

## Justice and the spatial imagination

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Mustafa Dikeç

Department of Urban Planning, University of California Los Angeles, 3250 Public Policy Building, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1656, USA; e-mail: [mdikec@yahoo.com](mailto:mdikec@yahoo.com)

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**Abstract.** I attempt in this paper to conceptualize a notion of spatial justice in order to point to the dialectical relationship between (in)justice and spatiality, and to the role that spatialization plays in the production and reproduction of domination and repression. I argue that the city provides a productive ground for the formation of a spatially informed ethics of political solidarity against domination and repression. A ‘triad’ is articulated to inform such politics, which brings together three notions: the spatial dialectics of injustice, the right to the city, and the right to difference. The notion of spatial justice is employed as a theoretical underpinning to avoid abusive interpretations of Lefebvrian rights in a liberal framework of individual rights. The case of French urban policy is used for illustrative purposes. Finally, the notion of *égalité* is introduced as a moral ground on which the triad may be defended.

### Introduction

In an article published almost two decades ago, G H Pirie (1983, page 472) wrote:

“It would be a pity indeed if the busyness of political philosophers was to go completely unnoticed by spatial theorists and applied researchers. Equally, it would be a pity ... if this essay were to stand alone as a review of implications of that busyness.”

In that article, entitled “On spatial justice”, Pirie reflected “on the desirability and possibility of fashioning a concept of spatial justice from notions of social justice and territorial social justice” (page 465). The present paper offers yet another reflection on the notion of justice as it relates to space and spatiality, to point to the ways in which various forms of injustice are manifest in the very process of spatialization, and the ways in which an increased awareness of the dialectical relationship between (in)justice and spatiality could make space a site of politics in fighting against injustice. As will become clear further through the text, the conceptualizations of both justice and space differ from the ways Pirie once viewed them.

The paper is organized in five sections. The first section is a brief review of the geography literature which engages with the notion of justice, and serves to outline the theoretical position assumed in this paper. The second section provides an urban context in which a notion of spatial justice may be conceptualized. The third section is devoted to such a conceptualization. The fourth section presents the case of French urban policy in order to make the arguments more concrete. The concluding section is an attempt to define an ethico-political ground on which emancipatory politics in an urban spatial framework may be defended. The paper is conceptual in nature. Examples, however, are provided to stir the imagination as to the ways in which the dialectical relationship between (in)justice and spatiality may be conceived. The examples, therefore, are used to make this relationship more concrete, rather than attempting to provide a thorough discussion of the cases selected.

### Geographical encounters<sup>(1)</sup>

“The explicit engagement of geography with morality and social justice”, David Smith (1994, page 4) argues, “dates from the latter part of the 1960s”. There is, of course, good reason to believe this. The movements of the 1960s and 1970s brought to attention issues, such as identity politics, rights to the city, rights to difference, and social justice, to name a few, and have been influential in almost every discipline. Geography was no exception.

The first explicit attempt to link justice to geographical terms was made by Bleddyn Davies, who first coined the term ‘territorial justice’ in his 1968 book entitled *Social Needs and Resources in Local Services*. Davies’s conceptualization was normative in nature, designed to assess the distribution of local services with respect to the needs of designated service areas. Approaches of this kind came under close scrutiny with the emergence of the so-called radical geography of the early 1970s. Regional science methods were criticized as being dehumanizing and distracting attention from social problems, and attention, accordingly, “moved on to the processes responsible for spatial disparities in people’s life chances: for what was beginning to be recognized as spatial injustice” (Smith, 1994, page 5).

The book that broke new ground came out in 1973. David Harvey, in his *Social Justice and the City*, sought to push John Rawls’s (1971) liberal formulations to its limits, with a territorial twist, and arrived at a notion of ‘territorial social justice’, which he defined as “a just distribution justly arrived at”. Harvey, however, was more interested in the structural dynamics of the capitalist society, and therefore, not merely in distribution but, above all, in issues of production. Rawls’s scheme, which did not have production at its core and which, indeed, left it to the workings of the market, would not take him there.

Davies’s initial conceptualization and Harvey’s earlier work have been influential in stimulating research on the spatiality of social justice, and the notion of territorial justice still guides research (see, for example, Boyne and Powell, 1991). A shift in focus occurred with the publication of Iris Marion Young’s *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (1990). Harvey (1992) engaged again with the notion of justice, this time building not on Rawls, but on Young, with an emphasis on forms of oppression as sources of injustice. This was followed, with a diminished interest in Young’s formulation, by a modification of his earlier formulation as “just production of just geographical difference”. His central concerns now were uneven geographical development as an intrinsic feature of the capitalist mode of production, and the social construction of principles of justice (Harvey, 1996). Although Young’s work was initially embraced, it was later criticized for its ‘difference’-guided identity politics by scholars seeking strategic forms of essentialism, such as human sameness, as sources of ethico-political solidarity (Smith, 1997; 2000).

To recapitulate: geography’s engagement with social justice started with an exclusive concern on distribution in a Cartesian space (Davies, 1968); continued with an emphasis on production, the workings of the capitalist city, and uneven geographies of capitalism (Harvey, 1973; 1996); shifted focus with a celebration of identity and difference, and an emphasis not on justice and consensus, but on injustice and dissensus (Gleeson, 1998; Harvey, 1992; Merrifield, 1997; Merrifield and Swyngedouw, 1997); and ended up, for the moment, with a problematization of the preoccupation with difference, and a search for universal bonds of solidarity (Smith, 1997; 2000).

There have been few studies, however, that have explicitly employed a notion of ‘spatial justice’. One of these was Steven Flusty’s (1994) study of the built environment

<sup>(1)</sup> This section is a condensed version of Dikeç (2001). A recently published review may also be found in Smith (2000).

in Los Angeles, where he argued for an equitable distribution of spatial resources for all to ensure spatial justice given that space is claimed by dominant groups in the society. This, of course, is a most welcome and challenging statement but Flusty, rather than elaborating the notion, focused merely on form to the neglect of the structural dynamics of the particular kind of spatialization that he wanted to analyze. The most recent engagement with the spatial dimension of justice, by explicitly employing the term spatial justice, has been that of Edward Soja (2000) in his *Postmetropolis*, as part of his ongoing project for the assertion of the spatiality of human life and the formation of spatially conscious politics initiated in his earlier work (1989).

The article that opens this paper was an explicit attempt to conceptualize a notion of spatial justice. Pirie's spatial sensibilities were certainly intriguing. However, his conceptualization deserved a reservation. He, admittedly, treated space "in the [then]-familiar way as some kind of container, as an entity or physical expression made up of individual locations and their distance relations" (1983, page 471). It is a pity that Pirie stopped at what seems to be a perfect starting point (1983, pages 471, 472; emphasis added):

"This notion of space is not inviolate. It may also be conceived of as a social creation—as a structure created by society and not merely as a context for society ... Conceptualizing spatial justice in terms of a view of *space as process*, and perhaps in terms of *radical notions of justice*, stands as an exacting challenge and, not unlikely, as the single occasion there might be for requiring and constructing a concept of spatial justice. ... In spite of the challenge of spatial fetishism, and in spite of the radical assault on liberal distributive concerns, it would be worthwhile investigating the possibility of matching justice to notions of socially constructed space."

What follows, then, is an endeavour that undertakes this enticing suggestion. Before moving on to the next section, I return briefly to Rawls, and chart some of the criticisms levelled against his work for they provide the agenda around which the present paper is structured. A recurring critique directed against Rawls was his conviction of a single conception of justice that can rationally be defined, presupposing a rather homogeneous public with no serious conflicts. Later, in his *Political Liberalism*, Rawls (1993) modified his previous 'well-ordered' view of society, recognized conflicts with a postulate of consensus, and admitted that his conception of society as relatively homogeneous in his earlier work was no longer a plausible assumption. His postulate of consensus, however, was not without problems. He was still inclined "to keep incommensurability outside the public realm and admit to it only when reasonable and capable of contributing to his overlapping consensus" (Katznelson, 1997, page 52). The recognition of this problem guided *The Urbanization of Injustice* (Merrifield and Swyngedouw, 1997) which was a collection of essays attempting to reconsider the lessons learned from Harvey's *Social Justice and the City* (1973), in the light of debates around 'difference' and 'nontotalizing' discourses. The focus, therefore, was not on consensus, but on dissensus and injustice. The conceptual tool for such an approach was provided by Young, according to whom injustice "should be defined primarily in terms of the concepts of oppression and domination, rather than distribution" (1990, page 192). Although "Young's alternative vision for justice remains inchoate, she certainly provides a powerful theory of injustice" (Gleeson, 1998, page 89), and the framework she provides seems to be a productive terrain on which to construe a notion of spatial justice, for spatialization (the mode of *social production* of space) is one of the major systematic producers of domination and oppression: that is, of injustice.

Some of the basic tenets of this project may now be discerned. The argument is built around the social production of space, with the idea that the very production

of space, which is inherently a conflictual process, not only manifests various forms of injustice, but actually produces *and* reproduces them (thereby maintaining established social relations of domination and oppression). Such an approach clearly departs from an exclusively distributional approach. This, however, does not negate the importance of distributional issues, since, for example,

“when people are utterly excluded from active political participation in city affairs, distributional issues, of the sorts Rawls pinpoints, are often all that is left for communities and groups to organize around and to seek substantive representation” (Merrifield, 1997, page 202).

What should be criticized in the distributive paradigm, therefore, is the tendency to reduce social justice to distribution. I try to reconcile this tension through a notion of *spatial dialectics of injustice*, in an attempt neither to overvalorize nor to devalorize distributional matters. The attempt here, it should be noted, is not one aimed at refining Rawls’s arguments. It is rather to evoke the spatial dimension of justice—via a notion of spatial justice—informed by the charges leveled against Rawls, whose engagement (and liberal political philosophers’ in general) with social justice mostly remained as an abstract ideal, “invariably devoid of time and place” (Merrifield and Swyngedouw, 1997, page 3), and “without the city” (Katznelson, 1997, page 49).

Rawls was obviously weak on the sociospatial front. This might also explain his tendency to “conceive of individuals as social atoms prior to social relations and institutions” (Young, 1990, page 27), another source of critique directed against his work, mostly by communitarian scholars (see, for example, Sandel, 1982). Rawls’s major concern was the maximization of individual liberty, which would enable individuals to pursue their particular goals in their particular ways without interference. Rights, in his scheme, were used to this end, to foster self-interest, provided that the rights of others are respected. Rawls’s moral self, which was prior to social relationships, lacked community as constitutive of his or her identity (this situation leads to an ‘unencumbered self’, as Sandel would call it); did not necessarily encourage civic action, and actually contributed to its deterioration (Mouffe, 1992; Skinner, 1992), and his or her ‘identity’ and ‘differences’ went largely unnoticed under a conception of a relatively homogeneous public (Young, 1990).

The way in which I try to address this problem diverges my position from that of Young’s. Although I draw on her definition of injustice, I do not do so in the name of ‘difference’. Rather, I turn to Étienne Balibar’s notion of *égalité* (equality–freedom) as the ethico-political bond that would inform emancipatory movements, not in the name of a certain particularity, but, rather, in the name of an enactment of equality and freedom. *Égaliberté* provides the ‘universal’ bond of solidarity, and more on the notion may be found in the concluding section.

Underlying these premises, and indeed the whole endeavour, is the conviction that approaches to, and principles of, justice are time and space specific. A close relationship, therefore, between sociospatial specificities and conceptions of justice is assumed. I should like to believe that a sensitivity to the spatial dimension of justice may be developed—especially in societies where the injustices of spatial dynamics are exposed and largely recognized—to guide emancipatory movements to suppress domination and oppression in and through space. The city seems to provide a fertile ground for such a prospect.

### **Urban sensibilities**

The impulses of the 1960s and 1970s were also influential in bringing the ‘urban question’ to the political agenda. Two major reasons for the development of an urban sensibility in this period may be noted. First, there was a growing reaction to the

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functional approach to the city, and to the growing emphasis on the city's exchange value to the detriment of its use value. Second, as Alain Bertho (1999) states, there was a search for alternative social movements to the workers movement—for a political mobilizing force that was more spatial and urban in nature than the traditional mobilizations based on work. These reasons, of course, may be less confidently stated outside the French political culture. However, it was in this context and for these concerns that Henri Lefebvre conceived the notion of the right to the city.

“The *right to the city*”, Lefebvre (1993, page 435) writes, “cannot be considered a simple visiting right or a return to the traditional city. It can only be formulated as the *right to urban life*, in a transformed and renewed form.” It is not simply the right of property owners, in which case policies like zero tolerance might have been legitimized—if not justified—but of all who live in the city. The right to the city, therefore, does not imply a ‘clean’ and quaint city where the ‘good citizens’ mingle on its streets, crowding its beautiful parks, and living there happily ever after. As Lefebvre (1996, page 195) argues “it does not abolish confrontations and struggles. On the contrary!” This, of course, is an unsurprising claim given Lefebvre's conception of the city as the place of simultaneity and encounter, and of rights to be given content through struggle. And he is perfectly sensible to ask the question: “are these not specific urban needs? Is there not also the need for a time for such encounters, such exchanges?” (1993, page 428). There is, I think, a double message in these questions; an appeal and a critique. The appeal points to the need to (re)claim the right to the city. The critique, on the other hand, stems from Lefebvre's denouncement of the welfare capitalist society as the “bureaucratic society of organized consumption” where needs are created and institutionalized, where the exchange value of urban space is prioritized over its use value. It was a critique in the context of the 1960s and 1970s when, in France, functionalist and technocratic urbanization processes were under severe critique for eradicating urbanity, and depriving urban dwellers of places of social encounter through the rational ordering of urban space. This critique, in a sense, is a critique of the abstraction of rights from the city, which, I believe, was the motivation for Lefebvre to advance a notion of right to the city. Let me try to clarify this point.

A common theme flowing through all the writings of Lefebvre on the city is a critique of the contemporary city, which started to deteriorate in the 19th century with the development and deployment of industrial capitalism and the rise of the modern nation state. In the 20th century, as capitalism dominated all areas of social life, the society was turned into a ‘bureaucratic society of organized consumption’. Not only consumption was controlled, but the spaces of the society and their production as well, the city being the site where these powers were at work more intensely. In that sense, Lefebvre's attempt can be seen as a political project to rescue the individual from the oppressive and homogenizing processes by asserting his or her right to the city. “The individual does not disappear in the midst of the social effects caused by the pressures of the masses, but is instead affirmed”, he would write. “Certain *rights* come to light” (1993, page 435).

What, then, happened in the 19th and 20th centuries besides the development and deployment of capitalism, that would lead one to point to the need to reassert rights to the city? And what kind of a right is that; why is Lefebvre so careful to note that it “cannot be considered a simple visiting right”? Let me start with the latter question. Such a conception would bring him too close to the argument Immanuel Kant advanced in his famous text on “Perpetual peace” concerning world citizenship and universal hospitality. The stranger, states Kant (1790), cannot claim a *right of residence* but rather a *right of visit*. The stranger, upon his or her arrival also enjoys another right, that of hospitality, which suggests that he or she not be treated as an enemy by the host of the territory in question. There is no room for the stranger to

claim a right, but simply to enjoy a right to visit or pass through. Besides, this right is conceived as an interstate conditionality, and thus, there is no hospitality for those who do not possess citizenship status in one of the signatory states.<sup>(2)</sup>

The answer to the first question, on the other hand, may be formulated in relation to changing conceptions of citizenship, a notion that has currently been challenged, as, for example, Catherine Wihtol de Wenden (1992) suggests, by two fundamental elements of political context and social tissue: immigration and urbanity. Citizenship originates as rights to the city in a spatial sense, which are now abstracted from the city, from their spatial origins. And this detachment coincides with the periods of which Lefebvre is so critical, and which eventually leads him to proclaim the need to reclaim rights to the city. The city, Engin Isin (1999, page 165) argues, “has not only been a foreground or a background to struggles for group rights but also a battleground to claim those rights”. These struggles were pursued as “claiming rights to the city as a space of politics” up until the 17th century, when citizenship and struggles were redirected to center on the state, and eventually, on the modern state since the 19th century. In this sense, Lefebvre’s notion of the right to the city is a call to advance an urban spatial approach to political struggles with the participation of all those who inhabit the city without discrimination.

“The right to the city, complemented by the right to difference and the right to information, should modify, concretize and make more practical the rights of the citizen as an urban dweller (*citadin*) and user of multiple services. It would affirm, on the one hand, the right of users to make known their ideas on the space and time of their activities in the urban area; it would also cover the right to the use of the center, a privileged place, instead of being dispersed and stuck into ghettos (for workers, immigrants, the ‘marginal’ and even for the ‘privileged’)” (1986, page 170; translation from 1996, page 34).

The right to the city implies not only the participation of the urban citizen in urban social life, but, more importantly, his or her active participation in the political life, management, and administration of the city. The achievement of these rights, Lefebvre (1986) states, supposes the transformation of the society, of time and space. It is the urban political life which is to be changed, not the city per se. In other words, the right to the city entails not a right to be distributed from above to individuals, but a way of actively and collectively relating to the political life of the city. The urban would then consist of “a civil society founded not on abstractions but on space and time, as ‘lived’” (1986, page 173; emphasis added). The right to the city, therefore, is not simply a participatory right but, more importantly, an *enabling right*, to be defined and refined through political struggle. It is not only a right to urban space, but to a political space as well, constituting the city as a space of politics. Urban citizenship, in this sense, does not refer to a legal status, but to a form of identification with the city, to a political identity. The construction of this identity through political struggle is enabled by another right—the right to difference.

*The right to difference* is complementary to the right of the city. Lefebvre was very clear on this notion, although it somehow ended up with an exclusive focus on difference as *particularity*. The right to be different, he wrote, is “the right not to be classified forcibly into categories which have been determined by the necessarily homogenizing powers” (1976a, page 35). His emphasis was on the ‘be’ of the ‘right to be different’, not particularly on the ‘different’ narrowly interpreted as particularity. Therefore, the connotations were disagreement and contestation (and eventually *differing*) resulting from a right to ‘not to subscribe to’, and from a ‘right to *be* different’. A better translation, perhaps, would be ‘the right to resist/struggle’. The difference between particularities

<sup>(2)</sup> An elaboration of the notion of hospitality, pointing to the limits and perils of its Kantian version, may be found in Dikeç (forthcoming).

and differences, and the dynamic relation between them were part of Lefebvre's *differentialist* project. He was critical of the reduction of the differences to the particularities, and the movement from the particularities to the differences was the moment of *differing*, achieved only through political struggle (Lefebvre, 1981). Solidarity, therefore, was not built merely around particularities, as Young's (1990) scheme would suggest, for example, but on the will and capabilities to differ. Criticizing the marginalization of certain groups through identities imposed upon them or through the use of identities that they associate themselves with, and then trying to develop a 'politics of identity' in the name of those 'differences' to resist such processes, is simply to accept and remain trapped in the already established categories.

For Lefebvre particularities existed naturally, but then became difference in the modern world. It is the concept of difference that is created by distanced reflection, and the illusory difference that the individual feels, which, eventually, makes him or her indifferent. He writes (1970a, pages 65–66):

"[D]ifference in act differs ... from the difference merely thought or reflected. The thought and not-lived difference of philosophers and logicians is in opposition with the non-thought and lived difference ... [I]t cannot be reduced to banalized representations: originality, diversity, variety, distinction, etc."

The right to difference, therefore, is the basis and source of other concrete rights which could "be fully affirmed only beyond the written and the prescribed, in a practice recognized as the basis of social relations" (1970a, page 45). Differentialism, as he states at the conclusion to his manifesto, "is about living. Not thinking but 'being' differently" (1970a, page 186).

Therefore, the rights that Lefebvre conceptualizes are established through lived experience and social relationships, and once established would lead to new ways of life, new social relations, and possibilities to *differ*—even in relation to the established rights themselves. In this sense, rights, as conceived by Lefebvre, become:

"more of a claim upon than a possession held against the world. It becomes a claim upon society for the resources necessary to meet the basic needs and interests of members rather than a kind of property some possess and others do not ... [I]n terms of rights to the city and rights to political participation, right becomes conceived as an aspect of social relatedness rather than as an inherent and natural property of individuals" (Holston and Appadurai, 1996, page 197).

In claiming these rights, a notion of spatial justice might serve as a mobilizing discourse through the cultivation of a spatial sensibility toward injustice and a spatial culture to fight against it. It might also serve as an ethico-political imperative to avoid the abusive interpretations of these rights, particularly of the right to the city in order to legitimize zero tolerance type of policies.

### **Spatial justice: a conceptualization**

I begin with three exemplary cases to point to the role of spatialization in the maintenance and manifestation of injustice. The first one is Harvey's account of the Imperial Foods plant fire in Hamlet. In order to point to the lack of political response to the incident in Hamlet in comparison with one in New York, Harvey writes (1996, page 340; emphasis added):

"A similar event in a relatively remote rural setting posed immediate logistical problems for massive on-the-spot political responses (such as the protest demonstration on Broadway), illustrating the effectiveness of capitalist *strategies of geographical dispersal* away from politicized central city locations as a means of labor control."

This was, perhaps, the great lesson that industrial capitalists had learned from the grand strike of July 1969 in Turin, organized by the united syndicates and political parties of the left against increased living costs. The 600 000 workers who united in Turin were not only exploited in the factory, but were dominated in their city as well. Both exploitation and spatial domination were consequences of the logic of the capitalist mode of accumulation, exploitation was produced and reproduced by social relations of power established under the capitalist production system, and spatial domination was produced *and* reproduced by the spatial logic of capitalism, contributing further to the domination of a certain group of the population. In this sense, the Turin strike was:

“one of the first movements for the right to the city against the pattern in which the city was developed under the pressure of speculation, motivated by the logic of maximum profit” (Novelli, cited in Lojkine, 1977, page 335).

Injustice in the factory was exploitation. Injustice in the city was the domination of urban space, pushing the workers away from the city where rent was no longer affordable. Injustice was at once socially and spatially manifest, and above all, was produced not only socially but spatially as well.

The case for the injustice of spatialization was made neither for Hamlet nor Turin. The case, however, was made in the Bus Riders Union (BRU) in Los Angeles, if not explicitly in these terms. The argument was that the Metropolitan Transit Authority’s (MTA) transit policies and investment schemes were discriminative against a particular population of transit-dependent bus-riders. The case was brought to court (*Labor/Community Strategy Center versus Los Angeles Metropolitan Transit Authority*) as a class action suit on behalf of 350 000 bus riders. It was resolved in 1996 through a consent decree, forcing MTA to reconsider its policies, resulting in a temporary stop of the construction of the planned fixed-rail transit system. What was questioned in the case was the spatial pattern imposed by the MTA on the transit-dependent poor working populations of Los Angeles. In this sense, the BRU:

“can be seen as opening traditional notions of civil rights to a more specifically spatial politics revolving around new visions of democratic citizenship and the rights to the city, the rights—and responsibilities—of all urban dwellers to participate effectively in the social production of their lived cityscapes” (Soja, 2000, pages 257–258).

Moreover, Soja argues, the BRU case represented an attentiveness to see injustice in its spatial dimension, enticingly signaling the formation of spatially informed practices and politics. What is imminent, perhaps, is the development of a new notion:

“I do not mean to substitute spatial justice for the more familiar notion of social justice, but rather to bring out more clearly the potentially powerful yet often obscured spatiality of all aspects of social life and to open up in this spatialized sociality (and historicity) more effective ways to change the world for the better through spatially conscious practices and politics” (Soja, 2000, page 352).

I read these examples as illustrative vignettes that denote both the *spatiality of injustice*—from physical or locational aspects to more abstract spaces of social and economic relationships that sustain the production of injustice—and the *injustice of spatiality*—the elimination of the possibilities for the formation of political responses (as in the Hamlet case in contrast to the Turin and Los Angeles cases).

In the dialectical formulation of the spatiality of injustice and the injustice of spatiality, the spatiality of injustice implies that justice has a spatial dimension to it, and therefore, that a spatial perspective might be used to discern injustice *in space* (which, of course, can be effectively captured by an analysis of distribution patterns, as the BRU case exemplifies). The injustice of spatiality, on the other hand, implies



existing structures in their capacities to produce and reproduce injustice *through space*. It is, compared with the spatiality of injustice, more dynamic and process oriented. Such a conceptualization implies two essential points. First, analysis should not be based on the thing under consideration per se, but also on the components of it. Second, form and process are inseparable and should be considered together. How, then, may such an approach be related to space? As Lefebvre puts it:

“The dialectic is back on the agenda. But it is no longer Marx’s dialectic, just as Marx’s was no longer Hegel’s ... The dialectic today no longer clings to historicity and historical time, or to a temporal mechanism such as ‘thesis-antithesis-synthesis’ or ‘affirmation-negation-negation of the negation’... To recognize space, to recognize what ‘takes place’ there and what it is used for is to resume the dialectic; analysis will reveal the contradictions of space” (1976a, pages 14 and 17).

“(Social) space is not a thing among other things, nor a product among other products ... It is the outcome of a sequence and set of operations, and thus cannot be reduced to the rank of a simple object ... Itself the outcome of past actions, social space is what permits fresh actions to occur, while suggesting others and prohibiting yet others” (1991, page 73).

Therefore, the emphasis is not on space per se, but on the processes that produce space, and, at the same time, the implications of these produced spaces on the dynamic processes of social, economic, and political relations. The basic features of the dialectical formulation I propose to consider in the relationship between injustice and spatiality are, therefore, as follows:

- (a) a focus on spatiality as a process; as a producer and reproducer of, and at the same time being produced and reproduced by, relatively stable structures (permanences),
- (b) recognition of the interrelatedness of injustice and spatiality as producing, reproducing, and sustaining each other through a mediation of larger permanences that give rise to both of them.

In this sense, the notion of spatial justice is a critique of systematic exclusion, domination, and oppression; a critique aimed at cultivating new sensibilities that would animate actions towards injustice embedded in space and spatial dynamics. The aim is to explicate an ideological discourse on the spatiality of (in)justice, informed by the two notions of the right to the city and the right to difference and resistance, into which such emergent movements as the BRU may insert themselves. Under a larger, but not a totalizing, conception of justice, it is useful to assess the processes that could be the sources and resources of injustice in their specific contexts, as similar processes may produce different consequences in different contexts. Focusing on processes in their relationships and implications would be a reformulated dialectical approach as opposed to focusing on fixed forms or distributive consequences under a universal stencil of justice. Such an approach helps not to discern whether a particular event is just or unjust, but rather, to explore the dynamic processes of social, spatial, economic, and political formations in order to see if they operate in such a way to produce and reproduce dominant and oppressive permanences which would be considered as being unjust. In a spatial sense, domination as a form of injustice manifests itself in space; most visibly in the built environment but also in the other various forms of less visible (or not visible at all) spaces of flows, distributions, networks, and institutions. More importantly, space and the processes of spatialization play a major role not only in the production of the conditions of domination, but also in their reproduction and survival as an indispensable manipulative tool for the existing mode of production (that is, capitalism).

How, then, do the three notions I have employed thus far—spatial justice, the right to the city, the right to difference—come together as part of an emancipatory politics?

In what follows, I shall offer a ‘triad’ that brings together these notions, and defines the parameters of a spatially informed emancipatory politics. At this point, I still remain vulnerable to charges that the argument about these notions is too abstract, and that the term ‘emancipation’ continues to be unpleasantly ambiguous. I attend to these issues by presenting the case of French urban policy in the next section, focusing particularly on a law passed in 1991 in order to fight against the problem of socio-spatial exclusion. The case presents an opportunity for the articulation of the notions of spatial justice, the right to the city, and the right to difference, and demonstrates a context in which the injustice of spatial dynamics is recognized. The observations drawn from the case form the basis of a spatial politics of emancipation, which I clarify in the concluding section drawing from Balibar and Rancière.

The triad consists of three notions: the spatial dialectics of injustice (the spatiality of injustice and the injustice of spatiality), the right to the city, and the right to difference. I articulate these notions as the parameters of an ‘ideal of égaliberté’ (equality–freedom); that is, the suppression of domination and repression, achievement of which would imply a moment of emancipation. The argument is that Lefebvre’s two rights, which have been the subject of much intellectual effort aimed at emancipatory politics, provide a better framework when articulated with a ‘spatial dialectics of injustice’. This, indeed, seems to be a necessary underpinning in order to resolve the paradox rising from decidedly individualistic versus collective interpretations of these rights (for example, zero tolerance versus ‘A city center for all’).<sup>(3)</sup> Such an approach is informed not only by the premise that spatial dynamics play an essential role in the production and reproduction of injustice, but also by the premise that they permit, as well as prohibit, the formation of rights claims and the ways and extent to which rights are put into action and practised.

The triad provides a common lexicon<sup>(4)</sup> and conceptual apparatus, which then could cultivate an “ethico-political bond” (Mouffe, 1992, page 231), or an “ethics of political solidarity” (Harvey, 1996, page 360) to inform emancipatory movements of those<sup>(5)</sup> who are, to name a few, “trapped in space” (Harvey, 1989), “chained to a place” (Bourdieu, 1999), “disabled by the social production of space” (Gleeson, 1998), excluded by urban entrepreneurialism (Hall and Hubbard, 1996), or expelled through urban renewal projects (Leroux, 2001). The bond is ethical in the sense that it is nurtured through social relatedness, rather than assumed as an ontological given. Such a conception is necessary to imply that forms of morally defensible practices must be socially negotiated, through engagement, rather than being manipulated by the anxieties of dominant groups in the city. And the bond is political in the sense that it entails antagonism and contestation, and not always an effortless reconciliation, for the simple reason that the very production of space is decidedly political (see, for example, Lefebvre, 1976b). As for the way in which the individual components of the triad relate to one another, the notion of spatial (in)justice sets the parameters by which the right to the city may be assessed, violations of which are resisted through a right to difference.

<sup>(3)</sup> ‘A city center for all’ is an association in Marseille, currently fighting against speculative forces generated by urban renewal projects, which force out the immigrant population from the city center. See Leroux (2001).

<sup>(4)</sup> Michael Keith (1997) employs a similar notion—‘vocabulary of resistance’—in his work on young Bengalis in London’s East End, and shows how such a common lexicon serves as a bond in their struggle against racism.

<sup>(5)</sup> This, of course, must not be interpreted as implying merely ‘those who are affected’, but be seen in the light of the notion of égaliberté. In this sense, these movements represent a resistance against the negation of socially enshrined principles (in this case, of the suppression of discrimination and exclusion), against the negation of humanity as such (Balibar, 1997). This is the universal bond that coalesces not only those who are affected, but all who wish to negate the negation of humanity.

And there is good reason to believe that such a spatial sensitivity to (in)justice may be developed, especially in societies, such as France, where the spatial dynamics of social exclusion are widely recognized. David Miller's thesis endorses this likelihood, according to which people:

“hold conceptions of social justice as part of more general views of society, and... acquire these views through their experience of living in actual societies with definite structures and embodying particular kinds of interpersonal relationship” (1976, page 342).

It is now timely to introduce the French case to demonstrate the ways in which these rights may be articulated with a ‘spatial dialectics of injustice’—injustice understood as domination and repression—and how such an articulation may inform emancipatory politics—emancipation understood as the suppression of domination and repression.

### **Right to the city: beyond homage to Lefebvre?**

“The political strategy implies:

- a) Introducing the urban problematic into (French) political life, pushing it to the forefront;
- b) Elaborating a program of which the first article will be *widespread self-management [autogestion]* ...;
- c) Introducing... the ‘right to the city’.”

Henri Lefebvre, “Towards an urban strategy” (1970b, page 199)

French urban policy, Daniel Béhar (1999) wrote, has probably been the most commented upon public policy of the last fifteen years. What he refers to here, it should be noted, is not French urban policy in general, but a particular one that was initiated in the 1980s with the ‘spatialization of social policies’ (Bertho, 1996; 1999; Chaline, 1998), and regrouped later in 1988 under the generic term *la politique de la ville* as a national urban policy. The use of the term ‘urban policy’ hereafter refers to this specific policy. The attempt here is not to provide a full account of French urban policy, but, rather, to take this policy by way of an example in order to; first, make more concrete what the dialectical formulation between injustice and spatiality—that is, spatiality of injustice and injustice of spatiality—implies; second, to illustrate how some of the notions discussed in abstract ways, such as the right to the city, are implied in urban policy; and, third, to consider some possible implications of the notion of spatial justice for urban policy in general.

The origins of urban policy go back to the first Housing and Social Life plan of 1977 (*Habitat et vie sociale*), which was originally conceived for the restoration of large housing blocks (*grands ensembles*) built by the state to meet the housing shortage in the 1960s (the period during which Lefebvre conceived the notion of the right to the city). Since then, with policies such as the 1981 Social Development of Neighbourhoods (*Développement social des quartiers*), which, in 1989, became Urban Social Development (*Développement social urbain*), the main focus of urban policy in the French state's fight against exclusion (for which a city minister was appointed in 1991) has been the most deprived areas of cities (*quartiers en difficulté*).

Urban policy has been largely affected by political changes and incidents of violence, being modified by all successive governments, and today it is recognized that it has become quite complex and difficult to assess in terms of effectiveness. Originally developed around the idea to identify and rehabilitate ‘neighborhoods in difficulty’, the concern of urban policy today is “no longer a question of curbing urban violence and restoring a few degraded housing blocks that are poorly situated” (Lelévrier, 1999, page 35). Today the underlying problem is defined as segregation and exclusion.

The two basic notions around which urban policy is conceived are concentration and exclusion (Lelévrier, 1999). The ‘urban and social degradation’ is largely attributed to the concentration of ‘problem populations’ in certain areas—mainly the large housing blocks—a situation which aggravates the marginalization of individuals. Such a concentration is seen to contribute further to the problem of exclusion. Regarding the notion of exclusion, a key work has been that of Lenoir (1974), who showed that exclusion was not simply limited to a few victims of economic circumstances, but was a structural problem with its own dynamics. Exclusion, in other words, was not merely an economic question, but a social and urban one as well. As Daniel Béland and Randall Hansen (2000, page 55) state,

“while the long-term unemployed are the archetypal example of *les exclus*, they are not the sole example. The concept of *l'exclusion* is meant also to describe a multiplicity of situations in which the individual is prevented from participating, even temporarily, in society.”

Defining the problem as one of exclusion is to recognize; first, the spatial (abstract and concrete) dimension of the problem; and second, the presence of a group of the included against which the category of the excluded may be defined. This implies that there exists a *process* of exclusion that actually leaves certain individuals and groups outside the category of the included. The process, of course, has many dimensions, and could be approached from a variety of epistemological and methodological perspectives. There is, however, an important dimension to it which has recently been largely recognized in the growing literature on exclusion: the spatial dimension (see, for example, Byrne, 1999; Madanipour, 1998). The spatial dimension of exclusion is also recognized in the French policy circles. The ‘exclusion problem’ entered the agenda of public debate in the 1980s, during the period in which urban policy was conceived. The effect of this conception on urban policy has been an awareness that:

“the social division between those who are in or out became an ‘urban division’ between ‘normal’, ‘ordinary’ neighborhoods and ‘exclusion’ neighborhoods which concentrate the misfortunes of our society. Those who are ‘excluded’ from society become ‘*excluded from the city*’” (Lelévrier, 1999, page 35; emphasis added).

Those who are ‘excluded’, in other words, are also deprived of their rights to the city. French society was moving, in the words of Alain Touraine (1991, page 12), from a “society of discrimination” to a “society of segregation”. The notion of segregation was effective to capture the spatial dynamics and manifestations of the social exclusion problem, a problem of which elimination was one of the major missions of the first City Minister, Michel Delebarre, in 1991. The Urban Development Act of 13 July 1991 (*Loi d'orientation sur la ville*, known as LOV, also as the anti-ghetto law) was conceived with these concerns in mind. The LOV was published in the official journal (*Journal Officiel de la République Française*) on 19 July 1991, and the first article read:

“In order to realize the *right to the city*, urban districts, other territorial collectivities and their groupings, the State and its public institutions assure to all the inhabitants of cities conditions of living and dwelling promoting social cohesion as to avoid or abate the phenomena of segregation. This policy must provide for the insertion of each neighborhood [*quartier*] in the city and assure the coexistence of diverse social categories in each agglomeration.

The reverberation of Lefebvre’s conceptualization of the right to the city is clear:

“To exclude the *urban* from groups, classes, individuals, is also to exclude them from civilization, if not from society itself. The *right to the city* legitimates the refusal to allow oneself to be removed from urban reality by a discriminatory and segregative organization” (Lefebvre, 1996, page 195).

However, the LOV was vulnerable to the criticism that it was implicitly envisioning “a correspondence between residential mixity and social harmony” (Simon, 1995, page 30). In this case, French urban policymakers made not one mistake, but two: trying to resolve some kind of perceived spatiality of injustice (that is, segregation and the resulting deprivation of the right to the city), and failing, in this attempt, to conceptualize the problem and conceive policies around the structural dynamics of a mode of spatial organization that constantly produces injustice—if not here, somewhere else. The question is not whether or not at some point some form of injustice is spatially manifested. The question is whether or not this spatially manifested injustice is produced and reproduced spatially (as well as socially). And the question that follows is this: what are the spatial dynamics, in the production and persistence, of this injustice? This is the interplay between the spatiality of injustice and the injustice of spatiality. If one holds the hypothesis that space is socially produced—and is not simply a container—there are important implications to be drawn from the ‘segregation problem’: segregation is not a question of distribution in space, but of spatialization itself. It is the very structural dynamics of the spatial organization processes in the city—and not simply some ‘distributive force’ external to space, distributing each to his or her ‘proper’ place. And these dynamics; first, contribute to the formation of such segregated areas with a concentration of poverty; second, force a certain group of the population to locate in these places, making it even more difficult for the individuals to participate in the society; and third, further reduce the chances of relocating not only for the immediate population, but, perhaps, for the generations to come unless the spatial dynamics are modified. In other words, such spaces are not simply by-products, mirrors, or stages of various forms of injustice; they are constituted by and constitutive of them.

The basic idea behind the 1991 LOV, then, has been to ‘integrate’ or ‘insert’ the ‘excluded’ into the city through urban policies. Such a conception, of course, was vulnerable to charges on many fronts. Two of them, at least, seem too important to be overlooked. First, designation and delimitation of ‘problem areas’ further contribute to the stigmatization and victimization of the population living in those areas. And second, the logic of ‘insertion’ or ‘integration’, clearly derived from the republican ideal of the one and indivisible French Republic, implies assimilation, on the one hand, and hostile partitioning of the society, on the other (for further discussion of these issues, see, among others, Baudouï, 2000; Bertho, 1996; 1999; Faber, 2000). In addition to these, the notion of the right to the city, which opens the LOV as the first article, is not clear as to its implications. The temporary residents’ situation, for example, is totally ambiguous as no attempt was made to link this notion with the notion of citizenship. The use of this notion, therefore, seemed merely “a homage to the work of Henri Lefebvre”.<sup>(6)</sup> This was a sensible assessment; the catchphrase, without deliberate elaboration and careful consideration of larger structural issues, appeared unable to deliver its promises. A letter was then circulated on 31 July 1991 to clarify the articles of the law, which stated that the opening article had “no normative nature”.<sup>(7)</sup> The pursuit of a right to the city, which would imply a major reconsideration of the dynamics of both urban space (for example, property market, housing and land-use policies) and the *demos* (that is, citizenship), was therefore repudiated.

<sup>(6)</sup> When the LOV was in preparation, a seminar was organized that brought together law-makers, researchers, and scholars. The minutes of the seminar were then published in *Recherches* 20 “Loi d’orientation pour la ville: séminaire chercheurs décideurs” (Paris, Ministère de l’équipement, des transports et du logement, 1991). The comment was made by Véronique De Rudder, page 36. References below to Balibar (1991) are also from this seminar.

<sup>(7)</sup> See *Circulaire no. 91-57 relative à la loi d’orientation pour la ville no. 91-662 du 13 juillet 1991*.

As important as these criticisms are, there are significant implications of the way in which urban policy is conceived in France. First, the state has recognized that the mode of urban spatial organization, inter alia, deprives certain individuals and groups—identifiable not only socially but spatially as well—of their rights to the city, which are yet to be given content. Second, with the “territorialization of social policies on the terrain of the city” (Bertho, 1996, page 107), French urban policymakers, implicitly or explicitly, “accept[ed] certain cause and effect relationships between the city and forms of ‘social disorder’” (Lelévrier, 1999, page 35), with a hope, perhaps, of “changing life through changing the city” (Légé, 1995, page 34). The social and the spatial, in other words, were conceived to be mutually affecting each other in the production and aggravation of various social problems as well as in the attempts to resolve them. This point opens the way into a discussion of the notion of spatial justice—the particularities, flaws, and effectiveness of the policy notwithstanding. What flows from this point, however, is not that spatial interventions will automatically solve social problems in the city. Such a conviction has already been realized as a problem with urban policy in France (see, for example, Béhar, 1999; Bertho, 1996). The important point is that the production and persistence of social problems in the city are largely affected by modes and forms of spatial organization. There is enough evidence to note that intensification of social inequalities in space is accompanied by a stabilization of the conditions of the concentration of poverty (Béhar, 1999). Spatial dynamics, therefore, not only aggravate, but actually produce injustice through the stabilization of social inequalities and problems, becoming a major reproducer of them. Seen in this way, urban policy “is no longer confronted merely with circumstances of the absolute concentration of poverty, but with a *multiplicity of territorial dynamics of social devalorization*” (Béhar, 1999, page 216; emphasis added). The conclusion to be drawn from these remarks is simple: if the problems of inequality, exclusion, segregation, and social devalorization enter the sociopolitical agenda as concerns of justice, it is as important to consider the ways in which: first, such problems are manifested spatially; and second, and more importantly, such problems are produced and reproduced spatially, through the very production of space. Injustice and its persistence, in this sense, is the product of spatial dynamics.

One more point needs to be emphasized. Segregation is an intrinsic part of urban spatialization, and in no way unique to France. Besides, segregation does not intrinsically carry a negative connotation; its prohibition may also be coercive (see, for example, Young, 1999). In this sense, the LOV may be charged by arguing that it was premised on a ‘mythical ideology of good mixity’, treating segregation merely as a result to the neglect of the fact that it is voluntarily created as well [Rémi Baudouï, Director of ACIV (Action Concertée Incitative Ville) at the Ministère de la Recherche, Paris, personal interview 26 June 2001]. However, the French case makes clear that there exists a population, living in poor conditions compared with other parts of the city, which is at once socially excluded and spatially segregated, and not always voluntarily. The point here is about segregation as a spatial mode of social exclusion as it relates to concentration of poverty in certain areas, as one of the structural dynamics of social exclusion; that is, the social processes and spatial practices that produce and reproduce socially excluded groups. Therefore, an intervention is necessary “on the principles and norms of urban practices that produce socio-spatial exclusion” (Béhar, 1995, page 13). Seen in this way,

“the ‘pathology’ of these particular neighborhoods is due less to their mono-functionality or to their social specialization than to the rigidity of urban forms that hinder ordinary processes of social appropriation and temporal evolution” (Béhar, 1995, page 14).

The problem, in other words, is not “a simple phenomenon of localized exclusion” (Légé, 1995, page 42). Such a conceptualization of the problem would be the spatiality of injustice, in a static sense, which could probably have been addressed, if not with complete success, by policies of ‘integration’. This, however, is not the case. The socio-spatial exclusion problem is constantly produced and reproduced by the ways in which the society is spatially organized, by ways that defy the rehabilitative capabilities of urban policies conceived to remedy the situation. This, precisely, is what is implied by the notion of injustice of spatiality, which draws attention to the structural dynamics of spatial practices as sources and resources of unjust sociospatial practices and/or their unjust consequences. The interplay between the two—spatiality of injustice and the injustice of spatiality—is important as it implies that although the spatiality of injustice may be captured as a snapshot, so to speak, of spatial practices (for example, segregated neighborhoods, public transportation network, the dominated city center, etc), the policies and actions conceived to address the issue should take into consideration the structural dynamics of spatialization (for example, the organization of property markets, housing, rent, and tax policies, etc), which the notion of the injustice of spatiality tries to capture. This is to reconcile the tension between overvalorizing and overlooking distributional issues. The focus, therefore, is not merely on how spatialization affects distribution, but also on how it stabilizes distributional patterns. Promoting (through, for example, land-use policies, housing market arrangements, entrepreneurial strategies, etc) or simply not interfering with—and therefore allowing the persistence of dynamics of structural exclusion—spatial practices that draw rigid boundaries and that cause and contribute to the domination and repression of certain groups, and then asking questions about social justice ignores the structural spatial dynamics of injustice. The *production* of space, in this sense, has to be at the core of any examination of injustice for it plays an essential role not only in distribution but also in production and reproduction. Thus, in the French case, it was a certain form of spatialization that contributed largely to the production of the socially excluded. It was, moreover, this form of spatialization that kept them excluded, reproducing the exclusionary processes.

### Conclusions: politicizing the urban spatial

“Space is a doubt: I have constantly to mark it, to designate it. It’s never mine, never given to me, I have to *conquer* it.”

Georges Perec (1997, page 91)

“In the case of ideologies of what is good and right it may be space rather than time that is crucial. Something may be good and just everywhere, somewhere, here or elsewhere.”

Goren Therborn (cited in Cresswell, 1996, page 3)

“The limits of just and unjust”, Voltaire once wrote, “are very difficult to set down; like the middle state between health and illness, between the appropriateness and inappropriateness of things, between the false and true, is difficult to mark” (1961, page 913). It would, similarly, be very difficult, and hardly desirable, to discern *the* line between justice and injustice as they relate to spatial practices. For this reason, perhaps, it is best to conceive the notion of spatial justice, with the rights to the city and difference, in relation to a ‘universality of an ideal’, as exemplified by Balibar’s proposition of *égalité* (equality–freedom).

*Égalité* signifies the unconditional ‘differential’ push in the collective process of struggle for the suppression of discrimination and repression. Balibar (1997) defines ‘equality’ as nondiscrimination, and ‘freedom’ as nonconstraint (nonrepression), both of which remain open to diverse determinations depending on the circumstances. Eliminating or simply fighting against discrimination necessarily implies the elimination

or the fight against repression and vice versa (the impossibility of freedom without equality and of equality without freedom). Hence the notion of *égalité*. The joint suppression of discrimination and repression implies emancipation. Balibar's proposition, as a politics of emancipation, has important implications for the current project for two major reasons. First, *égalité*, as an ideal of nondiscrimination and non-repression, remains as an indestructible resource of insurrection against the existing order, reborn and re-experienced in diverse situations, places, groups, etc. It is achieved through a *collective process*, through a political struggle 'against oppression, social hierarchies, and inequalities'. Equality and freedom, in this collective process of the suppression of discrimination and repression, therefore, "can never be granted, distributed among individuals, they can only be *conquered*" (Balibar, 1997, page 446; emphasis added). This has close resonance with Lefebvre's *differentialism* and the rights to the city and difference, for both rights are constantly redefined and acquired through political struggle, and they are not procedural and normative in nature. The ideal, then, is to conquer, through a collective process, the spaces (the right to the city) and means (the right to difference) of this struggle. In this sense, the resonance with *égalité* would be thus: the right of all city habitants to participate in the political life of the city (fighting against discrimination), and their right to political struggle of resistance (fighting against repression). What is implied is not simply a political movement, but a transformation of the political itself. What is implied is a *right to politics*, meaning that "no one can ever be emancipated from outside or from above, but only by his/her own action and its collectivization" (Balibar, 1997, page 446). Jacques Rancière (1995, page 70), in this sense, was perfectly sensible to state that "the question is not only 'How are we to face a political problem?' but 'How are we to reinvent politics?'"

The second implication of Balibar's *égalité* has to do with the notion's—as a universality of an ideal—transindividual nature. This does not only refer to a collective process of struggle against discrimination and repression, but also to its universal symbolic dimension as a politics of emancipation, which means that "it does not depend on the extension of its influence or its popularity" (1997, page 447). The struggle, therefore, is not aimed at defending "the rights of a particular group in the name of that particularity itself, but [at] proclaiming that the discrimination or exclusion that strikes that particular group represents a negation of humanity as such" (1997, page 453). What is changed, at the end of the day, is the very political itself: the struggle does not delineate an identity-defined community but a solidarity in the collective process of the elimination of discrimination and repression, in achieving *égalité*, which always remains as the element of subversion of the existing order.

In order to discern more clearly the implications of *égalité* as they relate to the arguments advanced in this paper, it would be helpful to consider Balibar's reflections on the French LOV presented above, focusing particularly on his remarks on the right to the city. According to Balibar (1991, page 65), any notion of right necessarily implies some realization of equality and freedom, or, better yet, "some way of defining and instituting the balance between equality and freedom". Although the reference to equality is explicit in the LOV, there is no reference to freedom: it is largely presupposed under the conditions of the free market. In other words, how this right (the right to the city)—equally distributed—will be *freely* enjoyed by all city inhabitants (although the status of noncitizens and temporary residents is totally ambiguous) remains overlooked.

The allusion to equality in the LOV, however, is not without problems. It suffers from an ambiguity, caused by the oscillation between two conceptions of equality: arithmetical (egalitarian) and qualified or proportional equality. In this sense, the



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law sometimes implies an “egalitarian redistribution of a service or an indivisible good, situated beyond individual property, that in sum would be the urban as such, or the quality of urban life”. Sometimes, however, it implies a conception of equality that would “attribute each individual or group a good corresponding to its rank; that is, to its financial means, and material and cultural needs” (Balibar, 1991, page 66). What will equally be granted to individuals or groups, in other words, is not clear. The former conception would probably demand a definition as to the meanings ‘urban’ or ‘quality of urban life’, which would then be assumed to be enjoyed by all inhabitants. The state’s role then would be to provide the desired qualities (including quantity) of the service in question or urban life in general. (‘Here is a beautiful city for you, enjoy it!’) The latter would probably imply defining some form of criteria and ensuring the ‘rules of the game’ according to which each individual or group would get their due (‘You are eligible for social housing, but feel free to join the gentrifiers in the city center should your financial situation improve’). Both positions are premised on a notion of the right to be defined and granted ‘from above’. Balibar, however, has in mind a third notion of equality, neither distributive nor participatory, but an openly *civic* one (a new ethics and politics). Informed by such a conception of equality, he argues, “talking about the right to the city would be a way of indicating that the city becomes as such a *polis*, a political collectivity, a place where public interest is defined and realized” (1991, page 66). Is this not what Lefebvre also had in mind with his notion of the right to the city complemented by the right to difference? Such a perspective above all implies a conception of the city that goes beyond an administrative entity, and makes it the place in and over which the terms of the right, or, better still, the nature of relationships between state, society and its space are negotiated.

The right to the city implies not only a formulation of certain rights and the cultivation of the political among city habitants, but also a reconsideration of the spatial dynamics that make the city. Therefore, it should not be conceived merely as a practice of claiming and asserting rights, but should also be conceptualized in a way that puts on the agenda the *dynamics* (such as property markets) and *principles* (such as urban policy, land-use policy, planning laws, etc) of the ways in which social relations are spatialized in the city. The triad I propose, in this sense, is an attempt to address this issue via a notion of spatial justice that calls into question the dynamics and principles which manifest themselves spatially in the city. Besides, it seems necessary, should the Lefebvrian notion be used, to conceptualize a notion of spatial justice in order to be able to distinguish between appropriation and domination of urban space in the name of a right to the city.

Neil Smith’s (1997, page 134) example of the claim of and the counterclaim against homeless people, *both* of which appeal to the same source for justification, exposes “the doubleness inherent in the system of abstract justice based on individual rights”. The claim of homeless people poses the following question: “Why do we as homeless individuals have no right to housing?” The counterclaim, against this, and using the same source of appeal, presses another question: “Don’t I have a right to live without homeless people messing up the neighborhood?” The first question, as Smith states, is “over and against individualism” whereas the second stands for a “reasserted individualism”. This is a remarkable example for it depicts the perils of a right to the city discourse interpreted in the liberal framework of individual rights. The notion of a right to the city implies not only a spatial change, but a societal one as well, for the ways in which the notion is conceived and justified depends largely on the society itself, its political culture included. In other words, the right to the city might vary drastically depending on the society in question, especially if the *demos* is marked with clear and

rigid demarcations. In the Greek *polis*, for example, the right to the city was arguably practised perfectly with the *exception* of women and slaves. To take a recent example, there is nothing to prevent the Mayor of New York Rudolph Giuliani from advancing a ‘right to the city’ (for some but not for others), and enforcing zero tolerance policies in its name, unless a new societal ethics is cultivated by the living togetherness of *all* city inhabitants. How, then, could one overcome this paradox, and conceive a right to the city (and to difference as well) as part of an emancipatory politics? Through the ‘heterology of emancipation’, I would argue following Rancière that, “the logic of political subjectivization, of emancipation”, “is a heterology, a logic of the other, ... it is never the simple assertion of an identity” (1995, page 68). Even the workers’ movement was not an assertion of identity. *Proletarii*, in Latin, meant “prolific people”—“people who make children, who merely live and reproduce without a name, without being counted as part of the symbolic order of the city”. *Proletarians*, therefore, did not imply a particular identity; it was rather “the name of anyone, the name of the outcast: those who do not belong to the order of castes, indeed, those who are involved in undoing this order” (Rancière, 1995, page 67). Therefore, their movement, as one of emancipation, did not imply a selfish reassertion of individuality, but an enactment of equality and freedom.

“One can object that the idea of emancipation is historically related to the idea of the self in the formula of ‘self-emancipation of workers’. But the first motto of any self-emancipation movement is always the struggle against ‘selfishness’. This is not only a moral statement (for instance, the dedication of the individual to the militant community); it is also a logical one: the politics of emancipation is the politics of the self as an other, or, in Greek terms, a *heteron*. The logic of emancipation is a heterology” (Rancière, 1995, page 65).

Seen in this way, *égalité*, as an enactment of equality and freedom, provides the universal that transcends particular identifications. The triad I have offered, in this sense, defines the spatial parameters of a struggle against discrimination and repression. The formation of a sensibility to the spatial dimension of injustice (for example in the French case mentioned above) could be considered as a transcendence of tensions rising from particular group interests in the city (segregation, sociospatial exclusion, etc) through a universality as an ideal, through the development of a consciousness nurtured by living together and sharing space, and through a (civic) ideal of *égalité*. If the city remains a site of structural sociospatial exclusion, where domination is legitimated, not only does such a consciousness remain undeveloped, but, worse still, it remains misdeveloped; that is, it gives rise to sociospatial exclusion in and against the city. All this is not to imply that the city, through its evolution, has not been the site of exclusion and segregation. Neglecting this fact would be a nostalgic fallacy. Legitimizing, even fostering, this fact, however, would be a fatal flaw, engendering zero tolerance type of politics. How, then, would the formation of such a consciousness contribute to the struggle against injustice? How could a spatially informed and sensible politics of resistance use space in the fight against injustice? How, in other words, could a spatial content be given to such a politics of emancipation?

Four approaches, following Garber (2000, pages 267–269), may be distinguished, which, of course, are not mutually exclusive, and which could also work against emancipatory (*égalité*) movements. A politics of resistance could use urban space in particular ways so that; first, people act *from* space, politically mobilizing from the material conditions of their space, and seek alternative spatializations (for example, the Paris Commune, the Los Angeles riots, the Turin strike, the BRU case); second, people act *on* space, to appropriate or to dominate it with a group identity (for example, appropriation of the Tompkins Square Park in New York, but also the formation of

gated communities); third, people act *in* space, taking it to the streets for debates, displays, protests or violence (for example, the Paris Commune, May 1968, the Los Angeles riots, the Turin strike); and finally, people *make* space, creating the conditions to expand the public political involvement through the linking of metaphorical space and politics (for example, in Harvey's account above, the formation of a political response in New York, but not in Hamlet, the organization of the BRU case). Although space most often appears as a means of control and domination, for this very reason it also carries the seeds of significant resistance (Cresswell, 1996).

What, then, are the substantive implications of the notion of spatial justice? Two mutually constitutive prospects may be discerned. First, it might provide a conceptual apparatus that could be given normative content to guide the actual production of urban space. Second, its discursive development and deployment might inform emancipatory politics willing to confront spatial dynamics that produce and reproduce various forms of injustice. Both prospects, of course, will depend on the society in question, and the meanings attached to principles of justice. Justice, after all, is a contingent "reification of commensurability" (Dimock, 1997, page 6), not an ontological given.

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