
Spatial Justice, or Not?

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Interview conducted on the 10th of July 2017 in Paris, between Anne Clerval and Fabrice Ripoll, from the JEDI Group, and online journal *Justice Spatiale / Spatial Justice* (Sophie Moreau and Pascale Philifert)

Sophie MOREAU: For the ten-year (or so) anniversary edition of *Justice Spatiale-Spatial Justice*, and ten years after the founding conference entitled "Spatial Justice and Injustice" in 2008, we would like to open contradictory debates and discuss the concept of spatial justice. Anne, Fabrice and I belong to the JEDI Group, "Justice, Space, Discriminations, Inequalities", a transversal group from the Labex Futurs urbains, of Paris Est University. The J in JEDI stands for "justice". But not everyone in JEDI uses the notion of justice, or spatial justice, especially you, Anne and Fabrice. Yet, you did collaborate with the journal *Spatial Justice*, and/or with the founding conference. Why then do not you use this notion in your work? What are your hesitations and criticisms? Are they due to the history of your training, your research paths? What key terms do you call up in your research? This issue of JSSJ is an opportunity to start a debate that we "have" not yet had, within JEDI or JSSJ.

Anne CLERVAL: Some people call on "spatial justice" in JEDI. The fact that it contains the term "justice" makes sense, even if it is not "spatial", even if others do not use it. The idea is that we have different ways of tackling the same issues.

Fabrice RIPOLL: JEDI is an acronym we all agreed upon, even if it does not suit anyone, because it is a funny acronym [...] Then again, I am still waiting for debates we have not yet had indeed. We would need to look deeper to see the extent to which we really converge, or if this whole thing is based on misunderstandings, because it is possible that we believe we are in agreement when in fact we are not. That is what happens when discussions are not always in depth, with JEDI or any other group for that matter.

Anne CLERVAL: Yes, most members of the group had one year to introduce their research work, which gave everyone an opportunity to see what others were doing. But this was not the time for debates and we did not have time to examine issues in depth. Even with the session on gentrification, we did not agree on everything, and we did not have time to discuss our differences. Personally, I am frustrated in geography in this regard, because we rarely have these discussions and collectively we do not further theoretical frameworks.

Sophie MOREAU: So, shall we? The first question was...

Pascale PHILIFERT: ... Justice: yes, no, perhaps?

Justice in question

Anne CLERVAL: As far as I am concerned, I do not use the notion of spatial justice and I must admit that I do not know it well. It is a sort of blurry vision for me. I did read the founding text of the online journal JSSJ which was co-authored, giving a sort of outline of spatial justice. And of course, with JEDI, I spoke with people who used that notion. I've had opportunities to look into it. But then, after that, since I have reservations about it, I did not read more on it, and as such I will not have the critical eye of an expert.

[...] To begin with, for me, the idea of justice in Social Sciences is not a clear notion. I understand it is used in the legal domain. But I do not see how, in Social Sciences, we can work on situations of justice, or what is referred to as fair spaces. As far as I am concerned, there are rather unfair situations. "Spatial injustice", that is more like it, because I would say: ok, here I can see what we are talking about. Whereas "spatial justice" is a kind of UFO, something that does not exist, that seems very abstract to me.

Then, I am trying to have a materialistic approach. I'll start from inequalities, from domination, from issues that can be objectivised, not only materialistic ones, some of which are quite symbolic, but they can be objectivised, even if the actors are not aware of it. The fact that actors are or not aware of it is not at all without interest, but it is an issue which is linked to another. The issue of the feeling of injustice would be an interesting subject in this regard. I haven't worked directly on mobilisations, but to me this is part of a whole and it cannot be the start. The start is much larger. There is another problem, which is that injustice is a feeling, and it cannot be objectivised. Some people feel that they find themselves in situations of injustice, even if in reality, they are dominant or benefit from inequalities. And this is a problem, because I deny them the right to consider that they are in a situation of injustice. There are many people who want to keep the poor away, and who find it unfair that they have to put up with the poor. To me, this is a corruption of the notion of injustice. I will not focus my research on them as I have no interest in them. To me, the feeling of justice seems very distant. The feeling of injustice, on the other hand, means something, but it comes with the problem of being very relative compared to the issue of making inequalities objective, especially since it is part of a whole. In the end, to me, the start cannot be injustice. It is inequality-domination and within, there is or not a feeling of injustice. And often, in fact, there is none, there is less and less and that makes it increasingly difficult, in my opinion, to start there.

The last part of the answer concerns one's research history. In fact, I discovered spatial justice along the way, when I started with radical geography. I discovered Harvey after Smith, and even Smith does not make use of the notion of justice, while Harvey did at some stage, but we cannot say that it is central either. And in the process, I progressed more on the issue of the relations of domination according to a structural materialistic approach, including what is symbolical, the way it is being experienced. The issue of justice is not used too much in the literature on the relations of domination. There can be struggles inside these. But there is domination, even if there is no struggle against it. Some struggles can mobilise the idea of being against injustice. In this case, it can make sense. But once again, these mobilisations do not encompass everything that must be taken into account to be understood. Fighting against injustice is a small part of a whole.

Fabrice RIPOLL: I have never used the “spatial justice” label. When, straight after the conference on “Spatial Justice and Injustice” in March 2008, Philippe Gervais-Lambony sent a message to all conference participants to ask whether or not we would agree to become correspondents for the journal, I said yes, but at the same time I had reservations on the label and the name of the journal.

[...] Because to me “justice” is a problem of value system, that ascribes +/- signs, good / not good, to situations. And to me, this is a political discussion. I do not fully master all these terms, ethics, moral... Anne referred to law, and I would refer to philosophy rather [...] What is good and not good? I find that very interesting, but I prefer to say that I do not know the subject well. I was not socialised to that end. I prefer to use the words that were used in my training, the words of social geography: social problem, social issue, inequality, the key word, which are almost the same words I ended up using subsequently in critical sociology [...] And, more importantly, I do not let myself decide what is fair and unfair when I wear the hat of researcher.

[...] In reaction to what Anne was saying, indeed, there are feelings of injustice. To me, we act them out. When you say: I am going to deny the facts that some are in a situation of injustice, for me you are not in a researcher’s position. Each time, we wear different hats. What we say as researchers and what we say as citizens are not automatically the same things. As a citizen I’ll agree with you, but as a researcher, it is not our job.

Anne CLERVAL: No of course, but what I meant to say is that, as a researcher, I do not want to do research work on them.

Fabrice RIPOLL: People feel that they are treated unfairly. Why not? Therefore to me, we act accordingly and it is part of the objective. Then, what are the effects of the fact that we feel we are being treated unfairly compared to not feeling it? That is based on the theme of internalisation or awareness. It is a big thing. It cannot be outside the research objective. It is not the same as objectivising situations of domination. But it is part of it [...] It is very important because, indeed, you have people who are in situations we could consider as being dramatic, outrageous, but they are not outraged. And conversely, you have people who are outraged at very little. And that does not go without saying. To me, the gap between objective situations and representations is fundamental. Feelings of injustice or outrage, in my opinion, are part of the objective. Then, the tool-concepts used to describe objective situations will be domination, inequality... and finally we give that to the rest of the social world and we can put on the citizen’s hat again and take part in the debate. But how do we manage the fact that it is the same person who wears the two hats? That is the problem of arguments from authority, of symbolic capital.

Pascale PHILIFERT: This idea of justice, did you actually go and look at what it was based on? Rawls, the matter of redistribution, procedural dimension, are these relevant to you? Did you look at all that before conducting your research work and going on the field?

Fabrice RIPOLL: What should justice be, etc.? I do not reject debates in political philosophy a priori; I am a very curious person... I know that one day I’ll get down to it. After being conferred the right to supervise research, I’ll open that box, because one must still be able to debate about it, as a citizen in particular, so as to have an answer to: “What must be done, not done; aren’t we making a mistake by making one claim or forgetting another?” Except that, as it happens in any case, the matrix of citizen Fabrice concerning what is fair and unfair, is nurtured and is worked

on permanently by all the literature in Social Sciences I have read on the different types of inequality, the different forms of domination. It began with Marxism, followed roughly by critical sociology that opened the array of symbolic dominations, which is a huge and complicated chunk. More recently, it has been about all the issues of intersectionality. It helps me to identify in certain situations elements I would never have spotted, to seek them out and question them. I do not feel I need debates on political philosophy to do it. And from the little I've seen, the little I understood of Rawls, I do not agree. But it is a labour of political philosophy; to me it is something other than the work of researchers in Social Science.

Anne CLERVAL: As to me, and I am saying it again, I have not done an in-depth reading and I am not sure I'll be doing it. When I read the editorial of the first issue of *JSSJ*, I felt that there was a problem of theoretical coherence: this founding text explains the different conceptions of justice, by borrowing from trends that do not speak at all about the same thing, which are paradigms with nothing in common. It is as if you read a bit of Marxism and Christian humanism and all that, and you made a mixture and you said: "Here goes, there is justice" [...] When I read this, I am concerned at first about the intellectual rigour which says: this is not right, it is not rigorous, we cannot mix everything and say that we are going to take the best of each theory, it does not work.

Concerning Rawls and liberal philosophical approaches, it seems very abstract to me. Justice is an issue very dear to my heart, but it is a political issue, not one in Social Science research. It refers to political convictions: I would not call that justice, but rather emancipation, a world liberated from relations of domination. And then there is Rawls, whom I find amusing... I mean we are not going to go far with him. I have the feeling that we are dealing with people who do not question the issue of power relations. We are talking about some sort of ideal, justice, which is very abstract. It is not founded on social movements dealing with justice, real major historical social movements that have asked the question concerning what would the ideal be like, what would a society rid of oppression be like. Moreover, often, these people leave aside the relations of domination, and class in particular [...] It is as if, without raising the issue of revolution, we are going to imagine what justice is like. It is distorted from the very beginning if oppression systems are not questioned radically. To speak of justice without this precondition, is to suppose that we could have a fair world, a fair situation in a structurally unfair context. It amounts to hiding this structural injustice, and therefore to taking part in its maintenance. From a political point of view, to me this way of mobilising the idea of "justice" is typical of the petty bourgeoisie. I am not attacking anyone, but that is the impression I have. I find that extremely half-hearted. Politically, it is not viable. And as a researcher, I am not going to propose what a better world should be like. As a researcher, I am going to show in-depth relations of domination.

[...] I remember the editorial at the launch of the journal. There was something around commitment, which I like, and that is also why I have contacts with people who are part of *JSSJ*. It is rare, because the commitment of geographers has been more still at the service of the prince than critique. I find that laudable, but on the other hand, I say to myself: come on... it is extremely half-hearted; it is not at all equal to the issue. I would like it if there could be groups of committed geographers, such as those in radical geography, who would become involved in social movements, in relation with people who protest. In this case, however, it is not related enough for it to make any sense in wondering about justice. We see a group which is

committed, and I think to myself that this is brilliant, but in fact, I do not find myself in it, it is not sufficient, it looks irrelevant and out-of-sync with struggle movements.

[...] I also remember a discussion we had, Sophie and I, concerning social movements on environmental justice, which calls up the issue of justice or injustice. In this case, it is different since these movements take up such issues. You were saying that some people win their case, a sort of better balance. But the problem is the word justice, because in fact, they came to a better arrangement, but that cannot be justice otherwise we would know about it. For that reason, it bothers me to call it justice. Indeed, they mobilised the term justice and obtained a situation which is less unfair, and that is a good thing; it can be less unfair, but it is still not fair. And that cannot be justice, even less in fact.

[...] This is not criticism on the actual JSSJ group and what has been done in the journal. It is just that I could not find myself in the editorial. This did not prevent me from taking part in the journal and from developing good relations with many of the group members.

Fabrice RIPOLL: That is why I spoke of label; the difference between label and content. In fact, it is a journal which, on the one hand, thinks about and works on the justice category, on different authors who theorise on it. On the other hand, it is also a critical geography journal. And from this point of view, what I think I saw in the different editorials and introductions is a field effect. I suggest the possibility that one of the reasons for which there was this highly ecumenical side, was precisely because it would greatly open up to people who came from different trends and who could have different intentions; a bit like the JEDI group. Some could come from social geography, others from cultural geography although not Claval's, and others still who did not use the social and cultural label, and who could recognise themselves in the more Anglophone labels such as critical or radical geography... In the end, it filled a huge potential gap.

Anne CLERVAL: And to move in your direction, in terms of label, it is a theme which is far more important, in geography or in Anglophone urban studies and in different contexts. Anyway, in the end, we spoke about different things. Fabrice spoke more about the journal as a project, and I spoke about how I perceived the concept or notion, knowing that I did not go in depth and that I had a form of distrust.

... Spatial?

Anne CLERVAL: Another issue with spatial justice is the spatial part. To me, justice, the only justice to be envisaged is social and not spatial. If need be, there could be an egalitarian production of space. It could perhaps be something which is fair, but it would have to do with spatial production, a management of space that would be fair. A fair space, in my opinion, makes no sense. And the other bothering element about spatial justice is the reification of space. If it is possible to have a fair space, then we run the risk of a huge bout of Spatialism. And in fact, many public policies in France and other countries accompany neoliberal reorganisation, which does not pretend to produce justice, but equity through space. It is like we could produce justice in the social sense, through space. That is what the city policy pretends to do. To me, the city policy, on the contrary, is a new constitution of domination policies in a neoliberal regime.

Promoting spatial justice as a researcher runs the risk of giving a scientific argument to these policies. To me, there is a very high risk of hijacking.

Fabrice RIPOLL: Concerning “spatial”, I think along the same lines as Anne. Indeed, I have another issue with “spatial justice”, and with that tendency geographers have to place the adjective “spatial” everywhere, a tendency I would analyse as an attempt to legitimise their right to voice their opinion in the Social Sciences. We have the right to voice our opinion because it is spatial. The problem is that, to me, epistemologically, it does not work. And that is really a big deal for me, where I found myself going against my academic training, against part of it, because the people I was reading in fact offered a varying discourse.

Pascale PHILIFERT: Why were you going against your discipline?

Fabrice RIPOLL: I see that as a sort of epistemological contradiction. If I were to synthesize on the dominant tendency... there was this idea that geography had been constituted on human-natural environment relations. In order to exist, geography had to have an objective, a set of specific explanatory factors, which pushed the natural environment to the fore. Except that the critique on natural determinism has created an epistemologically unsound situation for geography. But geography continued to exist because it was already there, fairly well settled.

[...] Briefly, from the 1960s, the fact that in other disciplines we began to speak about space and that in addition the State began to develop public policies for town and country planning, undoubtedly contributed widely to French geographers using the spatial category to say: “Here we are, that’s what our objective is finally”. Therefore there was a change of objective in the discipline, which was not very common in the history of disciplines, where we said to ourselves: “Here we have sorted the problem out. By speaking about space, we will have our very own objective and we’ll get rid of natural determinism”. Except that all it did was to shift the problem. We found ourselves, after all sorts of tribulations, between different trends in the 1970s-1980s which I will not mention, which had in common among the various geographic orientations, that kind of professional obligation to put forward space while trying to be a social science. But that ended up with the same kind of dilemma. The more I put “space” forward, the more I tend to make of it an objective separate from social matters. And conversely, the more I go in the social sciences, the more I tend to dissolve space.

[...] This created debates in France, as in Anglophone geography, including between those who refused the underlying autonomous capacity of space through “spatial analysis”. In both cases, we thought we had solved the problem by speaking of “socio-spatial dialectics”, particularly because the people who defended it had a slightly Marxist-oriented culture, and the notion of dialectics comes from there. And it seems able to solve the problem because we keep the two words while telling ourselves that they are inseparable. We find that in the writings of Edward Soja and Philippe Gervais-Lambony among others, when they defend spatial justice. We find all these texts that say: the social and the spatial are interrelated and, therefore, we are going to produce a space that can be unfair and that unfair space is going to have repercussions. We have an image with two boxes, one is called “space” and the other “social”, and we draw arrows in both directions.

[...] I learned that stuff, I militated in favour; I used to bawl people out, telling them: “You don’t understand social and spatial dialectics?” And one day, when I thought about the layout of my thesis – I was working on social movements – I asked myself: what is the role of space? Come to

think of it, actually, what is space? What is this famous retroaction? And I couldn't find any answer. So I began to tell myself that the texts in question had no content, or had an extremely variable content. Space, in some cases, was going to be the surface of the Earth, the physical, the material. Many sociologists, in urban sociology, added in more space, which in fact is material, and we find again this idea of interrelation. Or it is going to be about the local context in relation to general processes; which is completely different. I was then driven to deconstruct all that, because it made no sense to me. And now, I militate in geography to put an end to "space-society relations" – it would be amusing to publish an article with this slightly provocative title – and also to put an end to all these adjectives, as in spatial justice, spatial practice, spatial event and spatial organisation among others...

Some say that the spatial is a component of the social, and that it is sufficient to sort out the problem: next to economics, politics and cultural matters, there is the spatial. That would mean that some of the economic matters are not spatial, that some of the cultural matters are not spatial, and that some of the ideologies are not spatial. And conversely, it would mean that some of the spatial is not economic, etc. And I certainly do not understand what that means. What would be strictly spatial? I cannot see it.

Pascale PHILIFERT: Therefore, the way I understand it, spatial justice should not happen according to you?

Fabrice RIPOLL: For that reason, as for all the other expressions, to me they are unsound; [...] which does not mean that it is not very important to use spatial dimension everywhere, and not to have irrelevant thoughts. But I prefer instead to say: "spatial dimension". A dimension is not an object. It is a dimension of something; and so we must ask, a dimension "of what?" To which I reply: a dimension of social relations that can crystalize in a material, institutional or ideal form. The material / institutional / ideal (or internalised, cognitive etc.) triptych has the advantage of mobilising three words that do not make use of the word social or spatial. They are three forms of existence of the social, which have a spatial dimension and a temporal dimension [...] As such there is space everywhere and since it is everywhere, we should not talk about "space" but about "dimension", that is all. But it is important to refer to it, something philosophers – who speak of justice and injustice – and sociologists – who analyse social relations – do not do automatically.

Other key words

Anne CLERVAL: I use inequality and relations of domination. At first I used inequality, and relations of class domination; then I worked on the issue of gender and "race" relations. And what I go deeper into in the literature is the materialistic approach to that. Materialistic does not mean taking an interest only in what is material; it also means taking into consideration the root of these relations; which raises the issue of exploitation. Exploitation to me is something that does not appear in spatial justice.

If there is domination, it is to material ends. In fact, there is a huge symbolic dimension dedicated to domination, even Marx takes that largely into account, unlike the highly economic visions firstly of Marxists themselves, and secondly of those who criticise Marx. For a long time Marx envisaged major symbolic aspects of domination, including as regards emancipation, which went far beyond the material issue. That is the ambiguity of the term "materialistic".

[...] Then I moved towards subjects linking the material and the symbolic. I remember a discussion I had with Claire Hancock who only swore by Iris Marion Young, who spoke of recognition among other things. But to contrast the distributive with recognition, in my opinion, makes no sense. Already, with the distributive, we have a highly narrow vision of the way material inequality is questioned. Material inequality is not only about wealth distribution, it is first of all about production. When we start wondering about redistribution and we ask ourselves: "Perhaps it is not sufficient, perhaps there is also a need for recognition", we are already leaving aside the way we produce wealth. Yet, it is by radically questioning the way we produce wealth that we can imagine many other symbolic issues. If we do not change anything in the production and we only say: "we are going to collect a lot of tax to make society more redistributive", it is better, we are in agreement. And in this case, indeed, we need a symbolic addition of souls because we have just redistributed income.

[...] I am not at all saying that the issue of the recognition of dominated groups is not uninteresting to envisage in processual movements, in social movements, but in the ideal question about what justice is, I do not need it. I do not need this notion to take into account the symbolic for all that. It is obvious that this business is not about a material issue. Inequality is about power inequality. We speak of recognition, but we do not speak enough about power, whether the power on one's life or the collective power needed to make decisions.

That is why I make less use of the discrimination issue. Of course, relations of domination produce discrimination, but there again it is part of a whole. Racist or sexist discrimination is very important, but it is only one element of these relations. Social class, by definition, is not discrimination, it is exploitation. It cannot be proved individually and it is automatically a collective element, and it concerns the labour process. When we speak of sexist or racist discrimination, we forget that there is also the specific exploitation of women, and the specific overexploitation of the victims of racism, which is associated to discrimination. The fact that the victims of racism are confined to certain jobs is a form of discrimination, although it is first of all the fact that more surplus value is being extracted thanks to them, and thanks to racialisation. And that very element is at the foundation of any racialised construction of capitalism [...] If we take into account the idea that, in "race" relations, what is at stake is the specific overexploitation of the victims of racism and that we produce otherness to overexploit, even when we do not overexploit but exclude from the labour market, it puts colonisation and slavery into historical perspective, these being fundamental moments in the establishment of industrial capitalism. And I find that, as geographers, we have a role to play. The linking of scales is not an expression in vain, and it also refers to temporal scale, which makes it possible to have an aggregated vision, a macro vision in terms of groups and structures, while linking it with what can happen at the level of the individual. I have the feeling that in "discrimination", we are rather going to ask individual questions and forget the macro in which it is supposed to be inserted.

I also use the term resistance. In my thesis, I wondered about the consequences of gentrification on the working classes, and about potential resistance. It is something I would really like to go deeper into, but I encountered a discrepancy which is that, on the one hand, there are material consequences that can be fairly objectivised and easy to see on the working classes and, on the other hand, there is very little awareness of it, in France at least, and in the Parisian context in particular. It lacks a symbolic macro element which is the question of class identity, the crumbling of class awareness or that of other collective consciousness of dominated people which means that, as a result, we do not have the impression of being dispossessed by new trades that not addressed to us, but by housing. And here I am going to affect people who do

not have that feeling of injustice while they actually live an injustice. I say this in a more political manner as a committed researcher. I say that gentrification is something which is unfair. And I say it because many researchers try to say that it is not unfair, that it even creates nice set-ups, that some people turn the situation to their advantage, while others not. But I say that collectively, the working classes are losing out, even if there are small owners who are going to make a packet from gentrification. Be that as it may, as a class, they are losing out.

Pascale PHILIFERT: And what about the “right to the city”?

Anne CLERVAL: I discovered the “right to the city” during my research work, through Harvey at first, which led me to Lefebvre. I really liked Lefebvre’s work which is aligned with political stances I used to adopt, such as the idea that the right to the city is the self-management of the city; it questions the capitalistic production of the city. He says it very clearly. What is revolutionary in the “right to the city” is the production method of the city: it is not the owners and the authorities that produce space, it is the people themselves [...] The “right to the city” falls within the questioning of production relations. The “right to the city” alone, if we do not change anything, is impossible. Or then we are talking about islets, such as squatters in the city.

[...] We have had this discussion with the people who work on the “right to the city” in the South, people like Marianne Morange for example. She does research on those who use this expression, irrespective of the fact that it is not Lefebvrian, because the notion or slogan of “right to the city” has become widespread [...] I understand very well that we can say that we work on the way movements mobilise this concept and as a result, they are the ones that give it its meaning [...] But it is in a weak sense of the “right to the city”: it is the right to remain in the centre, to not being chased off. That is a good thing already; the fact that there is resistance against that is very important. However, as researchers, we are supposed to say: “... Careful, that’s not exactly the definition Lefebvre had in mind or proposed, which was not in the same perspective”. It is important to recall the Lefebvrian conception, which contrasts directly with capitalist relations of production and private property (lucrative). Our research works are rarely used by the dominated, but they are used by the dominant to say: “You see, even researchers... that’s what they understand by ‘right to the city’” [...] As researchers, we are supposed to have a sort of intellectual severity, which makes it possible to resist political takeover. And we must resist political takeover, something we do not do often enough; we are too open to political takeovers, as is spatial justice.

Fabrice RIPOLL: As before, there are major similarities with what Ann is saying. I claimed to adhere to materialism at one stage during my thesis. I played around with using a quote from Marx, taken from the eleven theses on Feuerbach, with the idea that one should not reduce the definition of what we understand by materialism.

This being said, I am not going to use it automatically in the same way as Anne does, i.e. the meaning I consider as the most restrained, the fact that relations of domination are systematically founded on exploitation. After the Marxist-based training I received while studying social geography in Caen, I read a lot of works by dreadful authors from the 1970s, the likes of Foucault, Castoriadis, etc. That is when I discovered Bourdieu and his nebulous materialism. Bourdieu played around with using the term materialism to speak about Weber against the general trend, by saying that his analysis of religion made it possible to propose generalised materialism. And like Weber, he emphasised domination more than exploitation.

Anne CLERVAL: He does not talk about it.

Fabrice RIPOLL: He does not talk about it or almost, but he does not criticise the notion. As if it was some sort of essential asset in the Social Sciences [...] There is this idea that there is exploitation, and there are social classes, even if he does not theorise about them in the same way. And that is where my conceptual vagueness lies: inequality, domination, exploitation, with Bourdieu's concepts re-using Marx' concept of capital, and transforming it by giving it a different form, but there is a common base which is precisely the idea that it is a value built and used in relations of domination.

Anne CLERVAL: Well, Marx' capital is a social relation.

Fabrice RIPOLL: In Bourdieu's work, it is the same. It is a social relation because it is a value as long as it is mobilised in relations of domination. So, obviously, it is a social relation. And it is a major common epistemological foundation for these people, i.e. our objective is a set of social relations, that which raises the issue of symbolic dominations, symbolic violence. All discussions on the theory of recognition, etc., to me, are a normal and obvious extension of Bourdieu's theories.

[...] Concerning the "Right to the city", I have not mentioned it yet, but I read Lefebvre over and over again during my thesis, because he was one of the references in social geography. But I find that Lefebvre does not offer many concepts in Social Sciences. And the status I gave the "right to the city" is the same as for "justice". To me, it is normative... it is a political word; it has to do with citizens [...] I also find it urban-centred; the social movements on which I worked are not urban movements, or planning conflict movements, and I did not even have to deal with it.

It is true that I found myself involved in the conference entitled "Territorial Discriminations" with Claire Hancock, Serge Weber and Christine Lelévrier, and that I co-signed the introduction while insisting that it was not to be considered as a concept, but as an object indeed. All the more since there is a whole work of critical deconstruction on the concepts of geography I undertook with Vincent Veschambre, but that were published in often confidential texts... By relying on critical sociology and Bourdieu's approach in particular, we tried to inject geography with inequalities, domination and social sciences at the same time, which led to the criticism of rising categories, such as the "territory" category. And one of the ways we did that, was to conduct a seminar, followed by publications on the issue of spatial appropriation by saying: here is an interesting notion because it does not make use of 'territory' and 'territoriality', which were trick categories, but makes use of a lexicon in "...tion" that shows that they are processes and are dynamic and not static "geographic objects". Therefore we use a social relation, and we inject it with space. At the same time, we can question the issue of privatisation, all issues of segregation and gentrification, as well as issues of geopolitical borders, etc. We would manage to say to ourselves that, in the end, there was not a single work in social geography that at some stage did not encounter the issue of the appropriation of space, and through it the "spatial dimension of inequalities and power relations", which happens to be the title of an issue of *Norois* we ran.

As to the methods...

Pascale PHILIFERT: How do these conceptual or theoretical inputs affect your research approach? How do they predetermine and modify it? Does this compel you to invent different methods?

Anne CLERVAL: As far as I am concerned, I can answer on two levels here. The first answer concerns the fact that from the moment they are critical, social sciences must be able to explain the world as well as situations of domination, which is what interests me. And I will go even further by saying that, to me, social sciences are a tool at the service of political reflection and necessary strategic reflection in particular; i.e. what can we do? To know what we can do, we must first truly know where we are at, how today's domination works. That is how I envisage my work.

Concerning the issue of methods, there are two levels. In my thesis, I linked field surveys, as many geographers do, but I also created statistics and worked at the macro level. And to me, that was absolutely necessary. In the end, it helped me incredibly to prove things more soundly than if I had only conducted interviews. This double approach was founded on the idea that it was necessary to succeed in showing something, in explaining and proving it. On the issue of gentrification, the debate where you say: "Is it positive or not for the working classes?", when you are at the individual level of the interview, it is not obvious, because there is not a very strong awareness of the process (and no feeling of injustice), not in Paris in any case. On the other hand, when you are at the macro level and you see how in some suburbs the working class is crumbling, it is very clear [...]

Fabrice RIPOLL: We try at the same time to objectivise situations of inequality or domination, and at the same time we integrate people's representations into the research objective. It compels us to adopt a binocular vision and, therefore, to opt for methodological pluralism. In principle, I am definitely for methodological pluralism, due to the fact that there is this constructivist relational posture. In this regard, I have not changed my mind one bit, because I have been socialised by people who advocated pluralism. Among the promoters of social geography, there was Armand Frémont who was one of those who had developed the trend of lived space geography, representations, perceptions, in a very subjectivist manner. And I think that Robert Héryn, as to him, focused far more on the approach of the statistical and cartographical objectivisation of inequalities. On the whole, it consisted in saying: both are important and in our opposition to the trend of spatial analysis, there is no opposition to the use of statistics. It is the search for the "laws of space" that we do not like [...] And that is exactly the approach which Anne has just presented: we are going to try to substantiate relatively indisputable assertions. After that, if you want to question reliable statistics on one point or another, we will need an analysis that questions the production of statistics. And to me, all methods require reflection in terms of social relations between the interviewer and the interviewee. And this is another input from Bourdieu's sociology [...] This does not mean that we must do away with statistics and objectivisation, just like we cannot do without the search for a theoretical model [...]

Anne CLERVAL: Yes, we must explain in detail these theoretical frameworks because many geographers do not do it [...] Research in Social Sciences (as in other sciences) cannot be only empirical... In fact, if you will, everything you study and all the fields you study are only excuses to further science. And science is a set of theoretical frameworks, frameworks for explaining the

world in detail, and it is also for that reason that it is necessary to do research collectively, i.e. we can work on many very different fields and on different subjects, and do so together to build and further theoretical frameworks.

Fabrice RIPOLL: One of the ways to avoid the risk of theoretical isolation is precisely to be given counter-arguments. Even if sometimes people manage to keep a certain distance from the theoretical framework in which they were trained, to try to do something else, it is bound to be partial. And to me, it is collectively that we have the most chance to progress, in one's arguments and counter-arguments. Whence the importance of initiating this very discussion!

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