2 THE PRODUCTION OF SPACE THROUGH PRACTICES OF EVERYDAY LIFE

… In the space of 30 years, Dhaka's literally car-free streets have been transformed into congested roads, where brand-new Japanese cars and rusted Chinese and Russian buses challenge hand-painted rickshaws and their drivers (only partially allowed in main streets and during rush hours); its neighbourhoods, until then unfolding around the traditional centre represented by mosque and bazaar, have lost these traditional reference points and opened up to the proliferation of shopping malls, attractive purchase-and-leisure resorts for an upcoming and aspiring middle-class; and in the meantime, a new type of procession has started to rhythmically pour young women onto the streets – from the home to the garment factory, and back …

… It may be less a question of overpopulation than of tradition if the artisans and small businesses dispose of little space in the Subcontinent – the observation of their set-up in villages confirms that. Instead, everyday actions are often displaced to outdoor spaces: in private gardens, on verandas, or on the street, one can behold scenes of work, chats as well as a general bustling of people and goods. Thus, depending on the varying users and the time – of day as well as year – the street assumes different functions. Such variability of uses, gestures and passages in space is related through a simultaneity of actions and interactions between various individuals and social groups: an "enriched space", at once used by the most diverse individuals with the most diverse purposes, in an overlapping of inter-actions. This does not simply multiply, but rather squares, cubes, or elevates space to an even higher n-power …[1]

These "impressionistic" sketches witness that Dhaka's urban scape is rich in objects and signs mirroring ongoing historical processes; yet, as witnessed by the described rickshaws, the signs of globalisation, migration and adaptation perceptible on Dhaka's streets are neither univocal nor exclusive. While some dimensions of everyday life have undoubtedly undergone a complete transformation, others remain either untouched or still in transition. Confronted with developments that span from labyrinthine lanes to the real estate market or, to be more literal, confronted with the coexistence of traditional as well as new production ways, uses of space and lifestyles, this study abstains from indicating the way towards a "final" or "ideal" stage of development for Dhaka through an assumed, but not further questioned, "process of modernisation". The extent and nature of the changes presently concerning

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1   Notes from own diary, April 2005.

this mega city (and other cities of recent urbanisation in non-Western countries) are such that the word "process" can only be used in its dialectic sense – meaning a constant transformation under the influence of coexisting and ever-present antithetical agents. Hence, my study's concentration on *moments*.

This study aims to move the technical and demographical focus typical of many publications on cities to a socio-cultural one. At the same time, instead of particular areas, it will approach the city as a whole, allowing the most contradictory trends and diverse living forms in Dhaka to be embraced. This purpose necessitates the examination of possible theoretical models that legitimise and sustain it. To begin with, the study of Dhaka, a city that challenges or even rejects traditional views with its inscrutable mixture of structural features, individual biographies and living forms, demands an in-depth reflection of the very concept of "city". The difficulty in approaching a fast growing city does not primarily come about due to the confrontation of proverbial congestion, informality or comparatively novelty of urbanisation *per se.* The reason behind my "critical diffidence" is rather an overall euro-centric perspective[2] and the previously mentioned tendency of urban studies to "reduce" the city to objectivable matters.

Ever since Max Weber[3] – who describes the historical development of the Western city from the charisma-dominated, through the commercial, up to the independent city based on political self-organisation –, modern urban studies have contributed to foster a pragmatic view of urban history resting on economic arguments. This was "varied" by historians like Lewis Mumford and Paul Wheatley[4], who stress the ritual or ceremonial foundation of cities since the antiquity and focus on the cultural and symbolic role of cities within their societies; nonetheless, these authors basically continued to lean on the concept of domination as well. Along with industrialisation and the improvement of capitalistic production systems, cities and urban structures underwent progressive changes and/or dissolved. According to the analyses of sociologists like Georg Simmel, Louis Wirth or Jürgen Habermas[5], in the

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2   In fact, urban studies are mostly limited to analyses of the European/Occidental city, though Peter Marcuse has made a fascinating trial in an article of his book *Of States and Cities: The Partitioning of Urban Space* (2002)., in which he tried to shift the attention to the question whether "alternative notions" of urban life are peculiar of non-European countries and whether they continue to survive despite the colonial and globalisation influence.

3   Weber's analysis of the city is part of his fundamental work *Economy and Society* of 1914.

4   Cf. Lewis Mumford's work *The city in history* (1961) and Paul Wheatley's *The pivot of the four quarters* (1971). For Mumford, the historical development of the city started with the necessity to celebrate funerals as a way to elaborate the fear of death. Division of labour and consequent emergence of professions, as well as hierarchies, appeared in his interpretation along with an increasing importance of celebrations and rituals and an increasing abstraction of divinities. Wheatley dedicated one part of his work to demonstrating how, in the seven regions of primary urban generation (Mesopotamia, Egypt, Indus valley, North China Plain, Meso-America, central Andes and the Yoruba territories of south-western Nigeria), the city originally represented a ceremonial centre.

5   Cf. e.g. Simmel's *The Metropolis and Mental Life* (1903), Wirth's analysis of modern urban life's phenomena (dissolution of family bondages, isolation and individualisation, mobility, etc.) in *Urbanism as a Way of Life* (1938), as well as Habermas' *Technology and Science as Ideology* (1968).

modern city "urban culture" consists of an increasingly perfect adaptation to the market economy, running parallel to the uniformation of everyday life. Beyond the respective divergences, the urban society described by all these models comes to coincide with the final point of a universal "modernisation". In the last decades, such interpretations have been challenged by theories that conceive of the city as a continuous and never to be finalised process[6]. Contemporary thinkers stress the *simultaneity* of communication and interaction, the *heterogeneity* of lifestyles, ethnicities and languages as well as the *hybridity* of forms – medieval, rural-urban, pre-urban, post-modern – that characterise cities.

Such understanding appears not only reasonable, but also indispensable, especially when mentioned theories are applied to urbanisation processes in industrialising and developing countries. After having observed Dhaka's inhabitants in the ocean of traffic, slaloming on rickshaws, making hour-long walks (maybe in a *borkha*) to reach and leave the working place in garment factories, or driving protected from sun and sight in their cars, and after having tramped through vegetable gardens cramped between new high-rise buildings occupied by offices with modern furniture, it would be in fact difficult, if not impossible, to regard Dhaka as a static, quantifiable fact. Similar examples of fragmented development charm the student, and yet at the same time face them with a challenge, as it becomes crucial to define which and especially whose city should be looked at, and how. To recapitulate:

– Dhaka cannot be approached by classic sociological theories due to the latter's rootedness in the European socio-cultural and urban history,
– the fragmentary nature of its urban developments is the reason behind the city's appearance as a juxtaposition of different hybridities,
– city is understood as a process, which shifts the perspective of the study from city to urbanisation.

The coordinates for the search of an alternative theoretical approach will have to be directly derived from these insights, from which follows that theories on urbanisation and not on city are to be looked for. An approach beyond the established theories of urban geography and sociology was searched for in philosophy. Illuminating were the thoughts on urbanisation of the French sociologist and philosopher Henri Lefebvre. In his book *La production de l'espace*[7], Lefebvre integrates his critique of everyday life and an epistemology originally developed from the dialectic of historical materialism into a critical theory of urbanisation, all the while maintaining an awareness of the irreducible complexity particular to post-modern cities. In the

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6   The spectrum goes from sociologists like Richard Sennett (*The Fall of Public Man*, 1976), to architects/planners/architecture theoreticians like Rem Koolhaas (*The Generic City*, 1995), to thinkers like Jean Baudrillard (*Citoyenneté et urbanité*, 1991) or Boris Groys (*Die Stadt auf Durchreise*, 2003).

7   "*The production of space*". *La production de l'espace* (following called PE) was first published in 1974. This survey refers to the fourth French edition, published in 2000; for English quotations, if not differently indicated, I will refer to the English translation by Donald Nicholson-Smith from 2007, *The Production of Space* (following called PS).

following section, his work will first be contextualised within the pertinent philosophical traditions and movements; secondly, his theory of the production of space will be illustrated and, thirdly, critically arranged for the envisaged research[8].

DIGRESSION

Henri Lefebvre's evolutions, and convolutions, towards a trialectic model

The leitmotif of Lefebvre's philosophical project, developed within the three volumes of La critique de la vie quotidienne[9], *consists of a survey of everyday life based on the concept of practice. Ever since the late 1930s, when he published* Le matérialisme dialectique, *the French thinker was concerned with the idea of human self-production, according to which human nature transforms reality through inventive, sensually perceivable and social action. The concept of action, equated by Marx to labour and work, has for Lefebvre a broad meaning, as he considers this "action" to be the basis of cognition as well as of social reality. Correspondingly, in the course of his occupation with everyday life, "action" is progressively substituted by the term "practice"[10].*

Unsurprisingly for a thinker bound to historical materialism, Lefebvre conceives of philosophical thought as a necessarily dialectic one. He however does not limit himself to Marx's dialectic, but reads Hegel and is inspired by Nietzsche, which leads to the development of an own, original concept[11]. Lefebvre follows Hegel on the fact that every concept "self-directedly" tends towards a second concept, which is its own contradiction or negation, and from here to a third concept – their confluence and overcoming. However, he regards as problematic the fact that Hegel's dialectic unity can easily be, and it actually has often been, interpreted as completion, which would imply that the historical movement of concepts can, at some point, stop. Due to his stress on production and on reality's essentially contradictory and never-ending nature, as well as to an ideologically sustained refusal to conceive of a perfectible history, Lefebvre could not

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8   The following analysis is based on Christian Schmid's "reconstruction" of Lefebvre's theory. Cf. Christian Schmid (2005), *Stadt, Raum und Gesellschaft. Henri Lefebvre und die Theorie der Produktion des Raumes* (abbr. SRG).

9   The first volume hereof, called *Introduction*, was published in 1947; the second, with the subtitle *Fondament d'une sociologie de la quotidienneté*, in 1962, and the last one, *De la modernité au modernisme (pour une métaphilosophie du quotidien)*, in 1981.

10   Lefebvre also distanced himself from Marx's narrow economic definition of production and intended it as a poietic act, from which all bearings of social beings are derived: the life of the individual as well as History, individual consciousness as well as social relations, logical forms as well as cognition, art and pleasure. To Marx's economic theories, Lefebvre preferred earlier, less axiomatic works like *Grundrisse* (1857) and especially the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* (1844). I refer also to Lefebvre's early works on Marxism such as *Le matérialisme dialectique*, as well as *Problèmes actuels du marxisme* or *Le romantisme révolutionnaire*.

11   As Christian Schmid pointed out, Lefebvre's "dialectic" has not yet been exhaustively studied. This is in part due to the fact that he continuously enriched and modified his theory, which made an approach to it difficult. The broad delineation attempted here is based on Schmid's interpretation.

embrace this view. Instead of the "perfect" synthesis, he insists on the idea of "transfor-mation" implicit in Hegel's original terminology, the German term "Aufhebung"[12], *and stresses the fact that the negation carried by the second term must be* contained, *and not solved, in transformed and more complex form in the third. In his eyes, such a view offers the premises for a* promise, *for a "project instead of reality", i.e. a possibility that can be realised through action.*

In the development of his thought, Lefebvre exerts a critique to German idealism: by regarding philosophy as the first dimension of cognition, idealism alienates thought from material practice. Hence, he declares movement – *i.e. the dynamism created by the conflict between practice and thought – as the basis of a new dialectic, in which practice and thinking are essences that run parallel to each other and vis-à-vis others. Their unity, which emerges dialectically, transcends both*[13]. *In particular, the "essence" standing vis-à-vis to practice and thinking is the human being with his vitality as conceived by Nietzsche, a fantastic, poetic and poietic element based on an absolute will*[14]. *Such vital force is neither localised in thought nor in the pure practice, but externally to both, as a transcendental concept, which "contains" and at the same time contradicts practice as well as thought, thus never entirely overcoming it. Lefebvre has by these means founded a "trialectic" of thought, practice, and active, poetic power. Some years later, this trialectic will be the basement of* The Production of Space[15].

The "poetic power" is never completely defined in Lefebvre's writings, although he often refers to it in terms of "desire", regarded as the means for the establishment of practice in the theoretical discours.

What is the meaning of "desire"? A first delineation can be found in the so-called "strategy of residues", the basis for Lefebvre's meta-philosophy or philosophy of everyday life, in which desire is synonymous of "residues". The latter are elements of human life that are not reducible to abstraction and thus uncontrollable, for example spontaneous vitality, the human being in his non-philosophical (everyday life) existence, sexuality, the freedom of individual opinion, behavioural deviancy, etc. In the envisioned strategy, these elements should be collected to create a "truer universe" characterised

12   "*Aufhebung*" contemporarily means "overcoming" and "maintaining" – a double meaning that may be the reason for problems of interpretation. In *Métaphilosophie,* Lefebvre took decidedly position for the first. Cf. *Métaphilosophie. Prolégomènes* (1965), especially page 30.

13   Following Lefebvre's formulation in *Le matérialisme dialectique,* practice is one "essence running parallel to thought, standing against other essences, whereby their unity transcends it".

14   Lefebvre (1965), page 137.

15   "Trialectic" is preferred to "dialectical trilogy", "triadic dialectic" or "*Dialektik der Dreiheit*" (all suggested by Schmid in course of SRG), which appear as oxymoron. A second advantage of such term is that it is more synthetic than "dialectically developing trilogy". "Three-elements" systems will become a constant in Lefebvre's theoretical work to come, also beyond epistemology and urban research (for instance, his theory of language as well as his political theory are based on triadic systems). Hereby, Lefebvre's models feature a distinct individuality in comparison to other "three-partied" theoretical systems, which, in some cases, he explicitly criticises. For example, Lacan's psychoanalytical "topology" also consists of three registers, i.e. 1) an imagination that resembles Lefebvre's "desire", 2) reality as empty space or stability and 3) symbolism as the premise for language and the mediator between the two. Lefebvre's criticisism of Lacan's system is aimed at latter's assumption of "the logical, epistemological and anthropological priority of language *[instead of everyday life's social practice]* over space" (PS, p. 36).

by heterogeneity, plurality, discrepancy and disharmonies[16]*, in which the traditional dichotomy of philosophy and everyday life, of spirituality and materiality, theory and practice is dissolved.*

2.1. LEFEBVRE'S CONCEPTS OF *EVERYDAY LIFE, PRACTICE,* AND *URBANISATION*

After having delved into a theoretical evolution spanning over more than two decades, the focus here turns back to the "critique" of everyday life, which occupied Lefebvre for years to come and confronted him with an increasingly important topic, urbanisation. As mentioned, Lefebvre regards everyday life as the real centre of social practice and as the source of any form of social cognition[17]. An heir to the Marxist method, he understands everyday life as the object of historical analysis, whereby the fact that it is a product of social reality renders it the object of in-depth critique. Why a "critique"? Because in modern urban life – and here Marx, but also Simmel and Habermas are echoed – reality, analytically subdivided in functionally organised sectors (work, private life, leisure time, etc.), alienates and lacerates human beings. On the other hand, for Lefebvre, urban life is the dimension in which alienating routines can be broken, in which city and urban reality, as products, are "consumed" by human beings following their desire instead of being dominated by ideology. Hence, his interest for urban life can be understood: in it, he recognises the potential for the project of a "new" (not only urban) society[18].

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16 The "strategy of residues" (cf. SRG, page 108, for a more profound description) is actually the most consistently developed of a series of "strategies" which Lefebvre elaborated along the years, from the "revolution of everyday practice" passing by the "urban revolution", to the "production of a differential space".

17 As it is possible to read in Lefebvre's political writings, everyday life, usually characterised by bureaucratisation and directed consumption, can become the starting point for social change through a change in everyday life's practices – here intended as routines – that could initiate a revolution. Departing from his precedent "faith" in surrealism, Lefebvre considers poetic language as ideally, but not actually, able to defeat everyday life's alienation due to the fact that language itself has fallen victim to tradition (cf. *La révolution urbaine*). The consequences hereof were drawn by some of Lefebvre's students, who – with their interventions in Paris' public places – transposed the "fight" from language to urban space. Organised around the group of the *Situationnistes Internationales,* they proposed a new form of urbanism, called "*urbanisme unitaire*", as well as a series of tools for intervention, action and creation of situations in the urban scape.

18 For example, Lefebvre recognises in festivals a primary moment of consumption of streets and squares, buildings, infrastructure and monuments, which breaks the domination, on the part of the urban structures, over the inhabitants. That is to say, by introducing in everyday life some elements of jocosity and unpredictability which humans need to escape from social reality's monotony, festivals encounter and activate their "*desire*". It should be remarked that Lefebvre's interest for the city and for urbanisation is doubtless also a product of its time. He "discovered" urbanisation during the 60s through its symptoms – mechanisation of rural work, increasing

Which are the steps of this occupation with urbanisation? Setting out with an initial interest for the changes in everyday life practices and the boredom deriving from the monotony of regularised working and living processes, Lefebvre resolves to study the transformations triggered by urbanisation in cities. He confronts himself with the contemporary debates on the city, characterised by a number of critical writings that declare the "crisis" of the city[19], and re-defines the terms and causes of this crisis on the basis of a new reading of the (Marxist) conflict between land and city. The "crisis", in his eyes, actually consists of the fact that 1) the city is losing its autonomy and its clear form, whereas 2) the land, itself urbanised, is losing its characterising attribute, that is the work in the fields[20].

These reflections give him reason to postulate the complete urbanisation of society and the future emergence of a post-industrial society characterised by pervasive urbanisation – as in its material structure (which becomes homogeneous in the heterogeneity intrinsic to the urban fabric), so in its culture, ways of life and production system[21]. His insistence on the still *unrealised* nature of such "urban society" distinguishes Lefebvre's thinking from other authors' analyses, which regard contemporary cities, in Europe and globally, as an already ultimate form, and thus exclude any possibility for different developments.

Lefebvre equates urbanisation with movement, tendency or tension. Yet, if in order to "observe" [Lat. "watching over"] it is necessary to stand on an exterior observation platform, "observing" urbanisation risks being impossible: at most, it could be "spoken of" on the base of its observable consequences, signs and symptoms, whereby their isolated observation and combination could not grant an understanding of the whole. If such a view would be followed, "city" as object of social research would be lost, split into a thousand parts by an uneven development, exploded in a cacophony of theories. How to come out from this impasse?

Lefebvre initially thought of a historical analysis. He traced a spatial-temporal "line of urbanisation", in which History is illustrated as passing from a natural status, through the political, then commercial and industrial city, to a "critical phase"

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industrialisation, partial transformation of villages into urbanised settlements for factory workers – visible in broad parts of France.

19 Cf. *The Exploding Metropolis*, edited by young US-American journalists, as well as *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* by Jane Jacobs (1961). These authors brought to light the problems of urban sprawl, of the mixture of functions and inner-urban reorganisation in post-war American cities.

20 *Le droit à la ville*, page 82, Lefebvre (1968).

21 Cf. *La révolution urbaine*, page 7 as well as SRG, page 128–131. Lefebvre expressively speaks of an "urban fabric" that is proliferating, expanding and almost organically devouring rural existence, whereby its loose mesh allows rural "islands": cf. *Writings on Cities*, translated by Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas, page 71–72 (2005). And further: "*[the expansion of urban fabric]* leads at the same time to the depopulation and the <loss of the peasantry> from the villages which remain rural while losing what was peasant life: crafts, small locals shops. Old <ways of life> become folklore. If the same phenomena are analysed from the perspective of cities, one can observe not only the extension of highly populated peripheries but also of banking, commercial and industrial networks and of housing"..

represented by the ongoing dissolution of the contradiction between land and city[22]. This model, being also based on the trilogy "Rural – Industrial – Urban," cannot however rescue the reflection on city from its fall into the inscrutability of urbanisation and virtuality of the "urban society". In order to re-establish the definition of city and to reintroduce it to scientific research, Lefebvre had to go further. His next attempt was again of macro-sociological nature and started with the consideration of two basic "schools of thought" on the city. The first postulates that city is a delimited, distinct spatial unity characterised by specific attributes, in the tradition of Max Weber and, later, of the Chicago School. The second is Marx and Engels' orientation, centred on the contradiction between city and land. Again, Lefebvre preferred the dialectic option and created an original theory based on three "spatio-temporal social levels": the private level (P), the "total" level (G), and the intermediate level between them, the city (M).

Level P, also called "near order", can be easily traced back and equated to the everyday life or practical-sensual reality (including family, neighbourhood and kinship, organisations and corporations). The "far order" or level G, in contrast, was less clearly defined: it could be said to be the level of entire social reality, comprehending international organisations and institutions that have the power to form moral and judicial principles, ideologies, political strategies, etc. through codes and culture. Such a level is abstract and formal, and encompasses "global" relationships like capital market and physical planning as well as processes like industrialisation and urbanisation. The city (M) finally mediates and penetrates both levels and as such appears respectively as a "projection" of society onto the concrete ground and a voice of society through monuments, ceremonies, festivals, times, and rhythms.

Though neither this sociological approach nor its historical equivalent manage to reintroduce a viable definition of city, it is important to illustrate Lefebvre's efforts towards a more mature theory not only in order to introduce his terminology and philosophical context, but also to describe a search that is found highly in line with the doubts which emerged during the empirical and theoretical development of this project. Furthermore according to what is illustrated above, it is now possible to give a definition of "urbanisation" as used in this study: urbanisation will be understood as a continuous process and city as essentially in a transitory state, whereby the concrete everyday life practice dominates and directs its development.

2.2. THE THEORY OF PRODUCTION OF SPACE

It has been shown how, by shifting from city to urbanisation, Lefebvre lost an "object" that could be observed by sociological and philosophical analysis of social reality. Despite having reached important assertions, such as:

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22   Cf. SRG, page 132ff for an in-depth description of the urbanisation phases, which on one side show an indisputable influence of Marx/Engels' historical thought and on the other are comparable to Castells' later analysis in *Is there an urban sociology?* of 1976.

– the city is a historical configuration linked to centrality,
– it constitutes an intermediate level between near and far order, between every-
  day life and state,
– it is characterised by various dimensions, i.e. it is simultaneously a *practice*, a
  strategy (to the realisation of an "urban society") and a *text*,

at the beginning of the 70s he was still lacking a term that could contain and inte-
grate all these ideas and ultimately give the city back as an object of survey to social
science. By 1974, with *La production de l'espace*, he eventually found this term:
space – occupied, or appropriated, by the city, produced by social practice[23].

To define the new term, Lefebvre consulted the Western philosophical tradi-
tion, whereby he refused the Cartesian separation of *res cogitans* (or thinking sub-
ject) and *res extensa* (or the perceivable "being", object of thinking), because it re-
duces space to a materiality, or at best to an order intrinsic to existing things, and
especially because it implicitly separates mind and body. From his point of view,
space could not be conceived of as a form enabling knowledge like in Kant's phi-
losophy, because space (and time as well) is hereby exterior to the world of objects.
In the course of his search, Lefebvre rejected Hegel's interpretation of space as a
product of history, Newton's "reduction" of space to a mere fact of nature, Marx'[24],
structuralist, phenomenological, semiotic, linguistic as well as psychoanalytic epis-
temological models of the 20th century, mainly due to the fact that they give an ex-
aggerated importance of "mental" configurations of space. Unsatisfied with these
interpretations, he then rooted his spatial theory in a production process: postulat-
ing that (social) space is a (social) product, and, in particular, a togetherness of
productive relationships occurring in history, he defined the task of social analysis
as the study of production of space.

At a first glance, such "production of space" could appear to simply shift the
problematic inscrutability of urbanisation leaving it unsolved: why should it be pos-
sible to inspect the process of production of space, but not that of urbanisation? The
answer resides in Lefebvre's peculiar understanding of space: while urbanisation
cannot interact with social practice but only through a mediation of the city, space
is an integrative part or precondition of all three levels (P, M, and G).

The next urgent question regards "how" space is produced: "[…] confronted by
an indefinite multitude of spaces, each one piled upon, or perhaps contained within,
the next: geographical, economic, demographic, sociological, ecological, political,
commercial, national, continental, global […], the theory we need might be called a
"unitary theory": the aim is to discover or construct a theoretical unity between
"fields" which are apprehended separately […] In other words, we are concerned

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23 From this moment onwards, with a logical move, Lefebvre used the terms space and city as
    equals.
24 Though he sometimes uses terms that could remind one of the German ideologist – for instance
    when he distinguishes between a) historical space as "full" space of accumulation, expression of
    the city's control over the surrounding land, b) absolute space or "empty", religious and civil
    space, and c) abstract space as result of alienation through capitalism – he does not really find
    an answer in this "model", as the different "spaces" still remain disconnected.

with logico-epistemological space, the space of social practice, the space occupied by sensory phenomena, including products of the imagination such as projects and projections, symbols and utopias"[25]. The heralded third element is thus a "social practice" led by imagination and utopias (hence desire) that includes and transposes mental conceptualisations as well as physical phenomena on a more complex level, itself constitutionally contradictory and dynamic. As all three so-called fields are objects of three simultaneous and interrelated production processes (material production, knowledge production, production of significance), space is at the same time perceived, conceived and lived: therefore, it shall be analysed from three points of view respectively. The three intertwined levels of the production of space – the physical, the mental, and the social – shall now be more closely defined.

Physical space

This level regards the continuous material production, through appropriation and mastering, of a society's space by *spatial practice*, which dialectically propounds and presupposes it. The perceivable aspects of space are hereby concerned: material production and reproduction processes as well as specific places and spatial ensembles that are inherent to, and the starting point of, every social formation – be these a room, a street-corner, a square or a market. These places are never isolated, but always inter-related and inter-penetrated. Furthermore, spatial practice emerges from the close association of everyday reality (routine) with urban reality (the routes and networks which link the places set aside for work, private life and leisure)[26] and thus requests a certain spatial competence and performance. The latter point shows that for Lefebvre, spatial practice also includes a mental act for, in his own words "space can not be perceived without a notion of space"[27]. The abstract moment is linked to the concrete space through the body's ability to occupy space. In conclusion, an important concept for the dissertation's methodology: the physical field of spatial production can be observed in the net of places of everyday life – of work, home and leisure – and in their connections, i.e. infrastructure, as well as economy and work. For example, in Lefebvre's words, modern, or contemporary, spatial practice could be represented by the everyday routine of a person living in a subsidised high-rise housing project.

25   PS, page 8 and 11–12.
26   Cf. PE, p. 48.
27   An echo of linguistics is clearly confirmed by the literal reference to Chomsky, whose work *Syntactic Structures* (1957) and especially "generative grammar" are referred to by Lefebvre in PE. For Chomsky, people are able to generate a wide variety of possible grammatical sentences thanks to an innate "intuition" of language, by him also called competence; performance, in contrast, is the transformation of this competence into everyday speech. Transposed to spatial practice, the word "market" is significant for specific spatial uses that individuals can figure out (competence) and fulfil (performance).

Mental space

Through a mental act, single details of material reality can be collected to form an (ideal) totality. Representations of space are created in this way by scientists, technocrats, urban planners, social engineers, architects and intellectuals (as well as some artists), who equate what is *lived* and what is *perceived* with what is *conceived* – but not imagined[28] – via their respective language. Plans and floor views, which mediate between geometrical space and the occupied or appropriated space, are typical representational forms alongside language and images – attributed to all these is the potential danger of being loaded with rhetoric and, thus, fooling their readers as well as their creators. Conceptualised space, which emerges thanks to a system of verbal signs (codes) that represent it, is permeated by knowledge i.e. ideology[29]. Due to the progressive detachment from physical work and due to individualisation (with the consequent loss of social interaction) in modern life, the mental field dominates over the others, and in its name spatial texture as well as political and social practice can be changed[30]. For an "urban revolution", such an ideological component should be uncovered and the actual interdependence between mental field and spatial practice strengthened: like physical space, mental space admits or even requires a dialectical interaction with spatial practice to emerge.

Social space

The physical and mental processes of production of space are integrative of lived space, called social practice. This social level of production space directly implies time: social practice originates from history, that of peoples as well as of individuals. This is at present the field of a dominated, and hence passively experienced, space, whereby "desire" and imagination seek to change and appropriate it. Within the social field, space is lived and suffered by inhabitants and users, but also by artists and "those who describe and aspire to do no more than describe"[31]. Their associated images and symbols create what Lefebvre calls *representational space,* or space of representation[32] – it "represents" social values, traditions, dreams, collective experiences, imagination, as well as "desire" and, for this reason, anthropological and eth-

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28   Imagination belongs to the poietic activity of the third moment and is thus constitutive of the social field.

29   Lefebvre distinguishes between knowledge ("*savoir*") and cognition ("*connaissance*"): knowledge serves or follows power intended as ideology and political practice, whereas cognition is (self-)critical, subversive, open to reality and possibility. This differentiation of meaning will be observed in the text.

30   In more explicitly socio-political terms, Lefebvre writes that concrete, lived space is dominated by mental, abstract space, "the free space of the commodity", which nonetheless is characterised by contradictions that can only be hidden, but not solved, by a homogenising ideology.

31   PE, p. 49/PS, p. 39.

32   It is important to note the distinction between "representation of space", which is inherent to *mental* field, and "space of representation" or "representational space", which is the space in which symbols, values, etc. are *socially* produced.

nological science is and should be occupied with this field. Socially produced space is imaginary, directional, situational (or relational), transversed by symbolisms and history, essentially qualitative, fluid and dynamic: these attributes make it the space of poets and artists, who are capable of "re-connecting" representational space and the representations of space thanks to their free poetic actions[33]. Apart from in physical space, objects are used here symbolically; apart from in represented spaces, representational spaces are "alive" and originate from "more or less coherent systems of non-verbal symbols and signs"[34]. The effective centres of social practice are *loci* of passion, of action and of lived situations: the ego, the bed, the bedroom, dwelling or house, but also the square, church and graveyard.

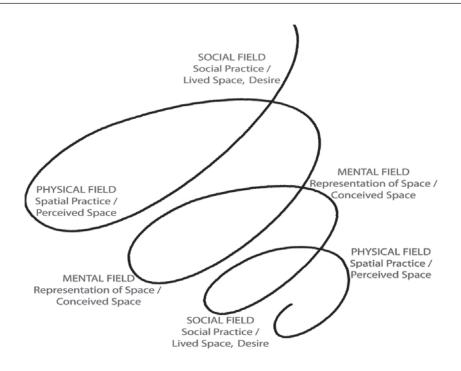Defining the "production of space" more precisely:

– space is a producer of structures as well as a product of the actions that produce it.
– (social) space is not a system, but rather a process consisting of the combined action of three contemporary processes of production: material production, knowledge production and the production of significance. In other terms:
– space consists of concrete materiality, mental conceptualisation *and* experience – life, feeling, imagination, "desire" – whereby each of the three elements respectively presupposes the others.
– the product "social reality" does not arise from any singular fields, but rather from their collective and simultaneous interaction.

To conclude this paragraph, Lefebvre's model can be illustrated as follows on next page in form of a conic helix, in which physical, mental and social fields are parts not of a static, but of a moving unity in which they interact and steadily affect each other.

2.3. FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE – APPLYING LEFEBVRE'S MODEL TO FIELD WORK

The precedent paragraph reproduced the steps through which Lefebvre, in an effort to describe postmodern cities' complexity instead of reducing them to static "matters of fact", shifts his attention from "city" to "space". These steps are:

– focussing on urbanisation instead of city,
– recognising space as common ground of the private, global and the city's level after accepting that urbanisation in its nature of process is inscrutable and a "theory of urbanisation" would be useless,

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33   Theatre especially is regarded as capable of integrating a representation of space – the scenic space, product of a specific spatial conceptualisation – and a representational space – mediated through a communicative act, yet directly a lived space. Cf. PS, p. 175 and 188.
34   PE, p. 49.

SOCIAL FIELD
Social Practice /
Lived Space, Desire

MENTAL FIELD
Representation of Space /
Conceived Space

PHYSICAL FIELD
Spatial Practice /
Perceived Space

PHYSICAL FIELD
Spatial Practice /
Perceived Space

MENTAL FIELD
Representation of Space /
Conceived Space

SOCIAL FIELD
Social Practice /
Lived Space, Desire

Visualisation of Lefebvre's trialectic model.

–   acknowledging space as a product of social practice and defining social analysis as the study of the "production of space",
–   identifying three continuous and intertwined processes of production of space: material production, knowledge production, production of significance (space is at once perceived, conceived and lived), and, therefore,
–   characterising the respective fields of production as physical field, mental field and social field.

What has been of value and what contribution to urban studies has been made by Lefebvre's theory of production of space? *The Production of Space* can actually be regarded as one of the main inputs to the "strategic hypothesis" of primacy of space over time, also called "spatial turn", that characterises postmodern thinking in the fields of geography, philosophy as well as planning[35]. Among others, Michel Foucault gives an insightful explanation of how, after the 19th century that was dominated by the paradigm of *time*, in the 20th *space* re-emerged in philosophical thought and almost became the obsession of a generation that was experiencing the world only secondarily as a historical process, but primarily as a net of points that can be linked

35   Jörg Dünne and Stephan Günzel talk about the "spatial" or "topographical" turn in their introduction to *Raumtheorie. Grundlagentexte aus Philosophie und Kulturwissenschaften* (2006), p-12–13. For references on Lefebvre's reception in recent years, cf. SRG, pages 62–70.

and shifted, and that includes simultaneity, heterogeneity and the juxtaposition of differences[36].

Moreover, Lefebvre's approach appears to grant a series of advantages for concrete applications in urban studies. For instance, his understanding of mental space makes the comparison of insights from philosophy, sociology, ethnology and anthropology, but also those from urban planning, engineering, etc. possible, as they can all be understood as equal "abstractions", or conceptualisations. Such an insight may have a liberating effect for researchers and professionals from all disciplines, who are no longer called to "defend" the legitimacy and/or major relevance of the respective point of view.

The assertion that city as a social product arises from three production processes in a dialectical relationship actually strengthens already existing calls for an integration of various methods in urban studies and practice: future surveys, considering physical, mental as well as everyday life, should be able to take distance from generalisations and normative descriptions. The trialectic model could be especially fruitful for cultural (and inter-cultural) research, because it clarifies the role that mental conceptualisations play for physical as well as social practice. Hereby, the call for an attentive inspection of everyday life contemporarily acknowledges the task of anthropology and ethnology – to investigate peculiar cultural conceptualisations and their effect on everyday life. In short, Lefebvre's "materialistic" approach allows academic, theoretical discussions to be brought onto a level of experience, i.e. of observable everyday life practices, without giving up the legitimate ambition to "produce knowledge"[37].

At this point, Lefebvre's theory can be "transposed" and made fruitful for the concrete project envisaged in this book. Based on the reached understanding, this will be defined as a study of how urban space is produced through practices of social interaction that take place in everyday life (social space) and correspond to a specific material environment (physical space) as well as to intellectual/mental conceptualisations (mental space).

The complexity of the trialectic model and the novelty of its application to empirical research necessitate some preliminary remarks on presentation form and organisation of the research. First of all, a definition of everyday life on which to base

36   Cf. Michel Foucault, *Des espaces autres*, in *Dits et Ecrits*, vol 4 (1994), p. 752–762. The similitude to Lefebvre's word choice is significant, and other contemporary and post-structuralist thinkers also found inspiration and/or accor in his poetic metaphysical reflections, as it has been pointed out above with the reference to Deleuze. The development of postmodern geography can be related to Lefebvre's thought as well. On one hand, his materialism convinced authors such as David Harvey (cf. for example *The condition of Postmodernity*, 1990); on the other, Lefebvre's space conception was applauded by e.g. Edward W. Soja (for example in *Postmodern Geographies. The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory,* 1989) as the base for a new geography. However, as pointed out by Schmid, these authors often misunderstood or only partially understood the actual value of Lefebvre's thought, which consists of its specific and programmatic openness, by trying to make it concrete, systematise it and re-transpose space on one only level (the physical). Cf. SRG, p. 65–66, 295–297 and 301–303.

37   This enables a surmounting of the relativistic trends sensible in post-structuralist thought, which actually challenge scientific activity per se.

the work is necessary. In the course of his reflection of many years, Lefebvre provided an ample spectrum of definitions: we have seen that he considers everyday life as historical product and at the same time as producer of representational spaces[38]; that he equates it to programmed consumption[39], and that he wants to underlay its repetitive, non-creative, but only reproductive, practice, with a critique. Further on, in *The Production of Space* it is possible to understand that everyday life takes place in work, leisure and living spaces[40] – in short, on a "<micro> level, on the local and localizable [*on which*] everything (the <whole>) also depends […]: exploitation and domination, protection and – inseparably – repression"[41]. On the other hand, this critically observed everyday life is one of those "vulnerable areas" and "potential breaking points" for the realisation of human "desire", of creativity and poetic action-like the urban sphere, the body and the "differences that emerge within the body from repetitions" (i.e. gestures, rhythms or cycles). [42]. Yet what does it mean to study everyday life, or to base a survey on it?

A comparison of definitions here proves to be helpful. Lefebvre's notion of everyday life has been compared to that of Georg Lukács' for their common Marxist approach, and contrasted to non-Marxist interpretations like that of Alfred Schütz's. For Lukács, everyday life is simultaneously the base and the final point of human action, whereby this action emerges from individual reflection[43]. Lefebvre would have probably criticised such a view due to an exaggerated focus on the individual and the exclusion of the collective social level. Alfred Schütz worked extensively on Husserl's phenomenology, which he sought to integrate with the Weberian "sociology of understanding" in a "phenomenological sociology"[44] – an approach that allows the observer to "categorise" the practices delivered by everyday life according to an ideal typology. A problem within phenomenological sociology however concerns its incapacity to overcome the "classifying" perspective, as Lefebvre repeatedly criticised in various passages of the *Production of Space*[45].

The French thinker Michel de Certeau was also concerned with the notion of everyday life. In an inspiring book on everyday practices, he acknowledges Lefebvre's original interpretation of everyday life and his postulation of an "anti-discipline"[46].

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38 PS, p. 116.
39 PS, p. 89.
40 PS, p 59.
41 PS, p. 366.
42 PS, p. 385.
43 Cf. *Die Eigenart des Ästhetischen* [Engl. *The Specificity of the Aesthetic*, 1963] or also *History and Class Consciousness* (1923).
44 Cf. *Der sinnhafte Aufbau der sozialen Welt: eine Einleitung in die verstehende Soziologie* (1932), [Engl. *The phenomenology of the social world,* 1967].
45 Among others, anthropology is vehemently attacked for this reason by Lefebvre; on Rapoport's anthropological study of housing forms for example, he writes: "The limitations of anthropology are nonetheless on display here, and indeed they leap off the page when the author seeks to establish the general validity of reductionistic schemata based on a binary opposition […] and goes so far as to assert that French people always (!) entertain in cafés rather than at home". Cf. PS, p. 123.
46 In his book (cf. p. XL and XLI in the *Introduction générale*), de Certeau uses "art de faire" syn-

In the reflection opening his chapter on "spatial practices", he opposes a view onto New York City from the 101ˢᵗ floor – the bird's view of architects and planners, but also the view on the city which painters in the Middle Ages and during the Renaissance strove to represent – to the city's experience on the streets, where the ordinary dwellers live. It is here, on the "ground floor", that urban dwellers, experiencing urban space in a blind, intuitive and sensual way, not congruent to the clear geometrical or geographical space at all, write the urban text. De Certeau describes first a choice of practices – urbanism, reading and ways of belief – from a rather theoretical point of view, then delves into an exhaustive illustration of concrete spatial practices (e.g. the "reconstruction" of space in the everyday life of one's family, and the way a net of relationships develops through culinary practice)[47]. Here are some important inputs to keep in mind for the empirical work: everyday life takes shape from practices that cannot be categorised, but have to be described by juxtaposing collective, or "macro" level, with private, or "micro" level aspects.

Is it by narrating instead of cataloguing uses of space that the city's process-like nature can be apprehended and properly mirrored?

DIGRESSION

Michel de Certeau and Hubert Fichte, or narration versus poetic word

In Arts de faire*, Michel de Certeau made a famous distinction between a)* space*, defined as a net of dynamic elements in the variation of time and identified with movement, and b)* place*, an order, a constellation of fixed points, identified with the map*[48]*. Starting from the results of an empirical study demonstrating that, upon wishing to describe a place, we tend to refer to the actions necessary to* go*, thus to* move*, through it instead of using "static" expressions like "left", "in front of", etc., and that this is also the case when we base our description on a map, he pointed out that these "accounts" of movement in space and/or time are nothing but "the base of the everyday narrations" (and in fact, it was with journey accounts that narrative historically came into being).*

Narrations are for de Certeau always related to movements in space, and these in turn are the conditions for the compilation of maps and for the "scientific" definitions of place; eventually, narration appears capable of continuously transforming space into

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onymously with "pratique" [Engl. "practice"] and "manières de faire" [Engl. "ways of doing"]. With the term "art de faire", he apparently wants to dignify everyday life. Cf. *L'invention du quotidien – 1. Arts de faire*, new edition 1990. English translation: *The Practice of Everyday Life,* 1988.

47   The theoretical foundation for this book consists of an illustration of relevant theories of the "art of practice" including Foucault's *Surveiller et punir* [Engl. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*] and Pierre Bourdieu's *Esquisse d'une théorie de la pratique* [Engl. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*], but also Kant's "art of thought" and Detienne's historical and anthropological "art of (story) telling".

48   For example, a street, itself a geometrically fixed *place*, becomes *space* when people walk on it.

place, and place into space. The dialectic between movement and map, or between "dynamic elements in the variation of time" and "fixed points", would thus depend on the creative ability to narrate. Now, de Certeau's model of space is based on a binomial (space/place) in which, from Lefebvre's point of view, mental space is missing or wrongly mixed with physical space – in other words, de Certeau does not seem to give relevance to the fact that a map is produced by means of an intellectual act. Latter's definition of place as "constellation of fixed points" could at most be compared to the materiality of physical space. What makes de Certeau's work notable for the present discussion is the insight that space (easily comparable to Lefebvre's space of social practice if defined as "dynamic elements in time") interacts with its dialectic counterpart thanks to the creative, imaginative act of narration, everyday stories, also called "treatments of space". Through these – be their scope the communication, organisation or reclamation of space – human beings combine mental conceptualisations (the map) and lived space (Lefebvre's space of representation). In this sense, it can be said that de Certeau also regards space as a "translator" or "mediator" between physical, mental and lived space; this makes his use of narrative forms for the analysis of space interesting.

Quite differently, German author Hubert Fichte declares the "poetic word" as the methodological basis for social sciences[49]. Undertaking the difficult task to "observe" a social reality in which they are imbedded and from which they can never completely prescind, social scientists are faced with an antinomy, similar to that of the urban researcher pretending to "observe" urbanisation, that can only be overcome by the use of the poetic word – so Fichte's point. After stating linguistic impoverishment and the increasing abstraction of the observers from the observed in mentioned disciplines due to the substitution of the poetic word with the scientific formula and technical terms, he pleaded for the reintroduction of "charm, discipline, lightness, fantasy, freedom and short form" in order to bring them closer to reality.

To be clear, the German author does not doubt the legitimacy of scientific research and on the contrary, he stresses that clearly determined observation and logical deduction are and have to remain the conditions of scientificness; yet, this does not necessitate scientific languages to becoming aseptic. And:

"Haikus often express more about a society than three folios from upended slip boxes. Rhythm.

Timbre.

Sharpness."[50]

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49   Cf. Hubert Fichte (1977): *Ketzerische Bemerkungen für eine neue Wissenschaft vom Menschen* (suggested English translation: *Heretical observations for a new science of men*; Fichte's work is only partially translated in English). Fichte starts his speech by pointing out that the suffix "-logy", reminiscent of the Greek term "logos" [Engl. "word"], in terms like socio*logy*, anthropol*ogy*, ethno*logy*, etc., should actually suggest the essential role of language for social science.

50   Ibid., p. 17. This "musical" semantic is noticeable, as Lefebvre also speaks of social reality in terms of rhythms and programmatically adopts a "musical" writing style. While it appears as irrelevant to ask whether Fichte and Lefebvre knew about each other's works, it may be interesting to delve into an analysis of how music – its melodies and harmonies, thus its aesthetic/composition rules – can inspire literary and scientific works.

In his concluding words, Fichte, who considers research as a dialectic process, asks scientific surveys not to try to hide or dissolve doubts and contradictions, but rather to include "holes" and mistakes on the part of the observer as constitutive parts of research as well as of its object, reality.

Fichte and de Certeau stand for two diverging approaches to scientific writing; despite working in different fields – de Certeau being a philosopher and historian, Fichte an ethnologist and author –, comparing their positions is legitimate because both reflect on the same subject, that is, social science and the way to write it. According to de Certeau, the ideal presentation form for social studies would be a narrative one, whereas with Fichte, one's work would be conceived as a poetic act: the first would recommend "story telling", thus to compose the research elements along a narrative line; the second would plead for the flights and falls of poetry, which is always strongly related to an individual. It appears that the option represented by de Certeau promises a certain formal unity, while Fichte's "poetic" option necessarily leads to works that develop fragmentarily, "in pieces". Considering Lefebvre's understanding of "unity", the second way appears to be more appropriate for this study.

The moment has now come to finally "decide" how space shall be described by the present survey. The method of anthropology would consist of combining the enumeration, or inventory, of concrete spatial elements – huts, cabins, houses, streets and squares – with the description of space as a whole: such combining implication and explanation would allow the unity of social and mental, abstract and concrete space. Yet, as previously mentioned, Lefebvre refuses the anthropological methods of his time, which in his view reduce space to a means of classification, to a nomenclature for things, a taxonomy[51], and rather recommends a purely descriptive approach that "preserves differences in their discreteness and then plunges into the poorly charted realm of the specific". Furthermore, he envisages a "rhythmanalysis" – an analysis of the *uses of space according to time* – as a viable alternative to "spatial analysis"[52]. Rhythms are for Lefebvre both natural and produced by human action,

51   Ibid., p. 295–296. Lefebvre also criticised in this context Lévi-Strauss' works like *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* for its treatment of sexuality from a merely functional, "aseptic" point of view.

52   PS, p. 205–207, as well as p. 351, 356 and further 405. It should be also stressed hereby that space was not seen by Lefebvre as the producer of social life or reality, but as the level of their regulation in everyday life: "Spatial practice regulates life – it does not create it. Space has no power <in itself>, nor does space as such determine spatial contradictions. There are contradictions of society […] that simply emerge in space, at the level of space, and so engender the contradictions of space". PS, p. 358. Herewith, Lefebvre would have also taken distance from geo-deterministic tendencies, which regard society on the base of spatial concepts, whereas the contrary should be the case. As Lefebvre pointed out in PS, this was a mistake undergone by urbanism and also by Bauhaus. Though the Bauhaus architects, especially with Gropius and Le Corbusier, had the merit to understand that spatial ensembles can not be thought of as single products, but have to be inserted in social practice and thus interact with it, they made the mistake to believe that the same ensembles can change social practice and understood themselves

they "inter-penetrate" one another, are eternally crossing and re-crossing, and are always bound to space and time; they "have to do with needs, which may be dispersed as tendencies, or distilled into desire": "what we *live* are rhythms – rhythms experienced subjectively. Which means that, here at least, "lived" and "conceived" are close"[53]; "through the mediation of rhythms, an animated space comes into being which is an extension of the space of bodies"[54]. In short, rhythms, which are constitutionally inherent to the social field due to its bondage to time and temporal cycles, could be the mediation between the three fields that is being looked for. A late essay, *Elements of Rhythmanalysis*[55], shows how such an analysis could take form: on the basis of a balanced mix of participation and contemplation, city can be apprehended and descriptively analysed – without pretending to give further interpretations nor, especially, to be the author of a unity, but accepting that the fragmentary urban is that dialectic unity.

Other than narration, rhythmanalysis cannot possibly be linear. It rather enables the comprehension of complexity through the non-linear, free assemblage of significant elements; other than traditional anthropological approaches, it refuses categorisation. Is it possible to realise such ambition within a scientific survey? And how can the analytical aspect here be preserved? One possibility is seen in "repeating" Lefebvre's "juxtaposition" at the structural level of the survey, which will thus develop along a physical, a mental as well as a social field. To analyse aspects of spatial practice, i.e. of space's materiality, associative walks along Dhaka's principal areas (for example, squatter settlements in the fringes, inner-urban settlements, purely residential areas, or Campus) shall be integrated alongside selective observations of characteristics of architecture and construction in general, of infrastructural provision as well as "generalisable" aspects of everyday life practices (Lefebvre's "everyday routine of a person living in a subsidised high-rise housing project"), also termed mobility.

Lefebvre's second field consists of the representation of space. While mental maps spontaneously appear as an ideal tool for the inspection of mental space, a regulative artifice may be necessary in case of ineptitude or inability of asked persons to draw a map. And yet the influence of Western conceptualisations of space on the researcher cannot be ignored if partial results and/or interferences in the survey want to be avoided. To counter this problem, a series of questions explicitly referring to such Western conceptualisations of space and city, but "transposing" them into the field of social practice, will be prepared. Lastly, the third field, that of production of significance, or social space, has to be based on the participant's observation of everyday life practices by different individuals, in order to enable an "immersion" in that "poorly charted realm of the specific" – passions and desire, in bedrooms and prayer rooms – that constitutes social practice and incorporates the

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as revolutionaries, while their thoughts were "tailor-made for the state" (*La révolution urbaine*, p. 108, 166 and further 171 as well as PS, p. 124–127).
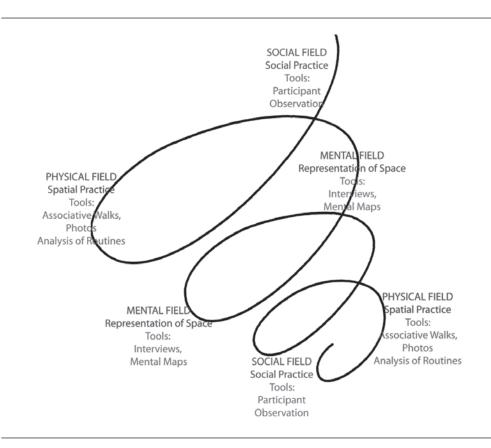
53   Ibid., p. 206.
54   Ibid., p. 207.
55   Cf. Lefebvre and Catherine Régulier, *Elements of Rhythmanalysis* (ER), in: *Writings on Cities,* p. 228ff.

mental and physical field. According to this "programme", the survey is going to be composed by "rhythmically" juxtaposed pieces of information, such as subjective observations, expert talks, maps of the practices, interviews, background information, historical data, etc., whereby people's everyday life, led by emotions, or desire, being the producer of social space, will be its climax.

The sketch reproduced below illustrates the combination of theory and of empirical tools corresponding to this programme, which is going to be treated in depth in following chapter, the *Methodology*.

Visualisation of adopted methodology according to Lefebvre's trialectic model.

2.4. "PUBLIC" OR "SOCIAL" SPACE

Before passing onto the definition of the tools needed for empirical research, I should clarify my positioning concerning the discussion on public space. The stress on "social" rather than "public" space in this study may appear curious considering the fact that the discussion on public space, especially after the declaration of the its "disappearance"[56], has played and currently still plays a protagonist role in contem-

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56   Richard Sennett's delineation of the process that led to such "disappearance" may be the most

porary urban studies, management as well as politics. Lefebvre seems to prefer talking about "social" rather than "public" space, although he attentively describes the phenomenon of its disappearance as early as in the 1960s. His choice is partly related to a seemingly superficial handling of the term, found uncritically equated with "social space" and "outside space of the community" in the *Production of Space*[57]. However, a more important reason should be his specific understanding of "public", which is compared, in the sense of "public buildings", to monuments, myths, and eventually ideology. Lefebvre points out that the state's operationalism – the arranging and classifying of space – "conflates <public> space with the <private> space of the hegemonic class", that "retains and maintains private ownership of the land and of the other means of production"[58]; such space is always "dominated" by means of representations, and only rarely can dwellers "appropriate" it through social practice[59]. Thus, Lefebvre's reluctance to use the term public space can be said to reside in the statement of its "emptiness" behind the facade of representations.

In the context of the present work, further reasons add to Lefebvre's political statement; the idea of "public space" is in fact critically looked upon as a "Western" myth, and its projection onto a different socio-cultural area is viewed to be an imposition. Interviews and participant observations clearly show that what would be called "public" space and sphere in European contexts is often used and shaped by individual actions, i.e. spontaneously, in Dhaka, and that the "public" may not be so easily discernible from the "private" in a city in which space is strongly segregated, congested and also illegally used. Based on this, "public space" will be encountered in the context of the survey of spatial practice, which – it will be illustrated – is characterised by exclusive or segregated public spaces and fragmented public spheres; the attention will then pass on to other, culturally particular, "categories" in which space becomes thought, and in an even more decided step, will pass from public space to space of everyday life practices, i.e. to social practice.

popular one: first, public and private were separated; in a second moment, the private prevailed over the public; in the final stage, corresponding to the modern time, increasing privatisation and social exclusion characterise social life of cities. Cf. the already mentioned *The Fall of Public Man* (1976) or *The Conscience of the Eye. The Design and Social Life of Cities* (1990).

57 PS, p. 166.
58 PS, p. 375.
59 PS, p. 166. In Lefebvre's analysis, the "monumentalisation" of public space started as early as in the Greek *polis*, whose space was absolute, i.e. the "public" included religious and political dimensions and was "made up of sacred or cursed locations". However, the *polis* was still "filled" with belief and carried by a non-alienated production system, while in the postmodern city, capitalistic production systems would have destroyed the link between representation and life, i.e. between mental and social field. Cf. PS p. 240–241.