# UNDERSTANDING LE CORBUSIER'S UTOPIA: *URBANISME* AND ITS CURRENT EXTENTIONS

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**Abstract**

One of the most important names in the modern city planning discipline is Le Corbusier, author of the book Urbanisme. Urbanisme is his utopia and one of the most important texts of utopian history.

Le Corbusier thinks that a rational design, in accordance with modernism, has universal validity. Paris was always in his mind and he has started to design his utopia from the deficiencies of Paris and the anger he felt toward the city. However, he thought that the city he had designed in this utopia, had to be a model for all cities of the world. The main arguments of Le Corbusier's utopian design are: there is only one common truth for humanity, and the human mind is able to find it. In 1925, Le Corbusier elaborated on this design of his textually and compiled his proposals, creating a corner stone, a cult study that reflected many influences today.

For Le Corbusier, cities should be designed according to an ideal model; this is a city utopia. The homogenous city he planned to go into circulation all around the world and produced with the same standards in every point of the earth, is a giant machine. It is possible to feel this feeling in every corner of the city, even on its plan. Everything that is nonfunctional is excluded from this city and expelled. For the sake of optimization of productivity, all the texture belonging to the past has been discarded. This radical disengagement in the design of the city is not just about its design, it is all about the past at the same time as well. Le Corbusier's suggestion is an uprooting operation. What lies behind externalizing everything that is unique to the human beings such houses, streets and the city from all living areas, is the monopolistic radical rationality and the unconditional glorification of the bureaucratic power? The design of Le Corbusier is, over time - ironically- the projection of political authoritativeness in the scale of urbanism of modernism which initially emerged as a liberating paradigm.

Cities, as Le Corbusier suggests, cannot be continuously destroyed totally and rebuilt from scratch each time with the evolving technology. The world has been rapidly urbanizing since the nineteenth century and urbanism is now ascending to metropolitan dimensions. Metropolitanism is driving cities to the domination of pluralism and destruction of homogeneity.

This paper discusses Le Corbusier's utopian city design by analyzing different architectural characteristics of the project and concludes with some arguments of this utopia for today's cities.

**Keywords:** Utopia, Urbanisme, Le Corbusier, Cities

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## 1. URBAN UTOPIAS IN CONCEPTUAL CONTEXT

### 1.1. A Brief Summary About the Phenomenological Approaches of Utopia

Utopia is a place imagined but not realized (Noble, 2009, p. 12). It is yet nowhere but it is already there (Havemann, Yarın, 1990, p. 61). It is a modeled design of perfection and a contender to replace the existing, the defective system. It is an abstract design, but its very purpose is to concretize by preserving all its features.

Distinctive features of utopia are the rational order, the authoritarian and totalitarian attitude, the absolutism, and the hindrance to alternative choices by getting its strength from its perfection (Mumford, 1996, pp. 362, 363). They have almost always emerged in periods when societies have suffered from depression and decay (Usta, İlkçağ Ütopyaları, 2015, p. 18). Utopia has appeared as a literary genre of the theory of state. Although types of utopias differ in the following years, they have always continued to be hand in hand with the theory of the state, even when they have converted into architectural utopias. In this sense, utopias, even in their most architecturally weighted versions, are within the tradition of political philosophy and in search for the ideal order (Davis, 1983). Each of the utopias, within the framework of theory of state, intended to produce a city state, and by claiming that these city states should dominate over the whole world; although they seem to be making a single production, but in fact they have been contenders to transform the whole world (Usta, İlkçağ Ütopyaları, 2015, pp. 18, 19). Utopia has achieved ultimate and eternal perfection of the already existing world, which it has abolished, and surpassed (Havemann, Ütopya ve Umut, 2005, s. 20).

Utopianism is the aim to build an ideal universe in which all conflicts of conscience and interest in society are ended, everything that is obstructive to a prestigious life is removed with the help of modern technology, and to create an environment where peace, prosperity and virtue are eternal and universal (Kateb, 1975, p. 17).

Each one of the utopias are an ideal, and even the tiniest drop in the ideal in this sense will disrupt its supreme position and abolish the utopia. For this reason, although many utopian ideals have been tried to be actualized in history, these ideals have never been realized without loss, because of the many different factors that have not been accounted for on paper or in theory. But utopias have never been ineffective just because they have not been actualized in their ideal states. On the contrary, the most important influences of utopias in history have been their ability to transform the past and the society. Although utopian ideals have not succeeded in direct actualization of utopias, they have been successful in transforming the world with radical changes each time. Utopias have become the most important leverage of the movement, in the sense that history, in the face of current circumstances, being intercepted by the free-formed thoughts developed by the human mind and being a facility to leaps.

### 1.2. The Concept of Utopia and Cities

Utopia is a design that is primarily tailored to a location, a space and fundamentally to a city (Alver, 2009, p. 140). Has an urban form (Harvey, Umut Mekanları, 2008, p. 192) In fact, according to Mumford, the first utopia is the city itself (Kumar, 2005, p. 25). Utopia is a form of the space that has been liberated from its present state and structured from the very beginning somewhat into a dream. For this reason, utopias identify and describe almost all spatial organizations. From the houses to the buildings, from the workplaces to the fields, from the avenues to the streets, from the city centers to its borders, directly constructs how the whole architecture of the city will be built on the utopian frame. Thus, cities acquire the feature of being the projections that create the ideal society. Every city is a bit utopic in its essence, and every utopia is mostly a city (Yüksel, 2012, p. 11).

The utopian thought that emerges from the notion that the form determines the content as well as the content determines the form, finds the architecture of its utopia, which it has determined in the city scale, as vital. The architectural form, according to them, determines the material and spiritual content and destinies of the city and everyone living in it. According to this idea, a good society should be built in a systematic way, that is, in the light of principles of mathematics, geometry, in short, rationality. Ideal city wants to capture and control all kinds of possibilities within its walls (Kumar, 2005, p. 35).

Utopians do not think it is right to consider the human first and create an architecture that is appropriate for them. First, they design the appropriate architecture in the footsteps of rational principles, and then advocate that society be defined and created by this rational architecture. In this sense, every utopian architecture is a social engineering. Utopia is an urban layout proposal, designed ideally (Alver, 2009, p. 143).

**Ideal City**

"The ideal city adds design to the utopia. As philosopher-architect-craftsman in the ideal city, man is a co-creator with the Chief God (Zeus)." (Kumar, 2005).

"The cities in utopia and the ideal city theme are highly related with each other. The endless exchange between utopia and the search for the ideal city takes place under an umbrella of dual necessity. (Sacrey, Bouchet, & Picon, 2003, p. 117)" "On one hand, the utopic city carries its legal, administrative, social, economic, and environmental traces of the era it emerged, while envisaging the space shaped by the utopic/ideal society in line with the vision/horizon of its owner." (Yüksel, 2012, p. 11).

### 1.3. The Paradox of Utopian Urban Projects, Utopia or Dystopia?

Utopia is a vision, a place that is not yet quite realised (Noble, 2009, p. 12). It has not been built but it already exists (Havemann, 1990, p. 61). Utopia is a design of modelled perfection and it is the flawless candidate for replacing the present flawed system. As an intangible design, the purpose of a utopia is to become concrete while still preserving all its unique features and qualities (Stevenson, 2006, p. 667). However, utopia must destroy the past while concretising itself.

Rational order (secure from alternative options), an authoritarian and totalitarian attitude, and absolutism are among the prominent features of utopia (Mumford, 1996, pp. 362–63). From the very beginning it has emerged as a literary type of the theory of the state. In this sense, even in their architecture-intensive versions, utopias are part of the tradition of political philosophy (Davis, 1983, p.17). Since the Renaissance the aim of utopia has been to build the perfect society, but this purpose of achieving flawless humanity slowly began to disappear from architectural anticipations by the beginning of the twentieth century (Nicoletti, 1971, p. 270), instead giving priority to the architectural perfection of cities.

Utopian thought is about territoriality, a spatial structure with internal rules governing the definition and perception of a geographical area (Hedrén & Linnér, 2009, p. 213). Accordingly, utopia is, first of all, a design created to decorate and garnish a location or space, essentially a city (Alver, 2009, p. 140). It is designed exclusively based on a specific place, which is a city as a general rule (Hardy, 1978, p. 279). Therefore, utopia has an urban form (Harvey, 2008, p. 192). The ideal city wants to contain and control any kind of disruptive force that may arise within its borders (Kumar, 2005, p. 35). Consequently, utopias typically emerge as imposition of order, rather than through public consensus.

As utopias always seek flawless rationality while ignoring public opinion, they fail to notice many characteristics regarding social life and urban design. Born out of individual minds and patronising attitudes instead of shared wisdom, utopias can evolve into dystopias because of the mostly unexpected, varying side effects that happen when people try to put their ideas into practice (Morgan, 2015, p. 113). Evolution into dystopia is the outcome of the paradox-generating structure of utopian thinking.

### 1.4. Understanding Utopia and Cities with Today's Conjuncture

In today's world, cities are fiercely competitive in order to attract maximum global interest and obtain the maximum share of global capital. Key instruments in this competition are to design large-scale infrastructure projects, provide assurance to foreign investors and promote the new image of the city globally (Douglass, 1999, p.32). As the main purpose of competitive large-scale infrastructure projects is to attract global attention rather than to maximise the functionality of the city, rational and functional projects are almost always overshadowed by sensational urban projects and over-hyped urban images. This competition between multiple entertainment-focused, flamboyant urban projects eventually gives birth to tabloid-focused utopian urban projects (Brenner, Jamie, & Theodore, 2010, p.37; Pinson, 2004, p. 329).

However, the fact that urban projects provide the economic sublime is not the only reason that makes them appealing to decision-makers. These projects also provide three other different notions of the sublime. The first is the "technological sublime", essentially requiring the construction of the most sublime building through the combination of engineering skills and advanced technology. The aim here is to create and implement innovative projects: to build the world's tallest building, longest bridge, fastest train, biggest wind turbine or the archetype of any megaproject. The ultimate goal is to ensure the city is branded with sensational originality and leadership.

The second is the "political sublime", meaning the extra prestige, reputation, popularity and votes that mega buildings bring to politicians and leaders. Urban projects that garner media attention and publicity at a wide extent also help politicians attract positive coverage by reputable sources (Flyvbjerg, 2012, p.112). Thus, those in politics are able to use their mega structures as a major promotional tool for being re-elected, putting their stamp on history thanks to monumental architecture.

The last is the "aesthetic notion" of the sublime, arising from the integration of a large-scale, powerful and iconic design into the city (Wuellner, 2011, p. 670). It represents people's joy and satisfaction when they admire a beautiful work of architecture. The more sublime the aesthetic notion becomes, the more chance the megaproject has of turning into a symbol of the city or an international tourist attraction (Flyvbjerg, 2014, p.12). This brings an immense advantage to the city in terms of taking the lead in the global intercity competition.

When considered in an economic and environmental context, urban projects designed and built to provide cities with more advantage in global competition paradoxically show very poor performance and fail to gain public support. While the cost of these projects inevitably exceeds the predetermined budget, revenues come in lower than expected. These projects are designed to boost economic growth but, in fact, hinder it (Flyvbjerg, Bruzelius, & Rothengatter, 2003, p. 3). Urban projects cause massive and irreversible damage to the society; not all residents are provided with the benefits of the project, and the project does not represent the different values of all city residents. Urban projects also lead to massive environmental costs. And, lastly, urban projects adversely impact the economy; on the one hand the project provides economic benefits to specific groups, but on the other hand it does not really generate any substantial economic revenue nationwide. On the contrary, once completed the project results in economic losses due to higher taxes and leads to a waste of resources

and unequal distribution of income among different regions of the country or different neighbourhoods of the city. Utopias that look good on paper sadly evolve into dystopias once they become reality.

There are several utopian urban projects which can be defined as mega urban projects today. Their roots belong to urban utopian projects from 1920s and late 20th century. Le Corbusier is one of the pioneer of urban utopias from these dates and he has many authoritarian projects. The Radiant City (Corbusier, The Radiant City, 1967, s.12) and Urbanisme are the main utopic projects of Le Corbusier. In this study, Urbanisme, Le Corbusier's one of the main utopian project is analyzed deeply and evaluated with today's urban booms.

## 2. ANALYZING AN URBAN UTOPIA: LE CORBUSIER'S "URBANISME"

One of the most important names in the modern city planning discipline is Le Corbusier, author of the book Urbanisme. Le Corbusier played a pivotal role in defining the design principles of modern architecture and in enabling the International Architecture style to spread rapidly and become acknowledged world-wide (Merzi, 2017, pp. 10, 11). Moreover, he has done this alone, not in a collective manner like the Bauhaus formed by the common contribution of many. The popularity that Urbanisme has captured, has also brought the research that has been done in the field before back to the agenda, and released them into circulation (Moos, 2009, p. 176). However, the popularity that Le Corbusier has captured has created exasperation as much as enthusiasm. The debate on modern urbanism is fired up with this book.

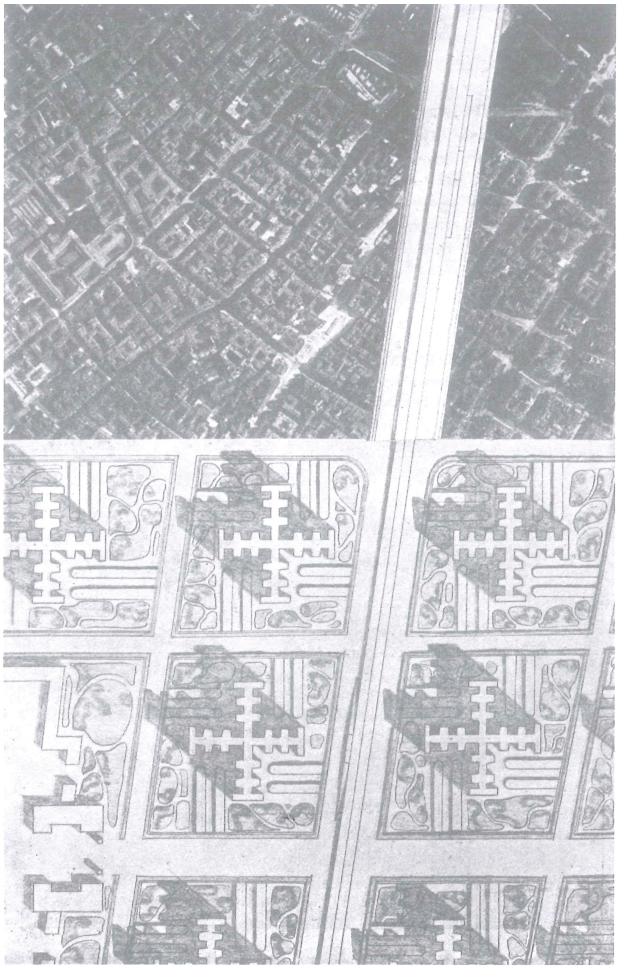

Figure 1. Plans of Existing Residential Settlements in Paris (above) and Le Corbusier's Utopic Design (below) for an Urban Area. (Both Plans are in Same Scale) Corbusier, L., 2014. Şehircilik, p.280.

Le Corbusier wrote Urbanisme with a very simple language, not a technical one. He built the entire city plan according to the principles of positivism/modernism. He based the detection of problems on numerical data. Functionalism, uniformity, homogeneity and standardization dominate the whole work. It is asserted in the book that residential and urban planning should be rescued from all traditional ties and that with an indeterminate rationality, they must be redesigned in a very harmonious way with today's technology, which is also argued that it is a "Contemporary City" as mentioned in this study.

Le Corbusier thinks that a rational design, in accordance with modernism, has universal validity. Paris was always in his mind when writing Urbanisme; he has started from the deficiencies of Paris and the anger he felt toward the city. However, he thought that the city he had designed in Urbanisme had to be a model for all cities of the world. This is one of the main arguments of his book: according to Le Corbusier, there is only one common truth for humanity, and the human mind is able to find it. Le Corbusier, in Urbanisme, claims that he found the only common truth in the modern city planning.

Urbanisme takes its base from the diorama of a city of three million inhabitants Le Corbusier presented in Salon d'Automne in 1922. This book, which was published in 1923 by Le Corbusier in L'Esprit Nouveau, reveals the principles of Le Corbusier's own architecture and follows his book Towards an Architecture. Le Corbusier himself wrote in the preface for the second edition of Towards an Architecture, that Urbanisme is the continuation of Towards an Architecture (Corbusier, İkinci Baskıya Önsöz, 2017, pp. 16, 17). When in 1925, Le Corbusier elaborated on this design of his textually and compiled his proposals into a book, creating a corner stone, a cult study that reflected many influences today. Urbanisme is his utopia and one of the most important texts of utopian history (Köksal, 2014, p. i).

Le Corbusier divided Urbanisme into three main chapters. The first is the General Discussion, the second is a theoretical examination of a Contemporary City which is the utopia of Le Corbusier, and the third is the discussion of the current situation of the Paris Center.

### 2.1. The Chaos Created by the Industrial Revolution

In the General Discussion section, Le Corbusier argues that the opportunities provided by technology, which made a huge leap over the last 50 years, clashed with the low-tech city that was planned and built with the paradigm of the time before the Industrial Revolution. According to Le Corbusier, the social crisis that is experienced stems from the contradiction between the new life style created by the Industrial Revolution, and the residential architecture that cannot respond to the needs of this life style. The machine has turned everything upside-down. Development has gained an unprecedented speed in the last century. A curtain has been closed onto our everyday habits, our tools, our works so that it will never be opened again. Now, a vast area is unlocking in front of us (Corbusier, Bir Mimarlığa Doğru, 2017, p. 23).

In the mind of Le Corbusier, the city is a "work tool". The function of the city is to enable the work. But cities can no longer fulfill "this function" (Corbusier, Şehircilik, 2014, p. ix). With the Industrial Revolution, technology has changed rapidly, the mode of production has changed from being agriculture-oriented, to being industry-oriented, and the population has been directed from the rural to the city. But the building stocks of the cities and the streets that provide transportation are designed for the medieval cities before this rapid transformation. For this reason, after the Industrial Revolution, there was a negative contrast between the physical conditions of the cities and the requirements of the times. Existing historical cities are deprived of the capacity to carry the new transformation. Accordingly, their functions are interrupted. Cities now have turned

into barriers that hinder the development, transportation, work, leisure, shelter, entertainment; in short, a humane living.

According to him, the cities in the Middle Ages, in the absence of motor vehicles, were built by mediating donkeys used for transportation can walk most comfortably. Many parameters of nature, such as uneven topographies, marshes, rivers, risks of natural habitat, have made the pathways of donkeys winding. Since villages, towns, and finally the cities were built alongside these pathways, all the cities established before the Industrial Revolution exhibited a highly curvy settlement structure and were abandoned to the irrational orbit of donkeys. Le Corbusier says "'The Pack-Donkey's way is responsible for the plan of every continental city; including Paris, unfortunately." (Corbusier, Şehircilik, 2014, p. 6). According to him, with the transformation of vehicles into automobiles in the twentieth century, these curved roads and plans did not need to exist. On the contrary, such curvatures prevent the automobile transportation. Le Corbusier who said "A curved street is a donkey track, a straight street, a road for men." (Corbusier, Şehircilik, 2014, p. 11), by maintaining rational functionalism in the front plan, suggests that automobile traffic requires straight tracks. According to him, the city formed by the Middle Ages, when faced with technology that developed so fast that it could not be followed, a cacophony, incompatibility and chaos had emerged. Le Corbusier was convinced that if the ideal form of industrial society was captured in urban design, the lost order would be attained again, this time more qualitatively, and a freedom, prosperity and aesthetics that history have never seen would be delivered (Fishman, 2016, pp. 21, 22). Believing in the optimist and progressive history understanding of the modernism, Le Corbusier will try to transform the current chaos into an atmosphere of order (cosmos).

### 2.2. Maintaining Order Through a Pioneering Architect

For Le Corbusier, a design must always be derived from the rationality of the human mind. The world is inordinate in its natural state, and man must circumvent this disorderliness with the categories of his own mind and regulate the world (Corbusier, Şehircilik, 2014, p. 15). Rationality, according to him, is the order itself. "Han has to put work in an order." (Corbusier, Şehircilik, 2014, p. 22). For Le Corbusier, a city that has not been organized in a rational way will hinder people. The peace of man depends on the perfection of the order. What will save us from the chaos of nature is a rational city design, designed with right angles. And its tool in architecture is geometry. However, today's city has not been realized with a "geometric mind". For this reason, it is a threatening disaster (Corbusier, Şehircilik, 2014, p. 24). In the urban life, Le Corbusier advocates the transition from entropy of romanticism to rational prescriptivism of modernism that sets standards.

Le Corbusier believes that the architect has tasks far beyond just building a building; he encumbers him with much larger tasks and responsibilities: to be the leader and pioneer of social development (Corbusier, Bir Mimarlığa Doğru, 2017, pp. 15, 16). What he meant by "the architect" is actually he himself personally.

According to Le Corbusier, a single mind must construct an order by designing an entire city with a rational plan. Where there is no plan there is irregularity and arbitrariness. Modern life demands and expects a new plan for the dwelling and the city (Corbusier, Bir Mimarlığa Doğru, 2017, p. 34). In Urbanisme, Le Corbusier builds this elaborate city plan that he has casted the role for himself. He designs a "modern city" for the "modern life" and forms it with a very "modernist" approach. He describes the method of architecture as "art above all others which achieves a state of platonic grandeur, mathematical order, speculation, the perception of the harmony which lies in emotional relationships". According to Le Corbusier, "geometry is the foundation" (Corbusier, Şehircilik, 2014, p. ix). Thus, Le Corbusier identifies the instruments of architecture that will resurrect the city as mathematics and geometry.

### 2.3. Instrument of Order: Geometry

According to Le Corbusier, engineers and businessmen who use mathematics and geometry have pioneered new forms of production. Now the architect has to design mass-produced houses and radiant cities that would benefit everyone who came to the "fundamental pleasures" of the new age. A whole new environment had to be created where industrialization techniques facilitated the daily lives of the citizens. On this count, the chaos would disappear. In Le Corbusier, the harmony of society was becoming a "problem of building" (Fishman, 2016, p. 180). This was the motivation that led Le Corbusier to design a utopian city in Urbanisme. He wanted to produce a machine that would work impeccably: a city machine.

Since he saw the world as mathematics and geometry, he thought that human living spaces should also be designed as machines. According to him: "A house is a machine for living in". (Corbusier, Bir Mimarlığa Doğru, 2017, p. 36) The street was a "traffic machine". (Corbusier, Şehircilik, 2014, p. 126) River was a "liquid railway". The city, on the other hand, was a "machine for living in". (Corbusier, Bir Mimarlığa Doğru, 2017, p. 254) So, he designed his own utopian city as a machine. Soulless, but a machine working like a clockwork.

In his design in Urbanisme, the most defining feature of Le Corbusier's geometry is symmetry. From the unit element skyscraper, to the general plan, the design of a Contemporary City has an absolute symmetry. This sharp symmetry was positioned as a sign of victory of the mind over coincidence.

### 2.4. Replacement of Romantic Genius with Rational Engineer

Le Corbusier, who suggests transition from the partiality of emotions to the universality of the mind, in other words from romanticism to modernism, propounds that, in keeping with his argument, there was no need for the romantic individual geniuses anymore, and that together with modernism, the creative genius has left his place to the general rational mind, and to the universal principles of mathematics. He argues that the effect of this in architecture is the transition from the product of passion to the product of reason (Corbusier, Şehircilik, 2014, p. 42). Le Corbusier pairs passion with creative genius architect, on the other hand intelligence with modern-day engineer. According to him, the mind work is added to each other continually, and this is called progress. However, the feelings of passion do not change; even thousands of years cannot change it. As to Le Corbusier, come nineteenth century, with the perfection in the tools, mind has obviated passion. Engineering has prevailed over the individual genius. It first reduced its importance and then replaced it. Thus, Le Corbusier openly attitudinize with standard and universal creations, not with particular, unique creations. He embarks on the task of transforming each architectural work and the city as a unique artistic work approach to each architectural work and city must be standard and homogeneous approach in the context of the "great minds think alike" and within the framework of principles of modernism. "A universal standard and the complete uniformity of detail," says Le Corbusier and desires this. For him "only then, big arrangements can raise their melodies." (Corbusier, Şehircilik, 2014, p. 67). Thus, Le Corbusier, demonstrating a definitive modernist reflex, argues for building all city cells in the manner of a uniform, monolithic whole instead of building the city cell-by-cell and creating a heterogeneous variety. Instead of personal buildings determined by emotions, he suggests imposing a single, standardized building type that the mind has determined for the whole city. He hopes to achieve a homogeneous and rational city by creating a model that connects rules, norms and by reproducing this model all across the city. Le Corbusier, who advocates progressive and optimistic history understanding in accordance with the principles of modernism, thinks that with the new urbanism, the twentieth century will be "like as in the fables".

### 2.5. Rules of Modernism: Standardization and Homogenization

Throughout the book, Le Corbusier did not lend credence to contingency or historicity; thought that logical and rational solutions for similar situations would be the same and one. In other words, he has completely accepted the principle of modernism which states "great minds think alike". So, the city Le Corbusier designed is standardized and homogenized. It is focused on mass production. He has been influenced by the industrial production models and new material choices (Sevinç, 2004, p. 90), and argued that cities and houses should now be produced in this way in serial and standard form.

Le Corbusier designed a standard and homogeneity among cities as well as the standard and homogeneity of the city itself. He claims that he created a model connected to the norms and reproduced this model worldwide by producing a universal city plan. Therefore, the settlement that is planned for three million people is designed for any place, not for a specific space. There is nothing local in the design. It has been developed with an unadulterated rationality.

### 2.6. Creative Destruction

Modernity always believes that there must be a fundamental disengagement with the past. It always tends to see the world as a tabula rasa, a blank page that can be written from scratch without reference to the past or ignoring it altogether. That is why modernity, whether democratic, revolutionary or authoritarian, is always associated with "creative destruction" (Harvey, Paris, Modernitenin Başkenti, 2013, s. 7). In Urbanisme, Le Corbusier undertakes the basic act of creative destruction in architectural planning.

The treatment Le Corbusier suggests for the recovery of cities is as modernist as the diagnosis he recognizes for them. He suggests that the old city, which is not produced rationally at all, should be completely destroyed and replaced entirely by a rational city. He advices the irrationalist old city plan produced from traditions, beliefs, habit, and the avenues, streets, buildings, monuments, graves, all other things that carry out this plan should be bulldozed through. Just as modernist French Revolutionaries do in politics, Le Corbusier says that every irrational structure must be destroyed in the city without exception. Nothing that is not functioning has no place in his city. Le Corbusier's remedy for sick medieval towns is not a dressing, but a radical surgery. He has taken Haussmann as an example. But on his own project he will go beyond Haussmann.

Le Corbusier tries to build how the ideal city of the twentieth century should be. He believes that the community he has been in needed first and foremost new cities. He thinks the format would reformulate the content. According to him, physical possibilities will create the communal living again and in a most positive way. He rejects the possibility of progressive improvement. He aims not to improve the old cities but to transform the urban landscape as a whole. Le Corbusier's design is an “urban revolution manifest”.

The ideal city of Le Corbusier is perhaps the most ambitious and complex expression of the belief that the entire life of society can be radically changed by reshaping the physical environment. In harmony with modernism, he has imagined that he could rebuild society together with the city, and he was optimistic in this dream. He was engaged in a sort of community engineering.

His action plan is extremely radical. According to him, the classical cities, which concealed themselves in city walls for military reasons, have already overflew out of the city walls in the twentieth century, and since it does not have a rational design to be able to function, now the inner city must be completely demolished and rebuilt in the frame of rational principles. Le Corbusier says, “the center of cities is deadly sick, the outside edges are as if moth-eaten” (Corbusier, Şehircilik, 2014, p. 88) and discards the whole history, architectural accumulations, monumental structures, stone streets, all in the name of functionality. By rejecting conservative

evolutionist conception of urbanism, takes up a position toward a radical-rational revolutionary urbanism attitude. In order to build the functional, he expunges in an instant all the past and its accumulations, the traditional life forms they point to and the identities they produce, without hesitation.

He also opposes compacted and crowded city centers to be built of anew as wider urban centers in other regions. He strictly strives to demolish the old city center and tries to prove his theory with various arguments. According to him, a center is bounded to a condition; it only exists with what is in its periphery. For this reason, it is unbelievable for him to abandon a center and build a new center again in another region (Corbusier, Şehircilik, 2014, p. 91). The center should be replaced wherever it is located. This is the creative destructiveness of Le Corbusier. In order for the new to be realized, he suggests that the old be destroyed from the root and insists on this full steam ahead.

Le Corbusier puts the grounds for the demolition of the old town centers as follows: According to him, with the discovery of the car, the cities have begun to fill up with automobiles. In 1925, the year he published Urbanisme, Le Corbusier demonstrates with statistics that the surface of cars in circulation in Paris, is greater than the surface of Paris's motorways, and asks: “Where are the cars going? To the center. Studies show that there is, in essence, no space for cars. The center does not provide the necessary space for a smooth traffic flow. Cars need more space. The center must be demolished!” (Corbusier, Şehircilik, 2014, p. 108). Le Corbusier shows New York as an example. The traffic intensity of New York is so high that businessmen, when coming to town, are leaving their cars in the periphery and have to take the metro to come to work. Le Corbusier calls this a “striking paradox” and, demonstrating with statistics that the number of cars are increasing, suggests that urban centers whose road surfaces remain unchanged will become more and more insufficient (Corbusier, Şehircilik, 2014, p. 108).

With statistics, Le Corbusier points out that the average speed of automobiles is 16 km/h in contemporary cities, whereas automobile factories produce vehicles capable of reaching 200 km/h. He finds the reason for this technological irony when cities do not have contemporary streets. According to him, this is a “clogging, drowning” for all intents and purposes (Corbusier, Şehircilik, 2014, p. 110). “In today's case, the big modern city is nonsensical.” (Corbusier, Şehircilik, 2014, p. 115). Therefore, according to Le Corbusier, city centers must be demolished and rebuilt according to new requirements.

## 3. UNDERSTANDING LE CORBUSIER’S UTOPIA: A CONTEMPORARY CITY

Utopian city planning of Le Corbusier, who advocates the complete destruction of old city centers and construction of centers in their place, begins at this stage. With A Contemporary City that constitutes the second part of Urbanisme, Le Corbusier tells the bases and principles of his utopia. In the section which starts by stating “The use of technical analysis and architectural synthesis enabled me to draw up my scheme for a contemporary city of three million inhabitants.” (Corbusier, Şehircilik, 2014, p. 157), he designs how a city in the twentieth century should be built.

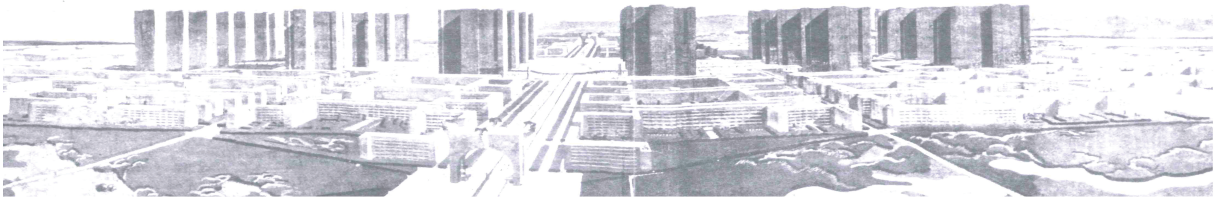

Figure 2. A 3-Dimensional Drawing of Le Corbusier's Utopia in Paris (http://carfree.fr/index.php/2015/05/19/lurbanisme-totalitaire-de-le-corbusier/, date: 2.3.2018)

There is a train station in the center of the utopic city of Le Corbusier. This station is integrated into the metro, buses, and other transport facilities as well as also to the airport via a helicopter. The station is surrounded with 60 floors high skyscrapers, each of which is arranged symmetrically at wide intervals. These large complexes will serve to fulfill the trade needs of the community. In parks surrounding them, there are luxury restaurants, theaters and shops. The majority of the population lives in spacious, high-rise apartments with elevators and with a special hanging garden for each apartment, while others live in colonies of detached houses. The streets are of three storeys that go at different speeds to provide different types of vehicles to flow at different velocities. Raising the density to such a high level allows people to be comfortably placed in a small space, thus liberating large areas to be enjoy as agricultural, recreational and natural spaces. Geometrically, such a wide range of urban development allows for the provision of cultural services or other kinds of services required by an intensive consumer population and an adequate transportation system. The fact that Le Corbusier envisions the city as a complex machine, a machine necessary for everyday life, also enables its inhabitants to live in privacy and beauty in a radiant, green, spacious, and serene environment at the same time. (Meyerson, Ütopya Gelenekleri ve Kentlerin Planlanması, 1996, s. 120)

Le Corbusier, in urban design, excludes everything that is not functional. Everything that appears irrational, such as traditions, habits, aesthetics, public memory, historicity, is an enemy of his urban design. Since he wants to build a city that was entirely rational and profitable, he paid attention for everything to be very close and compact. As the basic principles of the plan of its utopic city he has determined: 1) Eliminating the congestion of the city center; 2) Increasing the density; 3) Increasing traffic vehicles; 4) Increasing green areas.

According to him, the solution of the first two is possible by the settlement of the traffic issue and the replacement of existing buildings with very high-rise buildings. For Le Corbusier, the reason for the dense traffic in the city is that the spaces are as far apart as well as the fact that curved roads from the Middle Ages are unfit for motor vehicles. Le Corbusier tries to solve this problem by increasing the density of the city center and therefore by reducing the number of streets and street intersections.

According to Le Corbusier, the number of street and street intersections of existing cities should be reduced by two-thirds. In the existing plans, streets intersect in every 50, 20 or 10 meters. Whereas for Le Corbusier, street intersections are the enemy of traffic. Le Corbusier argues that the distance between two metro or bus stops is optimal distance for street intersection. This corresponds to a distance of 400 meters. (Corbusier, Şehircilik, 2014, p. 162)

By increasing the density of the city, Le Corbusier aims to reduce the traffic and to facilitate intra-central access. He has dreamed of increasing this density through skyscrapers. Accordingly, the existing floors of the low-rise buildings will be reduced, but 60-storey skyscrapers will be erected on this narrowed floor areas. In Paris, if the number of floors in a building is assumed to be 6, Le Corbusier desires a 10-fold vertical rise. Thus, he uses skyscrapers as “street in the air” with his own words.

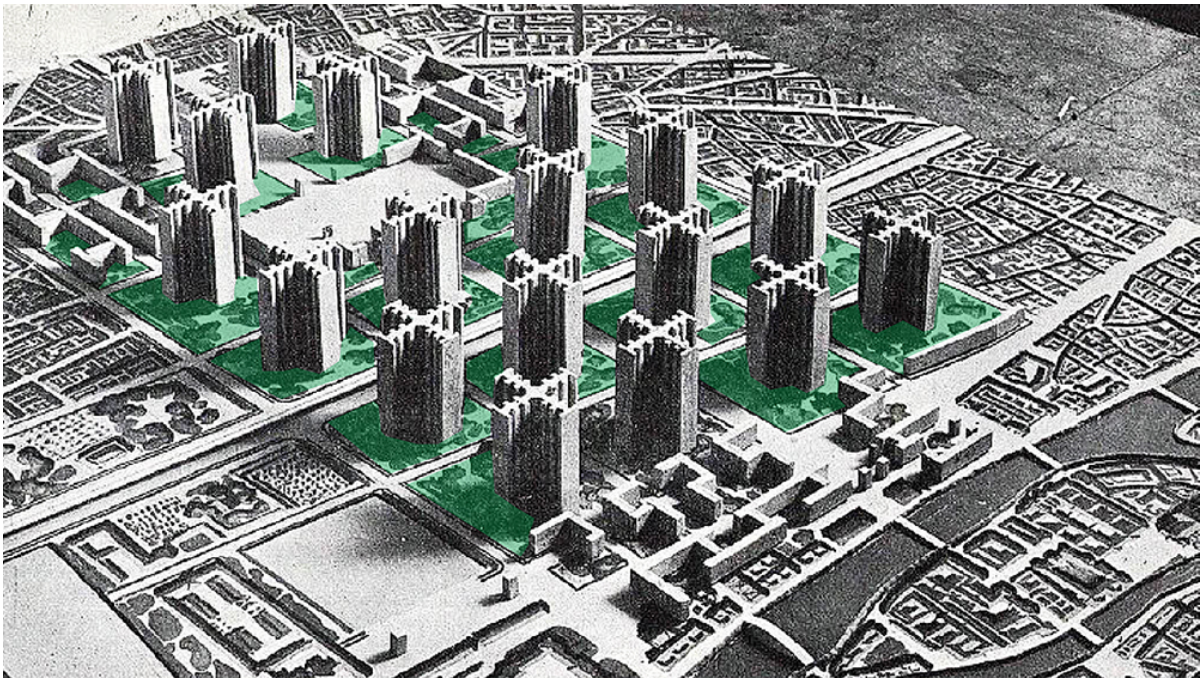

Figure 3. A Model of Le Corbusier’s Utopia in Paris

(http://projets-architecte-urbanisme.fr/architectes/le-corbusier/, date: 2.3.2018)

As a result of vertical conglomeration instead of horizontal expansion, the distances are shortened; places are made possible to be reached sometimes by walking and sometimes only with the help of elevators. This is an important solution to the city's traffic problem.

Another advantage of retracting from the horizontal expansion is; as a result of lowering floor areas that buildings occupy, the land on which the building is planted previously will be transformed into green areas. According to Le Corbusier, modern work requires tranquility and healthy air quality. However, these are not possible in the environment where green areas are not found and everywhere is covered by buildings. Le Corbusier, as well as vertical growth, increases city density and reduces traffic, thus cleansing the city's air and creating a more serene landscape that people will be more comfortable with. (Corbusier, Şehircilik, 2014, p. 160) In plans of the utopic city of Le Corbusier, on the grounds of skyscrapers that will accommodate 6,000 population per hectare, there will be 95% green area, where squares, restaurants and theaters will be constructed. On the grounds of luxury houses situated in recessed parcels that will accommodate 300

population per hectare, there will be 85% green area, where there will be gardens and sports fields located. In the closed parcels that will house 305 population per hectare, there will be 48% green area where again gardens and sports fields can be found. (Corbusier, Şehircilik, 2014, p. 165)

In the city of Le Corbusier, boulevards are drawn between skyscrapers over 200 meters high and in the middle of empty spaces; there are luxury shops with elegant window displays, which will be reached by consecutive stairs that are cramped in between one-two-or three-storey structures, where pleasure-oriented shopping can be done; similarly, there are restaurants, coffee houses, terraces that open to tree clusters of five or overlooking to the openings of the English gardens. The street, first of all, has been re-established with elements in the human scale.

*Financing the Utopian City*

In order to demonstrate that the city plan he has designed is as feasible, Le Corbusier tries to prove the financial profitability of completely demolishing the city and rebuilding another one on its place. By doing so, he aims to announce to necessary authorities that it is a project that can be actually realized rather than a model that only works on paper. While preparing the said economic modeling, Le Corbusier chooses Paris as his model and produces his calculations within the framework of this city.

For Le Corbusier, if the city is destroyed and rebuilt according to his suggestions, it will have a much more substantial value, relative to its former value. Le Corbusier turns this into a formula: he presumes the value of existing buildings in the city together with their land as (A). Then, he says, let's think of demolishing these suffocating, outmoded streets, environment, parks, neighborhoods that are not suitable for living, and let's imagine replacing them with new and splendid neighborhoods that are placed keeping the same number of flats. In this new case, according to Le Corbusier, the value of each unit will increase with the total value increase of the neighborhood. Le Corbusier estimates this increase as (A5). Le Corbusier does not suffice with that; because in his plan both the neighborhoods will be rebuilt optimally within their own planning framework, and all the number of building floors will be increased. During this increase of number of floors, since the floor area of the buildings are slightly narrowed, although the total number of building units does not increase as much as the floor area of the buildings, the population of neighborhoods will increase to 3,300 from 800 people per hectare; in other words, a full fourfold unit increase will occur. For this reason, Le Corbusier multiplies the land value which is transformed to (A5) by 4 to reach to the 4(A5) formulation.

In this method, perhaps the public administration will allocate a significant budget for demolishing and rebuilding, but at the end of the operation it will make a huge profit because it will be creating an enormous value increase. To these new buildings, both locals and foreign investors from around the world, such as the US, Germany, UK and Japan, will invest. Thus, the city of Le Corbusier will become a world city and since it is transformed into a city receiving investments all around the world, in the event of a possible war, as no nation would afford to bomb the city they have invested, it will not carry the risk of being demolished during any war. (Corbusier, Şehircilik, 2014, pp. 284-286) At the same time, a much larger economic return will be obtained compared to the budget spent on building the new city.

## 4. CONCLUSION

The conduct of utopian urban planning, which is itself an enlightened approach, is based on the complete demolition of existing urban structures through human intervention and their replacement with artificial but new and rational-functional structures. The method for transformation is not evolutionary, it is revolutionary.

Past experiences prove that utopias that look perfect on paper may bring highly imperfect results in practice. The fact that utopias squeeze present systems into 'good on paper' models and attempt to alter them strictly on the basis of these models leads to a number of unwanted side effects. These cannot always be foreseen for various reasons that may emerge during the design process or due to the limitations of science. Such side effects may hinder adaptation of the system to the model and transform the model, which was initially designed as a utopia, into a dystopia.

As described above, there is a revolutionary idea based on Le Corbusier's architectural philosophy, the ideal city concept is the pursuit of excellence, clarity, certainty and non-contradictoriness. Its design, for the sake of being able to provide justice and equality and being able create social order, has the claim to be void of esthetics and be totally functional. Instead of livable cities, it inclines to build zones based on their functions. He assesses the level of creativity of an architect and the aesthetic value of the building according to the benefits that they provide to human beings and to the community.

For Le Corbusier, cities should be designed according to an ideal model; this is a city utopia. The homogenous city he planned to go into circulation all around the world and produced with the same standards in every point of the earth, is a giant machine. It is possible to feel this feeling in every corner of the city, even on its plan. Everything that is nonfunctional is excluded from this city and expelled. For the sake of optimization of productivity, all the texture belonging to the past has been discarded. This radical disengagement in the design of the city is not just about its design, it is all about the past at the same time as well. Le Corbusier's suggestion is an uprooting operation. And he hopes that the lines created by a single mind to dominate the whole world. What lies behind externalizing everything that is unique to the human beings such houses, streets and the city from all living areas, is the monopolistic radical rationality and the unconditional glorification of the bureaucratic power. (Harvey, Postmodernliğin Durumu, 1999, s. 51) The design of Le Corbusier is, over time - ironically- the projection of political authoritativeness in the scale of urbanism of modernism which initially emerged as a liberating paradigm.

However, humans are not only made up of the mind and the function; on the contrary they are cultural and social entities. In an unadulterated rational city design produced by a single mind in which no intervention of its inhabitants is accepted, it is not easy to anticipate masses to be satisfied, to establish identity, and to develop belonging with the city they live in. The city is, as Lévi-Strauss says, "a work of social art." Its densely intertwined structure is the product of thousands of intellects and thousands of individual decisions. Its diversity is derived from unexpected intersections and unpredictable interactions. As Fishman said, "Even if a genius, how can a single individual hope to understand this structure? And how can he produce a new plan possessing the same satisfying complexities? How can an individual alone hope to impose his own idea to the history?" (Fishman, 2016, pp. 25, 26) It is as if the architect is given the opportunity, he will instantaneously solve all our problems with rational professional understanding and planning skills. For the architect, the society is as if one of his professional instruments, as well as the object of his actions. (Tanyeli, 2017, p. 11) Determining what is right and necessary for the man and the society by simply reducing it to numerical values, based on a simple equation, focusing on parameters such as square meterage, topography, economy and producing plans founded solely on basic human biological functions, may come out from minds who assume, such as the city, man is also consisted of a machine. As much as the city is not just made up of a "work machine", nor is human being consisted of a biological machine. An architecture invented with these assumptions is oppressive since its considers physical environment and society as a tool to be disciplined. The architectural power of the architect, defended by Le Corbusier, points to an authoritarian ruling, a dictate aimed at building on sociality.

Cities, as Le Corbusier suggests, cannot be continuously destroyed totally and rebuilt from scratch each time with the evolving technology. Le Corbusier is, in fact, in contradiction with himself when he defends the Medieval city to be completely destroyed and replaced by cities that are compatible with the modern technology. Because if the city is not to be developed by being conjoined, the new city that Le Corbusier will produce will soon fall behind in the face of technology after a while. In that case, will this city be completely destroyed and rebuilt as well? The contradiction of Le Corbusier is in the presentation of the city he will last as if forever. However, the entity as well as the design for the entity is each a type of existence (the quest for the truth), and is constantly reinterpreted, re-paraphrased, and its existence reinstated. (Snyder, 1991, p. xx) The city is an organism that is never to be completed and can never be completed. It is always in existence.

The world has been rapidly urbanizing since the nineteenth century and urbanism is now ascending to metropolitan dimensions. Metropolitanism is driving cities to the domination of pluralism and destruction of homogeneity. While urban planning in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as Le Corbusier has been doing, was tackling with the homogeneity and identity integrity of the physical environment, where we stand now we see that the homogeneity of the past in metropolis is a dream. Today diverse cultural existences, preferences, subsistence habits, ethnic groups, marginalities, subcultural communities made up of the cities. Who can argue that cities should be so planned when the world does not go towards homogeneity, identity integrity, or a cultural consensus? (Tanyeli, 2017, pp. 72, 73) It is now impossible for one architect to plan today's metropolises.

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