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Birth Announcement

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n°01. Birth Announcement

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

« Welcome » is certainly the word we wish to use in this very first line of the very first issue of this new journal: *Justice Spatiale / Spatial Justice*. Welcome to the readers, welcome to the contributors, welcome to debates. The international context as well as the French social and academic context (from where we speak) gives us more than ever the desire to offer here a space for expression and exchanges on a topic we strongly feel is important if not urgent.

The creation of this scientific journal is based on the conviction that space is a fundamental dimension of human societies and that social justice is embedded in space. The understanding of interactions between space and societies is essential to understand social injustices and to reflect on the planning policies that aim to reduce them.

The group of people, researchers and academics, who made *Justice Spatiale / Spatial Justice* possible consists mainly of geographers; however the objective of the journal is to explore debates and controversies concerning the concept of Spatial Justice through the different disciplinary perspectives within the human and social sciences (regional and urban planning, urban sociology, history, philosophy, political sciences...). *Justice Spatiale / Spatial Justice* is an international electronic journal whose concept was born in Nanterre, France, precisely where Henri Lefebvre taught, and this is in no way a coincidence as we acknowledge here the strong relation between the concept of spatial justice and the Lefebvrian concepts of production of space ("production de l'espace") and right to the city ("droit à la ville"). More precisely, the project of this journal arose from a desire to expand the discussions which took place at the "Spatial Justice Conference" held in March 2008 at the University of Paris Ouest Nanterre. It became clear at the conference that there is a need to continue the exchanges about the relationships between justice and space, beyond disciplinary, linguistic and cultural boundaries. This first issue is constructed with revised versions of texts presented at this conference and we wish to express our gratitude here to the authors: Lisa Brawley, Bernard Bret, Mustafa Dikeç, Susan Fainstein, Peter Marcuse, Edward W. Soja. Their contributions will allow the readers to explore the diverse dimensions of the concept of spatial justice, presented and debated here by some of the world's most renowned writers in the field. The next issues of the journal will be thematic; the call for papers for the n°2 can be found here and is articulated on the question of access to environmental resources and environmental justice.

While spatial justice is the desired outcome of planning policies, the diversity of philosophical positions about "justice" has meant that the political objectives and outcomes of planning policies are frequently contradictory. Furthermore, the fact that the philosophical underpinnings of the concept of spatial justice are usually taken as given and have rarely been placed into question since the works of radical Anglo-American geographers in the 1970s and 1980s, means that an engagement with spatial justice is long overdue and urgent.

Two contrasting concepts of justice have polarized the debate: the first focuses on redistribution issues, while the second is more concerned with decision making processes. We believe that the concept of spatial justice is of great value today to the social sciences and to geography in particular since it is a concept which transcends disciplinary boundaries. Furthermore, an examination of the implementation of spatial justice raises interesting methodological

questions: justice is frequently evaluated on the basis of “results” or spatial distributions (of goods, of services, of people...), but increasingly research on spatial justice is also engaging with issues of representational space where identities and experiences constitute the *process* of justice. In other words, research on spatial justice mobilizes quantitative as well as qualitative approaches.

The interdisciplinary potential of the concept of spatial justice is particularly important to environmental research. The idea of “Environmental Justice” emerged in the 1970s and 1980s in North American cities to engage with the overlapping processes of racial discrimination and socio-economic exclusion, industrial pollution and vulnerability to natural hazards. The emergence of the concept of sustainable development has fostered a debate on environmental fairness. It questions our ontological relationship to the world, and the possibility of a fair policy to address the needs of humanity, present and future, local and global. It also includes questions of new forms of governance. Lastly, it goes without saying that the concept of justice also questions space at all scales of study, from the global to the local.

The journal *Justice Spatiale / Spatial Justice* is committed to **interdisciplinary** approaches and encourages cross-cutting research. Another primary objective is to create sustained linkages between the English-speaking and the French-speaking scientific communities. The journal is therefore completely **bilingual**. The **electronic** medium also has the potential to expand the traditional definition of the academic article since it enables the combination of text, images (static and animated) and sounds. *Justice Spatiale / Spatial Justice* is a peer reviewed journal with an editorial board constituted by a wide international scientific network.

With the combination of full bilingualism (complete versions of the journal in English and French), and of the support of an internationally recognized global scientific network, we expect that *Justice Spatiale / Spatial Justice* will rapidly become **a reference journal** in this field.

Justice Spatiale / Spatial Justice will appear twice a year, in addition to articles and book reviews, it will contain a section called “Public Space” where debates, discussions on the actuality (as the contribution in the present issue of Christine Chivallon on the recent events in Guadeloupe), and re-exploration (from different national points of views) of founding texts will be welcomed.

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