

THE STRUGGLE TO GAIN ACCESS: A THEORETICAL EFFORT TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE POLITICAL PROGRAMME OF WOMEN'S RIGHT TO THE CITY

A LUTA PELO ACESSO: UM ESFORÇO TEÓRICO PARA CONTRIBUIR PARA O PROGRAMA POLÍTICO DO DIREITO DAS MULHERES À CIDADE

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Abstract

The right to the city, stemming from Lefebvre's ideas, addresses the emancipation of individuals from homogenization and oppression. Analyzing 31 authors, two major groups emerge in literature: one criticizes Marxism's emphasis on social class, placing gender, race, and ethnicity on equal footing; the other focuses on the class-based tone of the right to the city, emphasizing self-management and appropriation, challenging the public-private dichotomy. The article suggests the key to understanding women's right to the city is the issue of access, viewed through the lens of Social Reproduction Theory. Access is seen as a precursor to effective rights enjoyment, closely tied to Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. Access is crucial in understanding women's right to the city, extending beyond mere physical access to encompass self-management, appropriation, and the radicalization of the right to difference. The struggle for women's dwelling and appropriation is framed as a quest for the right to the city.

Keywords: right to the city; women's rights; economic, social, and cultural rights; access to rights

Resumo

O direito à cidade, originado das ideias de Lefebvre, aborda a emancipação individual contra a homogeneização e opressão. Ao analisar 31 autores, surgem dois grandes grupos na literatura: um critica a ênfase marxista na classe social, colocando gênero, raça e etnia em pé de igualdade; o outro destaca o tom baseado na classe do direito à cidade, enfatizando autoadministração e apropriação, desafiando a dicotomia público-privado. O artigo sugere que a chave para entender o direito das mulheres à cidade é a questão do acesso, vista através da Teoria da Reprodução Social. O acesso é considerado precursor da efetiva fruição de direitos, intimamente ligado aos Direitos Econômicos, Sociais e Culturais. O acesso é crucial para compreender o direito das mulheres à cidade, indo além do mero acesso físico para abranger autoadministração, apropriação e a radicalização do direito à diferença. A luta pelo domicílio e apropriação das mulheres é apresentada como uma busca pelo direito à cidade.

Palavras-chave: direito à cidade; direitos das mulheres; direitos econômicos, sociais e culturais; acesso aos direitos

1. INTRODUCTION

The right to the city is “an exigent demand by those deprived of basic material and legal rights, and an aspiration for the future by those discontented with life as they see it around them” (Marcuse, 2012, p. 31). This is the issue that this article will address to contribute to the delimitation of the right to the city: Who are its political subjects?

Marcuse asserts the theoretical and strategic importance underlying this question and categorically maintains that the right to the city is not a demand for rights for all people (Marcuse, 2012), a position endorsed by other authors (Huchzermeyer, 2017; Lyytinen, 2020; Njoh, 2017). Lefebvre’s right to the city is a political project aimed at rescuing the individual from processes of homogenization and oppression (Dikeç, 2001). Therefore, to claim that it is a right for all individuals would imply contributing to the deepening of tendencies in capitalist space.

The essence of the right to the city is intricately linked to the right to difference, a foundational element that serves as the origin for various tangible rights (Dikeç, 2001). This involves hard-fought entitlements, emphasizing the transformation of urban residents into urban dwellers (Leary-Owhin & McCarthy, 2020). As asserted by Butler (2012), this process necessitates a vigorous struggle. Francesco Biagi (2020) encapsulates the power of difference in the emancipation of the oppressed. Marcuse (2010) further underscores its organizational advantage, uniting diverse forces, groups, and organizations with shared interests. This underscores the strength of the right to the city’s programmatic proposal: revitalizing the proletariat as a political subject by uniting the struggles of oppressed groups, aligning with the principles of the Social Reproduction Theory (SRT).

Here, the proposal is to gather and analyzes the developments of the right to the city by theorists who have taken the Lefebvre’s proposal as a starting point to highlight its omissions concerning the place of women in social relations of production in general and in the production of space in particular. Based on the results, the focus is deepened on the impact of conceiving a gender-neutral right to the city for its institutionalization¹ as part of the path towards urban society.

The literature review was narrative in nature. The selection process identified and explored the most pertinent periodical publications, as well as delved into the works of frequently cited academics, using a methodological strategy designed to find works related to women’s right to the city.

The surveyed publications are indexed in Google Scholar, Latindex, REDIB, Web of Science, Elsevier, and SAGE, and/or are frequently cited in indexed papers, responding to the keywords ‘right to the city’ – and its denomination in other languages –

and ‘Lefebvre’. The selected documents focus on authors who, inspired by the Lefebvre’s concept of the right to the city, analyze women’s position within this theoretical framework.

The findings are mainly in Spanish, English, and Portuguese, in line with the results of Brito & Andrade (2022), who highlighted the increase in articles over the last decade, while worldwide movements and the institutionalization of the right to the city within national legal frameworks have expanded. The 31 authors identified demonstrate, from different disciplinary approaches, the neglect of this substantial ‘minority’ within Lefebvre’s concept of the right to the city.

2. RIGHT TO THE CITY FOR WHOM?

Within gender epistemologies, standpoint theories propose that the actual is structured by the identity and position of the knowing subject. These theories are an important tool to justify, from an epistemological perspective, the inquiry into women’s lives, in contrast with the positivist conception of objectivity as an epistemic privilege (Cattien, 2016). The idea of sites of epistemic privilege traces back to the Hegelian conception of master and slave, further developed in the works of Marx and Engels (Hartsock, 2019) and later contributions by Georg Lukács (1971). Then, these theories focus on the development of contingent truths to mitigate the distorting effects of an uncritical acceptance of dominant perspectives (St. Denny, 2014).

Dorothy Smith (1987) advocates for a Sociology for People that thinks and inquiries from an alternative approach, a new perspective centred on subjects rather than objects. The embodied experiences of women have been misrecognized in social inquiry.

it operates to claim a piece of the actual for the ruling relations of which is part; it proceeds from a concept or theory expressing those relations, and it operates selectively in assembling observations of the world that are ordered discursively (Smith, 1999, p. 4).

The Women’s Standpoint proposed by Smith is a means to unveil the extensive network of ruling relations, both in the real and in the texts produced by social sciences. It serves as a starting point for inquiry, and the knowledge produced is not gender-restricted, as it explores and explains these relations for everyone. The problematization of the everyday world resonates for the people, not just women, because the epistemological shift, in this case, relies on researching issues from a perspective outside the standpoint of men who do the ruling (Smith, 1987).

There have been several attempts to connect the works of Smith and Lefebvre (Aladro, 2021;

Jirón et al., 2020; Kipfer et al., 2012). By expanding the framework to include experiences beyond those of men in ruling relations and white, middle-class women (Smith, 2005), the social sciences can generate meaningful knowledge from embodied subjects to better explain urban space. The Canadian sociologist is quite clear on this matter:

I mean by this simply that when it comes to knowing her way around in it, how things get done, where the bus stop for B-line bus is, at which supermarket she can pick up both organic vegetables and lactate-reduced milk, and all the unspecifiables of her daily doings and the local conditions on which she relies, when it comes to knowing these matters, she is an expert. It is another matter altogether when it comes to the forms of organization that authenticate the organic status of the vegetables that brings the supermarket or the bus company into daily existence; or that constitute the responsibility of the streets, the side walks, the standards of waste disposal, and so on. And going deeper into the complex of relations into which these locally visible and effective forms are tied are the social relations of economy (Smith, 2005, p. 24)

These practices inhabit what Lefebvre (1976) refers to as the peripheries. The inhabitants of these peripheries – understood not geographically, but as those displaced from social centrality (Schmid, 2012) – hold an epistemic privilege because they lack access to social resources and remain situated “in dispersion, demarcation, and exclusion from urban life” (Schmid, 2012, p. 57). Moreover, both Lefebvre and Smith emphasize the importance of making explicit and justifying the standpoint assumed by social researchers for similar reasons: to obtain authentic knowledge about urban phenomena (Biagi, 2020) and to create a sociology that goes beyond the experiences of men embedded in ruling relations (Smith, 1987).

Ana Frani Alessandri Carlos (2007) explains that the notion of reproduction is articulated with the reproduction of social relations in a broad sense, opening to a broader level and referencing what Lefebvre calls philosophical production. This notion is inexorably linked to that of appropriation, and its analysis involves a serious effort to elucidate its various moments. The concept also reveals its generality in a conflictive and contradictory process that includes all spheres of social reproduction. Social relations, at the same time, become concrete and materialize in a space that is produced at a level that transcends the classical idea of the location of human phenomena and activities, involving the analysis of the objective space-temporal conditions

that reveal and define this activity as a social practice (Carlos, 2007).

Social Reproduction Theory (SRT) aims to explain oppressions – such as racial, sexual, gendered, and ableist – within the process of creating the workforce for capital (Bhattacharya & Vogel, 2017). Furthermore, it has tried to challenge the white feminist tendency to equate domestic labour with social reproduction, using insights from, for example, Angela Davis (1981). The findings within this framework attempt to clarify the relationship between oppression and exploitation by a) reaffirming the proletariat as a revolutionary subject; b) expanding the traditional notion of the working class; and c) reconsidering class struggle to extend it beyond strategies for improving labour conditions.

SRT integrates spatiality into its analyses, allowing for a multi-scalar understanding of social reproduction. Bodies are situated within a global capitalist landscape marked by national borders and imperialist power relations (Ferguson, 2020, p. 30). This framework reveals the geo-social hierarchy perpetuating colonialist, racist, and cisheterosexist practices during the social reproduction process (Ferguson, 2020).

This approach effectively addresses the spatial and temporal dislocation between commodity production and the time of life, challenging the prevailing urban epistemology that hierarchically separates the two. The erosion of social reproduction capacity, leading to uncertainty and disposability, requires attention in urban studies. These material and emotional conditions of precariousness and insecurity have become normalized, intertwining with common-sense notions and influencing socio-spatial practices (Tanyildiz et al, 2021).

The production of capitalist space influences the reproduction of the workforce, and vice versa, while recognizing that any genuinely emancipatory proposal for the right to the city must consider and address the oppressions that regulate workforce reproduction. By integrating Smith’s epistemological proposal and the insights of Social Reproduction Theory (SRT), an operational framework could be developed to reinterpret the right to the city, not as the interest of a single group – women – but as a political program that can be realized within Lefebvrian terms.

3. WOMEN’S RIGHT TO THE CITY: LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review, as a research tool, is an invitation to revisit previous findings and to engage in critical reflection on new discussions of academic issues (Guirao Goris, 2015). The right to the city is “an exigent demand by those deprived of basic material and legal rights, and an aspiration for the

future by those discontented with life as they see it around them" (Marcuse, 2012, p. 31). This concept raises a relevant question to define the right to the city: the issue of its political subjects.

The right to the city is not a demand for rights for everyone; it is a political project to rescue the individual in homogenisation processes and oppression (Dikeç, 2001; Huchzermeyer, 2017; Lyytinen, 2020; Marcuse, 2012; Njoh, 2017). Otherwise, it could strengthen the tendencies of capitalist space, especially through the abstraction and universality of rights discourse.

3.1. What right to the city?

The first task of the literature review was to determine how the authors use the Lefebvrian concept of the right to the city as a theoretical framework to guide their research or interpret their findings. Regarding this issue, key insights come from various disciplines such as urban planning, geography, sociology, anthropology, law, feminist and gender studies, as well as transdisciplinary efforts in urban research.

The highlights from urban planning address citizenship notions involving a human rights discourse to combat gendered violence and to empower women. Another key concept present in this type of research is the dichotomy between public and private space, but the theoretical focus for addressing the issue shifts between the problematization of the public sphere as a patriarchal domain and multiscale approaches where bodies, homes, and public spaces are inextricably linked, a connection only visible through a gendered perspective.

Ana Falú, a key figure in cities and women's studies at the regional level, contends that Lefebvre's right to the city prompts an exploration of diverse relationships in urban life, encompassing social, political, cultural, and economic dimensions (Falú, 2013). Despite this, women remain unseen in urban spaces due to historical gender-based labour divisions, denying them access to public areas (Falú, 2014a, 2014b). Falú takes a dual stance on the Lefebvrian concept: she acknowledges it as "essential for addressing urban transformations driven by globalization and the rise of neoliberal policies" (Falú, 2014b, p. 60) while vehemently critiquing the formulations, asserting that "*el 'derecho a la ciudad', de Lefebvre a Harvey, parece transformarse en una quimera*" [Lefebvre and Harvey's 'right to the city' seems to have transformed into a pipe dream] (Falú, 2014a, p. 19) (author's translation). Adopting a multiscale perspective – from territory to neighbourhood and individual body – she argues that women's right to the city is shaped by "*el conjunto de los Derechos Humanos orientados a la efectivización de (...) la toma de decisiones, económicas y físicas (...) un*

entramado de derechos, interconectados entre sí en clave de integralidad" [an ensemble of Human Rights guide to applying the (...) economic and physical decision-making processes (...) a scheme of interconnected rights in an integral framework] (Falú, 2016, p. 162) (author's translation).

Romero García-Carpintero contends that the right to the city is a blend of rights and freedoms crucial for enhancing daily life, emphasizing the central role of the feminist dimension. Specifically, the right for women involves active participation in the public sphere, transforming and claiming space with autonomy and freedom. She notes an intriguing connection between Henri Lefebvre and Jane Jacobs, echoed by other authors, highlighting Jacobs' criticism of the capitalist and patriarchal system, questioning the urban model's principles that overlook diverse demands and experiences (García-Carpintero, 2019, p. 120).

Alicia Yon and SriPallavi Nadimpallidefine the right to the city as conceptualized by Lefebvre as "the right to access urban resources and the right to participate equitably in the city" (Yon & Nadimpalli, 2017, p. 33). They acknowledge that a barrier faced by any notion of the right to the city is the asymmetry in power relations. They give strong emphasis to the concept of intersectionality and the multidimensionality of identity and discrimination in order to envision more inclusive and secure cities.

In line with Lefebvre's criticisms of urbanism, Beebeejaun (2017) argues that urban planning hinders discussions about gender and space dynamics, obstructing analyses of the relationships between different forms of oppression and the production of space. Despite new social movements championing the Lefebvrian right to the city, there is a scarcity of reinterpretations involving gender issues in the debate. Spatial practices rooted in everyday life that generate patterns of exclusion for women continue to be overlooked.

From sociology and geography – and transdisciplinary efforts involving them as well – emotions, identity, and sense of belonging take centre stage. The research design includes specific groups such as migrants and non-heterosexual identities, examining their embodied experiences, exclusion from public space, and the prevailing power relations.

In many cases, these researchers take up as theoretical baseline the findings of Falú, especially when the studies come from Latin America and Spain. These contributions share an interest in giving content to Falú's proposals about citizenship in public spaces and women's human rights.

Jimena Pandolfi, Sofía Cardozo Delgado, Valentina Torre, and Victoria Jorge (2019) apply her approach to the analysis of the situation of women in the city of Montevideo. They draw on Falú's emphasis on the symbolic aspects and mea-

nings involved in the construction of urban spaces to account for the experience of those who suffer exclusion from the right to the city and the inability to produce and inhabit it. They conclude that it is necessary to reconsider the way women inhabit the city from the understanding that the city is a privileged political territory.

Freitas and Gonçalves (2021) assert that Falú supports a broader women's right to the city agenda beyond architecture and services. This includes advocating for cultural diversity, sexual and reproductive rights, opportunities for leisure, and overcoming the sexual division of labour (Freitas & Gonçalves, 2021, p. 9). They also highlight Falú's criticism of the persistent emphasis on defining women solely as mothers in public policies and urban reform debates. The components of the right to the city, involving self-management and appropriation, already pose challenges for working-class men, with a more severe impact on proletarian women, especially when compounded by other forms of oppression.

Pérez Sanz and Gregorio Gil (2020) express scepticism about Lefebvre's emphasis on class over other power relations and Eurocentrism. They argue that without integrating gender into Lefebvre's formulation, it becomes questionable how it can be sensitive to the differences characterizing urban inhabitants (Pérez Sanz & Gregorio Gil, 2020, p. 13). Pérez Sanz (2013), in her research, finds Lefebvre's work intriguing for feminism, despite gender studies' criticisms, as it incorporates subjectivity and experience as crucial factors in urban studies. To support her critique, she references Dolores Hayden, who, while acknowledging Lefebvre's contribution, questions the neglect of women in his theory.

Rahbari and Sharepour (2015) found – with limitations – that gender, though overlooked by Lefebvre, plays a defining role in the right to the city, impacting urban perceptions. They maintain a Marxist lens, contending that gender, alongside social class and access to capital, uniquely oppresses women's lives in the urban landscape. They present three explanations within this framework: a) women's heightened impoverishment due to labour market vulnerabilities and an increase in female-headed households; b) women, distinct from a class, have varied access to capital; and c) gender adds a specific weight to repression alongside social class and access to capital.

María Gabriela Navas Perrone starts from the assertion that the Lefebvrian right to the city is invoked

a la hora de promover reformas urbanísticas que abanderan la defensa de procesos participativos de la ciudadanía, la sostenibilidad ambiental, la accesibilidad universal, la inclusión social, la igualdad de género y

otros valores ligados a la democratización de la ciudad [when promoting urban reforms that champion the defence of participatory citizen processes, environmental sustainability, universal accessibility, social inclusion, gender equality, and other values related to the democratization of the city] (Navas Perrone, 2019, p. 27) (author's translation).

However, its adaptation to institutional discourse has involved cuts in its claims and alignment with depoliticization and technocracy, which also affects the specific right to the city for women and the feminist critique of its original formulation, closely tied to the same institutional rhetoric.

Tovi Fenster is a prominent author in feminist critiques of the right to the city from the field of geography. Her work is cited in other documents reviewed, especially regarding multiscale analyses of women's right to the city and intersectional problematisations. Her focus on a gendered perspective addresses Lefebvre's oversight of patriarchal power relations and the lack of practical insight. She constructs her argument based on women's feelings of comfort, belonging, and commitment. She highlights Lefebvre's neglect of identity and gender, emphasizing the failure to address domestic-scale issues in the right to the city. Fenster illustrates how women face restrictions in both public and private spheres, underscoring the need to scrutinize the roots of violations of women's right to the city. Thus, a comprehensive examination of the right to use public and private spaces is essential, involving a nuanced understanding of the components – rights to use public spaces and participate in decision-making – at the domestic scale (Fenster, 2005b).

Laila Nazem Mourad, Gisela Cunha Viana Leonelli, and Joel Meireles Duarte (2020) emphasize, building on Tovi Fenster's perspective, that the violation of women's right to the city is also a consequence of the attack on their rights in the domestic sphere. In this sense, unequal access to space is not just a result of the production and reproduction of cities but a constitutive element of them.

María Rodó-de-Zárate (2015, 2019) proposes fresh perspectives "*invisibles desde el centro*" [invisible from the centre] (author's translation) regarding the link between space access and the right to appropriation, integral to the right to the city. Drawing from Fenster's (2005a) gendered framework, Rodó-de-Zárate contributes by problematizing public and domestic space from a non-heterosexist standpoint. She emphasizes emotions as facilitators or barriers to city access, incorporating class as a significant factor. Advocating for a fairer right to the city, she underscores three key elements: a) prioritizing households in cities, recognizing power relations in private spaces as barriers to

public access; b) framing the body as a right and its autonomy as foundational to the right to the city; and c) acknowledging emotions as indicators of inequality, positioning the right to well-being as integral to city access.

Elena Vacchelli and Magali Peyrefitte (2017) propose a spatial reading of the gendered right to the city, emphasizing "the shift from *a/topia* (not having a space or being denied access to public spaces broadly conceived) to *topia* (having a space in the public domain)" (Vacchelli & Peyrefitte, 2017, p. 14). For the authors, the gendered right to the city is a call to take control of the state and capital with a radical restructuring of social, economic, and political relations. The appropriation of the space that constitutes it can be described with this shift based on the type of work that women have historically performed, i.e., the private sphere in general and care work in particular.

Other papers centre on the everyday life as a key to read the Lefebvrian highlights from a gendered standpoint. Leslie Kern (2010) advocates for Lefebvre's right to the city and his idea that everyday life shapes spaces of representation, but from a feminist perspective inspired by scholars studying urban life, such as Dorothy Smith (1987). Kern aims to explain the impact of daily tasks and processes on macroeconomic and political processes. Her research suggests that women's everyday concerns serve as sites and stakes for struggles for the right to the city, even though most shared spaces within and around condominiums are rarely more than representations of space.

Tanja Bastia (2017) analyzes the citizenship of migrants in Buenos Aires by taking Lefebvre's right to the city and problematizing it through Hannah Arendt's idea, which argues that the right to claim rights is not a given right, even though it is a fundamental capability for building a just city. According to the author, the alienation of people from urban space has been a constant for women due to their low wages and the different uses of their time based on their responsibilities, ranging from the struggle for income to caregiving.

From feminist legal studies, Ana Milena Montoya Ruiz (2012, 2013) emphasizes the importance that Lefebvre places on desire in his proposal for the right to the city, to the extent of transforming it into a necessity for a renewed urban life. Once interrogated by feminist perspectives, the right to the city must be inscribed in feminist legal thought to prioritize it as a new collective and global right, where the focus is on the experiences, reflections, and lives of women in cities.

The analyzed works can also be broadly categorized into two groups. The first shifts the constitutive variable of the right to the city from society's division into social classes to an equal consideration

of oppression based on gender, race, ethnicity, etc. (Falú, 2013, 2014a, 2014b, 2016; Freitas & Gonçalves, 2021; Montoya Ruiz, 2012, 2013; Pérez Sanz, 2013; Pérez Sanz & Gregorio Gil, 2020; García-Carpintero, 2019; Yon & Nadimpalli, 2017). The second group maintains a class-oriented perspective, suggesting an expansion of its explanatory character through academic research into the public-private dichotomy and emotions associated with everyday life from a gender perspective (Bastia, 2017; Beebejaun, 2017; Fenster, 2005a; Kern, 2010, 2019; Navas Perrone, 2019; Nazem Mourad et al., 2020; Rahbari & Sharepour, 2015; Rodó-de-Zárate, 2015, 2016, 2019; Vacchelli & Peyrefitte, 2017).

The first group, adopting an intersectional approach (Collins, 1992; Crenshaw, 2002), criticizes Marxism and aligns with other perspectives, arguing its inadequacy to explain the social world. The second group focuses on a deeper exploration that aims to rethink citizenship based on the fundamental components of the right to the city – appropriation and self-management.

However, neither group fully addresses the Lefebvrian right to the city from a gender perspective. The first group falls short in explaining the interactions of identified oppressions, while the second lacks a proper integration between gender and class.

3.2. *The access as a key to understand the women's right to the city*

In the reviewed literature, the theme of access to the right to the city consistently emerges as a defining aspect that lends specificity to gender-focused research. Ana Falú probes the impact of gender omission in urban planning on "*¿(c)uánto de esta omisión incide en la posibilidad de acceso y el buen uso de los bienes urbanos?*" [to what extent does this omission impact the possibility of access to and proper use of urban resources?] (Falú, 2016, p. 163) (author's translation). María Rodó-de-Zárate investigates how young lesbians' access to the city is influenced by their diverse positions (Rodó-de-Zárate, 2016, pp. 6-7). Leslie Kern cautions against framing citizenship from a consumption perspective, emphasizing the consequences of selling city life as a continuous spectacle to new residents (Kern, 2010, p. 170). Elena Vacchelli and Magali Peyrefitte (2017) incorporate access as a constitutive element of the *a/topia* characterizing women's experiences in cities. Alicia Yon and SriPallavi Nadimpalli (2017) aim to problematize the denial of access and usage rights for women, and Yasminah Beebejaun (2017) explores the role of planning in facilitating women's access to the city, among other references.

The issue of access is often briefly mentioned but not fully developed in meaning or scope. Nevertheless, the term remains imprecise, and

none of the cited papers provide a clear definition to explain its meaning within these studies. The adoption of a rights discourse, as mentioned in the previous paragraph, is not widely embraced by the reviewed authors. However, the concept of access is well-established in legal research and documents. For example, the World Charter for Human Rights in the City institutionalizes access within the right to the city, defining it as both physical or mental proximity and economic affordability.

In the legal context, the notion of access arises as a contradiction within a system managing scarcity. The recognition of economic, social, and cultural rights challenges the universality and equality claimed by modern law, as it remains abstract when contrasted with the subjective and material conditions of individuals (Madrid Pérez, 2010).

Access, historically recognized with economic, social, and cultural rights, is a prior instance to the effective enjoyment of acquired rights. It is linked to necessary conditions for the enjoyment of formally recognized rights, requiring actions to alleviate general class inequality and specific disparities for disadvantaged groups (Beade, 2015). This linkage takes on nuanced aspects based on the content of rights and belonging to disadvantaged groups (Pautassi, 2008).

Pedro Pérez (2019) connects access to the city to the commodification of its production, consumption, and private property, bridging Marxism and legal analysis to provide a historical framework for understanding contemporary Latin American societies marked by accelerated urbanization and capital logic. His notion of the right to the city is pragmatic, contingent on identified conditions in current cities for its effectiveness (Pérez, 2019, p. 8).

These discussions are intricately tied to economic, social, and cultural rights, reflecting the synthesis of the contradiction between the need for urban goods and the social obstacles to their concrete access. According to Pérez (2019), accessing the city involves exercising a right or demonstrating economic capacity (solvency) to pay the market price of urban goods, emphasizing real access based on citizenship rather than their capitalist nature. The legal notion of access provides only a limited perspective for giving socio-spatial content to the term. It could extend the abstraction of law into the political meaning of the right to the city. Furthermore, providing a legal definition may lead to the commodification and abstraction of women's efforts to claim their right to the city, impacting strategies of appropriation and self-management.

4. ACCESS AS DIFFERENTIAL APPROPRIATION

Access as a key concept cannot transfer its legal meaning into the right to the city without losing

its Lefebvrian sense. Even if its institutionalization is possible, the right to the city is fundamentally a pedagogical tool for organizing the working class, especially disadvantaged groups such as women. This aligns with Lefebvre's work on revolutionary political action and his vision of urban citizenship rights developed within the Navarrenx Group (Huchzermeyer, 2017; Marcuse, 2010).

Even among the authors addressing the right to the city, the concept of access remains unclear. Fenster (2005a) and Yon and Nadimpalli (2017) emphasize the power of public access, with women workers facing reduced citizenship as a key barrier, as highlighted by Soto Villagrán (2007). Rodó-de-Zárate (2016) critiques limiting access to urban resources and introduces a dual meaning, aligning it with Lefebvre's right to the city: self-management for transforming the city through collective power and appropriation for understanding emotions tied to public and private spaces. Beebejaun (2017) advocates focusing on everyday life negotiations to address the ambiguity of 'access', while Jirón and Mansilla (2013) and Jirón et al. (2020) zoom in on women's urban mobility practices, exploring spatial barriers to accessing activities, people, and places.

The subject of the right to the city can only be understood in conjunction with its complement, the right to difference. The right to difference is 'the basis and source of the other concrete rights' (Dikeç, 2001, p. 1791) and 'implies no entitlements that do not have to be bitterly fought for' (Butler, 2012, p. 152). Furthermore, it represents a process of transitioning from urban residency to urban inhabitation (Leary-Owhin & McCarthy, 2020).

The power of difference lies in the oppressed's struggle for emancipation (Biagi, 2020). It offers an organizational advantage by bringing together diverse forces, groups, and organizations around a common interest (Marcuse, 2010). This is the programmatic strength of the right to the city as a political proposal, revitalizing the proletariat as a political subject by uniting the struggles of oppressed groups, as SRT suggests in its analysis of capitalism.

If it is confirmed that "(a) *mayor posición o estatus de las mujeres, más posibilidades de romper barreras – techos de cristal – y compartir espacios con los hombres*" [when women's position or status is higher, there are more possibilities to break barriers – glass ceilings – and to share spaces with men] (Concejo Álvarez, 1998, p. 15) (author's translation), as indicated by studies like the one conducted by María Rodó-de-Zárate, where the results suggest that social class influences the ability of women to cope with negative emotions regarding places, it would affirm that access to the right to the city for women, like social reproduction, is deeply and necessarily linked to appropriation as a component of that right.

Understanding the right to the city as the recovery of its use value – appropriation – and the democratization of decision-making in a broad sense – self-management – within a process where the social claims of peripheral groups transform to demand the city as a centre of power and wealth – right to difference –, it is possible to identify, at least, three dimensions in it. The access dimension is the possibility of appropriation – dwelling as spatial activity –, the use dimension is the possibility of exercising urban citizenship, and the claim dimension is perhaps the most important as it concretizes the programmatic demands of the right to the city and its political subjects.

The hegemonic production of knowledge in urban studies has neglected the role of gender by relegating social reproduction and, therefore, the access dimension of the right to the city, the possibility of appropriation beyond those who control the means of production, closer to those who reproduce the workforce daily. The perspective of appropriation by Vacchelli and Peyrefitte (2017) becomes very relevant here because, from a gender perspective, the struggle for the dwelling of working-class women is to move from non-access – *a/topia* – to access – *topia* –, which is a specific process of appropriation resulting mainly from the dislocation between the points of value production and the spaces for the reproduction of the workforce.

The right to the city as a political project aims to rescue the individual from processes of homogenization and oppression (Dikeç, 2001). Therefore, not all individuals are holders of the same right; it is necessary to determine its subjective aspect by incorporating into the definition the right to difference. The radicalizing power of difference lies in the emancipatory struggles of those who are oppressed and in their organizational capacity.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This article provided a literature review that explores the writings of authors who, drawing on the Lefebvrian notion of the right to the city, problematize the place of women in their work. The task was carried out similarly to the preceding chapter, and it was possible to identify 31 authors who address how the gender issue has been, at the very least, neglected in Lefebvre's right to the city.

Broadly speaking, it can be asserted that the analyzed works fall into two major groups. The first of them constitutes what has been termed an inter-sectional rewrite since it involves a strong critique of the place that Marxism, in general, has given to social class. Consequently, it shifts the specific weight of dividing society into social classes as the constitutive variable of the right to the city, replacing it with an approach that puts it on the same level

as the oppression related to gender, race, ethnicity, etc. (Falú, 2013, 2014a, 2014b, 2016; Freitas & Gonçalves, 2021; Montoya Ruiz, 2012, 2013; Pérez Sanz, 2013; Pérez Sanz & Gregorio Gil, 2020; García-Carpintero, 2019; Yon & Nadimpalli, 2017).

The second group advocates for the class-based tone of the right to the city and delves deeper into the initial proposal of the right to the city by reconsidering citizenship through appropriation and self-management as fundamental components. In this line of thought, it is suggested to enhance its explanatory capacity by critiquing the public-private dichotomy and incorporating the study of emotions associated with everyday life (Bastia, 2017; Beebejaun, 2017; Fenster, 2005a, 2005b); Kern, 2010, 2019; Navas Perrone, 2019; Nazem Mourad et al., 2020; Rahbari & Sharepour, 2015; Rodó-de-Zárate, 2015, 2016, 2019; Vacchelli & Peyrefitte, 2017).

These two major groups did not, for this work, adequately account for Lefebvre's right to the city from a gender perspective, as the first group fails to explain how the identified oppressions interact, while the second group does not successfully integrate gender and class. However, both groups have an underlying element that, despite its initial vagueness, was considered a key element to prioritize them and achieve an explanation of women's right to the city that effectively aligns with the minimum contents of Lefebvre's program, namely, the issue of access.

Some general conclusions drawn are that the legal concept of access is considered prior and necessary for the effective enjoyment of rights and is closely linked to the recognition of Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights in general, and Social Rights in particular. It requires various actions aimed at mitigating class inequality in general and the disadvantaged groups in society in particular, taking on specific nuances based on the content of the associated rights and the belonging to one or more disadvantaged groups of the right holders. Regarding the specific use of the notion concerning the right to the city, it was identified that it is mainly linked to real access to urban goods from the condition of citizenship and not in its capitalist character.

In the realm of research on women's right to the city, Tovi Fenster (2005a, 2005b) emphasizes the power of access in the public sphere, hindered by various barriers that create a reduced citizenship for women workers (Yon & Nadimpalli, 2017), particularly affected by the dislocation between home and work (Soto Villagrán, 2007). However, access cannot be narrowed down solely to access to urban goods and services; it must be understood in terms of self-management and appropriation, incorporating specific emotions, practices, and feelings that affect the right to the city (Rodó-de-Zárate, 2016). The focus should be on these practices derived from

negotiating everyday life to overcome the vague terms employed by hegemonic planning (Beebeejaun, 2017). The mobility practices of women are especially significant for identifying barriers to accessing activities, other people, and places (Jirón & Mansilla, 2013; Jirón et al., 2020).

As a strategy to prioritize the contributions of the two identified theoretical groups, a reinterpretation was carried out from the perspective of SRT, aiming to provide a sufficient understanding of women's access to the right to the city. The emphasis was placed on the relationships between the production of capitalist space, the reproduction of the workforce, and the regimentation of social reproduction by various oppressions. This effort resulted in the identification of at least three dimensions within the definition of the right to the city: a) an access dimension understood as the possibility of appropriation – or inhabiting as a spatial activity; b) a usage dimension as the possibility of self-management – or exercising urban citizenship; and c) a reclamer dimension as a radicalization mediated by the right to difference – or the realization of programmatic demands of the right to the city by peripheral subjects. The struggle for women's dwelling, for appropriation, is thus a struggle for access to the right to the city. It is the quest for *topia* (Vacchelli & Peyrefitte, 2017), which demands reconnecting the spaces of the reproduction of labour to the points of value production, bringing what is traditionally private into public discourse.

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Contribution of the author

This manuscript was written by the sole author listed, who contributed to all the study conception and design. The author conducted all the material preparation, data collection, and analysis. The author read, approved, and submitted the final manuscript.

Note

¹ The starting point of this paper is the acceptance of the possibility of institutionalizing the right to the city as a method of action for the working class within the context of the class struggle. While legal changes can enhance the

working class's living conditions, they can't replace the historical aspect of the class struggle. Positive impacts of this institutionalization are evident in low-development countries (Attoh, 2011; Huchzermeyer, 2017; Njoh, 2017), especially concerning women's right to the city (Elden, 2004; Lyytinen, 2020).

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