EXTENDED MOBILITY FOR THE CITY AS A COMMON

Furthering the Right to the City in Global Perspective

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INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

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Striking realities

When you visit Favela da Maré – one of the largest favelas in Rio de Janeiro – you learn that most of its inhabitants simply don't know the city center or the famous Copacabana and Ipanema beaches: "we never knew what it is like," says Ap, a 45-year-old Afro-indigenous woman. And you feel there is something wrong; with our culture and values. Maré is only 13 km away from downtown and is served by hundreds of buses; the bus ride is less than US$0.80 (0.3% of the minimum monthly wage), and a walk from home to the nearest bus stop takes 20 minutes at the most. How come Maré's residents rarely, if ever, have any business downtown, the closest city-level centrality? Why have they never seen the blue waters touching the white sands? What sets the parameters of their ability to access – to *live* – the city that they inhabit? These were the questions that prompted us to take the first steps along a lengthy research path.

Maré is both at the center and the periphery of a metropolis of 10 million people. Located in the city's North Zone, between the Rio International Airport and downtown, the neighborhood's 140,000 residents are subject to a paradox of external infrastructural abundance and internal infrastructural paucity, a "parted" urbanism (Ventura, 1994) reflected in the acrylic bulkheads that hide Maré's reality from the gaze of tourists arriving at the city along two of the three highways constraining the Complex.

Such divides, however, are far from unique, either to favela inhabitants or to the geographically constrained urban experience of many low-income, marginalized, and migrant communities in cities worldwide. As we soon discovered in the stigmatized housing project of San Siro in Milan, many of that neighborhood's migrant residents also live highly localized and segregated lives, not venturing

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into the city center despite their proximity to downtown and the prevalence of transportation options. As N., a former lawyer in Morocco and now a house cleaner, put it, "migrants are afraid outside San Siro." Why and how is the urban experience of marginalized inhabitants in Rio and Milan so constrained? How do the strikingly distinct urban realities of Maré and San Siro produce such similar experiences? And what does this tell us about the nature of contemporary global urbanity and our choices concerning the Other?

This book delves into such critical questions about urban inequality, pushing beyond a simple concern with "how the other half lives" (Riis & Leviatin, 2011). We explore how global disparities in access and opportunity drive increasing urban migration, while also creating barriers that prevent many from fully benefiting from the wealth they contribute to generate. Additionally, we consider how colonization-forced evictions and migration waves reinforce corporeal stigmatizations based on skin color, gender, and cultural values, deepening the divide between urban peripheries and essential resources. Finally, we address the present and the future of urban society, highlighting how the immobility imposed on marginalized groups is, to different degrees, brutalizing the social and spatial peripheries, creating a harmful cycle that hurts all of us.

We will argue in this book that urban mobility is the product of:

- *motility*: individuals' desires and capacity to move within the city, as shaped by their socioeconomic conditions, personal obligations, and aspirations;
- *accessibility*: the spatial and temporal availability of transport options, as shaped by the relationship between urban transport provision, infrastructure, and land use; and
- *porosity*: the degree to which urban inhabitants, different social groups, and communities are accommodated and feel welcome in the city.

Taken together and inseparably, these elements constitute what we theorize as *Extended Mobility*, a key concept to help us define the right to the city and realize the city as a common. By "common" we refer to a social relationship and a political framework that challenge the unequal distribution of private property. Instead, it promotes collective management through individuals' participation in collective activities, fostering communities based on mutual support and reciprocity.

In presenting this idea, we offer not just a theoretical concept, but also a practical approach and a political discourse (Harvey, 2014) aimed at rethinking how urban resources and populations are organized, ultimately seeking a "cultural turn" toward more equitable and inclusive futures.

Mobility as a social and political matter

We have learned at least since Perlman (1976) and later from United Nations-Habitat's *Challenge of Slums* (2003) that favelas can be both problematic and full of potential at the same time. We also know that the historical

and geographical stigmatization of Black people has consistently restricted their access to urban opportunities. However, the lack of mobility – the ability to move freely, experience, and inhabit the city – raises deeper questions about our understanding of this phenomenon. What lies beneath and between the desire for an urban life (or its absence) and the ability to fully engage with and enjoy it?

Cresswell's *On the Move* (2006), Secchi's *The City of the Rich and the City of the Poor* (2013), and Kaufmann's *Porous City* (2014) give us a start, illustrating that mobility, as a social phenomenon, must be looked at through a micro-perspective that sheds light on individuals' socioeconomic conditions and personal desire to move, as well as on how the city itself facilitates or hinders not only their everyday lives but their pursuit of wider goals and aspirations. For Cresswell (2006), while movement only describes displacement between locations, mobility is socially produced and involves both an empirical reality and representational strategies in a corporeal experience that is practiced on a daily basis. For Kaufmann (2014), this whole social phenomenon requires both micro- and macro-perspectives in order to adequately situate human flows and their complexities. At the micro-level, he calls our attention to individuals' social conditions of access and the embedded intentionalities, while at the city level he points to differences in territories they may or may not access in their familiar, as opposed to their social, activities. Secchi (2013), on the other hand, focuses our attention on how city amenities are made accessible and enjoyable to the general public, thus leading us to think about how welcoming, or in his terms, "porous," the city is to the poor. In *Mobility Justice* (2018), Sheller goes further, taking a trans-scalar perspective to look at the problematics of mobility from micro-, meso- and macro-levels: that is, from individual experiences, through the perspective of the city, to transnational relations that involve international borders and globally unequal flows of resources and people.

While the above authors focus on analyses rooted in the global North, their findings point to the more generalized challenge presented by mobility and its absence. Clearly, mobility extends beyond issues of transport and land use, which have historically been structured to symbolically and spatially marginalize groups of poor, Blacks, migrants, and women.

A cultural crisis

A cultural crisis is an all-encompassing and transnational crisis that poses questions regarding the ways in which we live, see, and share the planet with Others. While cultures are numerous and diverse, some overarching issues seem compelling enough to be considered by all of them because they talk about the future of humanity itself, including the environment and inequalities. We are thus underlining issues related to colonialism, to domination, and to superiority in the hope we dismiss them all in favor of a sharing and solidarity culture. In order to discuss "sharing" in terms of accessing city resources, let us ask first: What kind of specific crises are we talking about?

Mimi Sheller (2018) explores a triple crisis shaped by climate change, migration, and urbanization – each deeply connected to patterns of immobility – that are profoundly impacting social and environmental stability. Her concerns with inequality, accessibility, and flows firmly resonate with Secchi's (2011) "new urban question," which stems from extensive and unjust urbanization, the climate urgency that threatens the planet, and human fluxes or their absence. Other authors have pointed to disparate crisis tendencies and experiences. Davis (2006) points to stigmatization and labor exploitation in our cities. Bissell (2018) discusses multifaceted crises around transport structures. McFarlane (2023), while exploring the "right to city life," calls our attention to urban poverty and crises of sanitation. In varying ways, each is concerned with resource distribution, but they also situate mobility at the center of our urban crises, much like Yiftachel (2020 and in this book's Foreword), who has frequently pointed to the threat of displaceability as a key problem of our times. Yet all are fundamentally concerned with "the model of society that we want" (Antonioli et al., 2021, p. 21), founded on sustainability and equity, and increasingly threatened by the current rise of far-right governments in the United States, in Europe, and in the global peripheries.

If our current era is defined by the rampant capitalist extraction of wealth – through the depletion of natural resources (thus endangering life itself), accumulation by dispossession (which displaces people by the millions), and speculation on urban land and infrastructure (which deepens socioeconomic segregation) – then the power to determine the distribution of urban wealth, amenities, and resources (via legislation, policy, and the structuring of immobilities) are key mechanisms through which present and future inequalities are reproduced – and may be challenged.

Different access to different opportunities

Maré's citadins are mostly of working age and tend to be employed in low-paid jobs in nearby wealthy neighborhoods. Most men who "made it" in the job market travel to work using transport subsidies, which cannot be used during the weekends. Their long and difficult journeys, coupled with prejudice and financial hardship, ensure they do not get to the city they build and support in their free time. Women are even more affected. Many of Maré's young women only travel nearby to take care of family chores. Those aged between 25 and 44 years old often work in double or triple shifts separated by long commutes to barely make ends meet. Their mothers take care of the grandchildren, feeding and taking them to the underfunded schools and the limited health and social services available.

What hampers their movements most are the frequent police body checks and harassments experienced at the favela entrances: "they [the police] make us understand the city out there is not for us, we shouldn't get out so often

because we are thieves and criminals. Many times we avoid the outside, when all we want is to be considered citizens wherever we go," vented Tb, a young mtan in dreadlocks. Jm, a well-educated Black youngster, summarizes his neighbors' hardships:

> They are torn down on a daily basis, the oppression is felt in many ways; the public transportation weariness, long waits, inhuman conditions, take precious time that would be devoted to care for oneself and about their families. Indeed, it is all designed to inhibit their access to culture - it is strictly related to repertoire. They are oppressed in order to see life from a subsistence logic.

San Siro, only 5 km away from the Piazza del Duomo at the heart of Milan, is well served by public transportation, with two metro lines, one tram, and numerous bus lines within walking distance. It is, however, one of the most deprived areas of the city, with precarious physical conditions and insufficient economic resources. The absence of good urban structures and commercial or service facilities further marginalizes the neighborhood's many immigrant workers whose habitus is not based on their urban aspirations, but on survival strategies.

In San Siro, most Arab men aged 22–35 have lived in the neighborhood for five to ten years and are already married and with children. They tend to work in construction and rely on intermediary "friends" who speak Italian and get them hired. They only know the routes to their jobs, where they go six or seven times a week. For these migrants, San Siro is just a ghetto from which they leave and return to every day until (the hope is) their lives improve through work or through their offspring. But their kids also face a number of barriers to integration in Milan and Italian society. According to Ma, an Italian volunteer and a lawyer, "in San Siro some schools are true ghettos, with only one Italian kid per class."

The working age population, despite having transport passes, uses public transportation mostly for mandatory trips and does not want to mingle in the city. While men seem to face a harder reality in the round trip journeys to their workplaces, women also face prejudice and integration difficulties on a daily basis as they move around town and deal with a number of institutions in order to solve family issues. Mn, a Muslim woman, for example, feels that people from outside San Siro, government personnel, and the native elderly take all foreign migrants to be undocumented and uneducated.

Corporeal stigmatization

In Maré, economic, cultural, and bodily restrictions and mobility constraints diversely affect different people and notably impact the elderly. Their corporeal-territorial experience translates social distances into hierarchies of

gender, race, and age group combined, constituting an intersectional stigmatization: Black women have lower mobility rates than white women, and Black elderly folks have extremely limited mobility options. Racism, as the basis for stigmatization, was mentioned in every single conversation we had with the neighborhood's Black citadins.[1]

Maré inhabitants are openly unwelcome in public and private spaces outside the Complex, including public transport, where they get harassed and frequently have their rights violated. They feel both insecure and disrespected. The Black and Afro-indigenous workers only use ATM machines inside transportation structures, where they feel safer from being taken for burglars. Bc is an Afro-indigenous girl in her early 20s who, despite finishing a degree in Computer Science, gets rejected at job openings because she looks poor or she lives in the favela: "out there all we get is prejudice: everybody thinks we are thieves." Ap speaks out: "we notice we are not welcome; looks of disdain… that unworthiness. You get no response to a 'good morning.'" Tb goes further: "people hold tight to their purses and bags at the beach; on the sidewalk, they cross the street and hide to avoid you," and Jm bluntly states: "Blacks can clean the floor; they cannot sit at your side at a coffee shop."

Deprived of full citizenship (Purcell, 2002), San Siro migrants suffer prejudice due to their country of origin and/or looks: a darker skin tone, a veil, a different dress code, diverse eating habits, and/or simple or disheveled clothing. An old Italian lady from the projects makes it clear: "I want nothing to do with foreigners; they are the ones who want integration, not me." The youth of San Siro feel like "fish out of water," which is the "regular thing for those who live in exception," says Mo, a young Italian key informant.

Brutalizing the periphery (of bread and dreams)

A war-like black tank is parked at Maré's main entrance daily. It is known as the "Big Skull" (see Figure 5.2). On the days it is not there, there are police cars, checkpoints, and internal operations that make schools, health centers, and institutions in general close 60 days per year on average: "You understand the kind of place you live very early in life because you look around and see no rights," says Tb.

When riding city buses, a Black man in his 50s can be threatened at gunpoint by police officers just because he carries a Styrofoam container. Not finding anything inside it, the officers point their guns at the ground and get off the bus without learning that the man was going to the supermarket to buy supplies for his small business as a street vendor at soccer stadiums. Other times, officers may enter a bus and remove Black boys between 14 and 18 years old for body checks. The boys are taken out into the street and required to place their hands on the side of the bus as the police officers run their hands all over the boys' bodies, including their private parts. They may be shuffled for a while

until the officers decide the bus should leave, with the boys left behind on a dark lawn without witnesses.

A local teacher evaluates his students' chances at a future: "the kids think 'this is not for me.' When you don't see success in the people around you, examples, that influences you a lot. Disappointments are too many." Stigmatization and violence become banalized and internalized to the point of young men beating their Black girlfriends. Bc told us, "the guys prefer white girls and the Black ones put up with a lot of disrespect and violence to keep a boyfriend."

In San Siro, N., the Moroccan lawyer warns that:

> Immigrant workers bring home anger and misery, feelings that shape the atmosphere experienced by the family: children see their mother with more and more children every day at home and the father, when he arrives, has plaster or paint from his face to his feet. Life becomes hell. These are the kids who get into trouble on the streets and that we lose to a life without work and education.

In the district school, you may have a principal say to a mother, "you don't know anything, you are not educated, you don't speak Italian, and your son cannot be fixed, he is doomed to failure," Mn recalls, still stinging from the principal's words. Such perspectives suggest the reasons why a sizeable number of youngsters in school or of university age do not value or aspire to higher education and end up as neither employed nor a student.

Comparing Maré with San Siro discloses a hopelessness: "Dreams are violated due to the absent possibility of dreaming them; that is how violence starts," says Jm about the Black youngsters from favelas. When N. sees San Siro workers in the metro, she sees "bread" – the most basic sustenance for the family, beaten by life, dreamless.

The ontological turn

Yet against all the odds, there are 140,000 human beings feeling and vibrating with life in Maré. Despite their imposed city-wide immobility, they move to create different economic, cultural, and social possibilities within their territory. And there are a number of insurgent collectives in the Complex that are actively looking to reinvent the city as a common. Local institutions such as Observatório de Favelas and Redes da Maré have helped many youngsters, female victims of violence, and Black workers to take an ontological turn that challenges their socioeconomic conditions and, instead, paves their way toward the power to act and to perform in the city.

On the other side of the Atlantic, segregation and prejudice have recently intensified in San Siro, driven in part by a troubling rise in anti-immigration

rhetoric and public policy. While some second-generation immigrants may gain citizenship, secure better opportunities, and choose to remain in the neighborhood as role models, many will be further marginalized and lost to brutalization. However, others – particularly those facing heightened stigmatization – may engage in commoning activities through initiatives like Comitato Abitanti and Mapping San Siro, and take their own turn toward full citizenship.

It took Maré residents 100 years of prejudice and struggles to find and begin moving along this path. It looks like a long journey, full of both dangers and possibilities. What lies ahead of them, and for the inhabitants of San Siro, in another 100 years, is undecided. As a society, do we choose an anti-colonization culture – fostering and sharing the city as a common – or do we choose domination, stigmatization, and brutalization?

Weaving together our arguments, research fields, and contributions

The goal of *Extended Mobility for the City as a Common* is to offer readers an understanding of how different urban communities possess motility, how different places are rendered accessible, and how porous these spaces are to diverse people all together. To do this, we utilize a multi-scalar sociospatial, historical, and global approach (Sheller, 2018) to contextualize and situate our studies.

We, the editors, come from a colonized background and the so-called global South. We reason, no matter how critical we are, through a Western thought constituted, inherited, and renewed as the only form of rationality in the world (Fernandes, 2025). Indeed, when the global North discusses native and colonized communities, it often defines us in ways that belong to a limbo which, according to Cusicanqui (2023), no longer exists because it is not in the past nor in the present: we are now invisible because we are hybrid communities and therefore have no future. A question that she, an Aymara professor from Bolivia, contrasts with the *Chi'xi*, or the "logic of the included third" that allows diametrically opposed forms of conflict to reposition themselves in updated places that bring the autonomous and diverse concepts of life and world in dialogue and in some sort of rhythmic language, as in art. As such, we position ourselves at the confluence between Indians and Afro-diasporics (Santos & Barbosa, 2020) and under the influence of the colonizers. Recognizing our "third" as a "possible novelty" (Tommasino, 2025, n.p.), we stand firmly against all forms of colonialism and domination.

Further, we position our argument within the wider field of urban studies and ground it in both the 1990s' "spatial turn" and the 2000s' "mobility turn" (Sheller & Urry, 2006). Following the recent re-engagement with the "new mobility turn" (Jensen et al, 2020), we aim to build an understanding of urban transport that focuses not only on the cultural and socioeconomic

conditions of users (López-García, 2024; Nieuwenhuis et al., 2020) but also on their "kinopolitics" – embodied (Jensen et al, 2020) and lived (Martin, 2023) micro practices of urban mobility considered together with the broader politics of movement (Sheller, 2023). This means that we want to connect transport policies and politics to the social sciences *and* bring urban planners and practitioners into dialogue with urbanists who are envisioning and seeking more egalitarian cities.

Rather than simply viewing public transport infrastructures as the domain of engineering and engineers, we see them as public spaces (Tuvikene et al., 2023) and consider them as the locus of the public sphere (Arendt, 1958); they are essential environments where physical and social interactions occur. In this sense, we contend that the whole urban sociospatial continuum – established by movement – is publicly determined and lived. Through the concept of Extended Mobility, we embrace the idea that mobility is not just about transport but about a continuous sociospatial experience. This experience starts in the inhabitants' immediate milieu, continues through the city's transport structures, and culminates with the free and complete enjoyment of the destination.

As we will demonstrate, Extended Mobility and its composite elements-motility, accessibility, and porosity-provide a robust analytical framework to account for the positive and negative affections – encounters, physical and symbolic denials and privileges, conflicts and solidarities, and the various social practices – that impact the self, the other (Bissell, 2010; Rink, 2023; Toivanen, 2023; Tuvikene et al, 2023), and the habitus of city residents.

The structure of this book

The Observatório de Favelas and Redes da Maré mobility survey (Silva et al., 2017) was one of the first studies that we engaged. It disclosed disturbing data about Maré's inhabitants' immobility and catalyzed our interest in wider comparative research. A subsequent smaller statistical survey and semi-structured interviews in the housing projects of San Siro, Milan, undertaken in 2019, revealed very similar immobility phenomena, as we intuitively suspected. The more we looked at these two case sites, the more similarities seemed to emerge. This prompted us toward a deeper qualitative comparison and to finally open up our thinking on Extended Mobility to a more global discussion.

In Part I, we develop this book's theoretical foundations and lay out our understanding of motility, accessibility, and porosity, which together underpin our conceptualization of Extended Mobility. Its chapters also elaborate on how Extended Mobility can serve as an instrument to further both the right to the city and the city as a common by bringing transportation studies into concerted dialogue with the social sciences. In Chapter 1, Capanema-Alvares,

Barbosa, and Cognetti introduce Extended Mobility as a three-dimensional phenomenon, explore the limits and alternatives to mobility in theoretical terms, and argue for Extended Mobility's capacity to advance the right to the city and the city as a common. Chapter 2, by Stavros Stavrides, examines how citizen and activist initiatives confront state-developed policies of segregation and hostility by creating welcoming conditions for urban porosity. Stavrides analyzes examples of self-instituted commons as models of inclusivity efforts that can give peripheral communities the opportunity to find shelter and to move around the city in safety – thus increasing their Extended Mobility and encouraging urban inhabitants to claim their right to the city and to city life. In Chapter 3, Orrico and Leiva discuss public transport as a public space, a common resource, and a vehicle for promoting the right to the city, before examining how the concepts of "the common" and Extended Mobility intersect with the inherently collective nature of public transport. Implementing this approach offers significant benefits but it comes with challenges, particularly in terms of management, financing, and coordination among various stakeholders. Orrico and Leiva, though, illustrate that when applied to transport engineering, the framework of Extended Mobility introduces fresh perspectives that can prompt critical discussions and innovative proposals to reshape transportation decision-making processes.

Part II presents two detailed quantitative and ethnographic studies of Maré and San Siro. Chapter 4 begins with an epistemological and methodological exploration of how the framework of Extended Mobility can be measured and applied. Capanema-Alvares, Cognetti, and Martins discuss two situated learning experiments, one in Rio, one in Milan, that shaped this study's research methodology. Their approach incorporates modeling, operationalization, qualitative data collection, field observation utilizing a distinct approach to rhythmanalysis, and a final phase of analysis, which was deployed in the empirical analysis presented in the following chapters. Chapter 5, by Capanema-Alvares and Barbosa, and Chapter 6, by Capanema-Alvares and Cognetti, respectively present the Maré Complex (Rio) and San Siro (Milan) case studies. They each offer a deep comparative exploration of the relationship between Extended Mobility and urban peripherality, uncovering inhabitants' working conditions, access to city services and amenities (or lack thereof), and vulnerability due to socioeconomic insecurity. These chapters also discuss how they deal with this reality – and live *their city* – in the face of imposed immobility, stigmatization, and lack of urban rights. In Chapter 7, Capanema-Alvares, Barbosa, and Cognetti reflect on the key findings from the Maré and San Siro studies and conclude with an assessment of the possibilities engendered by the Extended Mobility framework to further marginalized inhabitants' right to the city and to institute the city as a common. Across Part II, the authors examine a range of initiatives, from social movements and coordinated political action to alternative collective solutions such as self-help groups and work-related

informal cooperatives. They also explore the inadequacy of current top-down solutions and advocate for the institution of commoning processes and places. Each of these efforts, in differing ways, offers valuable lessons on how we might build patterns and pathways toward a city of rights to all, a city where its inhabitants not only share Extended Mobility solutions but actively participate in shaping the city through cooperative forms of decision-making.

Part III brings these reflections and insights on Extended Mobility into a global dialogue with leading experts in the field of transportation studies and urban planning. Four invited interlocutors pick up the idea of Extended Mobility and contextualize its utility in their own topical and geographical areas of expertise. The resulting discussion amplifies Extended Mobility globally, offering an expansive and inclusive view of policies that fall short of our proposed model and possible policies and pathways that might help take us toward a city of rights to all. In Chapter 8, Danielle Guillen looks at active transport modes and motorcycle taxis in Metro Manila, paying particular attention to informal organizations and movements' capacity to further the inhabitants' right to the city in the face of government policies. Examples include citizens organizing to create bike lines during the COVID-19 pandemic that ended up shaping public policies and the interesting "Tour of the Fireflies," a 20-year-old mass ride in Metro Manila. In Chapter 9, Rosário Macário points to the need for a paradigmatic change in European policies toward citizen mobility because they can no longer rely on the idea of an "average citizen." The mischaracterization of citizens' motility potentially leads to accessibility options that neither respond to communities' needs nor further their potential in the city, a situation that might change if we incorporate a more nuanced understanding of citizens' profiles. In Chapter 10, Humberto, Bigoumou, Ngo, Asseko, and Santini discuss the adoption of Fare-Free Public Transport (FFPT) in Libreville (Gabon), analyzing its potential to produce environmental benefits in the medium and long term. They highlight the inclusion that FFPT has promoted when substituting the previous cheaper transportation option, the *clando*. Chapter 11, by Golub and Quiñones-Zambrana, explores US urbanization and socioeconomic development as producers of inequalities. They then investigate the "accessibility turn" of the past two decades to focus more closely on actual travel needs and geographies of opportunity, pointing to local initiatives that have helped coordinate the spatial mismatch between housing developments and job opportunities.

Capanema-Alvares and Orrico conclude the volume in Chapter 12. The authors respond to the global perspectives on Extended Mobility offered in Part III and evaluate next steps and potential policies that can move us toward a city of rights for all. In doing so, they both contextualize the transscalar analysis of Extended Mobility in Maré and San Siro and how the global urban populations cope with their immobility paradigms and strive to realize the potential of their cities. Building urban commons, supporting peripheral

populations to make them less displaceable, and turning Extended Mobility into a lived public space are, after all, essential steps to rejecting domination and instead forwarding emancipation, fostering cities with rights for all.

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Note

1 The term is used by Lefèbvre (1968) opposing the Westphalian notion of citizenship: regardless of legal status, all inhabitants and city users have a right to the city.

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