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Henri Lefebvre and planetary urbanization: Progress and prospect

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Abstract: Henri Lefebvre, a key Marxist urban theorist, introduced the concept of ‘Planetary Urbanization,’ a cutting-edge theory addressing emerging global forms of capitalist urbanization, where traditional urban theories have limited explanatory power. This paper reviews studies on planetary urbanization over the past 20 years in relation to Lefebvre’s urban theories. The report categorizes planetary urbanization’s contributions to urban theory into two primary aspects. First, it innovatively incorporates the processes of urbanization and the extended operational landscapes within urban research. Second, it proposes new trajectories for urban politics by reshaping Lefebvre’s concept of ‘the right to the city.’ However, by tracing Lefebvre’s theories, the report argues that planetary urbanization overlooks his emphasis on ‘everyday life’ while aligning with his views on generality and universality. Consequently, this dehumanized approach fails to uncover the significant political potential embedded in urban daily life. Additionally, by neglecting the differences among urban populations, the theory adopts a naive perspective on the subaltern’s capacity to articulate their ‘right to the city.’ Moreover, as a Eurocentric theory rooted in Western urbanization history, it inadequately explains context-specific events occurring in the urbanization of the Global South. Thus, this paper suggests that future research on planetary urbanization should incorporate considerations of urban everyday life, recognize social differences, and account for context-specific dependencies.

Keywords: Henri Lefebvre; planetary urbanization; everyday life; the right to the city; provincial approaches

1. Introduction

In the 21st century, global integration, adaptable manufacturing, and market orientation have significantly intensified. These factors have facilitated the rapid movement of capital and the formation of new transnational spatial systems. Consequently, global regions have undergone profound transformations, and urban agglomerations have expanded rapidly. Soja [1] contends that urbanization is expanding across various dimensions, encompassing social, political, economic, and environmental aspects. This multifaceted expansion challenges traditional geographical categorizations, such as urban versus rural, society versus nature, and global north versus global south. Moreover, it has the potential to signify the obsolescence of the notion of the “contemporary urban center.” Conventional urban theories, predominantly grounded in Western perspectives, are inadequate for comprehending these evolving environments. In response to this phenomenon, the concept of planetary urbanization has emerged as an innovative hypothesis. This theory posits that the entire globe is undergoing a transformation, evolving into a networked and urbanized social space.

Henri Lefebvre's *Urban Revolution* [2] laid the groundwork for the concept of planetary urbanization, a framework that has been further developed by scholars such as Andy Merrifield, Christian Schmid, and Neil Brenner. These scholars build upon Lefebvre's analysis of political economy, arguing that planetary urbanization represents a novel phenomenon and methodology for understanding urban issues within a capitalist system.

This paper provides a comprehensive evaluation of research on global urbanization conducted over the past two decades. It critically examines Lefebvre's urban concepts, exploring recent advancements, existing deficiencies, and future prospects. The paper contends that planetary urbanization, through its extensive examination of urbanization processes and their expansive operational landscapes, makes a substantial contribution to contemporary urban theory. This contribution supports an epistemic shift in urban research, emphasizing the need to rethink traditional urban concepts. Moreover, the phenomenon of planetary urbanization has the potential to redefine key concepts such as "the right to the city" and "the politics of encounter," thereby opening new avenues for urban political discourse. The thesis proposed in this paper suggests that while Lefebvre's notion of generality aligns with the processes of global urbanization, it diverges from his emphasis on 'everyday existence.' The concept of planetary urbanization, by adopting an objective and impersonal perspective, overlooks the significant political opportunities embedded in the everyday lived experiences of urban life.

The concept of planetary urbanization may inadvertently constrain the representation of urban subaltern groups and their demands for the 'right to the city' by overlooking critical dimensions such as gender, class, and racial inequalities. Despite this limitation, the theory does expand upon Lefebvre's generalization of agencies and locales. However, its Eurocentric approach fails to adequately address the context-specific disparities and conflicts occurring in the Global South, thereby reinforcing the dominance of European culture and Western power. This critique suggests that future research on planetary urbanization should prioritize the investigation of urban everyday life, socioeconomic disparities, and geographical factors.

The current development report is organized into five key components. This dissertation's final segment delves deeply into Lefebvre's urban theories, emphasizing his viewpoints on "everyday life" and "urban citizenship." These concepts are rigorously analyzed to provide a comprehensive understanding of their implications. In the third section, we analyze the latest research on global urbanization, drawing connections between Lefebvre's notions of "everyday existence" and "the right to the city." Section 4 offers a detailed analysis of global urbanization in relation to these ideas. Finally, Section 5 proposes potential directions for future research in the field of planetary urban studies, aiming to enhance both theoretical comprehension and practical implementation.

2. Henri Lefebvre: Everyday life and the right to the city

This section provides a concise overview of Henri Lefebvre's urban research, with a particular focus on the concepts of "everyday life" and "the right to the city."

These notions are integral to Lefebvre's work, as evidenced in **Critique of Everyday Life** Volumes I [3] and II [4], as well as **Everyday Life in the Modern World** [5]. Lefebvre defines "everyday life" as encompassing all aspects of existence beyond work, including "sustenance, clothing, furnishing, homes, lodging, neighborhoods, [and the] environment" (Lefebvre [5], p. 21, as cited by Elden [6]). His exploration of everyday life delves into the elements that shape our sociality and define our humanity (Lefebvre [3], p. 148).

In Volume I, Lefebvre adopts a philosophical and optimistic perspective on everyday life, viewing it as the fundamental intersection of social and structural activities, the common foundation of various cultural phenomena and social relations, and a source of total revolution. He identifies both repressive and emancipatory elements within everyday life, suggesting that it contains inherent contradictions, as it "embraces both the trivial and the extraordinary" (Lefebvre [4], p. 20, as cited by Elden [6]). On one hand, capitalist ideology and modern lifestyle concepts, along with notions of social welfare, are ingrained in people's minds through media propaganda, masking exploitation and suppressing revolutionary impulses. On the other hand, everyday life harbors revolutionary potential for overcoming alienation, as exemplified by the 'festival' in rural France. The festival and everyday life are two sides of the same coin; while the festival contrasts with everyday life, it also integrates with it. The festival represents an explosion of the forces accumulated within everyday life, highlighting its more powerful moments in relation to food, community, and nature (Lefebvre [3], p. 207).

However, in the last two volumes, Lefebvre adopts a more micro-level, sociological, and pessimistic perspective, discussing the rise of technocracy, consumerism, and the presumed end of modernity [6]. In contemporary capitalist society, modern 'everyday life' has been largely absorbed into and 'colonized' by capitalist production, consumerism, and new technologies. Capitalist society offers an abundance of products and services, not to meet people's everyday needs, but to stimulate the expansion of production and economic growth, thereby disguising the deprivation of their leisure and free time (Lefebvre [5], pp. 72–73). Despite this, Lefebvre suggests that 'everyday life' remains a 'level' or 'platform' from which to understand the potential for transforming the world, presenting a vision of 'the constellation of moments' distinct from traditional socialist political revolution.

Lefebvre [7] (p.158) argues that in order to effectively critique the daily existence under capitalism, he introduces the concept of "the right to the city," which he defines as a passionate plea and request. This right may be seen as the inhabitants' entitlement to obtain information, utilize municipal services, and actively participate in the process of urban development. According to Lefebvre [7] (p. 158), the right to visit or return to traditional rights is not a simple matter. It encompasses the right to have an impact on the production of social spaces, as well as the right to oppose one-sided control by entities like the government and capitalist demands. Furthermore, it includes the right to change urban spaces through collective and inclusive political actions.

Streets and monuments function as hubs for social interaction and the exchange of information. Additionally, they may serve as catalysts for collective revolutionary actions. Nevertheless, there exists a prevailing belief among those advocating for "the right to the city" that is rooted in essentialism and focused on the privileged few. This

perspective fails to acknowledge significant differences in terms of gender, race, socioeconomic status, demands, and places within social movements. Lefebvre's concept of "urban revolution" [2] exhibits a comparable tendency towards generalization, sometimes disregarding diverse geographical and historical elements. Lefebvre posits the hypothesis that the advancement of human civilization follows a linear trajectory along the space-time continuum, commencing with an agricultural society, advancing to an industrial society, and ultimately culminating in an urban civilization. This concept, derived from the observations of cities in Western countries, fails to consider the diverse trajectories of development in the Global South. For example, some East African countries have transitioned directly into urban culture without undergoing the industrial phase.

3. Review on planetary urbanization

Based on Lefebvre's study, the notion of "planetary urbanization" was established. Lefebvre [7] used the terms "the complete urbanization of society" and "urban society" in his book "The Right to the City," which was released simultaneously. The concept of "planetary urbanization" was initially introduced by Lefebvre [2] in his book *Urban Revolutions*, which was released in 1970. This book was the initial publication to introduce the concept. Lefebvre argues that urbanization leads to the gradual erasure of differences between rural and urban areas, ultimately resulting in the worldwide integration of the entire planet into a unified system. Furthermore, he claims that the aforementioned process results in the ongoing enhancement of a city's functionality. The traditional urban concepts that emerged throughout the industrial era are becoming outdated as cities are no longer confined to certain regions with well-defined limits. As a result, the idea of a "city" may become more distant or disconnected from the real world.

The concept of planetary urbanization was adopted and further developed by critical urban theorists such as Brenner from Harvard University, Merrifield from Cambridge University, and Schmid from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology. These individuals were responding to the phenomenon of large-scale urbanization, the blurring of boundaries, and the potential loss of natural spaces. Studies that are currently being conducted on the topic of urbanization on a global scale are founded on politics and procedures. The argument put forth by Brenner [8] is that the expansion of capitalism urbanization to a global scale has been driven by creative destruction and spatial fix. This expansion has been affected by history, geographical locations, institutions, and social movements. When compared to the term "global," Merrifield [9] thinks that the term "planetary" better accurately expresses the dynamic and fluid nature of urbanization. Specifically, he proposes that the endpoint of productivity increase and the spatial fix that is inherent in capitalism is represented by the phenomenon of global urbanization. The enhancement of global connection in information, media, knowledge, and practice is another way in which planetary urbanization contributes to the development of new political possibilities.

In recent scholarly discussions, several researchers have expanded the theoretical understanding of planetary urbanization by exploring its implications for social dynamics, spatial justice, and global urban processes. Angelo and Goh [10] illustrate

how the planetary urbanization framework, by adopting a multiscale and non-city-centric perspective on seemingly local phenomena, plays a pivotal role in theorizing and comprehending social differences at the everyday level in empirical research. Lesutis [11] advocates for the “right against the urbicidal city,” demonstrating how this formulation of spatial justice fosters the “true politics of encounter” in the ongoing battle for spatial equity in an unevenly urbanized globe. Against the backdrop of ongoing discussions about overcoming city-centric approaches in urban theory, Neil Brenner and Swarnabh Ghosh [12] propose a theoretical framework in this article to investigate the links between planetary urbanization processes and the political ecologies of emerging infectious diseases. In this theoretical discussion on planetary urbanization, Canetti [13] introduced the notion of the ‘peripheral condition,’ shedding light on a crucial aspect of this expansive urban phenomenon. In China, scholars have embraced the theory of planetary urbanization, a recent advancement in Western urban studies, and have applied it to China’s rapid urbanization process to explore its unique characteristics [14–16]. These endeavors underscore the significant research value and vast application potential of this innovative theory.

3.1. Reconstructing urban theories

Brenner and Schmid provide a critical analysis of traditional urban theories that are based on the epistemological principles of regionalism, categorization, and generalization. Furthermore, they advocate for the implementation of novel features and methodologies in urban research. Planetary urbanization studies challenge the epistemology of traditional urban theories, advocating for a paradigm shift away from “methodological cityish” towards a “urban theory without an outside.” In addition, these studies shift their focus from evaluating the features of urban agglomeration to intensively examining the process of urbanization. Brenner [17] argues that the constraints of current urban theories might be ascribed to a concept referred to as “methodological cityish.” This notion is defined by its dependence on the distinction between urban and nonurban areas, and its focus on studying specific cities as the primary factor. The mainstream urban theories such as *Triumph of the City* [18], *Smart City* [19], *Ecological Urbanism* [20], and *Subaltern Urbanism* [21] are based on traditional urban concepts that establish clear distinctions between urban and non-urban areas based on factors such as population size, density, and heterogeneity [22, 23]. These mainstream urban theories are based on common urban conceptions. In his book *Triumph of the City*, Glaeser [18] highlights the importance of the city and argues that it represents the perfect organization of social space.

In contrast, Brenner and Schmid [24] critique traditional urban studies for attributing all achievements, progress, and challenges in social, political, economic, and ecological domains solely to the ‘city.’ This geographical focus suggests that addressing internal changes within metropolitan regions can effectively resolve all socioeconomic and ecological issues, as if these challenges are exclusive to urban areas. Such an approach reinforces the notion that cities are static entities with fixed geographical boundaries, overlooking the interconnectedness between the city and its broader surrounding environment.

Brenner and Schmid propose an alternative framework for understanding cities, which challenges the traditional view of cities as static and self-contained. Their approach emphasizes the interactions that occur across different metropolitan areas, recognizing the dynamic and constantly evolving nature of urbanization within a capitalist system [17,24]. This new perspective on urbanism seeks to understand the fluid geographical changes that characterize urban areas, moving beyond the idea of cities as isolated entities to a more comprehensive view of urbanization as a global and interconnected process. Martinez et al [25] explored the productive tension between the concept of planetary urbanization and the issues of the urban age, pointing out that the process of urban development has gone far beyond the boundaries of the traditional city. In addition, Lesutis [11], based on the theory of planetary urbanization, discussed in depth the challenges and problems of spatial justice in the context of uneven urbanization. Kamvasinou [26], in her work, reexamines the notion of waste within the context of planetary urbanization, offering fresh perspectives on the challenges faced by urban areas.

3.1.1. New dimensions: Multi-scalar and processual

Brenner and Schmid have made substantial contributions to the reassessment of urban concepts and theories, fostering a deeper understanding of the forces driving the increasing prevalence of urbanization. Brenner [17] argues that the concept of the urban extends beyond simple categories of types and opposites, instead representing a dynamic and ongoing process that reveals the transformation of social space through various mechanisms. He emphasizes that “creative destruction” has been a key driver in the continuous alteration of urban spatial systems since the 19th century, leading to the emergence and global proliferation of distinctive architectural designs. Consequently, it is crucial to examine the urban environment from a process-oriented perspective, focusing on the continuous reconstruction of capitalist socio-spatial organization, rather than relying on static morphological tools.

Brenner’s second argument suggests that the urban can be characterized without reference to specific geographical arrangements or predefined limits of human settlement. The defining features of urban agglomeration, according to this view, include openness, diversity, and the inclusion of a broader range of scales and sizes. Within the field of urban studies, the prevailing epistemology often simplifies and categorizes social space into distinct classes, such as urban areas, towns, suburban regions, rural areas, and natural environments. However, the 21st century has witnessed a growing interconnectedness between urban and suburban areas in terms of economic, social, and ecological factors. This interconnectedness challenges traditional fixed classifications, which are increasingly inadequate for understanding the constantly evolving urban landscapes. Instead, a more fluid and flexible approach is needed to capture the complexity of contemporary urbanization.

3.1.2. New mechanisms: Concentrated urbanization, extended urbanization and differential urbanization

The prevailing knowledge within urban studies struggles to fully grasp the “planetary formation of capitalist urbanization” [27] (p. 153). This difficulty arises because urbanization has advanced beyond confined geographical units and specialized spatial patterns. Brenner and Schmid [27] advocate for a shift in the

epistemological foundation of urban studies, moving away from a narrow focus on cities alone towards an understanding of the broader operational landscapes connected to urbanization. They propose that urbanization encompasses concentrated, extended, and differential processes, all of which are interconnected and mutually constitutive.

Traditional urban theories often concentrate exclusively on the concentrated growth of cities, emphasizing the clustering of populations, industries, infrastructure, and wealth [28]. However, these theories frequently overlook the transformations occurring in operational environments and the ongoing process of creative destruction within metropolitan areas. The concentration of individuals and financial resources represents only one dimension of urbanization. A more comprehensive understanding requires examining the production and restructuring of social spatial organization, which is a broader and deeply interconnected aspect of the urbanization process. By broadening the scope of urban studies to include these extended and differential processes, scholars can better capture the complex dynamics driving contemporary urbanization.

The concept of “extended urbanization” refers to the activation and transformation of suburban areas, territories, and landscapes to support the daily operations of urban life. This process involves urban centers drawing labor, materials, and energy from suburban regions, resulting in the conversion of large portions of natural and agricultural land into construction zones. Furthermore, the global urban society continues to sustain itself through the continuous development of extensive infrastructure. Through accumulation by dispossession, traditional suburban life is dismantled and integrated into the global labor market and exchange system [29]. Under capitalism, extended urbanization has profoundly influenced the consolidation, development, and reconstruction of cities. The relationship between urban agglomerations and their broader operational landscapes beyond traditional city boundaries is mutually recursive, driven by the demands of capitalist production. Therefore, urbanization should be understood from the perspective of socio-spatial transformation, integrating both the processes of agglomeration and extension.

Differential urbanization, on the other hand, is the ongoing process of reshaping socio-spatial organization through creative destruction. This process leads to the reconstruction of urban configurations and the emergence of new types of urban spaces. Lefebvre [2] introduces the concept of “implosion-explosion” to describe the continuous erosion of social space under modern capitalism. This phenomenon is characterized by the merging of metropolitan regions, the abandonment of rural areas, the expansion of urban development, and the total domination of agricultural areas by urban interests (p. 15).

The expansion of metropolitan areas reveals inherent flaws within capitalism, such as class struggle. Ineffective management of these conflicts could dismantle and rebuild the existing social and spatial arrangements, resulting in the emergence of novel urban forms. In capitalist societies, creative destruction functions as a mechanism to alter power dynamics and address various conflicts. It also serves as the primary catalyst for the continuous growth of urban areas.

Luke [30] notes that since the 1980s, this force has experienced worldwide growth, resulting in the transformation of urban regions and exerting significant impacts on cultures, environments, and politics globally. Socio-spatial configurations

within the capitalist system undergo continuous modification through the process of creative destruction. The culmination of this process is referred to as “differential urbanization.” Ultimately, the three primary processes of urbanization interact dialectically, leading to variations in the creation of social space and giving rise to a range of social movements.

3.2. Political practice: The right to the city and politics of encounter

The second theme, drawing on the work of Merrifield, delves into political praxis and the entitlement to urban space. This discussion posits that the process of planetary urbanization presents new opportunities for the emergence of political consciousness and social movements on a global scale. However, the decentralized nature of global urbanization stands in stark contrast to Lefebvre’s notion of “the right to the city,” which emphasizes the city’s paramount importance in the world. To address this tension, Merrifield [31] reintroduces “the right to the city” and explores the concept of “politics of the encounter” [9,32,33]. This viewpoint acknowledges the potential for social movements and identity groupings to evolve over time.

Planetary urbanization fosters political awareness among non-urban subalterns through the globalization of citizenship. Individuals with diverse perspectives have the potential to spark societal upheavals, and the platforms for social movements have expanded beyond traditional urban centers to encompass global and virtual spaces. For instance, the ‘Occupy Wall Street’ movement, initially limited in its impact, eventually gained global attention through the widespread dissemination of information via the internet. Subalterns worldwide actively engaged in similar mobilizations through social media. Another example is the large agricultural districts in Latin America, which faced the imminent threat of being forcibly transformed into modernized zones. Through social mobilization, local communities were able to garner global support in their fight against industrialization, enclosure, and environmental degradation [34,35].

Planetary urbanization refers to the process by which the urban environment transforms into a dynamic, global, and boundless socio-spatial sphere. During this transition, the distance between people and things diminishes, resulting in increased proximity. This shift creates an environment where individual interactions and connections become increasingly significant and influential, a phenomenon known as the “politics of the encounter.” As a result, the scope and subject matter of social movements have expanded beyond the traditional concept of “the right to the city.”

4. Critiques: Ignoring everyday life and difference

Planetary urbanization has a profound impact on urban theory, driving significant transformations in its interpretation, scope, and processes, as well as reshaping the notion of “the right to the city.” However, it has notable limitations, particularly in its neglect of “difference” and “everyday life.” In his 2015 article, Peake critiques the concept of planetary urbanization, describing it as a theory that posits the urban condition as the dominant global state. However, this theory fails to account for “the exploration of the agrarian issue, rural areas, the countryside, and the wilderness, including all their histories, geographical aspects, and the aspects of life within them” ([27], p. 174, as cited in [36]).

Firstly, the process of global urbanization harbors the potential to cultivate an all-knowing perspective and a dehumanizing attitude, leading to a disregard for authentic human experiences and the ordinary aspects of life. Consequently, established institutions reduce people, subjects, and agents to mere components, leading to a decline in the diversity and vibrancy of urban life. From this vantage point, urbanization is viewed on a large scale, with broad implications.

Unlike positivism and structuralism, planetary urbanization overlooks the impact of everyday life on social reality, relegating its significance to a superficial and insignificant level. Peake [36] argues that cities offer a unique opportunity for asserting and achieving “the right to the city” because they attract significant numbers of migrants from various parts of the world.

However, Brenner and Schmid [27] argue that the traditional concept of the city is no longer sufficient for addressing urban challenges in the context of global urbanization, given the city’s increasing interconnectivity. From their perspective, this is the current state of affairs. They assert that the rhetoric surrounding urban conflict and “the right to the city” effectively suppresses the experiences and perspectives of city dwellers. Nevertheless, this claim is contested.

Conversely, “everyday life” plays a central role in Lefebvre’s analysis of urban and rural sociology, alongside the concepts of time and space. Elden [6] notes that Lefebvre regarded his exploration of “everyday life” as his most significant contribution to Marxist thought. Marx argues that political economy neglects to consider the worker as a human being during their leisure time, leaving this aspect to criminal law, medicine, religion, statistics, politics, and the workhouse beadle (Marx [37], (p. 76), as cited by Elden [6]). The premise of Marx’s thesis is that “political economy fails to consider” the worker during their spare time [38–43].

Marx views capitalism as a mode of production that is primarily influenced by economic factors, implying that alienation is confined to the economic sphere. Conversely, Lefebvre argues that alienation includes not just the economic sphere but also the social, political, and ideological spheres. Lefebvre’s work titled “Bureaucratic Society of Controlled Consumption” delves into the most profound forms of alienation. This study is mentioned by Elden in 2004, citing Lefebvre’s work from 1968/1971. Consequently, capitalism’s influence permeates everyday life, turning it into a battleground for challenges.

“Lefebvre emphasizes multiple times throughout his work that the everyday holds the most significant importance.” “According to Lefebvre [44] (pp. 88–89, as cited by Elden [6], the mundane aspects of everyday life provide the foundation for the development of politics and society.” Power fills the space it generates, while the ordinary serves as the foundation on which power emerges. The planetary urbanization technique sometimes overlooks the ordinary activities that serve as physical locations and bases for economic activity, power dynamics, and other complex connections. However, the method aims to comprehend the dynamic processes and intricate linkages linked to urbanization.

In addition, Lefebvre acknowledges the inherent capacity of everyday life to bring about significant change when it comes to addressing the problem of alienation. Conversely, Brenner and Schmid adopt a pessimistic stance by dismissing the importance of everyday life. They achieve this by disregarding the transformative

possibilities and the underlying elements that exist beyond capitalism. Although facing resistance from the working class and local communities, Brenner and Schmid [27] argue that the non-urban areas are inevitably assimilated, incorporated, and controlled by the demands of capitalist urbanization. However, this is true even as the globe continues to see a growing trend towards urbanization.

Moreover, in line with Lefebvre's focus on universality and completeness, planetary urbanization fails to account for the political, geographical, and historical differences that occur across persons and locations. In the urban setting, the political demands and understandings of "the right to the city" can differ significantly based on criteria such as gender, socioeconomic class, and ethnic origin.

When examining the concept of planetary urbanization, these distinctions are disregarded. Although both the subaltern and the elite oppose dominant representations of space and lobby for their inclusion in the creation of urban social space, their objectives diverge. In contrast, the elite want to maintain a sense of exclusivity inside their neighborhoods, as shown by the affluent homeowners' movement in Los Angeles [45]. The subaltern, however, seeks a basic state of dwelling. Another factor to take into account is that different groups have differing degrees of access to expressing their thoughts and being listened to.

Planetary development limits, rather than creates, new opportunities for the marginalized to advocate for their "right to the city." This occurs because it conceals the basic differences in power and individuality that are associated with gender, social class, and race. Similar to Spivak's critique of Foucault and Deleuze, the subaltern persons, despite their desire to convey their unique experiences, are compelled to conform to specific discourses and perspectives in order to be regarded as credible [46].

Typically, popular narratives have a significant role in influencing this kind of conversation, which is also prone to epistemic violence. When subjugated individuals align themselves with dominant discourses, they often adopt and reiterate common ideas and views. This behavior is driven by the aforementioned rationale. This results in their representation being eclipsed by the dominant values and limited by the proliferation of prevailing ideas, so impeding their ability to effectively express their viewpoints.

Moreover, similar to the works of Lefebvre, research on planetary urbanization is predominantly based in the Global North. These studies focus on the historical development and patterns of capitalist urbanization in Western countries, while disregarding specific circumstances in the Global South. While Brenner and Schmid [17] critique traditional urban theories for ascribing all development, progress, and challenges to the assumed spatial structure of the 'city', they themselves also succumb to a similar pitfall. By elevating capitalism to the position of a "context of context" [27], they attribute all interpretations of urbanization to capitalism, so altering the urban landscape.

This statement is a reductionist view of the many geographical, social, and structural factors that contribute to urban challenges in the Global South. The factors encompassed are poverty, violence, and displacement. Rodgers [47] provides an illustration of this inclination in the form of the ongoing conflicts known as "slum wars" occurring in Central America. Furthermore, there is a notable absence of

consciousness of the uneven progress of different areas and the challenges faced by local residents in their endeavors to resist the encroachment and confiscation of their territory. This is an issue as there is a deficiency in understanding. Planetary urbanization inadvertently promotes Eurocentrism and Western supremacy by disregarding context-specific occurrences in the Global South and seeing them as inevitably assimilated into capitalist production. This is because it views these events as being influenced by capitalist production.

At its core, the planetary urban approach emphasizes abstract concepts such as theory, capital, and grand narratives, but it often overlooks the significance of individuals, their unique experiences, the social realities they face, and the specific geographical and historical contexts in which they exist. This approach consistently operates at a broad and abstract conceptual level, categorizing all urban challenges within the framework of capitalism.

Several factors contribute to this approach's significant limitation, including a lack of understanding of micropower, diverse empirical findings, and various material locations. When these constraints are considered, the study's ability to provide insight into the intricate processes underpinning urbanization and the multiple trajectories that urban politics may follow is significantly diminished. By not fully engaging with these complexities, the planetary urban approach risks oversimplifying the nuanced and context-dependent nature of urban challenges, thereby reducing its capacity to offer meaningful solutions or understandings of urbanization's diverse realities.

5. Conclusion and future research agenda

The purpose of this paper is to provide an analysis and assessment of the concept of "planetary urbanization" in relation to Lefebvre's ideas on the administration of urban areas. Lefebvre considers the notion of "everyday life" to be an essential component in urban studies due to its unique characteristics, which both impose constraints and provide opportunities for freedom. This balance of characteristics makes everyday life a crucial area of focus. From Lefebvre's perspective, engaging in one's daily routine serves as a "baseline" or "foundation" for understanding potential global changes, demonstrating the significant political impact exerted by everyday life.

Lefebvre is widely credited with proposing the concept of "the right to the city" to make opportunities for political engagement more accessible to the general public. This concept highlights the idea that individuals have the power to challenge and confront the dominant forces governing metropolitan areas, as well as to reshape these spaces according to their own discernment through political initiatives. However, Lefebvre's perspectives are often criticized for being overly simplistic, Eurocentric, and for neglecting the importance of specific contexts and individual actions.

Currently, Lefebvre's ideas on urbanization have been expanded through contemporary methodologies, including the concept of planetary urbanization and its related notions. Research findings indicate that planetary urbanization significantly influences the fundamental development of current urban conceptions in two important respects. First, it emphasizes the interconnected and global nature of urban processes, and second, it highlights the need to consider a wide range of geographical, social, and political contexts in urban studies.

“Planetary urbanization” describes a shift in how we interpret and investigate metropolitan spaces, transitioning from a focus on specific patterns of urban agglomeration to a broader examination of the overall process of urbanization, which is more comprehensive and inclusive. This approach considers the wider operational contexts of urbanization rather than merely concentrating on cities, marking a significant departure from conventional methods. Furthermore, by adopting the concept of the “politics of encounter,” planetary urbanization offers opportunities for individuals worldwide to cultivate a heightened sense of global political consciousness and engagement. This allows people from diverse locations across the globe to advocate for their rights to the urban environment.

Lefebvre’s focus on “everyday life” is seen as being in direct opposition to the global urbanization explored in this study, as global urbanization tends to oversimplify both individuals and regions. The rise of global urbanization diminishes the significance of what Lefebvre refers to as “everyday life,” replacing it with a dehumanized and abstract perspective. Consequently, it overlooks the political possibilities and transformative trajectories inherent in everyday experiences.

Additionally, planetary urbanization theory maintains Lefebvre’s broad categorization of individuals and locales while disregarding the political, historical, and geographical contexts in which they coexist. This oversight leads to the marginalization of subordinate voices and the preservation of dominant ideologies, thereby hindering meaningful discourse on the right to the city. By neglecting variations in socioeconomic class, gender, and ethnicity, the theory perpetuates these inequalities. Furthermore, its focus on Western ideas inadequately addresses the uneven spatial development and challenges faced by indigenous communities, particularly in the Global South, due to its failure to consider the unique conditions in these regions.

Despite the emergence of new features and trends in urban development and politics resulting from global urbanization, there remains significant room for improvement. To begin with, the concept of planetary urbanization should incorporate a more comprehensive and theoretical perspective that emphasizes the tangible and physical aspects of daily life, as well as the experiences of marginalized communities.

Political possibilities are more likely to emerge from everyday occurrences rather than on a truly global scale. For instance, in contemporary China, the advent of neoliberal urbanization has led to a notable political awakening and the acceleration of grassroots movements advocating for spatial justice. Following China’s current political climate, an example of this can be seen in the 2009 protests in Panya, Guangzhou, where residents collectively resisted the construction of a trash incineration plant due to concerns about their health and quality of life. This movement gained momentum on social media and sparked similar protests across the country. Therefore, empirical and action-oriented research on grassroots initiatives can illuminate the connections between embodied, everyday urban life and larger political and economic institutions.

An approach that prioritizes the experiences encountered in everyday life is more productive than an impartial, all-encompassing perspective. Those who advocate for “the right to the city” play a crucial role in shaping the direction of urban politics. The

struggles people face in their everyday lives to assert this right are often the catalysts for conflict.

Secondly, in line with postcolonial and feminist frameworks, planetary urbanization must strive to identify social inequalities and context-specific relationships. During urban development, it is crucial to recognize and analyze the impact of disparities related to race, class, and gender. These differences can provide a foundation for a deeper understanding of how individuals seek self-improvement and new political opportunities. Additionally, they can serve as a starting point for exploring a range of urban trajectories within specific, grounded contexts. Furthermore, planetary urbanization should adopt a more individualized approach to effectively address the unique challenges in the Global South. A generalized theory based on the Global North is insufficient for tackling the specific issues prevalent in these regions. To gain a comprehensive understanding of global urbanization, it is essential to consider the unique historical, geographical, and political contexts of the Global South, rather than relying on broad, generalized frameworks.

It is essential to focus additional attention on the complexity and situatedness of urban geographies in order to prevent studies that are done on a global scale from simplifying and generalizing the findings of the research. It is of the highest importance to investigate the Global South from a more location-based perspective, taking into consideration the historical, geographical, and political contexts of the region. Furthermore, it is of the utmost importance to conduct urban trajectory studies in regions that extend beyond the Western world's cities.

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