fundamental element of the urban experience. This interpretation influences the reflections developed by Maricato (2011), Bonduki (2014) and Rolnik (2015), which associate the construction of more inclusive cities with equitable access to infrastructure, urban services, and public spaces. This approach highlights that urbanity depends not only on the form of spaces or the intensity of social encounters but also on the conditions that enable different groups to effectively enjoy the city.

Taken together, these contributions suggest that urbanity emerges from the interplay between spatial characteristics, social practices, and the conditions for participating in urban life. In this sense, urbanity cannot be reduced merely to the presence of people in public spaces or to the quality of the urban form viewed in isolation. Its construction depends on the urban environment's capacity to foster encounters, encourage people to linger, promote a diversity of uses, and enable individuals to participate in urban life. This interpretation broadens the study of urban integration, as it allows for an assessment not only of where developments are located but also of the extent to which they are integrated into the city's daily dynamics.

This perspective makes urbanity highly relevant to the study of urban integration. While mobility relates to the conditions for movement, and accessibility concerns the ability to reach urban activities, services, and opportunities, urbanity provides a way to evaluate how these conditions manifest in the everyday experience of inhabitants. In other words, while mobility and accessibility indicate the possibilities for reaching the city, urbanity offers insight into the conditions for lingering, appropriation, and interaction that urban spaces provide to their users.

In the context of social housing (HIS), this discussion takes on particular significance. Developments may offer satisfactory conditions for mobility and accessibility, yet still provide low levels of "urbanity" if situated in areas with limited diversity of land use, a scarcity of high-quality public spaces, or few opportunities for social interaction. In such cases, physical

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integration into the urban fabric does not necessarily translate into integration into urban life. This observation highlights that any analysis of urban integration must consider not only aspects related to movement and access but also the conditions that facilitate residents' everyday engagement with and appropriation of the city.

Based on the discussions presented, it is clear that urban integration is a multidimensional phenomenon, the understanding of which encompasses aspects related to mobility, accessibility, urbanity, and socio-spatial segregation. While mobility and accessibility pertain to the conditions for movement and access to urban opportunities, urbanity allows for an assessment of the quality of the relationships established between individuals and the city's spaces. Socio-spatial segregation, in turn, serves as an indicator that these conditions are distributed unevenly across the territory. Consequently, these concepts constitute fundamental analytical categories for evaluating urban integration and for comparing the methodologies examined in this study.

2.5 Urban insertion analysis tools

Understanding the concept of urban insertion as a multidimensional phenomenon—linked to conditions of mobility, accessibility, urbanity, and socio-spatial segregation—has spurred the development of various methodologies aimed at assessing the relationship between housing and the city. These tools seek to translate theoretical concepts into evaluative indicators capable of measuring the extent to which housing developments are integrated into the urban fabric. However, these methodologies differ in terms of their scale of analysis, the criteria employed, and the specific dimensions they prioritize, reflecting distinct interpretations of the very concept of urban insertion.

Among the methodologies developed for the scale of housing developments, the FAIU—created by LabCidade/FAUUSP and the ITDP (2014)—stands out. This methodology is based on the premise that the quality of urban integration is directly linked to the population's access to urban services, public facilities, and transport systems. To this end, it structures its analysis around three main axes—transport, commerce, public facilities, services, and urban design and integration—enabling an assessment of the degree to which these developments are integrated into their immediate surroundings.

Also operating at a local scale, the APO (Post-Occupancy Evaluation) framework—systematized by Ornstein and Roméro (2003)—adopts a distinct perspective. While methodologies such as FAIU focus on spatial and territorial attributes, the APO approach incorporates the residents' own experiences into the evaluation process, taking into account aspects related to the functionality of spaces, environmental comfort, residential satisfaction, and the ways in which the built environment is appropriated. In this sense, the methodology broadens the analysis of urban integration by including subjective dimensions that are typically absent from evaluations based solely on spatial indicators.

At a broader territorial scale, the ITDP's (2014) methodological matrix proposes an analysis rooted in the interplay between urban mobility, accessibility, and land use. Inspired by the principles of Transit-Oriented Development (TOD), this methodology is based on the understanding that access to urban opportunities depends on the connection between transport and land use. To this end, it employs indicators related to the provision of public transport, street connectivity, walkability, urban density, and the diversity of land uses, making it possible to assess how the urban structure influences the population's ability to access the city.

The My + Sustainable House Notebooks (Brasil, 2017) broaden this discussion by incorporating aspects related to environmental sustainability, urban infrastructure, community facilities, and the quality of the surrounding environment. The methodology is based on the

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understanding that the quality of housing does not depend solely on the characteristics of the dwelling itself. Therefore, it incorporates indicators related to urban infrastructure, community facilities, and the quality of the surroundings, proposing an integrated perspective that links housing with the city.

Although it falls within the scope of the methodology for analyzing urban integration, the REGIC—developed by the IBGE (2018)—operates at a regional scale and is not directly aimed at evaluating housing developments. Its focus lies in identifying levels of urban centrality and the patterns of influence established among Brazilian cities, thereby providing insight into the position of municipalities within the national urban network. While not designed to assess housing projects, the REGIC offers valuable input for understanding the structural opportunities and limitations inherent in the regional context where such developments are situated, highlighting territorial inequalities regarding access to specialized services, employment, and more complex urban functions.

It can be observed, therefore, that the methodologies used to analyze urban integration operate at different scales and adopt distinct analytical premises to understand the relationship between housing and the city. While some focus on evaluating the immediate surroundings of a development, others incorporate dimensions related to mobility, sustainability, user perception, or regional linkages. This methodological diversity highlights that urban integration is a multidimensional phenomenon, the understanding of which requires the integration of various analytical tools. Consequently, a critical-comparative analysis of these tools is essential for identifying their potential, limitations, and contributions to the assessment of social interest housing (HIS)—a subject that will be explored in greater depth in this study. Thus, conducting a critical-comparative analysis of these methodologies makes it possible to examine how each tool incorporates the various theoretical dimensions under discussion, thereby revealing convergences, gaps, and strengths in the assessment of urban integration within social interest housing developments.

3 METHODOLOGY

This research is qualitative, exploratory, and bibliographic in nature, aiming to conduct a critical-comparative analysis of methodologies used to evaluate the urban integration of social housing (HIS) developments. A qualitative approach was adopted to allow for the interpretation of theoretical assumptions, analytical categories, and the potential of the selected tools, while the exploratory nature stems from the attempt to understand the various ways the concept of urban integration is operationalized in the literature.

The methodologies analyzed were identified through a bibliographic survey of scientific articles, technical reports, institutional documents, and government publications concerning urban integration, urban planning, and social housing within the Brazilian context. This process enabled the mapping of methodological instruments used to assess the relationship between housing and the city, facilitating the selection of tools that were both frequently used and aligned with the research objectives.

During the survey, various urban assessment methodologies and instruments were identified. However, for the purposes of this study, inclusion criteria were applied, considering (i) the availability of complete methodological documentation for consultation; (ii) the presence of indicators related to urban integration or related dimensions—such as mobility, accessibility, urban infrastructure, territorial integration, and urban quality; and (iii) the feasibility of direct or indirect application to projects under the Programa Minha Casa Minha Vida (PMCMV), as well

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as the methodology's relevance to analyzing the relationship between housing and the city across different territorial scales.

Based on these criteria, five methodologies were selected: the Urban Insertion Evaluation Tool (FAIU), developed by the LabCidade/FAUUSP in partnership with the ITDP; the ITDP Matrix; the My + Sustainable House Notebooks elaborated by the Ministry of the Cities; the Evaluation Post-Occupation (APO); and the research of the Regions of Urban Influence (REGIC). Although other instruments for urban and housing assessment exist, the selected methodologies were deemed representative due to their frequent appearance in specialized literature and their inclusion of diverse perspectives for analyzing urban integration. Furthermore, these tools encompass various territorial scales—ranging from individual housing developments and their immediate surroundings to the relationships formed within a regional urban network—thereby enabling a comparative analysis that reflects the different approaches to urban integration found in Brazilian literature.

The analysis was structured in two stages. The first stage involved characterizing the tools based on their institutional origin, objectives, scale of application, and the types of indicators employed. The second stage consisted of a critical-comparative analysis grounded in theoretical categories such as urban integration, mobility, accessibility, socio-spatial segregation, and urbanity.

To facilitate this comparison, the following analytical criteria were established: (a) the territorial scale of application; (b) the capacity to assess urban mobility; (c) the capacity to assess accessibility to urban services and opportunities; (d) the consideration of aspects related to urbanity and the quality of urban spaces; (e) suitability for analyzing social interest housing (HIS); and (f) the potential to identify socio-spatial inequalities. Based on these criteria, the study sought to identify convergences, divergences, strengths, and limitations of the methodologies, as well as their contributions to evaluating the urban integration of social interest housing developments.

The classification of these methodologies took into account the presence, scope, and depth of the indicators associated with each analytical dimension, allowing for comparisons between instruments developed for different scales and contexts.

It should be noted that this research does not aim to provide an exhaustive review of all existing methodologies for urban assessment; rather, it focuses on analyzing instruments that are compatible with the stated objectives. Therefore, the results obtained can support future investigations aimed at expanding the sets of methodologies analyzed or incorporating new criteria for evaluating urban integration.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A critical comparative analysis of the selected methodologies reveals that urban integration is understood through various analytical perspectives, which differ according to the objectives, the scale of application, and the indicators adopted by each instrument. Although all these methodologies seek to assess the relationship between housing and the city, each one emphasizes specific dimensions of the phenomenon, leading to different interpretations of what it means to be integrated into the urban space.

This diversity of approaches demonstrates that urban integration cannot be reduced merely to the location of a housing development or the presence of urban infrastructure. As discussed in the theoretical framework, urban integration entails the interplay between mobility, accessibility, urbanity, and the conditions under which a population can access urban

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opportunities. In this sense, the methodologies analyzed translate these concepts into distinct indicators and evaluative procedures, which justifies the need for a comparative analysis.

Based on this understanding, the methodologies were compared by considering their scale of application, the types of data used, their capacity to assess mobility, accessibility, urbanity, and socio-spatial inequalities, as well as their suitability for social housing (HIS) and their potential to inform public policy—all of which are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1 – Comparison of methodologies for assessing urban integration

Criteria	FAIU	ITDP	APO	REGIC	My + Sustainable House
Territoria Scalel	Local	Urban	Local	Regional	Urban/Local
Data Type	Quantitative	Quantitative	Qualitative	Quantitative	Mixed (Qualitative-Quantitative)
Mobility	High	High	Low	Indirect	Medium
Accessibility	High	High	Medium	Indirect	Medium
Urbanity	Partial	Partial	Alta	Low	Medium
Sustainability	Baixa	High	Low	Low	High
Applicability to HIS	High	High	Média	Low	High
Capacity to identify social-spatial inequalities	Medium	High	Média	High	Medium
Potential to inform public policy	High	High	Medium	High	Medium
Main limitation	Restrictive scale for habitational venues	Dependence on transport system structure	Low standardization	Few local resolutions	Wide analysis criteria

Source: Elaborated by the authors (2026).

The comparison reveals an important convergence among these methodologies in their recognition of mobility and accessibility as central dimensions of urban integration. Although they employ different indicators applicable at varying scales, the FAIU, the ITDP Matrix, and the My Home + Sustainable Notebooks guidelines share the foundational premise that the integration of housing developments into the city depends on the population's ability to access public transport, urban services, and the opportunities distributed across the territory. This alignment reinforces the contributions discussed by Hansen (1959), Vasconcellos (2012), and the National Urban Mobility Policy (PNMU, 2012), all of which link access to the city with the actual possibilities for participating in urban life.

Among the methodologies analyzed, the FAIU and the ITDP Matrix show the strongest alignment with debates on urban integration within the field of social housing (HIS). Both prioritize indicators related to mobility, accessibility, and the provision of urban services, making it possible to assess how the location of a development influences the population's access to the city. However, the two methodologies adopt different approaches. The FAIU focuses its analysis on the development itself and its immediate surroundings, identifying limitations regarding the availability of urban facilities, public transport, and urban design. The ITDP Matrix, conversely, broadens the scale of observation by incorporating the relationships between land use, urban density, walkability, and transport systems—aligning the discussion with the principles of Transit-Oriented Development (TOD).

This distinction highlights a significant aspect for understanding urban integration. While the FAIU seeks to identify the concrete conditions residents encounter in their daily lives,

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the ITDP Matrix aims to understand how the broader urban structure influences those conditions. Thus, although both methodologies value mobility and accessibility, they examine these dimensions from complementary perspectives—underscoring that access to the city depends as much on the characteristics of the immediate environment as it does on the broader territorial organization.

Another significant divergence concerns the incorporation of "urbanity." Unlike other methodologies, the Post-Occupancy Evaluation (POE)—or *Avaliação Pós-Ocupação* (APO) in Portuguese—considers elements related to residents' daily experiences, the appropriation of spaces, and users' perceptions of the built environment. This characteristic aligns the tool with the contributions of Whyte (1980), Gehl (2010), and Jacobs (2011), who associate urban quality with the presence of people in public spaces, the diversity of uses, and opportunities for social interaction. Including these aspects broadens the study of urban integration, as it allows for an assessment not only of the conditions for accessing the city but also of how residents experience and utilize urban spaces.

The REGIC (a study on the influence of urban centers in Brazil) differs from other methodologies due to its regional scale of analysis. While other tools focus on a specific development, neighborhood, or city, the REGIC investigates the relationships of influence established among Brazilian urban centers. Although it was not developed to evaluate housing developments, its contribution lies in demonstrating that the conditions of urban integration are also influenced by a municipality's position within the urban network. Factors such as centrality, polarization, and access to specialized services thus form a broader dimension of urban integration—one that is frequently absent from methodologies focused on the local scale.

The My Home + Sustainable Notebooks present a more comprehensive approach to the relationship between housing and the city, incorporating indicators related to urban infrastructure, public facilities, and the conditions of the surrounding environment. However, precisely because they encompass a broad range of urban aspects, these methodologies offer less depth regarding the specific dimensions of urban integration when compared to the FAIU and the ITDP Matrix. Consequently, their contribution lies in providing an integrated view of the urban environment, albeit with a more limited capacity to detail the relationships between housing location and access to urban opportunities.

The comparative analysis also highlights differences in the ability to identify socio-spatial inequalities. The ITDP Matrix and the REGIC offer greater potential in this regard, as they allow for the visualization of inequalities linked to the territorial distribution of infrastructure, urban services, and economic opportunities. Conversely, the FAIU and the APO help to identify how these inequalities manifest at the everyday scale, affecting residents' conditions of access and their urban experience. To synthesize these analytical differences, Table 2 presents the main strengths and limitations identified for each methodology.

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Table 2 – Critical-comparative synthesis of methodologies for assessing urban integration

Method	Predominant dimension	Main potentiality	Main limitation
FAIU	Mobility and accessibility	Objective assessment of the immediate surroundings of the venues	Restrict to a local scale
ITDP	Mobility, accessibility, and urban structure	Integrates transportation, the use of the land, and urban organization	Less attention to the everyday experience of residents
APO	Urbanity	Incorporates the perception and appropriation of spaces by users	Low standardization of results
REGIC	Social-spatial segregation and regional articulation	Highlights territorial inequalities on a territorial scale	Does not directly evaluate the venue
My + Sustentainable home	Quality of the urban environment	Visão integrada entre habitação e cidade	Wide criteria to the urban insertion analysis

Source: Elaborated by the authors (2026).

The synthesis presented in Table 2 demonstrates that the methodologies analyzed differ not only in the indicators they employ but also in the dimension of urban integration they prioritize. While the FAIU and the ITDP Matrix focus on conditions for accessing the city through mobility and accessibility, the APO (Post-Occupancy Evaluation) broadens the analysis to encompass the residents' everyday experiences. The REGIC, in turn, shifts the discussion to a regional scale, highlighting territorial inequalities that extend well beyond the immediate surroundings of the developments, whereas the My Home + Sustainable Notebooks guidelines adopt an integrated approach to urban conditions.

These differences show that each methodology captures only a portion of the complexity inherent in urban integration, underscoring the need for complementary interpretations. Such distinctions reveal the specific limitations and potential of each tool, reinforcing the importance of a critical reading of the methodologies used to evaluate social housing developments.

The critical-comparative analysis conducted leads to the conclusion that these methodologies do not compete with one another; rather, they address different dimensions of the phenomenon of urban integration. While some prioritize conditions for movement and access to urban opportunities, others help in understanding the residents' daily lives or the territorial factors that shape these experiences. Consequently, these findings reinforce the fact that urban integration cannot be reduced to a single set of indicators or a single scale of analysis. Understanding it requires the integration of various methodological approaches capable of simultaneously capturing the spatial, social, and territorial aspects of the relationship between housing and the city.

5 CONCLUSION

This research aimed to conduct a critical-comparative analysis of methodologies used to evaluate the urban integration of social housing projects, seeking to understand how different instruments incorporate dimensions related to mobility, accessibility, urbanity, and socio-spatial segregation. The analysis revealed that, while these methodologies share the common goal of assessing the relationship between housing and the city, they differ in terms of the scales of analysis employed, the indicators used, and the underlying concepts of urban integration that shape their methodological frameworks.

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The results demonstrate that urban integration cannot be understood solely based on the location of housing projects or the availability of urban infrastructure. As the analysis highlights, the integration of housing into the city depends on the interplay between conditions for movement, access to urban opportunities, the quality of relationships established with the surrounding environment, and the territorial distribution of urban resources. In this sense, the concepts of mobility, accessibility, urbanity, and socio-spatial segregation proved essential—not only for a theoretical understanding of urban integration but also for a critical interpretation of the methodologies examined.

The comparison between the tools revealed important convergences, particularly in the emphasis placed on mobility, accessibility, and the provision of urban services as structural elements of urban integration. However, it also uncovered significant differences regarding the capacity to incorporate aspects related to urbanity, the daily experience of residents, and socio-spatial inequalities. While some methodologies prioritize the analysis of access and movement conditions, others focus on the appropriation of urban spaces or on territorial relationships established at broader scales. Thus, it was found that the differences observed among these instruments stem not only from the indicators adopted but also from distinct interpretations of the very concept of urban integration.

The main contribution of this research is to demonstrate that none of the analyzed methodologies is capable, on its own, of capturing the full complexity of urban integration. Relying on a single instrument tends to favor certain dimensions of the phenomenon at the expense of others, resulting in partial interpretations of how developments are actually integrated into urban dynamics. From this perspective, a critical-comparative analysis facilitates the understanding that urban integration is a multi-scalar and multidimensional phenomenon, the assessment of which requires complementary approaches capable of articulating different analytical categories and territorial levels.

From the perspective of urban and housing planning, these results reinforce the need to incorporate "urban integration"—the way a development fits into the existing urban fabric—as a strategic dimension in the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of housing policies. The research demonstrates that the mere production of housing does not, in itself, guarantee the integration of the population into the city; factors such as access to urban opportunities, the quality of the built environment, and the territorial distribution of services exert a direct influence on residents' living conditions. Consequently, the assessment of urban integration should be understood as a fundamental tool for reducing socio-spatial inequalities and promoting the "right to the city."

Finally, it is acknowledged that this research has limitations, stemming from the number of methodologies analyzed and its theoretical, critical-comparative approach, which does not include empirical applications in specific case studies. Nevertheless, the findings contribute to advancing discussions on urban integration and social-interest housing (HIS) by highlighting the potential, limitations, and gaps of the primary methodologies employed in this field. As a future direction, it is recommended that comparative empirical studies be conducted to examine how the identified methodological differences influence outcomes in concrete urban contexts, thereby contributing to the refinement of tools for assessing urban integration.

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DECLARATION

AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTIONS

To describe the participation of each author in this work, the following criteria were used:

- **Concepção e Design do Estudo**: The supervisors, Dr. Jeane Ap. Rombi de Godoy and Dr. Natallia Sousa e Sanches, helped define the study's theme and core concept, as well as its objectives and methodology.
- **Data curation**: The third author collected the data, organized and verified them in order to guarantee their quality.
- **Formal Analysis**: The first two authors guided the process of constructing the analysis of the collected data, as well as the comparative assessment thereof.
- **Securing Financing: The** authors secured the necessary financial resources for the study using their own funds.
- **Investigação**: a terceira autora conduziu a investigação, levantamento, analise e comparação do escopo da pesquisa.
- **Metodologia**: The third author conducted the investigation, data collection, analysis, and comparison of the research scope.
- **Writing—Initial Draft**: The initial version was written by the third author and subsequently co-authored with the other two authors.
- **Writing—Critical Review**: All the authors reviewed the text, improving its clarity and coherence.
- **Revision and Final Edits**: All the authors reviewed the text and collaborated to verify and adjust the manuscript to the journal's guidelines.
- **Supervision**: The two authors coordinated the work and ensured the overall quality of the study.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

We, Dra. Jeane Aparecida Rombi de Godoy, Dra. Natallia Sanches e Sousa and Victória Ferreira Galvão declare that the paper entitled "[**URBAN INTEGRATION IN SOCIAL HOUSING IN BRAZIL: A COMPARATIVE CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF METHODOLOGICAL EVALUATION TOOLS]**"

1. **Financial ties:** There are no financial ties that could influence the results or interpretation of the work. No institution or funding entity was involved in the development of this study.
2. **Professional ties:** There are no professional relationships that could impact the analysis, interpretation, or presentation of the results. No professional relationships relevant to the content of this manuscript have been established.
3. **Personal Conflicts**: There are no personal conflicts of interest related to the content of the manuscript. No personal conflicts related to the content have been identified.