

Understanding the City

Understanding the City:
Henri Lefebvre and Urban Studies

Edited by

Gülçin Erdi-Lelandais

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P U B L I S H I N G

Understanding the City: Henri Lefebvre and Urban Studies,
Edited by Gülçin Erdi-Lelandais

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PREFACE

HENRI LEFEBVRE: A PRAXIS OF WHAT IS POSSIBLE

REMI HESS*

Henri Lefebvre, who was born in 1901 and died in 1991, can be perceived in the world of social sciences as a “revolutionary romantic” (Lefebvre 2011). The “adventurous” side of his life course consisted of exploring what is possible. He produced a considerable body of work: he wrote close to seventy books during his life, as well as publishing hundreds of articles in reviews and journals between 1923 and 1991. So, for seventy years, as an intellectual H. Lefebvre participated in all the discussions about major issues of the 20th century (Hess 1988). It is difficult to associate him with a particular discipline. Even though he was a philosopher by training, he explored the realms of mathematics, linguistics, history and, above all, sociology. He translated the works of Hegel, Marx, Engels and Nietzsche, and, as Attilo Belli points out, his Nietzschean dimensions should not be overlooked since to define him simply as a Marxist—which he is not wholly—is not sufficient (Belli 2012).

Lefebvre chooses his objects of study in the areas of history, politics and sociology. Consequently, he tackles subjects pertaining to various disciplines. For example, his book *Language and Society* has been appreciated by linguists. His interest in aesthetics and art leads him to produce decisive texts on the creative process. He takes a keen interest in cybernetics but constantly comes back to philosophy and sociology.

His horizon is metaphilosophy: a critical discipline encompassing the contribution of human and social sciences, but surpassing their local limits (Hess and Deulceux 2013). Metaphilosophy is the art of conducting a search for totality through a *transductive* movement. Transduction—

* With the collaboration of Camille Rabineau.

Aufhebung with Hegel—means surpassing the dispersion of fragments in an effort to appropriate and to elevate.

In the domain of sociology, he invents a critical approach which should align him with the Frankfurt School tradition. However his critical posture leads him to add the intervention processes. Thus, he is also a critical practitioner. His critical thought tends toward action. This dimension is what interests both young researchers (Nicolas-Le Strat 2013) and students today (Rabineau 2013). The present book also privileges this critical approach to understand the new forms, systems and relationships which restructure cities in different parts of the world. The contributors propose their fieldwork findings in order to empirically discuss Henri Lefebvre's thought. This position is completely in harmony with Lefebvre's orientations when it comes to explaining urban space.

Lefebvre is not an armchair sociologist; he goes into the field and intervenes in real life. To get to know reality, he transforms it. He proceeds this way in the areas of rural and urban sociology by creating an institute that conducts surveys. He also takes part in politics. His militancy in the Communist Party between 1928 and 1957 does not exclude an effort to develop what Georges Lapassade calls an internal analysis of this apparatus. Lefebvre becomes interested in Institutional Analysis, which R. Lourau theorized under his direction. This analysis, which he considers to be "today's dialectic approach", makes it possible to examine the relationship between practice and the underlying "prophecy". The German philosopher G. Weigand pointed out the originality of the French intellectual trend of institutional analysis that is essential to Lefebvre's work and surpasses the critical posture in the praxis. For Lefebvre, producing a critique of life or urban development, for instance, means shedding light on what is possible, on the virtualities present in reality at a given time (Hess 2009). Thus, his role in the emergence of *Mai 1968* is decisive, not only from a theoretical point of view, but also in terms of his involvement in a pedagogical critique.

Lefebvre's work is a movement that attempts to produce concepts allowing intervention in the real world. Concepts have no universal legitimacy. They are meant to work in real life at a given moment. They can be transcended. This is what the authors of the present book try to do by situating Lefebvrian concepts within different national and cultural contexts and giving them new dimensions and interpretations.

From that point of view, Lefebvre uses an approach that constantly articulates sociology and history; he names it the regressive-progressive method. The point is to start from the here and now. A situation is described as minutely as possible, and the structure is brought out.

Contradictions appear. Where do they come from? The researcher then goes back to the past to identify the origin of today's problems. Enlightened by this regressive survey, he comes back to the present to find the germs of the future. Lefebvre does not study history for the sake of history, but to gain practical knowledge. The historical survey is inscribed in the analysis of circumstances in order to find out how they can possibly be transcended.

Lefebvre relies on this method to study historical moments in literature or philosophy through figures. He studies Rabelais, Pascal, Descartes, Diderot, and Musset. These characters interest him because they show how the particular social situation with which they were confronted produced theoretical issues. For Lefebvre, an author's genius lies in the fact that he manages to overcome the contradictions of his time. According to him, Rabelais' invention, for example, was to produce a work in French, thus challenging the power of Rome and of the Vatican, which imposed the use of Latin.

Some of Lefebvre's readers can be called "contingent". They are interested in a book or a series of books. For instance, some geographers are fascinated by his research on urban reality. As far as we are concerned, we do not allow ourselves to decide on a hierarchy of Lefebvre's works, here or elsewhere. We assume that his theoretical involvement is a global movement that uses all opportunities to intervene in reality. From this point of view, any "moment" in his work is a fragment of a totality into which we attempt to instil dialectics as well as historical and sociological dynamics.

We are constantly trying to maintain the posture of the "necessary" reader who places each work into the general movement. Since, for Lefebvre, "man's work is himself", it seems that his life experience, his relation to the world and to the social praxis have to be taken into account as well as his written work (Deulceux and Hess 2012).

Our ambition is to publish Lefebvre's complete work one day. However, today this project is impossible. First, we must realize what is possible now. For the time being, amongst his books translated into English, the most widely read are those on space, on the city, and his critique of daily life. However, Verso will soon publish in English his *La fin de l'histoire*, a Nietzschean book, and *Métaphilosophie*. These books will help English-speaking readers to perceive the complementarity of his works. Perhaps one day *La somme et le reste*, a magnificent book, will also be available in English.

With Lefebvre, there is a will to constantly articulate real life experience, the perceived and the conceived. His texts are therefore always

the product of a context and of an aim within that context. Circumstances arise from circumstances. At the end of his career, he conducted seminars on Clausewitz and wrote a book called *De la guerre*. Lefebvre thinks about strategy. He does not do anything that is not inscribed in a strategic perspective. He is not afraid of going against the flow. That is why he frequently opens new channels! In the ten years following the publication of his *Manifeste différentialiste*, there was not a single philosopher who did not write a book on difference, unfortunately too often without mentioning Lefebvre. For several decades, this code of silence enabled philosophers and sociologists to pick up their themes from his ideas. Conversely, architects, town planners and his friends, the institutionalists, have always been loyal to him. The present book also contributes to this recognition and brings Lefebvre back to the core of discussions on urban studies. From this point of view, it is more than welcome in order to understand the dynamics of cities today.

Nowadays, Lefebvre is being massively rediscovered. In the last ten years about fifty books have been published on him in English, German, Spanish, Portuguese and even Korean. In France, the prospect of a new edition appears to be on the agenda. Quite a few newly reprinted books by Lefebvre are currently available. We have just republished *La somme et le reste* and *Le droit à la ville*, *Marx, une métaphilosophie de la liberté*, and *Descartes*. We are working toward a new publication of several out-of-print books: *Pascal, au-delà du structuralisme*, etc.

The book you are about to read is important. It makes new contributions to the field of urban reality and also refers to rhythmanalysis, an essential dimension of this thought and of its complexity. It is not an ordinary collection of disparate papers loosely organized around a topic, nor mildly polished conference proceedings, but rather carefully written contributions to a complex and important single theme: the meanings and the use of Henri Lefebvre's sociological theory in urban studies from an empirical perspective.

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—Gülçin Erdi-Lelandais

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AGM	Antalya Greater Municipality
AGOFF	Antalya Golden Orange Film Festival
AKMED	Akdeniz Medeniyetleri Enstitüsü <i>Research Institute on Mediterranean Civilization</i>
AKP	Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi <i>Justice and Development Party</i>
AKTOB	Akdeniz Turizm ve Otelciler Birliği <i>Mediterranean Tourism and Hoteliers Association</i>
ANSİAD	Antalya Sanayiciler ve İşadamları Derneği <i>Association of Industrialists and Businessmen of Antalya</i>
ATAV	Antalya Tanıtım Vakfı <i>Antalya Promotion Foundation</i>
ATSO	Antalya Sanayi ve Ticaret Odası <i>Antalya Chamber of Commerce and Industry</i>
AU	Akdeniz University
CHP	People's Republican Party
CQA	Conseil de Qualité Architecturale <i>Council for Architectural Quality</i>
GaWC	Globalization and World Cities Research Network
GIAT	Groupement Industriel des Armements Terrestres <i>Land Weapons Manufacturing Group</i>
GÜLDAM	Gülensu Gülsuyu Dayanisma Merkezi <i>Gülensu Gülsuyu Life and Solidarity Centre</i>
HLM	Habitation à Loyer Modéré <i>Social Housing</i>

İMECE	Toplum için Sehircilik Hareketi <i>People's Urbanism Movement</i>
INSEE	France's National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies
MOAŞ	Mimar Odalari Antalya Subesi <i>Antalya Branch of the Architects Chamber</i>
SPOAŞ	Şehir Planlamacıları Odalari Antalya Subesi <i>Antalya Branch of the Chamber of City Planners</i>
ANSAN	Antalya Sanatçılar Derneği <i>Antalya Artists' Association</i>
STOP	Sinir Tanimayan Otonom Plancılar <i>Autonomous Planners without Borders</i>
TGV	Train à Grande Vitesse <i>High speed train</i>
TOKİ	Toplu Konut İdaresi <i>Mass Housing Agency</i>
TÜBA	Türkiye Bilim Akademisi <i>Turkish Academy of Sciences</i>
TÜRSAK	Türkiye Sinema ve Audio Visual Kültür Vakfı <i>Turkish Foundation of Cinema and Audio-visual Culture</i>
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

INTRODUCTION

LEFEBVRE'S LEGACY: UNDERSTANDING THE CITY IN THE GLOBALISATION PROCESS

GÜLÇİN ERDI-LELANDAIS

*“L'espace sert d'instrument à la pensée
comme à l'action, qu'il est, en même temps
qu'un moyen de production, un moyen de
contrôle donc de domination et de
puissance – mais qu'il échappe
partiellement, en tant que tel, à ceux qui
s'en servent.”¹ (Lefebvre 1974, 35).*

A few years ago, I led a research project at the University of Warwick's CRER (Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations) on the nature of urbanisation and resistance in Istanbul. For me, there was no other city that would allow for a better observation of the different stages of urbanisation (e.g., informal settlements, social housing, and gated communities), the blazing speed and the ephemeral nature of urbanisation without limit and the impact of this type of urbanisation on human lives.

During my empirical research, I also observed authoritarian and exclusive processes in the making of urban policies that caused the displacement of the populations of entire neighbourhoods to the outskirts of the city, and the whole disappearance of these neighbourhoods in order to create new ones forged according to the needs of high income classes. Thus, it is a part of the collective memory of the city that faded, as if

¹ “The space serves as an instrument of thought and action; it is at the same time a means of production, a means of control, hence of domination and power, but it partially escapes, as such, from those whom it serves.”

previously there were no other communities and lives occupying these spaces that are now “gated communities”.

This process, because of its authoritarian and undemocratic nature, was indeed widely contested by many associations, but also sometimes by inhabitants, who organised themselves to defend their living space. I met them for the first time at the European Social Forum in Istanbul in July 2010. They were called the Istanbul Urban Social Movements and, at the end of the Forum, published their manifesto, which ending with the following paragraph:

“Against all the urban transformation/renewal projects that are forced upon us and shaped by the interests of transnational capital, we are determined to continue our struggle for the right to shape our city according to our way of life and our desires. As such, our goal is to spread our **right to the city** beyond shelter and access to urban facilities, to the whole of the city.”²

This is exactly what Henri Lefebvre exposed in his research as “the right to the city”, and what he defined as “the cry and the demand of inhabitants for a transformed and renewed right to urban life” in the city (Lefebvre 1996, 158). It was this cry that led me to Lefebvre’s theory and analysis of the city space.

Throughout the 1970s, Lefebvre prepared the conceptual framework that would be deployed in the six books he devoted to urban issues—all of which have been translated into several languages: *Critique of Everyday Life* [*La critique de la vie quotidienne* (1947)]; *The Right to the City* [*Le droit à la ville* (1968)]; *The Urban Revolution* [*La révolution urbaine* (1970)]; *Marxist Thought and the City* [*La pensée marxiste et la ville*, (1972)]; *Space and Politics* [*Espace et politique* (1973)]; and *The Production of Space* [*La production de l’espace* (1974)]. The influence of Lefebvre’s work was considerable during the 1980s, especially in Europe, and he is perhaps best known for his pioneering contributions to socio-spatial theory.

Having discovered the sociology of Lefebvre, and especially how he explains the concepts of “space” and “right to the city”, I asked myself, as a young French-Turkish researcher, why I didn’t see that many workshops, conferences or seminars devoted to Lefebvre, whose thought goes beyond France and a simple analysis of the city of the 1970s. My investigations

² This declaration can be found on the website of the Istanbul Urban Social Movements: <http://istanbulurbanmovements.wordpress.com/>

found that there are town planners and geographers who, particularly in the United States, emphasise Lefebvre's theory, and privilege such terms as "the production of space", "the right to the city" and/or "the rhythm analysis" in order to analyse the remaking of global cities in the context of globalisation and spatial restructuring of power relations in the city. His writings on cities and urbanisation exercised a seminal influence upon some of the founders of critical urban and regional political economy in the post 1970s period, Harvey (1989) and Soja (1989) being foremost among them. Researchers such as Brenner and Theodore (2002), Marcuse and Van Kempen (2002), and Purcell (2008), taking deep inspiration from the oeuvre of Lefebvre, focused their research mostly on global cities and how capitalist power relations and neoliberal restructuring of the city shape the destiny of urban dwellers. Research on the impact of neoliberal policies on the production of urban space has been more than fruitful in the last decade. Many investigations have emphasised its negative impacts on the life of inhabitants, especially the poor, and how the capitalism is spatialised by the privatisation of public services in the city and for-profit housing construction, often led by State institutions (Berry-Chikhaoui et al. 2007; Fawaz 2009; Leontidou 2010; Lovering and Türkmen 2011). We can see, however, as mentioned above, that the references to Lefebvre's writings have become less frequent over the past 15 years in Europe, especially in France.

Most of the research on Lefebvre refers to his ideas and their theoretical discussion, without focusing on the empirical transcription of the philosopher (Elden 2004; Goonewardena et al. 2008; Merrifield and Muschamp 2005). From 2000 onwards, the key concepts initiated by Lefebvre come shyly back into French academia, especially those around "the right to the city". There have been recent developments on the production of urban space based especially on neoliberal policies, as well as debate on "new urbanism"³ (Grant 2006). Opponents (e.g., Brenner and Theodore 2002) point out the contribution of the philosopher to an alternative urbanisation that is against the capitalist production of the city.

³ The new urbanism approach defends the creation of city spaces planned for the wellbeing of people with walkable and green areas. New Urbanism has been criticised for being a form of centrally planned, large-scale development, "instead of allowing the initiative for construction to be taken by the final users themselves". It has been criticised for asserting universal principles of design instead of attending to local conditions, resulting in the creation of gated communities and the intensification of gentrification.

Yet, precisely, the theory of Lefebvre offers reflections that are still valid for analysing social relations in urban areas caused by the crisis of neoliberal economic system. The political utopia of Lefebvre, when he spoke in the 1960s about a “right to the city”, is now more widely shared; “the right to make the city” is no longer just a special case.

The above research has analysed in depth all aspects of Lefebvre’s thought, based on his principal books, and it has made an extraordinary contribution to the understanding of Lefebvre, especially in the Anglo-Saxon academic world. Nevertheless, as Paquot (2009) stressed, there is no real measure of the impact of this thought on professionals, teachers in architecture and urbanism, or theses on sociology, but the wide distribution of his works suggests that he was powerful. In this point also, there is a lack of serious, comparative, quantitative and qualitative analysis of the reception of his work, especially in empirical urban studies.

If we take Lefebvre’s sociology as a base by which to analyse and, sometimes, even to oppose the neoliberal nature of urbanisation, it is because it is necessary to think about current social dynamics of urban space. This is where our desire comes from to return to the sociology of Lefebvre and emphasise the importance it deserves in the analysis of these urban settings, and to reintegrate his concepts such as “right to the city” in the analysis of resistance and power relations within the city. The concept of “the right to the city”, considered by some researchers as a utopia (Castells 1977, 90), could, on the contrary, propose an alternative solution to creating an urban space accessible and beneficial for all inhabitants. Lefebvre defines the right to the city as follows:

“The right to the city should modify, concretise and make more practical the rights of the citizen as an urban dweller [*citadin*] and user of multiple services. It would affirm, on the one hand, the right of users to make known their ideas on the space and time of their activities in the urban area; it would also cover the right to the use of the centre, a privileged place, instead of being dispersed and stuck into ghettos (for workers, immigrants, the ‘marginal’ and even for the ‘privileged’.” (Lefebvre 1996, 34).

Since 2000, there has been an increase in the number of books, articles, conferences and workshops referring to Lefebvre and to his most famous concepts, such as space, right to the city and rhythmanalysis. Even UNESCO referred in a report to the famous “right to the city” in the objective of “humanising the city and affirming solidarity as a fundamental value of democracy and human rights” (2006, 12). In the last four years, conferences at Nanterre University in France (2011) and Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands (2008 and 2009) on the *œuvre* of Lefebvre have been held. I also organised a panel during the

Tenth Congress of European Sociological Association in Geneva in 2011 to discuss how Lefebvre could be brought back into urban studies. The chapters of this book are the results of this fruitful meeting, which has brought together researchers with different intellectual courses and visions of analysis. Lefebvre thus returned in force to academic research, especially with his theory on the social construction of space and the right to the city.

Today, one of the main questions of urban sociology is to know how to think and analyse the contemporary metropolis. What tools, approaches and instruments are available to get there?

The second half of the 20th century witnessed an unprecedented level of urbanisation, particularly with the emergence of large metropolitan cities in developing countries within the context of globalisation. Many researchers refer to the global cities in their research (Sassen 1991; Amen et al. 2006; Brenner and Keil 2005). The speed of the phenomenon that we observe in many regions demonstrates some forms of unplanned urbanisation, with the resurgence of shantytowns (that we can call, for instance, *gecekondu*, *favelas* depending on the country) at the margins of cities. A key reason for this uncontrolled growth is the internal and/or international migration flows requiring more housing. However, cities are unable to meet this requirement. Thus, those who want to install in large cities with the hope of a better life “urbanise” themselves. They often create their own city at the margins without the necessary administrative procedures. Conversely, in many countries, governments apply progressively urban policies, which have the objective of making the city attractive for tourism, services and finance. The will to create brand cities becomes important. In this perspective, neighbourhoods with informal settlements (established in the 1950s and 1960s) or old historical neighbourhoods that were for a long time forgotten in the city centre, constitute the main targets, as they are considered as marginal and criminalised areas limiting a city's image. Reconstruction of Istanbul by the current AKP government via several urban transformation projects is one of the examples of this kind of urbanism (see Ergin's and Lelandais' chapters in the present book).

Urban transformation projects in several countries, especially in emerging nations such as Turkey, India, Brazil and China, have led to development of luxury collective accommodation, namely gated communities, with inhabitants protected and locked within their own living spaces, with outsiders excluded. At the origin of this kind of urbanisation, we found mostly the fact of regarding the city from a financial perspective and of proposing the lucrative town planning

schemes. Luxury sites built with the objective of financial gain are sold with considerable speed and at a considerable price. The construction industry is seeking new sites and neighbourhoods and turns its attention towards the illegal slums inhabited by poor people. Concerned about the image of their city, public authorities often yield to these projects and try to forcibly remove these people to the peripheries of cities. Numerous research studies have focused on this question (Davis 2006; Koonings and Kruijt 2009), with some emphasising the segmentation of the city by the construction of gated communities (Paquot 2009; Daniş and Pérouse 2005) and others deeply questioning the ways for urban dwellers to participate entirely in urban decisions (Purcell 2008).

Following the approaches of researchers such as Harvey (2013), Purcell (2008), and Soja (2010), we argue that all these evolutions have a bond with the growing prevalence of neoliberal perception of the city. Indeed, neoliberal policies have an important role in this evolution because they facilitate the commercialisation of space, reducing it to a measurable entity. In keeping with capitalism's tendency to overdevelop certain contexts while underdeveloping others, the contemporary phase of neoliberal policies provides refined tools to the owning class for greater accumulation in the urban context. The expansion of urban markets and "urban regeneration" practices has brought enormous investment to areas that have been neglected for decades. At the same time, local governments often fail to provide adequate support for existing communities, compounding their vulnerability to displacement.

Thus, we witness a renewed object of urban sociology: the marginalised areas harbouring any form of dissent. Several authors invite us to think the urban phenomenon from its margins. Whether the *barrio* and the culture of emergency in the cities of South America, presented as precursors of the urban future of the entire planet; "sensitive" neighbourhoods in France, the network economy more or less formally trained by these "mobile communities" that are immigrants; or the movement of squatters and their influence on the symbolic and practical definition of "urban common good", spaces and practices that may appear by first sight to be marginal (from the point of view of the middle class and government in Western countries) are presented as the actual place where the most significant developments of the "new urban revolution" can be decrypted. A number of the chapters in this book (e.g., Chapters 4 and 5) also consider the notions of "margin" and "centrality," and show that margins can sometimes create their own centrality, and what is a centre can be transformed to a margin.

It seems that this message is crucial for a new urban sociology: consider these facts not as “social problems”, which our discipline should help to manage, but as sociologically central facts. I am convinced that these “marginal” actors should be considered “very visionary individuals”, that is to say, as the “prototype” of the future urban spaces.

In *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre already emphasises the effects of global integration on the composition of the city. Lefebvre is of the view that the tension between global integration and territorial redifferentiation leads to a general explosion of spaces in which the relationships among all geographical scales are rearranged and reterritorialised continuously. For Brenner, Lefebvre's theoretical framework permits us:

“To explore the various implications of contemporary re-scaling processes for conceptualising the dynamics of capitalist urbanisation in the late 20th century. Indeed, we appear to be witnessing an even greater intensification of the contradictory processes of globalisation, fragmentation and reterritorialisation to which Lefebvre drew attention over two decades ago.” (Brenner 2000, 373).

We propose, therefore, to revisit Lefebvre, not to establish an orthodox interpretation of his concepts, but to comply with them after. However, his vision is useful insofar as it gives us the opportunity to develop specific content for the organisation of the city space.

Ross (1988) explains that Lefebvre suggests that just as everyday life has been colonised by capitalism, so too has its location—social space. There is, therefore, work to be done on the understanding of space and how it is socially constructed and used. This is especially necessary given the shift to the importance of space in the modern age. According to Lefebvre, social space is allocated according to class, and social planning reproduces the class structure and reflects the balance of power among actors. This is either on the basis of too much space for the rich and too little for the poor, or because of uneven development in the quality of places, or indeed both. Like all economies, the political economy of space is based on the idea of scarcity (Martins 1982)⁴.

Restructuring the urban space in a neoliberal logic, excluding participative processes, highlights Lefebvre's theory on space and conception of the right to the city. Before all, this theory proposes to profoundly rework the social construction of the urban space and therefore

⁴ For a detailed discussion about it, see Martins (1982).

extend the borders of traditional citizenship to being an urban dweller. It proposes, therefore, ways of thinking about urban citizenship. Researchers such as Purcell (2002) and Isin (2000) explain it by arguing that the right to the city reframes the arena of decision-making away from the State and toward the production of urban space. The former argues that it means the production of urban space separates the right to the city from institutional forms of citizenship and participation. It gives the possibility of participating directly to the conception of urban space. Our first three chapters shed light on the relationship between the right to the city, urban space, and the debate on citizenship and link them to the debate about the introduction of spatial (in)justice in the construction of city space.

Lefebvre's theorisation of space and the right to the city has allowed new debates in urban studies, particularly within the context of the neoliberal world order. Based on his research on Los Angeles, Soja (2010) argues that the locational discrimination, created through the biases imposed on certain populations because of their geographical location, is fundamental in the production of spatial injustice and the creation of lasting spatial structures of privilege and advantage. As Dikeç (2009) points out, the right to difference is complementary to the right to the city. What it implies is a right to resistance, and not an exclusive focus on difference as particularity (2009). For him, in Lefebvrian terms, the right to be different is "the right not to be classified forcibly into categories which have been determined by the necessarily homogenizing powers" (2009, 76). Debate has ensued among researchers, especially in the United States, on the concept of the just city as the ultimate goal of planning. Researchers such as Fainstein (2010), Marcuse et al. (2009), and Soja (2010) focused on how to introduce spatial justice in the city.

However, some criticisms have been raised about Lefebvre's thinking on space and right to the city. First of all, many researchers underline the fact that his theory doesn't enlighten all aspects of the right to the city, especially its contents and how to realise it. Purcell points out, for example, that the right to the city "raises more questions than it answers and this indeterminate character leaves open the possibility that the right to the city could have significant negative impacts on cities" (2002, 103).

Indeed, Lefebvre feels that it is essential to think about the urban space, to break with the bureaucratic practice of town planning in order to found an experimental urbanism, combining an analysis of the new phenomena related to the assertion of urban and a right—i.e., a legitimate claim of a lifestyle transfiguring the everyday urban life. The right to the city seems, therefore, to suggest that there is something there, that it can offer real solutions to the problems of enfranchisement in cities. One may argue that

Lefebvre's objective, by elaborating the right to the city, was not to propose a tailor-made, ready-for-all instruction sheet to create a new city. He proposed a way and left to the *citadins* the possibility of making their own right to the city. Harvey notes that the openness and expansiveness of Lefebvre's discussion leaves the actual spaces of any alternative frustratingly undefined, but he underlines also that Lefebvre proposes only the ways and not solutions over time and space to concretely realise a just city:

"The idea of the right to the city does not arise primarily out of various intellectual fascinations and fads (though there are plenty of those around, as we know). It primarily rises up from the streets, out from the neighbourhoods, as a cry for help and sustenance by oppressed peoples in desperate times. How, then, do academics and intellectuals respond to that cry and that demand? It is here that a study of how Lefebvre responded is helpful-not because his responses provide blueprints (our situation is very different from that of the 1960s, and the streets of Mumbai, Los Angeles, São Paulo and Johannesburg are very different from those of Paris), but because his dialectical method of immanent critical inquiry can provide an inspirational model for how we might respond to that cry and demand." (Harvey 2012, xiii).

While paying attention to all these aspects, which constitute one of the most important elements in understanding the current city, the objective of this book is to go beyond this debate and propose a global look at Lefebvre's sociology on urban space. This is in order to understand different conceptions and perceptions of everyday life, from resistance to work relations, from cultural city politics to urban renewal process, in different countries. It should be emphasised that this book does not assume that there is only one plausible Lefebvre or, for that matter, that Lefebvre represents a panacea for strategy, theory, and research. The fact that today there are multiple Lefebvres floating about is due partly to the circuitous character of Lefebvre's work, and partly to "the current conditions of interpretations which are characterised by deep political uncertainties compounded by an enduring postmodern eclecticism" (Kipfer et al. 2012, 2).

Based on the findings on different cities, the contributions in this book ask the following questions: how is Lefebvre's sociology relevant to understand evolutions and restructurings in current global cities? How could the understanding of Lefebvre help to propose alternative ways of constructing the city? What could we say about the everyday practices of current global cities? How do they shape social relations?

Each chapter seeks to highlight these questions. Empirical fields of contributors are located in Turkey, France and Poland.

Our objective is to provide examples about the empirical use of Lefebvre's sociology from the perspective of different cities and researchers, in order to understand especially the city and its evolutions within the context of neoliberal globalisation. Our purpose is not to propose a theoretical overview of Lefebvre's theory, but rather, reintroduce his key concepts so as to understand the contemporary city. Case studies in this book will show also that the reception of Lefebvrian concepts are not the same and not always perceived in a similar way depending on the social and political context of the scientific field of each country. Social conditions are determinant for the "international circulation of ideas" (Bourdieu 2002). While the book aims to look at Lefebvre's theory from the side of the empirical field in particular, it seems also necessary to engage this understanding by starting with a theoretical discussion about the perception of Lefebvre's theory in English-speaking countries, which was highly important on the return of Lefebvre in academic debates for understanding the contemporary city. In this perspective, *Claire Revol* provides, in Chapter One, elements about the transpositions and present meaning of "right to the city" used by researchers in the English-speaking academic world. She shows how using concepts from an author does not only mean using the words he or she used, but also implies a more global understanding and re-appropriation of this author. Nevertheless, it is necessary to take into consideration historical change as well as geographical displacement, given that most current readings and appropriation of Lefebvre take place in the English-speaking world. She explores the understanding of the right to the city and determines which distortions to its adaptation are needed without it being denatured. This supposes an analysis of the context of translation and reception of the right to the city and a description of the major changes related to it. She presents different re-appropriations of the right to the city, with three themes emerging: socio-spatial justice; citizenship and participation; and appropriation and struggle. Their development shows their interconnections as well as their inherent contradictions.

The two following chapters contribute to the meaning of the right to the city, and its appropriation as a mobilisation tool by urban social movements and resistance in different neighbourhoods. *Nezihe Başak Ergin* and *Helga Rittersberger-Tılıç* discuss in Chapter Two how the concept of the right to the city is perceived in Turkey by opponents to the urban transformation led by the current Turkish government. They propose a theoretical discussion and its appropriation as a mobilisation and