IQVU and the Right to the CityBrazilian redemocratization experience

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Abstract

This article seeks to understand how the construction of a Brazilian social indicator - the Quality of Urban Life Index of Belo Horizonte (IQVU-BH), used as an objective criterion for the distribution of resources of the Participatory Budget (OP). It seeks to demonstrate how the ideation of IQVU-BH in 1993 does not constitute an isolated fact; this is part of the experimentations made possible in the redemocratization of the country that, in order to respond to the struggles for urban reform, led to the very incorporation of the concept of Right to the City in Brazilian legislation. This article is structured, therefore, along two axes of inquiry: one that inserts the construction of IQVU in the course of incorporating the notion of the Right to the City into Brazilian legislation; another that analyses its distancing and proximity to the Lefebvrian concept from the comparison between its initial link with the OP of the management of Belo Horizonte (Brazil). Finally, the present work intends to demonstrate that the resonance of the Right to The City in IQVU only occurs when its employment occurs linked to the OP, as an instrument related to democratic and participatory management.

Keywords

Right to the City; Urban Quality of Life Index; Participatory Budget; urban management.

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INTRODUCTION

The fight against the Military Dictatorship in Brazil (1964-1985) and by redemocratization, had as an important exponent the National Movement for Urban Reform (MNRU). Organized between the 1970s and 1980s, this movement brought together Brazilian intellectuals and popular leaders and inserted access to urban land and housing on its agenda. This movement expanded nationally with redemocratization and was fundamental for popular articulation during the debate process and elaboration of the New Federal Constitution of 1988 and for the drafting of the Bill that Instituted the Brazilian Urban Policy, the Statute of the City approved only in 2001. The Main Flag of the MNRU was the Right to the City.

Among the achievements of the MNRU during the redemocratization period is the attempt to expand the population's access to urban equipment and services through Brazilian urban legislation. The struggle for urban reform has consolidated the link between the demands of urban social movements and the marginalized population and the Right to the City – although there are different understandings about this notion. The period between the end of the 1980s and 2001 was marked by the movement of incorporation of democratic and participatory management in Brazilian municipalities.

It is in this context that one can perceive the intentions of incorporating the Right to the City in the indicators of construction, evaluation and monitoring of public policies. The process of construction of public policies involves, according to Souza (2006), plans, programs, projects and databases and, when put into action, they are subject to monitoring and evaluation systems. The use of indicators in the development and evaluation of public policies is common in different areas: environmental, mobility, social, health, education, security, housing, urban infrastructure, social development, among others.

One of the most widespread social indicators worldwide is the Human Development Index (HDI), which summarizes in one indicator the progress of three dimensions: income, education and health. Its creation objective was to present a counterpoint to gross domestic product (GDP), an index that considers only the economic dimension of development, to reflect more in a more real way the quality of life of a nation. Created in 1990 by Pakistani economists Mahbub ul Haq and Amartya Sen, the HDI has been used since 1993 by UNDP and has transformed the way to assess the social situation of the world's nations.

Although social indicators have become internationally known from the dissemination of the HDI, their conception does not date from this period. Paulo Sandroni (1994, p. 242, apud Rodrigues, 2010, p. 44) records that, in economic studies, the so-called index numbers – that is, ways of aggregating numerical information and transforming it into indicators and indices – date back to the first half of the 19th century. The expression social indicators, therefore, was first used in a paper published in 1966 by Raymond Bauer – as opposed to purely economic indicators. According to Bauer's definition, social indicators are "statistics, statistical series and all other forms of evidence that allow us to evaluate where we are and we are going in relation to our values and objectives" (BAUER, 1966, p.1). Research on social indicators expanded widely in the Between the 1960s and 1970s and resumed at the end of the 20th century after a

period of decline (MARANS, STIMSON, 2011).

In Brazil, the Urban Quality of Life Index of Belo Horizonte (IQVU-BH) was elaborated in the context of great innovation in the implementation of participatory management and planning instruments by the first management of the Workers' Party (PT) in Belo Horizonte – the sixth most populous municipality in Brazil and which at the time already had 2 million inhabitants. This index was conceived in a manner related to participatory budgeting, an instrument that would mark the first management of the PT after redemocratization and would be recognized internationally with one of the good practices highlighted by UN-Habitat 1996. The IQVU-BH is the object of study in this article, which aims to demonstrate that the ideation of this index is part of the bulge of the experiments of Brazilian redemocratization. It is investigated, therefore, whether it would be possible to codify the concept of Right to the City in an indicator used as a technical support and allows us to monitor public policies. For this, the intentions of hybridization between the Right to the City and IQVU-BH are used as documentary sources.

THE BRAZILIAN REDEMOCRATIZATION AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF IQVU-BH

The preparation of IQVU-BH began after the victory of Patrus Ananias, of the Workers' Party (PT), in the City of Belo Horizonte (PBH), in 1993. According to Bittar (1992), the "petista mode of governing" makes room for popular participation and, in this way, presents the reversal of priorities as a commitment to the most vulnerable areas, which start to receive greater visibility and contribution of resources. According to Junior (2001), in the first year of Patrus' management, social investment increased from 64.14% to 76.37% of the total investment resource. Bezerra (2019) adds that, in the 1990s, the PT sought to manage several Brazilian municipalities – such as Belo Horizonte, Porto Alegre and Belém – to promote popular participation and the reversal of priorities, with the concern to make them viable and enforceable. In addition to the expansion of the resources invested in social development, Patrus presented, in Belo Horizonte, the reversal of priorities as an opportunity for effective participation of the population in the decision-making of public administration.

The conception of IQVU takes place in a context of renewal of municipal technical staff, revision of the Municipal Master Plan (1993-1996) and construction of new participatory management and planning instruments. In this sense, it is based on the notion of inversion of priorities and is linked as a guiding instrument for the intra-urban distribution of municipal resources destined to Participatory Budgeting (OP).

In 2007, Yves Cabannes drew attention to the fact that, although the notion of inversion of priorities originated in the Brazilian debates, in each city, analyzed by him, there was a proper understanding of his agency. In this context, the French researcher highlighted as a reference to be followed by the experience of IQVU-BH. According to Cabannes (2007), this index would be able to guarantee a better articulation between the OP and territorial planning,

since it allows a "territorialized view of exclusion, poverty and well-being in the municipality" (CABANNES, 2007, p.36). More than twenty years after its implementation, IQVU continues to be pointed out as one of the main contributions of the Belo Horizonte OP to the national and international debate (AVRITZER, VAZ, 2014; SINTOMER et al, 2012).

The innovations brought by Belo Horizonte, such as the construction of the IQVU as an indicator of measure used to ensure the reversal of priorities, the housing dimension and the emphasis of the OP as an instrument of urban planning are elements that favor its differentiation in relation to Porto Alegre and, also, its international recognition (Oliveira, 2013).

In the national context, the conception of an index to guide the distribution of the OP's resources is part of – and anticipates – what Koga (2011) has named as the dawn of intraurban social indicators in Brazilian municipalities. From the mid-1990s a few years after the construction of the HDI, several Brazilian capitals sought to develop methods that would allow the visualization of intraurban inequality. IQVU-BH was developed by the team of the Center for Multidisciplinary Studies and Research of the Pontifical University of Minas Gerais, under the coordination of Maria Inês Nahas, through a contract signed with the City Hall of Belo Horizonte and was calculated based on aggregated and georeferenced data in a network of 81 Planning Units (UP) distributed throughout the municipality. In order to support a more equitable distribution of resources by participatory budgeting, the result of this process is the measurement of IQVU-BH for all UPs, the higher the index – whose values range from 0 to 1 – the better the supply and access to urban goods and services in that unit.

In the specific case of IQVU, three main moments were part of the application of the Delphi method: (i) the collection of the available data in the 13 Municipal Secretariats that assisted Nahas in the construction of the first list of variables presented to managers, for approval of the inclusion, or not, of each of them; (ii) a second consultation on the inclusion of variables, presenting the result of the first survey, for the final definition of the variables incorporated in the IQVU; (iii) the query for defining weights of variables using a spreadsheet called peer-to-peer comparison.

When analyzing the weights that resulted from this process, it is verified that, despite the lack of society's participation in the construction of IQVU, the main agendas of the social movements seem to have been considered by the managers. In particular, the importance given to the variable housing is highlighted, even surpassing the weights of urban infrastructure, health and education. This prioritization is the importance of social movements for housing in the political scenario of Belo Horizonte in the 1980s and 1990s, as well as its great penetration in patrus management, which culminated in the creation of the Municipal Housing Council in 1994, and a specific Participatory Budget to enable the financing of the production of Social Interest Housing managed by social movements by housing – the Participatory Housing Budget (OPH), 1995 (BEDÊ, 2005).

Variables/weights	Components
1- Supply (weight = 7.64)	1.1 - Supply equipment
	1.2 - Basic food basket
2 - Social assistance (weight = 1.79)	2.1 - Equipment
3 - Culture (weight = 3.17)	3.1 - Media
	3.2 - Cultural Heritage
	3.3 - Cultural equipment
	3.4 - Artistic-cultural programming
4 - Education (weight = 12.65)	4.1 - Preschool
	4.2 - 1st to 4th school grade
	4.3 - 5th to 8th school grades
	4.4 - High School
5 - Sports (weight = 3.05)	5.1 - Sports equipment
	5.2 - Sports promotions
6 - Housing (weight = 17.66)	6.1 - Quality of housing
7 - Urban infrastructure (weight =	7.1 - Urban cleaning
15.75)	7.2 - Sanitation
	7.3 - Electricity
	7.4 - Telephony
	7.5 - Public transport
8 - Environment (weight = 6.19)	8.1 - Acoustic comfort
	8.2 - Air quality
	8.3 - Green area
9 - Health (weight = 13.72)	9.1 - Health care
	9.2 - Health surveillance
10 - Urban services (weight = 10.43)	10.1 - Personal services
	10.2 - Communication services
11 - urban security (weight = 7.95)	11.1 - Police assistance
	11.2 - Personal security
	11.3 - Asset security
	11.4 - Traffic safety
	11.5 - Housing security

Table 1. IQVU-BH of 1994. Source: Nahas, 2002.

IQVU-BH AND THE RIGHT TO THE CITY

For the present work, the concept of Right to the City is of interest as defined by the philosopher Henri Lefebvre¹ in 1968 – built in great cultural effervescence – as its progressive transformation into various uses and appropriations (cf. MARCUSE, 2009; NOBRE, et. al., 2018) and, in particular, in its incorporation into Brazilian legislation in the bulge of experiments made possible in the redemocratization of the country that sought to respond to the struggles for urban reform.

The Right to the City manifests itself according to Lefebvre as a "superior form of rights: right to freedom, individualization in socialization, habitat and living" (LEFEBVRE, 2001, p. 134). For the French author, this concept goes beyond issues related to the supply of goods and services and emphasizes acts and actions, practical-sensitive reality and social relations. The need for the city and urban life would be both the need for qualified places, concurrency and meeting – in which the value of use prevails over the value of exchange – and the need for time for these meetings and exchanges (LEFEBVRE, 2001).

The French philosopher inaugurated the discussion on the Right to the City on the eve of the student uprisings – Movement May 68 – initiated at the University of Nanterre, where Lefebvre was an influential professor, founder of the Institut de Sociologie Urbaine (ISU) who had been responsible for breaking with the tradition of urban sociology in Chicago (COSTES, 2009). In this specific context, academia and civil society have joined in a political and intellectual movement with global impact (SANCHEZ-CUENCA, 2019).

The expression Right to the City has, since its genesis, a theoretical-conceptual and other practice-claiming facet, a configuration that had never been lost (TAVOLARI, 2016). The Right to the City conceptualized by Lefebvre appears as the emancipation of the working class in relation to the production of the city by the capitalist system. It is about the recovery of the value of use of the city and the scale of daily life in an equitable, free, spontaneous and living relationship. The power of work and transformation of spaces is prioritized by those who actually inhabit the city, since the ruling classes transcend the experience "are everywhere and anywhere" (LEFEBVRE, 2001, p.118). Therefore, in addition to the criticism of socio-spatial exclusion in the capitalist city, the author reflects on the alienation of the masses in relation to the production of space and envisions a demercantilized and intensely democratic city and treats the Right to the City as a collective path of socio-spatial transformation (SAN-CHEZ-CUENCA, 2019).

The conjuncture of struggle for democracy and urban reform allowed a situation of peculiar appropriation of the Right to the City in Brazilian legislation. This is now associated in Brazil with the immediate demands of urban social movements and the most vulnerable population, such as access to water, electricity, housing and transportation; components incorporated into the IQVU-BH calculation. The notion of the Right to the City transcends that strictly associated with immediate demands for specific urban services when approaching democracy, citizenship, autonomy and social organization. It is in the context of this political and social effervescence of redemocratization that the National Movement for Urban Reform presented the Proposed Popular Amendment to the Draft Constitution (MOVIMENTO NACIONAL PELA REFORMA URBANA, 1987) requesting the inclusion of a chapter on urban rights, which established that:

- Art. 1 Every citizen has the right to decent urban living conditions and social justice, forcing the State to ensure:
- I Access to housing, public transportation, sanitation, electricity, public lighting, communications, education, health, leisure and safety, as well as preservation of environmental and cultural heritage;
- II The democratic management of the city. Art. 2 The right to decent urban living conditions conditions the exercise of the right of property to the social interest in the

use of urban real estate, subordinates it to the principle of the state of necessity. (MOV-IMENTO NACIONAL PELA REFORMA URBANA, 1987, p.1)

The reference to the "right to decent urban living conditions" reverberates the Right to the City. Lefebvre builds his argument by linking the city's need to urban life; which defines as the "need for qualified places, places of concurrency and meetings" and the "need for time for these meetings" (LEFEBVRE, 2001, p.105-106). The French philosopher even exchanges the expressions throughout his text, even stating that the Right to the City "can only be formulated as the right to urban life" (LEFEBVRE, 2001, p.118, griffin in the original). Another aspect that allows to see Lefebvre's theses is the proposition that the "right to decent urban living conditions" subordinates the right to property to the principle of the state of necessity; that is, it is a clear defense of the value of use of the city and its prevalence over the exchange value.

However, the incorporation in IQVU-BH of the components listed in item "I" of the Popular Amendment Proposal seems to us a response to the experiments experienced in the period of redemocratization that sought to incorporate the right to the City agenda into Brazilian legislation. Is the creation of IQVU-BH an attempt to translate the Right to the City? Despite its insertion in a larger conjuncture, the idea of translating the concept originally presented by Lefèbvre into an index seems to betray the French author at its deepest core. To what extent would the translation intended by this indicator therefore be feasible?

By dialoguing with the idea of ensuring fair distribution and access to the benefits of urbanization, IQVU approaches the notion of City Law incorporated in Brazilian legislation. However, IQVU takes a dubious position. At the same time that its construction process removes it from the Right to the City, since it was conceived exclusively by academics from the Center for Multidisciplinary Studies and Research of Pontifical Catholic University of Minas Gerais (PUC-MG) and managers of municipal departments without the participation of civil society; the use of this indicator in the OP for the equitable, judicious and socially just distribution of the resources made available instrumentalizes it in guaranteeing the right to work, to urban transformation.

However, from the perspective of the Lefebvrean concept, the right to work does not summarize the Right to the City. For the author, much more than moving around the city, enjoying urban spaces is essential to combat the alienation of the masses in relation to the production of space. That is, the experience related to the Right to the City depends on the appropriation of urban spaces by the population in a democratic way.

The search for an instrument to ensure greater balance in the supply and access to urban services could constitute a way for the enjoyment of the city. However, the idea of doing so by an index that condenses in itself the claim of scientificity goes against Lefebvre's criticism of urbanism. For the French philosopher, the Right to the City transcends objective and quantitative understanding, presenting itself, in general, as a subjective and utopian concept.

CONCLUSION

The perspective of the Right to the City in the discourse of the MNRU and in its Proposal for a Popular Amendment, incorporated into this concept a more practical and objective meaning, linking it to the offer and access of the population to the goods and services offered in urban space and the condition of dignified living in cities. On the other hand, although the derivations of the notion of Right to the City in the context of Brazilian redemocratization have in common citizen and democratic perspectives, the institutional understanding of the Right to the City and its link to urban planning deviates from Lefebvre's critical position.

In the context of the expansion of municipal autonomy after the Brazilian redemocratization and the management of Patrus Ananias of the Workers' Party (PT) in the City hall of Belo Horizonte, IQVU is built. In this sense, despite the possibility of quantifying, at first, the Right to the City of MNRU in an index that considers the supply and access to urban services, the premise of the participation of the population in the construction of these instruments would be essential for it to materialize from Lefebvre. f, on the one hand, the collaborative construction of IQVU was restricted to a specific group and conducted by a method that avoids the confrontation of ideas; on the other hand, the incorporation of IQVU-BH as an instrument of participatory budgeting transforms it into a mechanism for guaranteeing the right to work and, in this sense, brings it closer to the Right to the City.

The essentiality of the indicators for the technical-scientific approach to public policies and the success of IQVU-BH led Nahas to be invited, in the early 2000s, by the Ministry of Cities to conceive a similar index applicable throughout The Brazilian territory, the IQVU-BR. Although it did not have its final results published for political reasons and, also for this reason, it was not used as a technical instrument to support public policies, the work was widely known. In addition, the interest of municipalities in IQVU as a technical instrument to deal with the policy culminated in consulting work by Nahas for the municipalities of Porto Alegre, Vitória and Santo André, which wished to build similar instruments for municipal public policies.

The innovation of IQVU, however, is not restricted only to its incorporation into the OP or to the precursor character of its conception in the Brazilian context. When we compared it to other attempts to measure the quality of urban life, such as those presented in the international compendium organized by Marans and Simons (2011) we observed that, 17 years after the formulation of the IQVU, the use of GIS² for this was still considered a novelty, an expanding trend. There are also a few indices of urban quality of life in the first decade of the 2000s, and the use of segregated social indicators – classified as objective, subjective and environmental, is more common. Although the index for assessing quality of life in urban areas proposed by Blomquist et al. (1988) is preceding the IQVU-BH, its destination – the comparison between metropolitan areas of the USA – and its composition were very different from that developed in Belo Horizonte; it did not have the complexity of gathering 75 indicators weighted by a measure of accessibility into a single index, combining and spatializing data from diverse sources in an intra-urban network³.

ENDNOTES

- 1. Henri Lefebvre was a French Marxist philosopher and sociologist and devoted himself to a rereading exercise critically situated in the time and space of Marxist thought. He is an indispensable author for this work for presenting for the first time in 1968 the concept of Right to the City in his iconic work *Le Droit à la ville*, launched months before the May 68 revolution in Paris.
- 2. The Geographic Information System (GIS) is a system that creates, manages and maps all types of georeferenced data, integrating diverse information for map making (TOMLINSON, 2007).
- 3. Blomquist et al. (1988) elaborated a first proposal for quality of life index for urban areas from the combination of data between data from the 1980 U.S. census on salary, housing costs and amenities (climate aspects, urban infrastructure coverage, violence rate and student teacher relationship) to compare 253 U.S. metropolitan areas.

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