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**RAQUEL RIBEIRO, DANIELA SOFIA NETO,
ANA CORDEIRO SANTOS, JOAQUIM PIRES VALENTIM**

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HOUSING SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS AND
PRACTICES IN THE 21ST CENTURY:
A SCOPING REVIEW PROTOCOL**

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Paula Sequeiros, Teresa Cunha

E-mail: oficina@ces.uc.pt

Raquel Ribeiro*

Daniela Sofia Neto**

Ana Cordeiro Santos***

Joaquim Pires Valentim****

Interrelations between Financialisation and Housing Social Representations and Practices in the 21st Century: A Scoping Review Protocol¹

Abstract: Despite the growing body of literature describing the interplays between financialisation and housing, little is known about the way financialisation processes interact with social representations related to housing and housing practices. This article addresses such gap by proposing a scoping review protocol to systematize the interrelations between financialisation and housing social representations and practices in the 21st century. It describes the scoping review protocol, namely the review objectives, the methodological steps of the search strategy, the including and excluding criteria of the sources of evidence, and the processes of data collection and analysis that ensure rigor and transparency in the review.

Keywords: housing, financialisation, social representations, practices, scoping review.

Introduction

The provision of housing has been historically associated with the (re)production of social, economic and territorial inequalities (e.g., Lefebvre, 1968; Harvey, 1973). However, the “increasing dominance of financial actors, markets, practices, measurements and narratives, at various scales” (Aalbers, 2016: 2), i.e., financialisation that resulted “in a structural transformation of economics, firms (including financial institutions), states and households” (*ibidem*), have increased such inequalities in a dramatic way.

* Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra, Portugal. Contact: raquelribeiro@ces.uc.pt

** Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra, Portugal/Faculty of Economics, University of Coimbra, Portugal. Contact: danielaneto@ces.uc.pt

*** Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra, Portugal. Contact: anacsantos@ces.uc.pt

**** Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, University of Coimbra, Portugal. Contact: jpvalentim@fpce.uc.pt

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Not only households' mortgage markets participation is positively related to income and qualification, but also homeownership is associated with better comfort living conditions and housing satisfaction (e.g., Elsinga and Hoekstra, 2005; Santos, 2016). The increased commodification of housing and its use as a financial asset for investment (through lease or sale) have emphasized housing exchange value and rapid valuation, as opposed to use-value for satisfying housing needs (Aalbers, 2016). This transformation is associated with increased inequalities in housing conditions and socio-territorial segregation; forced evictions due to increased housing prices and liberalization of rental contracts; drop of long-term rental contracts by conversion of dwellings into short term rentals; impoverishment of the most vulnerable groups of the population; housing insecurity related to social exclusion and discriminatory housing practices (Rolnik, 2013; Farha, 2017).

With over half the world's population living in urban areas, inequalities due to financialised housing constitute an unrelenting socio-economic and political problem and are at the core of the present challenges faced in cities to achieve social justice and full citizenship (Alexander *et al.*, 2018).

Studies on financialisation of everyday life (e.g., van der Zwan, 2014; Lai, 2017; Hillig, 2019) argue that financialisation not only concerns material transformations but also narratives and discourses that boost new models of citizenship, success, and risk-taking practices (see also Santos, 2017). Such studies emphasize that, when participating in financial markets (e.g., mortgage credit), individuals are also encouraged to internalize new risk-taking rules and develop new subjectivities, as investors or owners of financial assets (Aitken, 2007). Financialisation is thus based not only on material transformations, but also on narratives and discourses emphasizing individual responsibility and calculative evaluation in financial management (van der Zwan, 2014; Santos, 2017).

Not only the emergence of the financial actor's subjectivity is constructed in the spaces of everyday life (Aitken, 2007), but social roles and ethical positions shape the actual modes and degrees of engagement with financial products and markets. These are grounded in multiple motivations (financial gain, strengthen family relationships, protection, financial security, etc.), but the same desired outcomes can be pursued through antagonistic practices (Lai, 2017).

While these approaches explain discursive and institutional practices that create investor subjects, little is known still about the way households interact with these discourses and practices (Lai, 2017; Hillig, 2019) or even how these new models of

citizenship and success produce changes in lay theories about housing and housing practices. In fact, despite the growing body of literature describing the interplays between financialisation and housing (e.g., Aalbers, 2016; Fernandez and Aalbers, 2016; Pereira, 2017; Santos *et al.*, 2018; Erol, 2019; Wu *et al.*, 2020), little is known about the way financialisation processes interrelates with social representations (SR) about housing and housing practices (e.g., buying a house with mortgage loan, buying a house with savings, renting, real estate investment).

SR are conceived as “a set of concepts, statements and explanations” (Moscovici, 1981: 181) built in the daily inter-individual communications that establish lay theories guiding action and organizing social practices (e.g., Moscovici, 1981; Abric, 1994). If, on the one hand, representations are so deeply interrelated with what we call reality that they “not only influence people’s daily practices – but constitute these practices” (Howarth, 2006: 74), on the other hand, the practices that individuals carry on their daily lives may also determine their system of representations (Abric, 1994).

SR theory has proven to contribute to the understanding of diverse social-political-economic phenomena (Elcheroth *et al.*, 2011) like globalization (e.g., Ribeiro and Poeschl, 2020) or the economic crisis (e.g., Poeschl *et al.*, 2017), stressing how the study of SR and practices must be placed within its historical, social, economic, political and geographical contexts, and how sociopsychological and socioeconomic processes are interrelated (Elcheroth *et al.*, 2011; Ribeiro and Poeschl, 2020). Social representations are studied through the analysis of the opinions and discourses expressed in interviews, opinion questionnaires, documents, etc. (Doise *et al.*, 1992).

To our best knowledge,² there are no prior scoping or systematic reviews or research syntheses on these combined topics. By the exposed, the main objective of the proposed scoping review protocol is to use a systematic and iterative process to identify, collate and evaluate what is currently known about the interrelations between financialisation and housing SR and practices in the 21st century, to systematize existing evidence, inform future research, identify contradictions, gaps and inconsistencies in the literature.

Scoping reviews are relevant to both emerging and established fields, overcoming some of the limitations of a narrative review. Scoping reviews are particularly relevant and helpful when the literature is complex and heterogeneous (Colquhoun *et al.*, 2014; Peters *et al.*, 2020a, 2020b). By mapping a wide range of literature from various sources

² We conducted several searches (on 24 February 2022) on Ebsco, Campbell, PROSPERO, Cochrane and The Open Science Framework.

they can provide an understanding of the “lay of the land”, making sense and synthesizing abundant volumes of sources of evidence that can be influential for practice, policy and research and allowing future replication (Colquhoun *et al.*, 2014: 1292).

The proposed methodology constitutes an original and innovative approach in housing studies. Understanding the interrelations between financialisation and housing SR and practices will be valuable to inform policy-makers in order to develop and implement housing policies that contribute to eliminate discriminatory practices and contrariwise promote inclusive, safe, participative and innovative housing practices.

1. Objectives

The proposed scoping review aims to identify what is currently known about the interrelations between financialisation and housing SR and practices in the 21st century, to systematize main results, identify contradictions, gaps and inconsistencies in the literature. In order to achieve this aim, the review will intend to answer to the following questions:

- a) How do the financialisation processes in the 21st century interrelate with SR about housing and housing practices?
- b) In what geographical contexts (i.e., countries) has the relationship between financialisation and housing SR and practices been studied?
- c) Are there evidence gaps or shortfalls relating financialisation processes and housing SR and practices?
- d) Is there a need for further primary research or opportunities to conduct systematic reviews within the context of financialisation and housing SR and practices?

2. Methodology

To ensure rigour and transparency, the review will follow the methodological steps first proposed by Arksey and O’Malley (2005) and expanded upon by Levac, Colquhoun and O’Brien (2010; see also Colquhoun *et al.*, 2014) and further systematized by the Joanna Briggs Institute (e.g., Peters *et al.*, 2020a, 2020b), which are described below. Moreover, the scoping review will be reported following the PRISMA-ScR framework – Preferred Reporting for Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis Scoping Review Extension (cf. Tricco *et al.*, 2018) and will include the PRISMA-ScR checklist in annex.

2.1. Criteria for Including and Excluding Studies

Following the scoping reviews guidelines (Peters *et al.*, 2020a), the criteria for including and excluding evidence sources will be subject to a pilot testing within the research team with a random sample of 20 titles/abstracts. If discrepancies were to be found they will be discussed and the criteria refined.

2.1.1. Types of Study Designs

In order to capture the broadest scope of literature there will be no restrictions to the types of study designs eligible for inclusion (e.g., quantitative or qualitative primary research studies, reviews), the key consideration for inclusion will be the contribution to the research questions. There will be also no limitations placed on specific outcomes, study quality or risk of bias. However, due to temporal and resource constraints, only sources of evidence regarding academic journals, conference proceedings, dissertations, and reports will be considered.

2.1.2. Types of Participants

As the aim of the scoping review is to identify the interrelations between financialisation and housing SR and practices in the 21st century, we will consider participants of any country, age, gender and professional background.

2.1.3. Types of Outcomes

In eligible studies we will look mainly for SR of housing and housing practices (although the studies may not make direct reference to these concepts), and how these may be affected by financialisation processes. The outcomes may also refer to psychosocial impacts of housing financialisation processes. As this is a scoping review, we will not only focus on outcomes but we will also search for theoretical gaps or shortfalls.

2.1.4. Types of Settings

As the main objective of the scoping review is to identify the interrelations between financialisation and housing SR and practices, we expect that most primary research be conducted in participants' homes or research institutions facilities. Nevertheless, we will include any type of setting in any part of the world as long as it relates to financialisation processes and housing SR and practices in the 21st century. However, we will exclude the sources of evidence that address collective housing (e.g., nursing homes, recovery

housing) or other housing situations involving major health (e.g., home care) or family (e.g., foster care) problems, as they involve complex questions that go beyond the range of this scoping review.

2.1.5. Date and Language Restrictions

Considering that financialisation processes have developed mainly from late 1990s and early 2000s (e.g., van der Zwan, 2014), we will include the literature published from the year 2000 onwards, as long as it relates to housing SR and practices in the 21st century. Due to resources and temporal constraints, texts not fully available in either English or Portuguese will be excluded. This constitutes the major limitation of the review, namely in what concerns the potential to identify the geographical contexts where the relationship between financialisation and housing SR and practices have been studied.

2.2. Search Strategy

As the search in a scoping review is iterative, with reviewers becoming more familiar with evidence base as the research progresses (Peters *et al.*, 2020b), the review will be conducted within the interdisciplinary team of the research project “HOUSING – Financialised housing in 21st century Portugal: Social representations, practices, and political stakes”. Team meetings will occur at the beginning, midpoint and final stages of the review process to discuss challenges and uncertainties in study selection, and to appraise and refine the search strategy (Levac *et al.*, 2010).

Following the recommendations found in Peters *et al.* (2020a), an initial search will be conducted in two online databases (e.g., Proquest and SocINDEX) using four sets of keywords separated by AND Boolean operators, corresponding to the four main concepts defined in the introduction: financialisation, housing, SR and practices. As the content of housing SR and practices may be studied in different theoretical approaches, in order to capture the broadest scope of literature, secondary search terms will also be used separated by OR Boolean operators (see Table 1). For the retrieved papers, the words contained in the title and the abstract as well as the terms used to index articles will be analysed in order to establish the final search strategy.

Table 1 – Scoping Review Search Strategy

Language	English			
Primary search terms	Financialisation	Housing	Social Representations	Practices
Secondary search terms	Financialization Financialised Financialized Financial Finance	House Home	Representations Perceptions Narratives Subjectivity Discourses	Strategies Mortgage Ownership Rent Home sharing Squatter Airbnb Expropriation Eviction Landlord harassment Real estate mobbing
Language	Portuguese			
Primary search terms	Financeirização	Habitação	Representações Sociais	Práticas
Secondary search terms	Financeiro Finança	Casa Moradia Vivenda	Representações Perceções Narrativas Subjetividade Discursos	Estratégias Hipoteca Casa própria Arrendamento Partilha de casa Ocupação Alojamento local Expropriação Despejo Assédio imobiliário

Source: Elaboration by the authors.

The next step of the scoping review will involve the systematic search of the keywords in relevant databases: Web of Science; EconLit with Full Text; SocINDEX with Full Text; Criminal Justice Abstracts with Full Text; APA PsycArticles; Directory of Open Access Journals; JSTOR Journals; SciELO; SSOAR – Social Science Open Access Repository; ScienceDirect; Proquest Psychology Journals; Redalyc, and CODESRIA. Searching and screening processes will be carefully reported and the details will be documented in the flow chart proposed by PRISMA (Tricco *et al.*, 2018).

2.3. Data Collection and Analysis

2.3.1. Selection of Sources of Evidence

The process of selection of the sources of evidence will be based upon the inclusion/exclusion criteria described above involving five stages: 1) Duplicate sifting; 2) Title sifting; 3) Abstract sifting; 4) Full-text availability sifting; 5) Full-text sifting.

Duplicate sifting will be conducted through automated procedures. Titles and abstracts (stages 2 and 3) will be evaluated independently by one reviewer, and a second reviewer will complete the same process. If there is any uncertainty on the decision to include or exclude a particular source of evidence, the decision will be taken by a third reviewer. The reviewers will meet throughout the selection process to discuss any challenges or uncertainty and to refine the search strategy if needed (cf. Levac *et al.*, 2010).

The process of study selection will be described through narrative description, presenting the reasons for exclusion – and doing so throughout the flow diagram indicated in the PRISMA-ScR statement. Included texts will be collated into a single database which will be used to chart the collected data.

2.3.2. Details of Study Coding Categories

Charting results will be presented in a cross-tabular format providing systematized information regarding: source identification (author(s), year of publication), characteristics of the studies (aim, sample, location (country), methodology) and key findings that relate to review questions.

To ensure all relevant results are extracted, a trial will be performed in a sample of four sources by the four members of the research team. As such, the content of the charting table may be further refined and additional headings or categories may be added to the form at the review stage. After the trial, a member of the research team will independently obtain data from the studies included during the study selection using the data charting form. A second researcher will check the data extracted for accuracy. Any discrepancies will be discussed by the research team, and in the case of disagreement, a third reviewer will make the final decision (Peters *et al.*, 2020b).

Final Remarks

Considering that housing is a human right inseparable from the right to life (Farha, 2017), and that housing inequalities constitute the major obstacle in achieving social equality, inclusion, justice and full citizenship (Alexander *et al.*, 2018), understanding the

interrelations between financialisation and housing SR and practices is essential to policy-making. Besides constituting an innovative methodology in housing financialisation studies, this review will provide useful insights to the development and implementation of housing policies, contributing to eliminate discriminatory and unethical practices and contrariwise promoting inclusive, safe, participative and innovative housing practices. Moreover, it will also allow to identify contradictions, gaps and inconsistencies in the literature and inform further research on the topics.

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