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► **To cite this version:**

Frédéric Dufaux, Philippe Gervais-Lambony, Claire Hancock, Sonia Lehman-Frisch, Sophie Moreau. Justice in the street?. *Justice spatiale = Spatial justice*, 2011, Gender, sexual identities and spatial justice, 3, <http://www.jssj.org/issue/mars-2011-editorial/>. halshs-01562414

HAL Id: halshs-01562414

<https://shs.hal.science/halshs-01562414>

Submitted on 14 Jul 2017

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Justice in the street?

Frédéric Dufaux | Philippe Gervais-Lambony | Claire Hancock | Sonia Lehman-Frisch | Sophie Moreau

Editorial n°3: Justice is (also) in the streets!

What does it mean to run a new journal in today's rapidly changing academic and social context? Two years after the first issue of *Justice Spatiale/Spatial Justice* and as a preliminary to this third issue, it seems necessary to re-state why this journal exists.

Justice Spatiale/Spatial Justice exists, first and foremost, because a group of academics and researchers, board members and correspondents, who value their job, find this journal a necessary tool. They believe their job is to work together, beyond institutional affiliations, to help analyze the world and define ways of changing it for the better, and to disseminate the results of their work as widely as possible by writing and teaching. This implies that members of this group, joined together merely by their desire to advance things, believe both that societies as they are today are not as just as they should be, and that they can be improved. It's on this common ground, that does not prevent us from holding a variety of opinions, but means we are all critical in our approach to social realities, that we work and wish to be read.

To be read, and to give the possibility to those who submit articles to be read as widely as possible, after a peer-review process. This is why we publish papers in French and English at the same time, and that translations into Spanish are soon to be made available.

Beyond these reasons, JSSJ exists because we believe that the transformations of the world call for some reflection on social justice, in particular to adapt its definition to changing contexts—or, more accurately, to adapt its definitions, necessarily plural, even though the strength and political efficiency of the sense of injustice would suggest otherwise. We want therefore to address the diverse definitions of what is just and unjust, and position ourselves in the crucial debate on difference and universality. It seems to us that the spatial dimensions of the debate are too little taken into account: effects of injustice on social space, deliberate policies that use space to maintain or challenge unjust situations, but also production and reproduction of inherently spatial injustices. Recent events of the winter 2010-2011 have also cast light on the use of public space to challenge injustice and impose political change: what is meant by the phrase "the street doesn't decide"? Does "street" here refer only to "the people"? How to interpret what took place in Tunisia and Egypt, in Yemen, Bahrain and also Saudi Arabia - where the spatial justice concept also allows to question the rise of feelings of injustice in the context of a society that is based on the redistribution of oil wealth? What is happening in Libya? Those who occupy space, control space, have the power to change society, in a way, and the struggle doesn't just occur *in* space but also *for* space. But history does not end here: once the space of the old political system has been taken over, it becomes necessary to produce a new spatial order: "A revolution that does not produce a new space has not realized its full potential; indeed it has failed in that it has not changed life itself, but has merely changed ideological superstructures, institutions or political apparatuses" (Lefebvre, 1991, *The Production of Space*, Blackwell Publishing, p. 54).

When thinking about the relations between space and justice, the issue of injustices connected to gender and sexual orientations appears essential. This issue, jointly edited by Claire Hancock and Teresa Dirsuweit, gives an opportunity to address it. Not only because it is or has been fashionable, not only because French social science, and geography in particular, has become aware of the need to catch up (though this is far from generally accepted), but because the gendered and sexual aspects of society are major sources of injustice, spatial in particular. This issue of JSSJ aims to describe a reality, well documented in academic literature, and which raises new questions. It is an endless duty of ours to depict, explain, criticize, and transform this reality. The papers gathered here,

as shown by the editors of the issue, clearly illustrate the spatial dimensions and scales of gender and sexuality, without claiming that space exhausts all dimensions.

One of the papers in the "Public Space" section develops this reflection on gender and justice and echoes the current events in Arab countries by specifically questioning the place and role of women in the recurring movements for a more democratic and just society in Iran, as well as their relations to public space in the Islamic Republic.

This section also features a filmed interview of Edward Soja at the time of the publication of his last book *Seeking Spatial Justice*. Edward Soja analyzes the emergence of the notion of Spatial Justice, the deep influence of Henri Lefebvre, the role of the Spatial Turn in the notion and deciphers in depth the links between space and justice.

Let us also recall that the last section pursues *Justice Spatiale/Spatial Justice's* ongoing efforts to present works reflecting on the concept of justice from different disciplinary perspectives in French-speaking and English-speaking research. In this issue, you will find reviews of the books of two well-known scholars: *The Just City*, by US urban planner Susan Fainstein, and *Les Places et les chances* by French sociologist François Dubet.

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To quote this article : Frédéric DUFAUX | Philippe GERVAIS-LAMBONY | Claire HANCOCK | Sonia LEHMAN-FRISCH | Sophie MOREAU, « La justice dans la rue ? » ["Justice in the street?"], **justice spatiale | spatial justice**, n° 03 mars | march 2011, <http://www.jssj.org>