

Urbanization, Everyday Life and the Survival of Capitalism: Lefebvre, Gramsci and the Problematic of Hegemony*

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Reading Capital won't help us if we don't also know how to read the signs in the street.¹

Vous etes, dans votre vie quotidienne, au centre du conflit
(You are, in your daily life, in the centre of the conflict)²

1. Introduction

Symbolized by protests from Seattle to Genova, “anti-globalization” or “anti-capitalist” movements, which have long, not always recognized histories, have now achieved global publicity even in the advanced capitalist world. While much has been written about the composition, contradictions, and promises of this constellation of movements, little has been said about the urban dimensions of these mobilizations. Recent protests were implicit utopian glimpses into a different, post-capitalist urban world. For a day or two at a time, they turned urban space into liberated zones that are intense, if short-lived ruptures of everyday routines. “Anti-globalization” protests have also proven a fertile ground for pre-existing or newly emerging groups (Y Basta, Reclaim the Streets), some of which demonstrate a vivid interest

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¹Marshall Berman, *Adventures in Marxism* (London: Verso, 1999), p. 169.

²Slogan during the protests against the Free Trade Area of the Americas, Quebec City, April 2001.

in situationism and related urban critiques.³ In turn, some activists realize that movement networks must negotiate difference and establish more organic connections to different neighborhoods and communities⁴ if they are going to have a lasting impact. In practice, and, to a lesser extent, theory, “anti-globalization” protests have highlighted the reproduction of capitalism as an everyday concern mediated by urban space.

If a critique of actually existing capitalism and imperialism cannot ignore the urban as a terrain of engagement, a radical urban perspective is imperative. This article provides a re-reading of Henri Lefebvre’s urban marxism by establishing connections between Lefebvre’s work and that of Antonio Gramsci. Linking Gramsci to Lefebvre provides a “Gramscian” reading of Lefebvre and, simultaneously, transfigures Gramscian insights in a decidedly urban direction. A Gramscian reading of Lefebvre yields an “open” and “integral” approach to urban marxism. This “third reading” of Lefebvre’s work differs qualitatively from poststructuralist readings *and* modifies political economy approaches to urban marxism.⁵ The conceptual access point to the distinct, but complementary “open and integral” marxisms of Gramsci and Lefebvre will be the problematic of hegemony. Lefebvre’s main contribution can be read as an attempt to “urbanize” the analysis of hegemony (what he sometimes called the “survival of capitalism”). In so doing, Lefebvre

³Harriet Friedmann, “The World Social Forum and the People’s Summit: A View from the Bottom Up,” *Studies in Political Economy*, 66, 2001, pp. 86-87, 88-91; Naomi Klein, *No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies* (Toronto: Vintage, 2000), pp. 311-322; Arthur Nester, “A Bunch of Bastas,” *Now Magazine*, March 29, 2001, pp. 21-24.

⁴Elizabeth Martinez, “Where was the Color in Seattle,” *Colorlines* 3, 1, 2000; John Grundy and Alison Howell, “Negotiating the Culture of Resistance: A Critical Assessment of Protest Politics,” *Studies in Political Economy*, 66, 2001, pp. 121-32.

⁵Christian Schmid’s reconstruction of Lefebvre is based on just such a dual critique (*Stadt, Raum und Gesellschaft: Henri Lefebvre und die Produktion des Raumes*, Doctoral Dissertation [Universitaet Zurich: Department of Geography, 2002]). In addition, this “third” reading parallels recent readings of Gramsci, Benjamin, and Fanon. See, Esteve Morera, “Gramsci’s Critical Modernity,” *Rethinking Marxism*, 12, 1, 2000; David McNally, *Bodies of Meaning: Studies on Language, Labour, and Liberation* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2001); Ato Sekyi-Otu, *Fanon’s Dialectic of Experience* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996); Himani Bannerji, et al., eds., *Of Property and Propriety: The Role of Gender and Class in Imperialism and Nationalism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001).

also incorporated difference into the core of a marxist critique of daily life.

In this article, the purpose of establishing a lineage between Gramsci and Lefebvre is to propose a meta-theoretical and meta-political intellectual *orientation*, not to develop a full-fledged “Gramscian-Lefebvrian” approach to urban theory. But remembering insights developed by Gramsci and Lefebvre is also to “translate” — de- and recontextualize — these insights into our own times.⁶ Politically, analytically, and theoretically, Gramsci and Lefebvre remain relevant today. Elements of their lineage have resurfaced in new forms within contemporary anti-capitalist currents. This is true for the concern with base-democratic self-organization and the understanding that anti-capitalist strategy is very much an everyday and “differential” matter. In turn, excavating an urban marxism through Gramsci and Lefebvre may help develop an understanding of the reorganization of capitalism by extending recent middle-range analyses of “urban hegemony” from state theory and urban political economy to everyday life. Indeed, the centrality of the everyday and difference in Lefebvre (read with Gramsci) provides a promising meta-theoretical *starting point* to reformulate urban marxism in light of poststructuralist challenges, particularly with respect to difference. Such a re-formulation will, however, require more sustained engagements with theorists who shared Lefebvre’s dialectical humanism but focused on problematics (imperialism, racism, patriarchy) that Lefebvre alluded to but failed to adequately theorize.

2. Lefebvre and Gramsci: Affinities and Lineages

Little work has been done linking Lefebvre to Gramsci as western marxists.⁷ In part this is because references to Gramsci in Lefebvre are illuminating, but sparse. In contrast to Lefebvre’s (tension-ridden, but direct) relationships to French existentialism, surrealism, and situationism, he was tied to Gramsci through affinities and shared orientations, not direct links and connections. But Anglo-American “radical geographic” interpretations of Lefebvre have also short-circuited

⁶Walter Benjamin, “Die Aufgabe des Uebersetzers,” in *Walter Benjamin* (Frankfurt a.M: Suhrkamp, 1996).

⁷See Perry Anderson, *Considerations of Western Marxism* (London: Verso, 1978); Russell Jacoby, *Dialectic of Defeat: Contours of Western Marxism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Arthur Hirsh, *The French Left* (Montreal: Black Rose, 1982); Martin Jay, *Marxism and Totality* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984); Michel Trebitsch, “Preface,” in Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life* (London: Verso, 1991).

the western marxist dimensions of his work. The originally dominant appropriation of Lefebvre — from David Harvey’s early 1970s turn to marxism⁸ to the neo-classical marxist urban political economy of the 1980s⁹ — has tended to reduce everyday life and difference to secondary, if not derivative considerations.¹⁰ Interpreting urban marxism as political economy has made it difficult to engage theoretically with the “lived experiences of people in history.”¹¹ In turn, passing from marxist *political economy* to poststructuralism, more recent interpreters have claimed Lefebvre (in curiously *historicist* fashion) to a precursor of postmodern discourse and post-structuralist philosophy. While noting affinities between Gramsci and Lefebvre’s western marxism,¹² they have absorbed Lefebvre’s writings on space, everyday life and difference into the linguistic turn.¹³ Given the inadequacy of the poststructuralist reading¹⁴ and the limitations of political economic appropriations of

⁸David Harvey, *Social Justice and the City* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1973).

⁹David Harvey, *The Limits to Capital* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1982); David Harvey, *The Urban Experience* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989); Neil Smith, *Uneven Development* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984). In contrast to structuralist urban sociology, which developed as a negation of Lefebvre, see Manuel Castells, *The Urban Question: A Marxist Approach* (London: Edward Arnold, 1977). Neo-classical urban marxism productively grounded Lefebvre in a historical-geographical materialist research program. This program remains indispensable. See the recent works of Neil Smith, Erik Swyngedouw, Andy Merrifield, and Neil Brenner.

¹⁰Harvey’s re-formulation of Lefebvre’s spatial triad risks reading contradictory lived space into a political economy of space/time (*The Urban Experience, op. cit.*, pp. 261-65, see also footnote 119).

¹¹Noel Castree, “On Theory’s Subject and Subject’s Theory: Harvey, Capital and the Limits to Classical Marxism,” *Environment and Planning A*, 27, 1995, p. 293.

¹²Edward Soja, *Postmodern Geographies* (London: Verso, 1989), pp. 89-91.

¹³Edward Soja, *Thirdspace*. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), p. 38; Michael Dear, “Les aspects postmodernes de Henri Lefebvre,” *Espaces et Societes*, 76, pp. 31-39; Barbara Hooper, “The Poem of Male Desires: Female Bodies, Modernity, and ‘Paris: Capital of the Nineteenth Century,’” in Leonie Sandercock, ed., *Making the Invisible Visible* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 230-31; Robert Shields, *Lefebvre, Love, and Struggle: Spatial Dialectics* (London: Routledge, 1999); Derek Gregory, *Geographical Imaginations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994).

¹⁴A careful reading of Lefebvre’s interest in Nietzsche and his conceptions of space, time, language, the body, and knowledge would indicate that while Lefebvre shared *terminology* and certain sensibilities with poststructuralist theory, he did not accept the basic theoretical assumptions of such writers as Derrida, Lyotard, and Foucault. He did not reduce the body to an effect of

Lefebvre, a renewal of urban marxism requires a “critical engagement with wider currents of marxism.”¹⁵ Linking Lefebvre to Gramsci provides just such an engagement and points to his open and integral marxism.

Gramsci’s and Lefebvres’ western marxisms emerged out of a “dialectic of defeat”¹⁶ rooted in the experiences of Fascism, Stalinism, and Fordism. Gramsci’s political and intellectual biography was shaped by the experience of fascism in Italy, the defeat of the factory council movement in 1920 and thus the broader failure of extending the Russian revolution into Western Europe. Lefebvre’s longer biography was strongly marked by a series of disappointments: fascist collaboration in France, the disillusionment with the Communist (Stalinist) alternative after Liberation, the subsequent consolidation of postwar capitalism, the defeat of May 1968, and the reduction of the new left into a force for capitalist modernization. The experience of defeat led both Gramsci and Lefebvre to develop ways of analyzing the sources of capitalist reconstruction and the possibilities of rebuilding anti-capitalist energies in dark times. Gramsci’s attempt to combine a “pessimism of the intellect” with “an optimism of the will” was as much a result of the fascism (and his personal imprisonment) as Lefebvre’s attempt to search for “the possible in the real” was a rooted in a need to maintain a sense of revolutionary potential in historical moments — the late 1930s, the 1950s, the 1980s — where radical possibilities did not seem to exist.

The experience of defeat explains Gramsci’s and Lefebvre’s ambitious but patient political orientations. Their intellectual projects were informed by a left communist — “base-democratic” and participatory — understanding of marxist politics that was not only critical of Second International gradualism but also recognized the difficulty of rooting Russian Bolshevism in Western Europe. Gramsci’s early writings in *Ordine Nuovo* promoted the self-organization of Turin workers in factory councils, neighborhoods, and cultural committees as a qualitative alternative to economistic syndicalism.¹⁷ But given his

power/knowledge, refused to collapse truth and power, rejected attempts to create an opposition between time/history and space/geography and strongly criticized the double separation (between referent and sign, and between *langage* [system of signs] and *parole* [speech-act]) that sustained structuralism and persists in transfigured form in poststructuralism.

¹⁵Castree, *op. cit.*, p. 293.

¹⁶Jacoby, *op. cit.*

¹⁷Gramsci, *Pre-Prison Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 98-99, 116-19, 127, 164.

suspicion of spontaneism,¹⁸ Gramsci underlined in the *Prison Notebooks* the role of party and organic intellectuals in forging a dialectical relationship between the base and leadership, as well as between the industrial working class and other class fractions. Lefebvre, who in the 1930s shared Gramsci's concerns about the difficulties of confronting fascism with abstract internationalism,¹⁹ had life-long affinities with anarchist tendencies. Those affinities date back to his contacts with the Dadaists and Surrealists in the 1920s but are most evident after his expulsion from the Communist Party in 1958, when he associated with the Situationists and contributed to new left discussions about self-management (*autogestion*). But despite his skepticism of statist party politics and the French Communist Party (*PCF*), Lefebvre's preference for a socialism with anarchist leanings (*un socialisme anarchisant*) did not lead him to abandon his reservations about avant-gardist forms of politics.²⁰ Nor did he forget that a revolutionary struggle against capital, state, and family must be part of a multi-layered, long-term strategy to organize forms of counter-power and transform everyday life.²¹

Theoretically, Gramsci's and Lefebvre's ambitious but prudent political orientations were tied to an open and integral approach to marxism that remained heterodox in both content and form. Recognizing that overly self-confident formulations of marxist philosophy (such as that of Plekhanov and Bukharin) risk accepting the metaphysical materialist strands of bourgeois philosophy,²² Gramsci

¹⁸See Gramsci's nuanced critiques of Sorel and Luxemburg (*Selections from the Prison Notebooks* [New York: International Publishers, 1971], pp. 233, 126-30, 197-200).

¹⁹Remi Hess, *Henri Lefebvre et L'Aventure du Siecle* (Paris: Metailie, 1988), pp. 101-02; See Gramsci's questions about the relevance of Trotsky's "cosmopolitanism" for the Italian situation (*Selections from the Prison Notebooks, op. cit.*, pp. 236, 240-41).

²⁰Simon Sadler, *The Situationist City* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998), pp. 45-46.

²¹Henri Lefebvre saw *autogestion* not so much as a static model than as an ongoing practice of reorganizing everyday life in all spheres of life, workplace and territory ("Comments on a New State Form," trans. Neil Brenner, *Antipode*, 34, January, 2002; and Neil Brenner, "State Theory in the Political Conjuncture," *ibid*). Thanks to Neil Brenner for passing on these publication manuscripts.

²²See his "Problems of Marxism" (*Selections from the Prison Notebooks, op. cit.*, pp. 387-90; 417ff).

took Marx as a point of departure, not destination.²³ A series of notes and fragments connected by common sensibilities and orientations, his writings assumed that the coherence and uniqueness of marxism could not be asserted in the abstract. He understood marxism as a contingent intellectual practice within a determined historical context — a philosophy of praxis. As such, marxism may have the *potential* to become a self-sufficient conception of the world, but it can only do so by absorbing insights from other traditions and by engaging with the traditional and bourgeois cultural forms that permeate working class life.²⁴

For Lefebvre, too, marxism was an open-ended movement characterized by repeated crises that require reconstructing the thought of Marx and Engels and engaging other thinkers (such as Hegel and Nietzsche):

Finally, it can be admitted...that Marx's thinking constitutes a nucleus, an effervescent seed, the ferment of a conception of the world that develops without being able to avoid confrontation with entirely different works, like those of Freud or [or?] Nietzsche. This ferment in the modern world acts in and on this world by contributing to its transformation....According to this hypothesis, and going a little beyond it, it is necessary to emphasize here that Marxism always was and remains racked by internal and external contradictions....²⁵

Lefebvre saw the history of marxism as a refraction of the contradictions of the modern world. As a result, he preferred — with Nietzsche, Rimbaud, Rabelais, and the surrealists — an “ambiguous,

²³Eric Hobsbawm, “The Great Gramsci,” *New York Review of Books*, 4, 1974.

²⁴*Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, *op. cit.*, 330-35, 342, 392-94.

²⁵Henri Lefebvre, “Toward a Leftist Cultural Politics: Remarks Occasioned by the Centenary of Marx’s Death,” in Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, eds., *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988), p. 76.

festive, urban marxism”²⁶ to a stifling “Marxology.”²⁷ He opposed reducing Marx’s work — which he thought of as an open totality — to a skeleton of dissected and reassembled parts for the sake of scienticity and formal coherence.²⁸ Such a reduction would threaten to collapse the difference between marxism as a form of critical, embodied knowledge (*connaissance*) with technocratic knowledge (*savoir*).²⁹ For Lefebvre, the continuity of an open-ended marxism was to be found neither in coherent ontologies and “scientific” protocols (as in Althusserian structuralism) but in dialectical procedures and a critique of alienation. This open marxism, he expressed consciously with a meandering writing style that weaves together a myriad of conceptual moments.³⁰

If Lefebvre’s and Gramsci’s conceptions of marxism was similarly open-ended, Lefebvre was more doubtful than Gramsci about the self-sufficiency, or integrity, of marxism in a unified working class culture. While both Gramsci and Lefebvre shared a normative commitment to totality — a post-revolutionary common sense (Gramsci) and the possibility of non-alienated human relationships (Lefebvre) — Lefebvre’s sense of contradiction within the history of marxism made him more skeptical about the fusion of theory and practice, thought and being that Gramsci proposed with his theories of party and organic intellectuals. But even though Lefebvre did not share Gramsci’s view of marxism’s self-sufficiency, there is another sense in which both authors’ work could be described as *integral*. Both Gramsci’s and Lefebvre’s marxism attempted to be comprehensive, including many aspects of life in their broad conception of materiality as human and historical praxis. While their sensibilities were shaped by a *critique* of scientist, evolutionist, and reductive strands in classical marxism — notably in Engels, the theorists of the Second International (Lassalle,

²⁶Andy Merrifield, “Henri Lefebvre: Socialist in Space,” in Mike Crang and Nigel Thrift, eds., *Thinking Space* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 178) and Merrifield, “Lefebvre, Anti-Logos and Nietzsche: An Alternative Reading of the Production of Space,” *Antipode*, 27, 3, 1995.

²⁷Henri Lefebvre, *La Pensée Marxiste et la Ville* (Paris: Casterman, 1972), p. 149; “Marxism Exploded,” *Review*, 4, 1, 1980, pp. 19-32.

²⁸Lefebvre, *Le Materialisme Dialectique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1971), p. 105; *L’Irruption: De Nanterre au Sommet* (Paris: Anthropos, 1968), pp. 26, 38.

²⁹Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), pp. 367-68, 404-05, 414-15.

³⁰Lefebvre, *Le Manifeste Differentialiste* (Paris: Gallimard, 1970), pp. 186, 175-76; *Le Materialisme Dialectique*, *op. cit.*, p. 80; *Introduction to Modernity* (London: Verso, 1995), pp. 3-5, 186.

Kautsky, Bernstein), and elements of the Bolshevik tradition — their western marxism was not one-sided. Indeed, more than “absolutist” representatives of western marxism (Lukacs, Adorno, Althusser),³¹ their emphasis on philosophy, ideology, subjectivity, aesthetics and method did not lead them to abandon detailed historical study, jettison empirical concerns for everyday life, or disengage from political strategy. Gramsci’s and Lefebvre’s western marxisms were not severed from historical materialism and political practice.³²

Gramsci and Lefebvre developed their integral marxism through a double critique of idealist and reductive, subjectivist and objectivist currents of thought. In Gramsci, the critique of objectivist, reflectionist, and economic marxism in Plekhanov and Bukharin finds its parallel in a critique of Crocean idealism. Gramsci’s conception of marxism as philosophy of praxis linked a two-sided political critique (of fatalistic, gradualist Second International marxism and the immediatist, voluntary aspects of Russian bolshevism) to a double theoretical critique (of bourgeois idealism and what he saw as the metaphysical materialism of both revolutionary and evolutionary marxism).³³ Gramsci’s *historical materialism* took shape through what he understood as contributions to Marx’s critique of political economy (in the *Grundrisse*) and Marx’s study of Bonapartism (in the *18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*): studies of civil society and state, culture and intellectual practice, and shifts in capitalism (Americanism and Fordism). Lefebvre’s conception of meta-philosophy allowed him to criticize divisions between mind and body, subject and object, thought and being in traditional philosophy. Enriched with Nietzsche and derived from a dialectical reading of Marx (particularly the *Grundrisse* and his own translation of the *1844 Manuscripts*), meta-philosophy led him to critique the rationalism of postwar technocratic knowledge and what he saw as the latter’s left Cartesian and Promethean equivalents (Althusserian structuralism and Stalinist communism). This conception of metaphilosophy pushed Lefebvre not only to extend the marxian critique of political economy³⁴

³¹This is a point made by Alastair Davidson in his distinction between Lefebvre, Sartre and Lukacs (“Henri Lefebvre,” *Thesis Eleven*, 31, 1992, p. 153). See also Jay, *op. cit.*, pp. 157-58.

³²This is to qualify Anderson’s original thesis (*Considerations, op.cit.*).

³³Wolfgang Fritz Haug, “From Marx to Gramsci, from Gramsci to Marx: Historical Materialism and the Philosophy of Praxis,” *Rethinking Marxism* 13, 1, Spring, 2001, p. 78; Joseph Femia, *Gramsci’s Political Thought: Hegemony, Consciousness and the Revolutionary Process* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981), ch. 3.

³⁴“Sur l’alienation,” *Social Praxis*, 3, 1975, pp. 1-2.

but also to reformulate marxism as a critical investigation of everyday life, urbanization and space.

3. The Problematic of Hegemony

The central problem that emerged from Lefebvre and Gramsci's respective open and integral marxism was hegemony: the process through which capitalism survives despite itself, and the challenges repeated historical reconstructions of capitalism pose for the future of revolutionary politics. Gramsci and Lefebvre provided *different but complementary* approaches to hegemony. Gramsci's *strategic-relational* approach to hegemony focused on particular historic-geographical constellations of state and civil society (historic blocs), which fuse various class fractions and social groups in particular historical situations. In contrast to Gramsci, Lefebvre neglected the relations, institutions, and strategies that mediate the extended state with everyday life. He approached the survival of capitalism *dialectically*, as a reformulation of the problematics of alienation and reification. He focused less on the relationship between social groups in state and civil society and more on those forces Gramsci had paid little attention to: universalizing (but uneven) tendencies of commodification and moments of utopian possibility manifested within the contradictions of everyday life.³⁵ These different emphases can be traced to theoretical peculiarities — notably Lefebvre's original attempt to fuse his reading of dialectics in Marx, Hegel and Nietzsche with an engagement (and materialist critique) of existentialism and phenomenology (in Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Bachelard).³⁶ But the fact that Lefebvre and Gramsci faced distinct historical and geographical situations also explains differences in their approach to hegemony. While Gramsci wrote optimistically about the hegemonizing force of Americanism and Fordism from the point of view of fascism in "peripheral" Italy, Lefebvre's analysis of hegemony was a devastating critique of the impact post-war capitalism had on everyday life in metropolitan France.

Despite differences, Lefebvre's and Gramsci's treatments of hegemony were similar in a number of ways. First, both authors saw hegemony as the contingent process through which capitalist totality is constructed. Built on the links between popular culture and "relations of force" among socio-political forces (Gramsci) and the connections

³⁵Perry Anderson pointed to Gramsci's neglect of these important dimensions of ideology and hegemony ("The Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci, *New Left Review*, 100, 1976.

³⁶For a careful reconstruction of these dimensions in Lefebvre's dialectical marxism, see Schmid, *op. cit.*

between everyday life, the state, capital and dominant knowledge (Lefebvre), hegemony is a contingent fusion of macro- and micro-dimensions of reality, a condensation of base and superstructure.³⁷ Analyzing hegemony as fusion forced both authors to go beyond the “skeletal” ontologies of marxist *political economy* and the reduction of cultural theory to micro-research in some currents of “cultural studies.” Second, to the extent that Gramsci and Lefebvre focused their discussion of hegemony on “cultural” phenomena — common sense (Gramsci) and everyday life (Lefebvre) — their preoccupation with contradictory lived experience rather than the effects of specialized cultural production distinguished both from other Western Marxists such as Lukacs, Adorno, and Sartre.³⁸ Third, the emphasis on micro- and macro-aspects of hegemony led Gramsci and Lefebvre to accept that power as a social relationship has multiple, soft and hard, diffuse and centralized, tacit and coercive dimensions. Neither author reduced social relations to disciplinary effects of micro-technologies of knowledge/power as Foucault did. Fourth, both Gramsci and Lefebvre insisted that a study of hegemony include a search for transformation (counter-hegemony), not just resistance (anti-hegemony). Unlike gradualist reformists and spontaneist radicals, both saw counter-hegemony as a non-teleological practice with multiple time/space horizons.³⁹

Intended to explain the survival of capitalism and the gap between marxist theory and proletarian practice, hegemony and counter-

³⁷Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life*, *op. cit.*, p. 328; Hajo Schmidt, *Sozialphilosophie des Krieges* (Essen: Klartext, 1990), p. 47; Alex Demirovic, “Die Hegemoniale Strategie der Wahrheit,” *Zur Linie Luxemburg — Gramsci Argument-Sonderband*, AS-159, 1989.

³⁸Anderson, *The Origins of Postmodernity* (London: Verso, 1998), p. 69. It is also important to note that while both authors were interested in linguistic dimensions of life, they both rejected Saussurian and Post-Saussurian linguistics. In *Langage et Societe, Du Rural a l’Urbain, Introduction to Modernity, Everyday Life in the Modern World* and *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre used linguistic analogies to analyze space and urbanization but rejected the reification of language as system of signs in structuralism as an expression of *modernist* abstract space. Gramsci followed Italian neolinguists to interpret language not as a signifying system but as a socio-spatial relation among speech communities (*Selections from Cultural Writings* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985], p. 164).

³⁹This distinguishes not only Gramsci but also Lefebvre from Lukacs’s rather abstract conception of proletarian subjectivity and revolutionary consciousness (Jay, *op. cit.*, pp. 165, 157).

hegemony are privileged concepts in Gramsci's work.⁴⁰ For him, hegemony incorporates many layers of meaning. In this sense, Gramsci remains more integral in his conception than many neo-Gramscians.⁴¹ For Gramsci, hegemony is based on an "economic core" which frames the limits of the possible for individual political forces and for societal development as a whole. Hegemonic formations are achieved through the transformation of individual political forces from their "economic-corporate phase" into multiple "relations of force" among social and political forces: historic blocs. As condensations of relations of force in state and civil society, historic blocs provide a foundation for rule through consent, not just coercion.⁴² Consent ("ethico-moral leadership") depends in part on the capacity of intellectuals to play an "organic" role by furthering the prestige of the dominant language and influence popular culture.⁴³ Mediated through these cultural-institutional processes, hegemony in its most integral form can congeal in people's subjectivities and moralities (the "new men" of Fordism, for example) and their contradictory forms of consciousness that may be hostile to *and* compatible with bourgeois worldviews.⁴⁴

While committed to an honest intellectual "pessimism" with respect to revolutionary politics, Gramsci did not overemphasize the cohesion of hegemonic formations. Indeed, Gramsci's analysis always stressed the weaknesses of hegemony in post-unification Italy, which he laid bare by comparing the "passive revolutions" of the Italian Risorgimento and Mussolini's fascism to the integral forms of hegemony in late 19th century France and the emerging force of

⁴⁰Femia, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7, 218, 233.

⁴¹Since the 1970s, neo-Gramscians have (very fruitfully) expanded Gramsci's incomplete notes into full-fledged political economy, state theory or heterodox cultural theory. Structural, political economic readings of Gramsci have highlighted the "hard" dimensions of hegemony by elaborating on the links between the "economic core," civil society and the state with the help of state and regulation theory (Bob Jessop) or international political economy (Robert Cox, Stephen Gill). "Ideological" readings of Gramsci such as those of Stuart Hall and the Birmingham School have relied on inflections of structuralist and poststructuralist theory to focus on the "soft" dimensions of hegemony in popular culture, nationalism, racism, and the media. These parallel neo-Gramscianisms produced distinct interpretations of phenomena like Thatcherism.

⁴²Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, *op. cit.*, pp. 176-85.

⁴³Gramsci, *Selections from Cultural Writings*, *op. cit.*, pp. 183-84; Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, *op. cit.*, pp. 71, 97, 353, 286, 294, 350, 451, 197-200.

⁴⁴*Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, *op. cit.*, pp. 126-28.

Americanism and Fordism in the interwar period. For Gramsci, the success of counter-hegemonic politics depends on the potential of subaltern forces to oppose, disrupt, transform and replace hegemonic historic blocs in all their aspects, not just their cultural or organizational dimensions. Counter-hegemonic intellectual projects and social alliances can be built if they exploit contradictions within “the economic core” of hegemony, fissures among elements within ruling blocs, weaknesses in bourgeois political and cultural leadership, and tensions with popular common sense. Counter-hegemonic projects thus had to adapt multiple time horizons. While wars of movement (strategies to “seize power” from state and capital) were essential, they were not sufficient. Even in weakly hegemonic Italy, successful wars of movement both depended on and would be the prelude of longer-term “wars of position:” strategies to tease out the “good sense” from within the contradictions of popular culture, mobilize popular passions⁴⁵ and mold oppositional forces into a counter-hegemonic bloc centered on the industrial working class. For Gramsci more than for Lefebvre, the communist party was central in linking wars of movement with wars of position.

Any analysis of Lefebvre’s conception of hegemony must start with his critique of everyday life. Lefebvre’s interest in everyday life was rooted his association with surrealism and situationism, his interest in the de-alienating techniques of Chaplin and Brecht, and his observations about the transformations of provincial France after World War II.⁴⁶ The problematic of everyday life was perhaps Lefebvre’s most important.⁴⁷ It appeared not only in his three volumes on everyday life (published between 1947 and 1981) but reemerged in many of his other texts, notably his urban and spatial writings. For Lefebvre, the critique of everyday life was a central element in his open and integral conception of marxism as metaphilosophy and critique of political economy.⁴⁸ It signaled a controversial extension⁴⁹ of the critique of

⁴⁵Gramsci, *Pre-Prison Writings*, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

⁴⁶Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas, “Lost in Transposition — Time, Space, and the City,” introduction to Henri Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), pp. 11-12; Trebitsch, *op. cit.*, p. 25; Catherine Berne-Boissard, “Henri Lefebvre, sociologue du quotidien, philosophe de la modernité,” *Espaces et Sociétés*, 76, 1994, pp. 14-15.

⁴⁷Lefebvre, *Towards a Leftist Cultural Politics*, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

⁴⁸Lefebvre, *Pensée Marxiste de la Ville*, *op. cit.*, pp. 70, 52-58, 106-07.

⁴⁹Lefebvre, who was one of the first to integrate the concept of alienation into 20th-century marxist theory, has been unpopular with Stalinists (who claimed that alienation had disappeared in the Soviet bloc and were thus

alienation and commodity fetishism in production and the labor process to an analysis of separation, fragmentation and naturalization in the banalities of all aspects of life: leisure, radio and TV, café life, advertising, popular literature, and urbanization.⁵⁰ While this approach has obvious similarities to the critique of reification by Lukacs,⁵¹ Lefebvre was less interested in a critique of ideology in artistic production than a sober — neither elitist nor populist — critique and explanation of “mystification” in its mundane, contradictory manifestations.⁵²

hostile to the early Marx) and the structuralists and post-structuralists (who were hostile to the “humanist” and “essentialist” problematic of alienation). Yet it is difficult to imagine a revolutionary politics without a quest for de-alienation: a critique of processes of exploitation, domination, and reification that block *the possibility* of different human/nature relations by turning creative subjects into objects of their own alienated products (capital, the state, religion). Contrary to the assertions of some critics (who are otherwise sympathetic to a marxist approach to alienation), Lefebvre’s notion of alienation did not bypass the Marxian tradition in favour of a problematic, idealist notion of pure action borrowed from Blondel, Nietzsche, and Bergson (Jens Peter Schwab, “*L’Homme Total: Die Entfremdungsproblematik im Werk von Henri Lefebvre* (Frankfurt/M: Peter Lang, 1983). Lefebvre did not follow Hegel’s conflation of alienation with objectification and thus opposed existentialism and the early Sartre, who reduced alienation to a generic feature of human interaction. But Lefebvre acknowledged that alienation as a lived experience was not exhausted by Marx’s categories. His distinction between production and creation, product and *oeuvre* combines Marx (and his double critique of Hegel and Feuerbach) with Nietzsche (and celebration of artistic creativity and dionysian festivals as anti-dotes to logo-centrism). Lefebvre also recognized that during neo-capitalism, the forms of alienation observed by Marx (exploitation, money, the state, and religion) had deepened and been complemented with new forms of alienation in administered consumption, standardized urbanization and industrialized leisure. The rise of new claims by the women’s and national liberation movements he also saw as new critiques of alienation. See “Sur l’alienation,” *op. cit.*; Lefebvre, *Le Materialisme Dialectique*, *op. cit.*, pp. 9, 57, 65-66, 148, 183).

⁵⁰Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life*, *op. cit.*, pp. 145-75, 98-99; “Foreword the Second Edition,” *Critique of Everyday Life*, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-22, 39, 61-62; *Everyday Life in the Modern World* (London: Allen Lane, 1971), pp. 33-37.

⁵¹Trebitsch, *op. cit.*

⁵²Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life*, *op. cit.*, pp. 145-46, 176, 85-86; *Everyday Life in the Modern World*, *op. cit.*, pp. 31-32.

Lefebvre described everyday life as contradictory.⁵³ On the one hand, everyday life is central to “the reproduction of social relations of production,” by which he meant not just consumption and labor reproduction but all aspects which make capitalism survive. Daily life is key to hegemony and the reproduction of capitalism⁵⁴ insofar as it is saturated by the routinized, repetitive, familiar daily practices that make up the everyday in all spheres of life: work, leisure, politics, language and so on.⁵⁵ Everyday life is the best “guarantee of non-revolution”⁵⁶ because it is a crystallization of what we take for granted, of what seems self-evident and inevitable irrespective of whether we like it or not.⁵⁷ Made effective because of our “taste of solidity and durability” as defense against the uncertainties and illusions of modern life,⁵⁸ the everyday becomes a “seat of power,”⁵⁹ the “very soil on which the great architecture of politics and society rise up.”⁶⁰

While Lefebvre located the advent of the everyday in the origins of industrial capitalism in the 19th century and studied it empirically in the French Pyrenees region in the 1930s and 1940s, he insisted that it was not until the advent of “neo-capitalism” after the war than that “capitalism had seized the ground that had escaped it in large part until then: everyday life.”⁶¹

The reproduction of the relations of production entails the extension as well as the enlargement of the mode of production and its material base. On the one hand, capitalism spread across the entire world to subordinate preexisting productive forces and transform them for its purpose, as Marx understood it. On the other hand, capitalism formed new sectors of production, exploitation and domination. These sectors include leisure, everyday life, knowledge

⁵³To stress this point, Lefebvre describes everyday life as a contradictory formation of daily life (*la vie quotidienne*), the everyday (*le quotidien*), and everydayness (*la quotidiennete*) (Lefebvre, “Towards a Leftist Cultural Politics,” *op. cit.*, p. 87; Trebitsch, *op. cit.*, p. xxiv).

⁵⁴Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life*, *op.cit.*, p. 89.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 11, 14-15, 18, 21, 26, 132.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, p. 32.

⁵⁷Lefebvre, *Everyday Life in the Modern World*, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, p. 109.

⁵⁹Lefebvre, *The Survival of Capitalism* (London: Allen and Busby, 1976), pp. 66-67, 83.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 88-89.

⁶¹Lefebvre, *Towards a Leftist Cultural Politics*, *op. cit.*, pp. 79, 88.

(*connaissance*) and art, and, finally, urbanization. What are the results of this double process? Capitalism has maintained itself by extending across space in its entirety. Starting from a small number of countries at the time of Marx....it has conquered the globe by constituting the world market and celebrated colossal victories (notably with the creation of leisure, tourism, etc.), and this despite a number of serious defeats, revolutions and revolts.⁶²

Capital centralization, aggressive state intervention, the opening of new sectors (leisure, mass media, consumer durables, advertising), bureaucratically administered consumption, and rapid urbanization caused French postwar capitalism to “extend into the slightest details of ordinary life.”⁶³ This deepening of capitalism in everyday life was the metropolitan dimension of a world-wide, neo-colonial expansion of capitalism.

Lefebvre was often pessimistic about the “loss of autonomy of everyday life” and the latent “terrorism” of bureaucratic interventionism and administered consumption under neo-capitalism.⁶⁴ That was because, under neo-capitalism, power is not simply a “front” located in macro-institutional centers (schools, factories, parliament) but also in micro-worlds of space, discourse, “commonplace notions,” visual representation, art consciousness.⁶⁵ But in contrast to Marcuse’s thesis about the one-dimensionality of the Fordist subject, Lefebvre insisted on the contradictions and promising potentials within postwar everyday life.⁶⁶ Indeed, Lefebvre never tired of stressing the role of intellectuals to extricate the possible within the real rather than to reify the systemic coherence of capital.⁶⁷ The *dialectical* methods that permeate his work — transduction, dialectical humanism, spectral analysis, differentialism, conjunctural analysis — all pointed to the limits of the reproduction of social relations of production. These limitations and contradictions of hegemonic formations, Lefebvre located as possibilities latent in commodified everyday life. Never completely engulfed by the dull constraints of the everyday, daily life — as symbolized in neo-

⁶²Lefebvre, *Pensée Marxiste de la Ville*, *op. cit.*, p. 152 (Translation S.K.).

⁶³*Ibid.*, p. 79; Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life*, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-30, 30-41, 56-57.

⁶⁴Lefebvre, *Everyday Life in the Modern World*, *op. cit.*, pp. 143-49.

⁶⁵Lefebvre, *The Survival of Capitalism*, *op. cit.*, pp. 86-87.

⁶⁶Lefebvre, *Everyday Life in the Modern World*, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

⁶⁷Lefebvre, *L'Irruption: De Nanterre au Sommet*, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

capitalism by the car, the bungalow, the beach, popular magazines, TV ads — includes utopian promises for non-instrumentalized, playful, and non-alienated futures. Contradictions emerge because these promises are denied by the very regressive forces of commodification that spread them.⁶⁸

Latent utopian promises within hegemonizing forms of everyday life can also be articulated in organized and explicit forms by social movements, as Lefebvre indicated in his conjunctural analysis of May 1968.⁶⁹ Contradictions within hegemonic formations make revolutionary strategies possible. But like Gramsci, Lefebvre insisted that these strategies (for rights to the city/difference, self-management and cultural revolution) adopt complex temporal and spatial horizons. Warning against spontaneist conceptions of revolutionary change, Lefebvre suggested that revolutionary ruptures be situated within a broader time frame of transforming everyday life.⁷⁰ To conceive revolution as a “‘magic wand’ that leads directly from despotism to freedom, capitalism to Communism” would overlook that everyday life tends to change at a different rate and in a different way than the state.⁷¹ Without accepting everyday life as the ultimate benchmark of revolutionary success, Lefebvre feared that old habits and practices — the tenacity of everydayness might quickly assert itself.⁷² In the absence of a qualitative horizon of transforming life “in its smallest, most everyday detail” (through self-management), revolution would risk repeating the quantitative state-socialist project of “intensifying production, cultivating new space, industrializing agriculture, building giant factories.”⁷³

⁶⁸Lefebvre, *Everyday Life in the Modern World*, *op. cit.*, pp. 86-90, 98-106; *Critique of Everyday Life*, *op. cit.*, pp. 3, 21, 32-41, 206, 207, 187-88.

⁶⁹Lefebvre, *L'Irruption: De Nanterre au Sommet*, *op. cit.*

⁷⁰Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life*, *op. cit.*, p. 151; “Foreword to Second Edition, in *Critique of Everyday Life*, *op. cit.*, p. 56-57.

⁷¹*Ibid.*, p. 49.

⁷²*Ibid.* p. 56.

⁷³Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life*, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

4. Urbanizing Hegemony

Gramsci's and Lefebvre's conceptions of hegemony were infused with spatial and urban dimensions. But only Lefebvre's urban and spatial writings in the 1960s and 1970s signaled an explicit "urbanization" of the problematic of hegemony.⁷⁴ Gramsci's sensibilities to space, scale, and urbanization were shaped by his experiences in the South (his native Sardegna), his intellectual and political maturation in Italy, and his exposure to the influence of foreign cultural and political forces in Italy. The conceptual elements of historic blocs — intellectuals, socio-political alliances, the role of the party, language, common sense, popular literature, folklore — Gramsci all refracted through a discussion of the Southern Question, the relationship between city and countryside in Italy, and the relationship between Italy's fragile nation, France, and the United States.⁷⁵ Gramsci thus saw hegemony in spatial and scalar terms, as an integrated national historic bloc composed of a national political economy, class alliances under urban leadership but with organic ties to the countryside, a national language and culture capable of absorbing regional dialects and popular cultural forms, and balanced relationship between internal socio-spatial forces and a country's relationship to other nation-states.

Gramsci traced the weakness of bourgeois hegemony in Italy during the Risorgimento and under fascism to the disconnection between urbanization and nation-state formation in Italy. In the absence of a unifying absolutist state, the history of Italian city-states combined with the "cosmopolitan" role of the Holy Roman Empire and the semi-feudal relationships of the South. The legacy of Italy's parasitic and fragmented urban history helped isolate Italy's northern industrial bourgeoisie from the rest of the country, leaving Italy's intellectuals in a "traditional" state with little popular influence, and prevent organic connections between city and countryside, standard Italian and regional dialects, urban intellectuals and rural folklore.⁷⁶

⁷⁴For Edward Soja, "the step from Gramsci to Lefebvre is primarily one of explicitness and emphasis regarding the spatiality of this phenomenon of everyday life" (*Postmodern Geographies, op. cit.*, p. 90).

⁷⁵Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks, op. cit.*, pp. 58-59, 94, 59-109, 86-89, 131, 142-45, 154, 66-68; Gramsci, *Selections from Cultural Writings, op. cit.*, pp. 164, 167-70, 183-84; 189-90, 351, 243-44.

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 118, 197, 210, 273-75, 213; Gramsci, *Pre-Prison Writings, op. cit.*, pp. 167-70, 218-38, 118, 208-10; Gramsci, *Further Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press,

Yet Gramsci saw urbanization as key to both bourgeois hegemony and socialist strategy. Urbanization could mediate the development of the productive forces⁷⁷ while architecture, the layout and names of streets were possibly organic components of bourgeois culture.⁷⁸ Gramsci interpreted Fordist urbanization — functionalist architecture, new city-building techniques, modern urban planning — as key to the reordering of the “structural terrain” of hegemony, especially given Italy’s backward, parasitic urban structure and the fascist nostalgia of rurality.⁷⁹ In Fordist urbanization, Gramsci detected a collectivization and socialization of the forces of production.⁸⁰ Along Engelsian lines, he saw revolutionary potential in the forces of agglomeration that concentrated and spatially opposed bourgeoisie and proletariat in Turin without the mediation of large petty bourgeois strata.⁸¹ Party structures and popular organizations based in factory and neighborhood would embed workers’ subjectivities and imaginations in revolutionary culture.⁸² These urban constellations, Gramsci saw as the kernel of national class alliances (of workers, peasants, intellectuals) with organic institutional, intellectual and cultural connections between city and countryside. Without such a national historic bloc, it would be difficult to engage wars of movement against state institutions and the control centers of capital in metropolitan centers (such as Milan).

Gramsci’s historicism was thus geographical as well. Rather than counterposing time, history and diachrony to space, geography and synchrony,⁸³ Gramsci analyzed particular conjunctures as a confluence

1995), pp. 243-46, 52; *Selections from the Prison Notebooks, op. cit.*, pp. 14-15, 81, 98-102, 154.

⁷⁷Gramsci, *Pre-Prison Writings*, *op. cit.*, pp. 137-39, 118-22, 218-36, 167-70.

⁷⁸Gramsci, *Selections from Cultural Writings, op. cit.*, p. 389.

⁷⁹Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks, op. cit.*, pp. 288, 295-96; *Further Selections from the Prison Notebooks, op. cit.*, pp. 203-04, 207.

⁸⁰Gramsci, *Selections from Cultural Writings, op. cit.*, p. 128-32.

⁸¹*Ibid.*, p. 33; *Pre-Prison Writings, op. cit.*, pp. 153, 179, 183-84.

⁸²*Ibid.*, p. 37, 98, 137-39.

⁸³Theorists of the spatial turn have of course criticized this very dualism between diachronic time (change, dynamism) and synchronic space (stability, stasis) (Soja, *Postmodern Geographies, op. cit.*). But there is a tendency in the postmodern critique of historicism to collapse space (and time) into a geography of absolute simultaneity (Soja, *Thirdspace, op. cit.*, chapter 8). This radical spatial move risks collapsing difference into the very separations, particularities and fragmentations of urban space Lefebvre

of multiple temporal rhythms and spatialities. Gramsci's urban history recognized different forms of urbanization shaped by relationships to countryside, nation-state formation, cultural forms and socio-political constellations. In contrast to other left thinkers, he avoided both urbanist conceptions of cities as loci of progress, civilization or the capitalist spirit *and* anti-urban, romantic critiques of the city as a symbol of the evils of industrialism, individualism, or human arrogance.⁸⁴ Gramsci's notes on Fordist urbanization were also visionary. Already in the 1930s, Gramsci pointed to the urban — “the exaltation of the big cities” and the “construction of grandiose projects”⁸⁵ — as a key site of the rationalization of social life under Fordism.⁸⁶ But Gramsci's spatial historicism was implicit, not theoretically fleshed out. He was still wedded to the distinction between city and countryside that Fordist urbanization, the origin of which he anticipated, would render obsolete. Gramsci's notion of scale was similarly nuanced but undertheorized. Given his commitment to a “national-popular” project, he saw hegemonic and counter-hegemonic formations as crystallizations of international and subnational forces centered on the national scale. In this context, the urban appears as a subnational, local scale rather than a multi-scale mediation of social reality, as Lefebvre would have it.

Lefebvre suggested that the industrial city signaled a historic break in patterns of urbanization. This break was consolidated under neo-capitalism, which accelerated the expansion of the built environment of metropolitan regions, the industrialization of agriculture, and the integration of preexisting social spaces into urban networks. As a result, the age-old distinction between city and countryside as discreet sets of social relations is superseded, the city as a bounded social space disappears and the urban becomes the central multi-scalar spatial form

criticized (“Seen from the Window,” in *Writings on Cities, op. cit.*, pp. 219-22).

⁸⁴For critiques, see Elizabeth Wilson, *The Sphinx in the City* (London: Virago, 1991); R.J. Holton, *Cities, Capitalism, and Civilisation* (London: Allen Unwin, 1986).

⁸⁵Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks, op. cit.*, p. 286.

⁸⁶The main French and Anglo-American debates on Fordism have ignored urbanization. This contrasts with the German and Swiss context and the works of Joachim Hirsch, Roland Roth, Margit Mayer, Rudolf Luescher, Daniel Marco, Christian Schmid, Roger Keil, Klaus Ronneberger and Renate Borst. In the Anglo-American context, exceptions are David Harvey, Richard Florida, Andrew Jonas, Marshall Feldman, Mark Goodwin, S. Duncan, Joe Painter, and Bob Jessop.

and mediation of social life.⁸⁷ For Lefebvre, the urban question was a new way of developing the critique of everyday life, for it was through urbanization that everyday life established itself as a central problematic of critical theory. Indeed, Lefebvre's urban writings in the 1960s and early 1970s made it possible to reconfigure marxism through an integration of considerations of everyday life, urbanization, and the reproduction of capitalism into an explicit theory of space and time in *La Production de l'Espace*.⁸⁸ Through (neo-capitalist) urbanization, hegemony reappears as the fusion of the social order and everyday life and the production of (abstract) space and (linear) time. In turn, elements of differential space and cyclical time produced within the postwar order prepare the ground for possible counter-hegemonic projects for a post-capitalist urban society.

Lefebvre's critique of postwar urbanization paralleled those of Jane Jacobs and Alexander Mitscherlich. But his interest in the urban went much beyond a critique of vulgar modernist urban development.⁸⁹

⁸⁷Lefebvre, *Die Revolution der Städte* (Frankfurt a.M: Anton Hain, 1990), pp. 10-15.

⁸⁸Lefebvre, "Space and Politics" in *Writings on Cities, op. cit.*, p. 185; Hess, *op. cit.*, p. 288.

⁸⁹The aforementioned two authors contrasted postwar urban renewal as an attack on a transhistorical notion of the "city" as a diverse urban village and source of innovation (Jacobs) or an essential European "urban spirit" (Mitscherlich). While similarly appalled by the violence of vulgar modernist planning and city-building after the war (*Production of Space, op. cit.*, p. 364), Lefebvre's project was not to resurrect the historical city or idolize the idea of the urban village/neighborhood as an ideal frame for social activity (*Du Rural a l'Urbain* (Paris: Anthropos, 1970), pp. 207-10), but to search for the unexpected possibilities postwar urbanization created for a revolutionary urbanism. As Lefebvre noticed brilliantly, the very destruction (and thus absence) of "the city" through urbanization produced calls for its dialectical recreation (presence) in a new context. It was not in historic towns such as Aix-en-Provence but in places where the "city" never existed — in the newly built company town Mourenx and the suburban dormitories, housing tracts, and factories of Paris — that residents and workers reasserted their "right to the city" as a collective "work of art," a self-determined, diverse space defined by use-values (*Du Rural a l'Urbain, op. cit.*, pp. 115, 125-28; *Introduction to Modernity, op. cit.*, pp. 116-26, 279). To the extent that Lefebvre's notion of the right to the city expressed a revolutionary romanticism, his romanticism looked for possibilities in the future instead of dwelling nostalgically on a lost past (*Introduction to Modernity, op. cit.*, pp. 239, 374-75). Neglecting Lefebvre's urban and spatial writings, Kurt Meyer overlooked the distinctly dialectic and modern way in which Lefebvre recovered fragments of the romantic tradition (Kurt

Lefebvre was interested in the urban not as a specialized field of research and action but as a linchpin in his broader concerns about theory, daily life and political practice.⁹⁰ His interest in the urban was motivated by what he anticipated, in the 1960s, as a shift from the agrarian and peasant question to the urban question as a central, multi-scale terrain of revolutionary theory and practice, as one, indispensable linchpin in revolutionary strategy.⁹¹ This view of the urban Lefebvre held primarily about highly industrialized countries, yet he saw the revolutionary relevance increasingly in world-wide terms.⁹² (Lefebvre linked the neo-colonial expansion of the world market to urban “neo-colonialism” in the metropole: the segregation of non-European immigrants in the peripheries of French cities). A multi-scale question, urban reform is interesting insofar as it puts into sharp relief fundamental social structures and “questions society in its entirety.”⁹³ The critique of postwar urbanism, for example, revealed the forces of state, technocracy, and commodification that produced abstract space. In that sense, the urban is not only the setting of struggle but “also the stakes of that struggle.” Engaging the urban, occupying space is to stop reducing politics to the reified “political sphere” and “reach for the places where power resides.”⁹⁴

Conceptually, Lefebvre sees the urban as form and mediation. As socio-spatial form — centrality, encounter, discontinuous simultaneity⁹⁵ — the urban mediates everyday life with the social order, links past, present, and future and articulates multiple scales. Rather than a transhistorical spatial determinant of ways of life (as in the Chicago School of urban sociology),⁹⁶ the urban as form is both product and *oeuvre* and thus related dialectically to its content. As such,

Meyer, *Henri Lefebvre: ein romantischer Revolutionaer* (Wien: Europa, 1973).

⁹⁰Hess, *op. cit.*, p. 288.

⁹¹Lefebvre, “L’urbanisme d’aujourd’hui,” in *Du Rural a l’Urbain, op. cit.*

⁹²On Lefebvre’s approach to scale in his writings on the state, see Neil Brenner, “Global, Fragmented, Hierarchical: Henri Lefebvre’s Geographies of Globalization,” *Public Culture*, Fall, 1997.

⁹³Lefebvre, *Du Rural a l’Urbain, op. cit.*, pp. 218-19, 225.

⁹⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 386-87.

⁹⁵Lefebvre, *Le Droit à la Ville* (Paris: Anthropos, 1968), pp. 93-97, 128-35; Lefebvre, *Die Revolution der Städte, op. cit.*, pp. 127-74, 122-24, 62-63.

⁹⁶Lefebvre’s staunchest critics (the early Castells and Katznelson), who accused him of reifying the city as form, failed to appreciate Lefebvre’s dialectical understanding of urban form as a mediation rather than an external spatial determination.

the urban is an intermediary instance that mediates the macro-dimensions and institutions of the social order (state and capital, patriarchy, institutional knowledge) (*l'ordre lointain*) and the immediate, micro-reality of everyday life (*l'ordre proche*).⁹⁷ As a mediation and form, urban space includes material practices of reproduction (spatial practices, perceived space), state-bound interventions of policy, planning and dominant knowledge (spaces of representation, conceived space), and subtle dimensions of symbolism, affect and experience (representational space, lived space). As a product of industrialization, commodification, real estate capital, dominant “urbanist” strategies of planners and architects, and everyday symbols (such as phallic images), the urban is an objective “projection of society” onto space that eradicates city/countryside with a landscape of the present. But the urban is also a “medium of action and creation” (*oeuvre*) by subjects.⁹⁸ As such, the urban *may* be a result of creativity, spontaneity, and ludic festivity and thus include traces of a different, post-capitalist urban world.⁹⁹

Squeezed between society and everyday life in a kind of half-existence (*demi-existence*),¹⁰⁰ the urban is both site for the construction of hegemony and achilles heel of capital.¹⁰¹ As “a location for the reproduction of social relations of production,”¹⁰² urban space is clearly central to hegemony:

Is it conceivable that the exercise of hegemony might leave space untouched? Could space be nothing more than the passive locus of social relations, the milieu of in which their combination takes on body, or the aggregate of the procedures employed in their removal? The answer must be no. Later on I shall demonstrate and active — the operational or

⁹⁷*Die Revolution der Städte, op. cit.*, pp. 86-95; *Le Droit à la Ville, op. cit.*, pp. 66-70, 121-22; “Elements d’une théorie de l’objet,” *Du Rural à l’Urbain, op. cit.*, p. 282.

⁹⁸*Ibid.*

⁹⁹Lefebvre, *Le Droit à la Ville, op. cit.*, pp. 36-43, 968; *L’Irruption: De Nanterre au Sommet, op. cit.*, p. 111; *Critique de la vie quotidienne III. De la modernité au modernisme* (Paris: L’Arche, 1981), pp. 128-35; *Everyday Life in the Modern World, op. cit.*, pp. 123-28; “No Salvation away from the Centre?” in *Writings on Cities, op. cit.*, p. 208.

¹⁰⁰“Rue, quartier, vie de quartier,” *Du Rural à l’Urbain, op. cit.*, p. 214.

¹⁰¹*Production of Space, op. cit.*, pp. 384-85.

¹⁰²*Survival of Capitalism, op. cit.*, pp. 65-66; *La Pensée Marxiste et la Ville, op. cit.*, pp. 128-30, 145-47.

instrumental — role of space, as knowledge and action, in the existing mode of production. I shall show how space serves, and how hegemony makes use of it, in the establishment, on the basis of an underlying logic and with the help of knowledge and technical expertise, of a “system.”¹⁰³

Hegemonic social space is not “purged of contradictions” and has no “legitimate claim to immortality.”¹⁰⁴ But the production of urban space contributes to hegemony by fusing the immediate realm of lived space with the spatial practices and spaces of representations of the larger social order.¹⁰⁵ The serialized abstract space and repetitive linear time of capital and state get inscribed in the everyday through moral principles, persuasion and the “self-evident” force of daily repetition. The urban mediates this process as it contains macro-structures and is incorporated in everyday life.¹⁰⁶ In the postwar order, the fusion of all aspects of social space and the integration of the macro social order with everyday life through urbanization was particularly acute.¹⁰⁷

While Lefebvre recognized (like Engels, Marx, and Gramsci) that urbanization creates objective revolutionary conditions by concentrating labor and capital, he emphasized (more emphatically than Engels and Gramsci and more like Benjamin) that urbanization, particularly in neo-capitalist form, is also a force of separation. Under neo-capitalism, industrialized agriculture and growing real estate sectors expand the productive forces and open new sources of profit while mass-produced suburbs, factory districts, and expressways presuppose the (organizational and spatial) centralization of capital. But neocapitalist urbanization survived by peripheralizing the working class and dissociating everyday life with new forms of segregation and individualization. Through postwar urbanization, everyday life is subsumed to bureaucratically administered consumption and enclosed in the homogenized and fragmented landscapes of bungalows (*pavillons*), high rise apartments (*grands ensembles*), freeways and leisure spaces (beaches and resort towns).¹⁰⁸ Neo-capitalism takes root in everyday life by integrating utopian aspirations into these everyday spaces which

¹⁰³Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

¹⁰⁴*Ibid.* p. 11.

¹⁰⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 33-39, 41-43.

¹⁰⁶*Le Droit à la Ville*, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

¹⁰⁷Schmid, *op. cit.*, ch. 9, p. 15.

¹⁰⁸*La Pensée Marxiste et la Ville*, *op. cit.*, pp. 145-47, 152, 128-30; *Die Revolution der Städte*, *op. cit.*, pp. 145-75, 195-96.

become associated with desires for a different, erotic appropriation of body and nature, hopes for non-instrumental human relationships, or daydreams about freedom from repetitive drudgery.¹⁰⁹

But contradictions within abstract space and linear time are signs of a possible, post-capitalist urban society shaped by differential space and cyclical time. Neo-capitalist urbanization gives rise to new forms of spatial contradiction. The openness produced by these contradictions explains the continued importance of violence in sustaining a social order without total cohesion.¹¹⁰ The production of space promotes homogeneity and the repetitive — and thus helps reproduce social relations of production — but it also tends to undermine its own conditions.¹¹¹ The fragmentation of urban space into property for sale and profit undermines the capacity to maintain and produce space — a collective productive force — for the purposes of the accumulation process.¹¹² Most importantly, the very urbanist practices of planners, architects, and developers that established the neo-capitalist “dreamscapes” negate the utopian aspirations associated with postwar everyday spaces by reducing them to regressive, patriarchal and industrialized utopias. As a result, “the explosion of the city,” which may have dissociated everyday life and bound popular aspirations to neo-capitalism, cannot prevent unintended appropriations of space and radical attempts to reclaim urbanity and centrality. Lefebvre’s “dialectical humanist” approach to the urban¹¹³ tried to detect everyday aspirations for a de-alienated, fully lived — creative, self-determined, sensual — future and link these aspirations to a critique of the general social order.¹¹⁴

As Lefebvre observed in his studies of Mourenx (a new company town in Southern France) and the universities, housing estates and factories of suburban Paris, radical urban claims could prove difficult to

¹⁰⁹“Foreword the Second Edition,” in *Critique of Everyday Life*, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-10; *Everyday Life in the Modern World*, *op. cit.*, pp. 150-51; “Pessac, le quartier de Corbusier,” *Du Rural a l’Urbain*, *op. cit.*, pp. 233-34; “Le bistrot-club,” *Du Rural a l’Urbain*, *op. cit.*, pp. 141-43; “Institut de Sociologie Urbaine,” *Du Rural a l’Urbain*, *op. cit.*, pp. 172-78.

¹¹⁰*Production of Space*, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

¹¹¹Lefebvre, “Space: Social Product and Use Value,” in J.W. Freiberg ed., *Critical Sociology: European Perspectives* (New York: Irvington, 1979), p. 289.

¹¹²*Production of Space*, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

¹¹³“Les nouveaux ensembles urbains,” *Du Rural a l’Urbain*, *op. cit.*, pp. 111-15.

¹¹⁴Lefebvre, *Le Manifeste Différentialiste*, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

contain by the centralized powers of state and capital. For Lefebvre, the students and workers of May 1968 — the new *Communards* — signaled the eruption of spatial contradictions and the transformation the latent possibilities within contradictory lived space. Lefebvre saw in the fluid links established between the Parisian periphery (Nanterre) and the old historic core (the Left Bank) an effective (if not necessarily explicit) attempt to overcome the disassociation and separations that were cemented during postwar urbanization between centers of decision-making and segregated suburban peripheries: factories, student dormitories, and housing projects.¹¹⁵ Claiming a “right to the city” (centrality, eros, festivity), May 1968 promised a future defined by use-value relationships not by defending the historic city or the new suburbs but by transforming the relationship between center and periphery.

These calls for the right to the city challenged the hegemonic integrity of neo-capitalism because they linked a claim for a different, utopian urban order to assertions of the right to difference for those segregated and peripheralized.¹¹⁶ students, workers, immigrants, women and residents of peripheral regions. Lefebvre, for whom difference was more central *theoretically*¹¹⁷ than it was for Gramsci,¹¹⁸ saw these

¹¹⁵*L'Irruption: De Nanterre au Sommet, op. cit.*, pp. 115-19, 148-49, 151-54, 136-38, 100-10, 129-35.

¹¹⁶*Critique de la vie quotidienne III, op. cit.*, pp. 8, 58-60, 74-79, 105-09, 110, 121, 132; *L'Irruption: De Nanterre au Sommet, op. cit.*, p. 103; Lefebvre, *Le Manifeste Différentialiste, op. cit.*, pp. 42-45; “Space and Politics,” in *Writings on Cities, op. cit.*, p. 195; “La Bourgeoisie et L'Espace,” in *Le Droit à la Ville, op. cit.*

¹¹⁷Observed in fragments in modern art, atonal music, architecture, urbanization, class alliances, difference is a multidimensional, lived and conceived reality, not just a linguistic abstraction (Lefebvre, *Production of Space, op. cit.*, pp. 50, 372, 384-89; Lefebvre, *Le Manifeste Différentialiste, op. cit.*, p. 274; *Du Rural à l'Urbain, op. cit.*, pp. 233-34, 171, 190-93). As a general dynamic of differentiation and a form of group distinction, difference is central to his conception of the urban (“an ensemble of differences”) as form and mediation, reality and possibility (*Die Revolution der Städte, op. cit.*, pp. 127, 128). As an integral part of the urban, difference is a part of Lefebvre’s critique of alienation and commodification. As such difference is a crucial element in his attempt to a distinguish, with Marx, Hegel, Nietzsche, a qualitative, dialectical, open-ended marxism from the rationalist and formalist tendencies of Althusserian structuralism and the promethean, quantitative, reductive and closed marxisms of the Second and Third International (Lefebvre, *Le Materialisme*

(interrelated, but distinct and even contradictory) claims as clues to the role of difference in the survival of capitalism. This role Lefebvre detected not only in the uneven development and the process by which homogenizing forces of postwar urbanism exploded everyday life into fragments.¹¹⁹ The fragmentations of the capitalist metropolis Lefebvre also interpreted as manifestations of the imperative of biological reproduction in the postwar family,¹²⁰ the “weight” everyday work and household routines imposed particularly on women,¹²¹ and the phallogocentric violence inherent in modernist linguistic and visual abstraction.¹²² Similarly, the claims of non-European immigrant workers, Lefebvre rooted in neo-colonialism: the ghettoization of colonial subjects into shantytowns and public housing tracts on the periphery of French cities.¹²³ Claims to difference thus emerge out of the fragments of abstract space and the forces that produce it: commodification, phallogocentrism, Eurocentrism, modernist visualities

Dialectique, op. cit., pp. 31, 120-21; *La Pensée Marxiste et la Ville*, *op. cit.*, pp. 72, 79; *Production of Space, op. cit.*, p. 102).

¹¹⁸In Gramsci, difference appears implicitly in his notion of historic blocs as an incomplete totality. In addition, difference occasionally appears in Gramsci as non-class form of social distinction, notably in his notes about the relationship between Fordist rationalization, changing gender roles and forms of sexual Puritanism and moral regulation, and his remarks about the racism and xenophobia of Northern industrial workers against migrants from Southern Italy (*Pre-Prison Writings, op. cit.*, pp. 315-22, 332-34; 294-97).

¹¹⁹Lefebvre, *Le Manifeste Différentialiste, op. cit.*, pp. 29, 107, 128-29; *L'Irruption: De Nanterre au Sommet, op. cit.*, pp. 103-05, 115-19. In his *Condition of Postmodernity*, David Harvey tends to reduce difference to the effects of time-space compression. This tends to conflate considerations of difference (as articulated by social movements) with postmodernism and postmodernity (and associated processes of fragmentation) and thus understates the tensions between postmodernism and feminism, gay and liberation, and anti-racism (Liz Bondi, “Feminism, Postmodernism, and Geography: Space for Women?” *Antipode*, 22, 2, 1990. For a partial correction, see Harvey, “Postmodern Morality Plays,” *Antipode*, 24, 4, 1992; Harvey, *Justice, Nature, and the Geography of Difference* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996).

¹²⁰*Production of Space, op. cit.*, pp. 49-50.

¹²¹Lefebvre, *Du Rural à l'Urbain, op. cit.*, p. 102.

¹²²*Production of Space, op. cit.*, pp. 302, 392.

¹²³*L'Irruption: De Nanterre au Sommet, op. cit.*, p. 103; Lefebvre's critique of what he saw as a merely formal critique of French colonialism in Algeria by the French Communist Party was one of the disagreements he had with party before his expulsion in 1958 (Hess, 1988, *op. cit.*, p. 156).

and linguistic abstraction (“the world of signs”), Cartesian rationalism, bourgeois domination, and the technocratic state.

The defeat of the new left in the aftermath of 1968 demonstrated the difficulty of sustaining quasi-revolutionary conjunctures with long-term urban strategies aimed at transforming everyday life, promoting self-management, and transforming “minimal difference” (a component of hegemony) into “maximal” difference (an element of counter-hegemony). Abstractly universalist, centralist and “phallogocentric” Jacobin tendencies among the French left, which ignored difference altogether, did not help in this regard.¹²⁴ For Lefebvre, minimal, or “induced” difference exists as an alienated, isolated fragment — an unmediated form of individualist or pluralist particularity — that is easily serialized, reproduced, trivialized and naturalized within the parameters of phallogocentric abstract space and the reified “world of signs” of modernism. Maximal, “produced” forms of differential space and cyclical time, however, are festive, affective, unalienated, fully lived forms of plurality that can only flourish in a post-capitalist world defined by use-value and self-management.¹²⁵ Asserting the right to difference can be a moment of counter-hegemonic politics if it liberates the “parodies” of minimal difference from the totalizing forces of commodification, uneven development, linguistic abstraction, phallogocentrism and bourgeois power.¹²⁶

An essential part of his dialectical humanism, Lefebvre’s differentialist theory represents an attempt to transform minimal into maximal difference:

The distinction between particularities and differences and the dynamic this distinction reveals is a part of the theory (of difference). Ignoring this distinction entails confusions with grave consequences. To affirm — under the guise of difference particularities as they present themselves — authorizes racism, sexism, separations, and disjunctures. This is not permitted in

¹²⁴*Critique de la vie quotidienne III, op. cit.*, pp. 113-14, 118.

¹²⁵Lefebvre, *Le Manifeste Différentialiste, op. cit.*, pp. 122-29, 172-73; *Production of Space, op. cit.*, pp. 370-91; “Space and Politics,” in *Writings on Cities, op. cit.*, p. 195; “Rhythmanalysis,” in *Writing on Cities, op. cit.*, pp. 231, 239.

¹²⁶Lefebvre, *Le Manifeste Différentialiste, op. cit.*, pp. 84-91, 97-99, 127-29, 161-65; *L’Irruption: De Nanterre au Sommet, op. cit.*, pp. 103-06.

differentialist theory [the theory of difference], its methodology and concepts.¹²⁷

“Differentialist” theory moves from accommodating or affirming existing manifestations of difference to connecting, undermining and overcoming the separations, naturalisms, and reifications that define minimal difference or particularity in the here and now. Claiming a “right to difference” thus implies a protracted transformation (neither an affirmation nor an abolition) of particularities to facilitate forms of plurality and individuality based on unalienated human relations.¹²⁸ Without such an orientation, one is bound to take at face value the immediate, “positive” manifestations of difference (such as working class culture or gender roles) by accepting elements of bourgeois hegemony (productivism, sexism, racism) that may permeate them.¹²⁹

Lefebvre recognized that the limitations and ultimate defeat of “1968” meant that difference has functioned as much as a force of capitalist modernization as a counter-hegemonic claim.¹³⁰ Differentialist new left claims were appropriated by the state, the bourgeoisie, real estate capital, and well-to-do professionals in the post-1968 order. Demands for regional autonomy and industrial and territorial self-management one finds again as parodies in administrative decentralization and industrial productivity management. Calls for centrality, difference, and the ludic one can see as commodified traces in those areas of Central Paris (such as the Marais, the left bank, the former *Paris populaire* in the northeast) that have been gentrified, reshaped by spectacular monuments and turned into “diversified museums.”¹³¹ The new right has reduced difference to the old paternalism and biologism¹³² while the French state has “paid homage” to some of Lefebvre’s concepts — centrality, segregation, the city as work and festival — to re-plan suburbs, restructure citizenship rights

¹²⁷Lefebvre, *Critique de la vie quotidienne III*, *op. cit.*, trans. S.K., p. 112.

¹²⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 111, 122.

¹²⁹Lefebvre, *L’Irruption: De Nanterre au Sommet*, *op. cit.*, pp. 77-78; *Critique de la vie quotidienne III*, *op. cit.*, pp. 105-09, 158-59; Lefebvre, *Le Manifeste Différentialiste*, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-21, 32, 97-99.

¹³⁰For a “Lefebvrian” view of the link between radical claims to urbanity and the modernization of capitalist urbanization since the 1970s, see Christian Schmid, “The Dialectics of Urbanization in Zurich: Global-City Formation and Urban Social Movements,” in INURA, *Possible Urban Worlds* (Basel: Birkhaeuser, 1998), pp. 216-25.

¹³¹*Ibid.*, pp. 118, 105-09, 158-59; Lefebvre, “The Urban in Question,” *op. cit.*, pp. 209-211.

¹³²*Critique de la vie quotidienne III*, *op. cit.*, pp. 115-17.

and promote “social inclusion.”¹³³ This selective appropriation disconnected urbanity and difference from a dialectical critique of capital, the state, private property and everyday life.¹³⁴ As a result of the displaced effects of oppositional claims, (minimal) difference is now a focal point in the reorganization of capitalist hegemony and what we now recognize as “flexible” accumulation, casualized employment, diversified consumption, aestheticized urban development, and cultural or differential racism.

5. Conclusion:

Pursuing the “lineage” Gramsci — Lefebvre, we are left, in the early 1980s, with an urbanized conception of hegemony: a sense that the urban is terrain and medium for the survival of capitalism and, simultaneously, a source and stake for revolutionary claims to its transformation. In the new millennium, Lefebvre and Gramsci live on in many intellectual circles and inform an array of often contradictory fields and debates. It is worthwhile remembering, however, that in Gramsci and Lefebvre, the problematic of urban hegemony — understood as fusion of micro and macro-dimensions of reality, a combination of multiple dimensions of power, and an integration of “minimal difference” into the reproduction of capitalism — is rooted in a particular understanding of marxism. Their marxisms were, in distinct ways, open and integral insofar as they were self-consciously conceived as contingent historical practices and alternatives to reductive objectivist and idealist traditions. Most visible in the problematic of urbanization, everyday life and hegemony, the lineage Gramsci-Lefebvre promises a “living marxism” imbued with a sense of the contradictions and promises of lived reality in advanced capitalism. With Lefebvre, the interplay of minimal and maximal forms of difference is an integral part of these contradictory lived realities.

The purpose of this article is to provide sources for an intellectual orientation, not establish a Gramscian-Lefebvrian “model” (which would be a contradiction in terms). There are concrete ways of actualizing Gramsci and Lefebvre, though. The lineage Gramsci-Lefebvre combined two critiques of anti-capitalism: “social” critiques of exploitation, inequality, and misery and “artistic” critiques of

¹³³Jean-Pierre Garnier, “La Vision Urbaine de Henri Lefebvre: des previsions aux revisions,” *Espaces et Societes*, 1994, *op. cit.*; Kofman and Lebas, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-36; Dikeç and Gilbert, this issue.

¹³⁴Garnier, *op. cit.*

commodification, oppression and homogenization.¹³⁵ Although these critiques were articulated differently in the two authors (with the “artistic” critique dominating in Lefebvre),¹³⁶ they met in their commitment to a participatory, base-democratic form of marxism that was marginalized by the “quantitative” productivism and statism of the state socialist, social democratic, and developmentalist projects that defined the mid-20th century. In a conjuncture markedly different from both interwar period and the 1960s, which gave shape to Gramsci and Lefebvre’s politics, anti-capitalist currents within the contradictory “anti-globalization” movement take up elements already present in Gramsci and Lefebvre. Linking a critique of the ravages of globalizing capitalism with a quest for daily self-organization, a new political generation promises a double political shift. It builds on but is more ambitious than the micro-utopian self-management projects that proliferated after the defeat of the new left and sometimes contributed to the modernization of capitalist urbanization. And it differs from the impulse of many in the left in the 1990s to oppose globalization by “defending” the state against the neoliberals. In this sense, the new urban protests signal an (uneasy) re-combination of social with artistic anti-capitalisms.¹³⁷

New critiques of capitalism may represent a break from the pessimism that has plagued much of the metropolitan left lately. But if it is essential to counter indifference and hopelessness, it may be premature to displace the problematic of hegemony with a problematic of hope and utopia, as some seem to suggest.¹³⁸ Following Gramsci and Lefebvre, searching for the sources of a counter-hegemonic politics and explaining capitalist survival are not mutually exclusive but internally related projects. Today, the reactions to the bombings of the World Trade Centre underscore the centrality of the urban not only for the imagination and spatial strategies of oppositional forces but also the symbolic and material reorganization of capitalism and imperialism. Analyzing the urban dimensions of capitalist reconstruction is essential

¹³⁵Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello, *Le Nouvel Esprit du Capitalisme* (Paris: Gallimard, 1999).

¹³⁶See Ronneberger, this issue.

¹³⁷One thus might want to go further than Boltanski and Chiapello, who primarily detect a return of the social critique of capitalism (*op. cit.*, p. 424).

¹³⁸David Harvey, *Spaces of Hope* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), p. 17; Leo Panitch and Sam Gindin, “Transcending Pessimism: Rekindling Socialist Imagination,” *Socialist Register*, 1999.

if street protest is not to become dissociated from everyday life.¹³⁹ This analysis is already under way. “Neo-Gramscian” theorists have tried to fuse Harvey’s neo-classical urban marxism with middle-range concepts from state and regulation theory to analyze urban hegemony after Fordism.¹⁴⁰ What the orientation excavated from Gramsci and Lefebvre suggests is that an analysis of urban hegemony must go beyond urban political economy and state theory and extend to matters of everyday life.¹⁴¹ Only such an extension makes it possible to grasp “the materiality of the urban” as a component of hegemony/counter-hegemony in the integral terms suggested by Gramsci and Lefebvre.¹⁴²

Meta-theoretical (and political) difficulties do emerge, however, when it comes to actualizing a “Gramscian” Lefebvre for the purpose of analyzing urban hegemony. After all, the marxist problematic of hegemony has been dismissed as a “master-narrative” for neglecting considerations of difference.¹⁴³ Yet the open and integral marxism that follows from Gramsci and Lefebvre accepts the everyday and difference as central, not derivative problems *without* following the poststructuralist move to disconnect hegemony from the problematic of the survival of capitalism.¹⁴⁴ In particular Lefebvre’s dialectical

¹³⁹Lefebvre, *L'Irruption: De Nanterre au Sommet*, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

¹⁴⁰Mark Goodwin, S. Duncan, and S. Halford, “Regulation Theory, the Local State, and the Transition of Urban Politics,” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 1, 1, 1993; Bob Jessop, “A Neo-Gramscian Approach to the Regulation of Urban Regimes,” in Mickey Lauria ed., *Reconstructing Urban Regime Theory: Regulating Urban Politics in a Global Economy* (Thousand Oaks: Sage), pp. 51-73.

¹⁴¹For preliminary suggestions along those lines, see Stefan Kipfer and Roger Keil, “Toronto Inc.? Planning the ‘Competitive City’ in the new Toronto,” *Antipode*, March, 2002.

¹⁴²Walter Prigge, “Raum und Ort: Kontinuität und Brüche der Materialität des Staetischen,” in *Die Materialität des Staetischen* (Basel: Birkhaeuser, 1987).

¹⁴³Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (London: Verso, 1985); Leonie Sandercock, “Cities of (In)difference and the Challenges for Planning,” *DISP*, 1, 2000, p. 10.

¹⁴⁴Following Derrida, post-marxists reduce difference (*differance*) to anti-humanist linguistic ontology that precedes and constructs subjectivity. Caught within what Lefebvre called the *modernist* “world of signs,” difference (*differance*) is no longer a concept to grasp experiences and political contestations of social difference but a generic term to suggest that meaning is an effect of a distinction (and temporal delay) between linguistic signs. As a result, hegemony now appears independently of historical capitalism (or patriarchy, imperialism) as a temporary, difference-denying

humanism, which differs from Derrida's approach to *differance*,¹⁴⁵ places the interplay between minimal and maximal difference at the center of capitalist hegemony *and* the search for a future beyond alienation. Critics are correct that Lefebvre theorized the role of ecology, racism, patriarchy and imperialism in the production of space and differentialist practice neither sufficiently nor adequately.¹⁴⁶ But the fact that Lefebvre insisted that the production of abstract space/linear time extends to modernist linguistic reifications, "phallogentric" masculinity, Euro-centrism and neo-colonialism¹⁴⁷ and the "destruction of nature"¹⁴⁸ allowed others to use Lefebvre for feminist,¹⁴⁹ ecological,¹⁵⁰ or anti-racist¹⁵¹ intellectual projects. It is thus possible to link Lefebvre's urban marxism to theorists who share a similar dialectical humanist sensibility to difference (as alienation, possibility, and liberation) but focus their analyses more squarely on racism, empire, patriarchy, and sexuality.¹⁵² Establishing such links is essential not only to develop an urban analysis of hegemony but also to understand more fully the role difference in counter-hegemonic projects.



fix (articulation) of the flux of signifiers that make up social reality (Laclau and Mouffe, *op. cit.*, pp. 111-13, 128; Soja, *ThirdSpace, op. cit.*, pp. 86-87). Counter-hegemony (a project of transformation and reconstruction in, against, and after, capitalism) is substituted with a celebration of anti-hegemonic resistance and strategies to deconstruct hegemonic articulations.

¹⁴⁵Kofman and Lebas, *op. cit.*, pp. 50-51; Sadler, *op. cit.*, p. 175, note 99; on the difference between Gramsci and post-Marxism, see Morera, *op. cit.*

¹⁴⁶Eugene McCann, "Race, Protest, and Public Space," *Antipode*, 31, 2, 1999, p. 163; Shields, *op. cit.*

¹⁴⁷Lefebvre, *Le Manifeste Différentialiste, op. cit.*, pp. 182-84.

¹⁴⁸*Production of Space, op. cit.*, pp. 285-87, 302-03, 309.

¹⁴⁹Doreen Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), p. 182.

¹⁵⁰Berne-Boissard, *op. cit.*, p. 217; Janzen, this issue.

¹⁵¹McCann, *op. cit.*

¹⁵²On Fanon's dialectic of experience, see Ato Sekyi-Otu, *op. cit.* On a marxist feminist approach to sexuality, human needs and liberation, see Rosemary Hennessy, *Profit and Pleasure: Sexual Identities in Late Capitalism* (New York: Routledge, 2000).