How to Think about Spatial Justice?

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BB: We would like to thank the Chôros Laboratory, for welcoming the journal Justice Spatiale / Spatial justice for this interview that will give us an opportunity to become better acquainted with your work, and to compare our respective ideas on the concept of spatial justice. But first, perhaps, could you give us a few words on the general orientation of your research?

JNF: Having worked together for seven years within the Chôros Laboratory, I can say that I speak for the three of us, Jacques Lévy, Ana Póvoas and myself. Our research approach works on the principle that individuals have a double intentionality. As actors of their life, they pursue personal ends, but they are also actors of the society they wish for and the place they want to have in it. As such, they are active on two accounts. Understanding individuals' reasoning and their purposes makes it possible to understand the social world and see how a society develops. When I say this, I think I'm fairly close to what Jacques Lévy calls realistic constructivism (1999). Moreover, beyond what they say about their personal interests, we think that these actors are able to give their opinion on issues of political philosophy, including stakes of space and justice. They have the capacity for it. The work we carry out is twofold, it consists in questioning political philosophy and justice issues and at the same time in listening to individuals, which is useful when examining public policies as well as spatial development and urbanism, knowing that our approach is the contrary of a technocratic approach. The idea is to start with ordinary individuals who supply information, richer than what we could imagine, to analyse this information and feed it back to them. We do not place ourselves in a decisional position. We do not decide for them, we do not offer potentially prebuilt solutions.
I'd like to add a final point concerning the three research projects that have kept us busy these last years, and which have recently been completed. There is a study conducted in consultation with the Commissariat général à l'égalité des territoires (CGET) on French people and spatial justice, and two theses, on the one hand that of Ana Póvoas who conducted open interviews in Porto for a research work entitled *Connecting Space and Justice in Metropolitan Porto. The Discourses of the Inhabitants on the Spatial Dimension of Justice* (Póvoas, 2016) and, on the other hand, another thesis.

JL: Yours.

JNF: Yes, a thesis for which I interviewed people on the distribution of hospitals in Switzerland that would seem just to them. I implemented/developed a computer modelling as means to engage with interviewees, making it possible to check what each argument produce on the hospital map. This work is entitled *Spatial Justice as Pragmatics. An Experimental Approach to Rearranging the Hospital Map* (Fauchille, 2016).

Does one need the veil of ignorance to speak about justice?

JNF: In these research works, what brings us together is the method employed. In one way or another, we gave the veil of ignorance (Rawls, 1971/1999) an interpretation: creating a situation where people can talk

as citizens. We push people to talk and we find that they are conscient that they must not give their opinion according to their own interest only. Their statements take almost always a societal dimension.

BB: Just a word concerning your thesis to say that, to me, the way you recreated the veil of ignorance by using mapping was highly ingenious.

JNF: There are several ways to create a situation where people can talk.

AP: In the research on Porto, I started from the instruction which consists in asking the following question: Can you speak of injustice regarding the space where you feel an inhabitant from? Starting from their status of inhabitant made it possible to verify the hypothesis according to which, by relying on their own experience, people can denounce injustice and, to different degrees in different individuals, propose just solutions. In the three studies conducted, people were able to speak about what they know, about their experiences and their spatialities in order to deal with major issues. Citizens do not see any antinomy between treating a concrete case and resorting to ideas of justice that have a shared meaning outside the context of their enunciation, i.e. that are universalist.

JL: In this regard, we free ourselves from Rawls's approach. We think that the notion of the veil of ignorance has its importance, that of identifying the actual political approach to a problem, but it can also lead to ambiguity and validate the idea that people would only become citizens if they forgot what they were in other respects. To me this idea does not seem well oriented. To intervene as a citizen can consist in answering a question: What is a just society? That's what we did in the French study for the Commissariat général à l'égalité des territoires (CGET), and it worked! Or, we can start from the porosity that exists between people's experience and the general idea of justice, and this also works! In the second scenario, one learns a lot. The hypothesis according to which one is less of a citizen when one is more of an inhabitant, would mean that the influence of causes would always be stronger than that of purposes. Yet, I think that what characterises humanity and societies is the fact that both worlds overlap. I would not prioritize between the two perspectives, but purposes are always there and one can read the interactions of the social world as interactions between intentionalities. To suggest that ordinary citizens are unable to go beyond a reactive attitude, when faced with a situation in which they are only molecules pushed by superior forces, would in my view constitute a mistake, which is more often made by some of Rawls' critiques than Rawls himself. Even in cases where there is a problem with moving into the political, it is not a problem between cause and purpose, it is a problem between purpose and purpose, i.e. my purpose as an inhabitant and my purpose as a citizen. They can clash, which is very much what the relation between civil society and political society is all about; yet it is not by ignoring a logic that one reaches the other logic but, rather, by a reflexiveness that makes it possible to articulate both in a way that does not divide the individual, but makes him more complex. When we ask political questions, people give political answers. We don't need to worry about the relationship between the discourse of the citizen and that of the inhabitant. Our objective was to create an environment conducive to the construction of political discourses, and we found that people with a substantial civil life also have a sophisticated political discourse. The citizen is "augmented" by the inhabitant, and vice versa.

BB: Of course, but I totally disagree with that. That one's answer depends on one's place in society can easily be understood, but what is going to make it possible to pass judgment, which can be discussed of course, on these answers? What is going to legitimise these intentions by referring to the notion of justice? Analysing society according to one's place in it does not validate what is being said from the point of view of equity. Interviews show that people can go beyond this level. That's fine, but this does seem to me to validate the notion of veil of ignorance because, without being perhaps fully aware of it, if they go beyond this level, it's because they distance themselves from their personal situation. This methodological

distance is in fact the veil of ignorance. Actually I find this highly coherent with the fact that we are rational beings (Rawls would say "moral beings") able to think about society.

JL: Talking about distance is to assume that the political comes afterwards, which to me does not seem confirmed empirically. As soon as they can talk, children say: "that's not fair!", and in doing so, they build a register of discourses which is not a mere argument of opportunity, but a wording that draws legitimacy from the fact that it is based on principles that are more general than the case at work, and supposed to be worth a whole series of situations. When one asks someone: "What is a just society?", s/he is not going to answer with: "I would like to earn more!"

BB: Not so sure…

JL: When we asked that question, no one replied like that.

BB: In this direct form, of course. In their ability to conceive of the social fact without explicit reference to their specific fate, I can see a positioning that implicitly adopts the procedure of the veil of ignorance.

AP: It is not so much the "ignorance" of their specific condition as the knowledge of a wide social world that allows individuals to be impartial, i.e. to be able to formulate aspirations in a societal perspective. We can call this: gradients of the *ethical capacity*.

The individual and the group in the declaration of justice

PP: In your research, how do you go from collecting individual words to gathering collectives that makes sense for the construction of the political?

AP: Two interpretations are possible in answering this question.
One is the technical analytical method in corpuses with highly varied contents, some of which are narrative, while others are more argumented. Identifying the notion of justice in corpuses supposes the reconstruction of what people say and on highly varied themes.
I created itineraries from several entries in the corpus. I started from a qualitative reading of the whole, and brought out a typology that distinguished several ways of linking space and justice. Then I tested this typology with <u>textometric</u> tools to identify under-represented and over-represented vocabulary in each type. This led me to modify excessive generalisations and distinguish ten types of discourse. On the whole, we find that there is co-variation between, on the one hand, the capacity to conceive of space as a resource for the development of society and, on the other, the level of demand in seeking justice (or the actual possibility of a justice horizon). In conceptions where justice is little present or absent altogether, we find words such as *shame, charity, evilness* and *stinginess* and, on the contrary, at the other end of the spectrum, where justice is present, we find words such as *capacity, respect, access, refusing exclusion* and *equality*. These words are used by the interviewees and it is their conceptions of political philosophy which are confirmed through them.
The other way to tackle the problem is to understand how this is transferred onto the political scene. In which case, it is not my role to give tools to those who have similar political views. My role is to define the portrait of categories that cross society and show divergences and conflicts where there is a need for a political debate, because fundamental values are not shared.

JNF: There are cases where the method uses the collective. In Switzerland and in France We ran focus groups that revealed viewpoints which individual interviews did not. It is interesting to bring together people who, for example, live in the same urbanity gradient, and listen to what they say. The fact that peri-urban inhabitants have a specific way of looking at society is an observation, not an invention. In our

research, the highest discriminating factor of what people say about the relationship between justice and space is not the classic criteria we would expect (money, income, sex, marital status etc.), but the place where people live, their mobility and relation to space. Therefore, it is useful to listen to what they have to say. Nonetheless, comparing the viewpoints of people living in the same area brings out their singularities. I can give an example here. In a focus group organised in a municipality which is about one hour from Paris by car or train, some of the inhabitants worked in Paris and others in situ. When asked if the transport network should be improved, the first lot replied yes, and the second no, fearing that an improvement would bring new residents and make them loose what they consider to be their little paradise.

BB: That's the reflex of those who come last. It makes me think of several reactions. First, that what matters more than the place of residence is the relation to mobility. Or, in other words, the same place does not have the same meaning for everyone. And therefore – my second reflection –, it seems to me that these answers validate the usefulness of the veil of ignorance. People who react without the veil of ignorance and, therefore, react at first in accordance with their personal situation, do not have a discourse on justice.

JL: It's complicated. If the *focus group* is not too heterogeneous, underlying it is an incitement to consensus and each group member tends to say what, according to him or her, others could be saying. This method reinforces a group and is an incentive to consensus. This can lead to contradictions in the discourse of a person who is expressing her own personal ideas, and at the same time a discourse she considers close to the other participants. In the example given, there was an issue with parking spaces. The locals, whether or not working in the same town, were in agreement on the need for a parking. But, there was no consensus regarding public transport. There are consensus areas and conflict areas. There is a non-mechanical relation between the defence of one's own interests and something more political, which seeks to include other people's points of view. There are hybrid situations. Nothing is completely black or white; we get into the political with what we are, with what we carry.

BB: We are individuals, but also social beings able to reason about society and not just about ourselves.

JL: Anti-Rawlsians would be telling you: But you're dreaming my friend!

BB: It can be useful to dream in order to think better, and in fact thinking abstractly is not dreaming!

JL: We must not build the concept of justice by subtraction, as Rawls tends to do; it is not necessary to ask a citizen to split himself, to forget the rest of his life; but it is necessary that people can express real political ideas, that I would call orthogonal, that is, expressed from completely different angles.

BB: I understand what you're saying but I don't agree entirely with it. Answering in a more argued manner would lead us to talk about what Rawls calls overlapping consensus, which would create a new discussion. We're not going to start one, except to say that a prolonged discussion would undoubtedly bring to light an overlapping consensus between us.

JL: Perhaps it's a matter of formulation, because we are mostly in agreement.

JNF: Even without the veil of ignorance, individuals can have political intentions.

BB: Yes, but a political intention can be highly unfair!

JNF: The advantage of the veil of ignorance is that it favours citizens' discourse. It places people in procedural configurations that help them entering citizenship.

JL: In the CGET study, the plan was simply to ask "what is a just society?"

BB: Many answered that a just society is a society where there is less inequality.

JL: Yes. We can say that a just society is a society where there is less inequality without needing to say that, personally, we do not earn enough money.

BB: It's true and that's a good thing. In fact, when you say that people do without the veil of ignorance, it's because they are already in a position that places them behind the veil of ignorance.

JL: Exactly. They show that they are available to speak about politics from which we can benefit.

BB: The veil of ignorance is a matter of legitimacy of what is being said from an ethical point of view. It's normal that the vocabulary used by a focus group is not the same as that used in a treatise on philosophy, but we are already slightly in the same positioning.

AP: If I can add something, I think that the importance of Rawls' input is to specify that one's thoughts need a constraint that distinguishes just from unjust, and his instructions on the veil of ignorance place people in this field, in this procedure. Focus groups make it possible to integrate different points of view, to widen my own and even to detect my own biases. The idea whereby the field of information is extended by discussion agrees with the arguments of Amartya Sen on the notion of "reasonableness". This idea has been confirmed in our research. In fact, people with the largest scope of preoccupation (and information) understand interdependencies between 'myself' (or my place) and other spaces. When an individual is concerned by the evolution of the whole, his/her personal interest can also be questioned in that it calls upon the collective interest.

BB: That's what Rawls calls *congruence between just and good*: if what is right brings satisfaction to my mind, then it must also be considered as good.

JL: Yes, that's right. One of the reasons that brings us to work together is that we like to see the interaction between what is most theoretical and most empirical, by recording what inhabitant citizens say. It is very important to be in contact with what is most concrete, to accept to be disrupted by intuitions and, at the same time, we need to link up the facts and theories of justice, even if it means questioning these theories again. In the CGET study, our intuition was confirmed: in the empirical, we find ideas from political philosophy and axiological discourses. Almost no one in our corpus knows the names of Rawls or Sen, and yet the statements of many of them said were in agreement with these authors. Only two people expressed some reluctance in answering (even if, in the end, they took part): a geography lecturer who said she was unable (!) and a philosophy lecturer who refused our instructions! All the others, perhaps unknowingly, produced discourses that we could interpret along this lines. What is weak in the literature on spatial justice, is that few authors have worked on theories and as such use the market of ideas in this regard. What is important is the permanent dialogue between the empirical and the theoretical, which might be sometimes uncomfortable but is always productive.

Spatial justice: discourse or practice?

PP: I have a question concerning the approach and the method. You speak about your empirical approach as being based mainly on discourses. But judging the justice of situations is important for the sociology of action.

JL: We have also conducted research on situations, as in Annecy where, with Romain Lajarge, I conducted a survey on Annecy identity that included issues of justice. I agree with the importance of situation analyses, where the exploration of a singularity interacts with theoretical construction.

AP: I made a documentary on the future of a neighbourhood in Porto, *Miragaia*. The work was financed by Feder within the framework of a project called *Manobras no Porto*, which aimed at designing a creative cluster in the historical centre of the city. We interviewed people, not just residents, about the way they saw the future of the place.
In the *Atlas politique de la France* (Lévy, Maitre, Póvoas et Fauchille, 2017), we did the mapping of current topics and events. As such, we do not stick only to research on people's perception. There is also an objectivizable reading of situations.

PP: Describing situations, yes, but there are also other actors apart from inhabitants. Collecting inhabitants' opinions on the notion of justice against a technocratic approach is one thing, but there is a whole chain of actors who intervene on the territories and with whom we must not cut all ties. It would be interesting to conduct a survey on all those who intervene in these situations.

JL: A great subject, for sure.

AP: Within the framework of my thesis, I interviewed five town planners in five municipalities of the metropolitan area. This can be done provided that the articulation between their axiological discourse and their expertise is clear.

JL: We try not to have a technocratic attitude...

JNF: Indeed, we are not in decision-making. It's not our role. We produce information and analyses. If we take an interest in ordinary individuals, it's because, most often, they are not the ones having the opportunity to speak. Of course we could have hybridised with the opinions of other actors more used to speak about space.

Theories of justice: a market of ideas?

BB: However, discourse analysis is not neutral and can inspire decision makers. How should one analyse a discourse without an analytical framework relying on a theory of justice? Which brings me to the issue of the values mobilised in your research: Do you have one or several reference theories? I don't believe that you do, and yet, it's definitely according to certain values that you arrive at conclusions.

JL: No. We are not a group that promotes a specific political philosophy, otherwise we would no longer be researchers.

BB: Of course, and that's not what I meant to say, but the conclusions you arrive at in your analyses must refer to implicit values.

JNF: When we read the interviews, we allow ourselves to apply all the theories of justice, because some individuals will refer to a certain theory, while others will refer to some other one. Therefore we are not going to use one single analytical framework, whether Sen's or someone else's. On the other hand, we try

to detect the values contained implicitly in interviewees' discourses. In other words, we try to pinpoint whether individuals think unknowingly like Rawls, whether they are unknowingly utilitarian or communitarian. As mentioned before, there is a market of ideas, and individuals help us revise this market. We try to understand how those who express themselves view reality. For example, the peri-urban people I met in Switzerland are very libertarian, much more than those I met in France, i.e. they are opposed to the very principle of solidarity. They are not against the removal of public services and that everybody manages on their own. I'm not going to read this using a specific framework on the basis of my own values, but I'm going to record this libertarian point of view and try to understand it by leaving aside what would be my own vision of solidarity.

BB: We're totally with you concerning the discourse analysis. But is it not different when analysing situations?

JL: This "framework" is our problematisation of the way in which we tackle an object of study; it is not a comparison of theories or a questionnaire to be filled in. As such, we must pay attention to the fact that justice is not necessarily a universal preoccupation. Certain visions of a desirable society ignore justice.
I was marked by the works of American anthropologist Jonathan Haidt (2012), who conducted surveys in several countries. He uses the expression *righteous* which does not refer to *just*, *right* or *fair*. This expression is fairly close to *what is advisable to do*. In French we can use the word "justesse", rather than *justice* in this case. Jonathan Haidt states that, throughout the world, there are other blocks of value in addition to the equality-liberty block. He identified purity, group loyalty, the respect of authority, as well as a set which is more difficult to define and which he calls *care*. As for us, we describe the plurality of opinions in society, which does not prevent us from subscribing to strong theoretical frameworks, on the contrary; this incites us to do so, in order to see clearly in the extremely refined viewpoints of our interlocutors. The three of us are interested in people's visions of justice. However, we have our differences and each one of us, through our personal experience, was able to observe some aspects more than others. There is no doubt that we could not agree on everything. As for me, the issue of the equality/liberty relationship has been preoccupying me for a long time. I was sceptical about the contemporary validity of the version of the left/right opposition, as established in politics in post-war Europe, and which consisted in saying: either you choose freedom, or you choose equality, with the image of a cursor moving between two radical extremities. I used to tell myself that there was a gap, and that this did not correspond to today's situation. In the CGET study, the people interviewed expressed the wish that everyone benefit from the same conditions (equality) to live their lives as they wish (freedom). Both values are therefore placed in series and not in parallel: therefore no opposition between the two, no unique indicator. The objective is not, for example, that everyone roughly has the same income, but that everyone can lead their lives in such a way that it is the party concerned that defines the choice between his options, while accepting that such options can be totally different from one individual to another. If we reach this ideal point, it becomes impossible to establish a hierarchy between social positions. What will place two individuals at the top of the justice hierarchy is that they will both have been able to choose. In the French study, this was the main approach, but it was less clear in the Porto sample. Emmanuel Macron's "*at the same time*" on equality and freedom, in any case, made us think that he had read our study… or, more seriously, that, in his campaign, he seemed at ease with these transformations of the idea of justice within French society.

AP: Amartya Sen's idea of justice could be used as an encompassing working framework, in that it links the idea of freedom with that of equality, and this in relation to the notion of systemic good. For me, it reaches the maximum complexity level of objectives of justice.

BB: Can we truly talk about *theory of justice* in Sen? I was wondering and noted that one of his books is entitled *L'idée de justice* (2010), which admits that it is more about an idea than a constituted theory. Where he talks about the need to reason on just and unjust situations and to compare them, Sen also

objects to any procedure that would place a consideration of justice upstream. As a result, in my opinion, his approach is reduced to empiricism in the limited sense of the word.

JL: This is consistent with Rawls, if we admit that Rawls is perhaps not always Rawlsian. He claims to be Universalist and procedural, but he is unknowingly very much set in a social-democrat vision of 1950s' or 1960s' desirable politics. He imagines primary goods as something that must be simply distributed– and not, for example co-produced, such as public goods. He is more concerned with access to school than education. Sen goes further in involving non-governmental actors, but on the other hand, it's true, he does not really formulate a coherent system but, rather, a range of avenues to be explored.

BB: Sen often gives an impression of vagueness, and that's why I will not speak of theory in connection with him.

JL: Agreed, but he does open doors.

BB: What surprises me the most with him, are his criticisms which rely on basic reading errors. On Rawlsian primary goods, his comparison with capabilities is very poor and erroneous. To say, as he does, that the same amount of money does not have the same usefulness for a disabled person as for someone in good health, is an obvious fact that does not call for a long demonstration and that, most of all, if I can say so, is completely wrong since Rawls mentions health as a primary good (a natural primary good to be specific), and makes it compulsory to give more to a disabled person on the basis of the reparation principle. On this specific point as on others, I'm not convinced.

AP: Other influences helped me grasp Sen's input, including the notions of universal and singular, procedural and substantial. When we interface them, linking specific issues with a procedural approach becomes possible. We can imagine a real (or hypothetical) spatial social contract informed by the public debate and, in this debate, geography can help to shed light on issues and possible choices. This substantial information can include the idea of public good while letting citizens choose. We are still in a procedural approach. We are not in a form of multiculturalism with a plurality of values that would enable each cultural group to survive by cutting all ties with others. To be able to live together, it is useful to highlight the many preferences and aim for their compatibility via a spatial contract at the level of a city or a region at the very least.

JL: Communalism is contrary to the idea of justice. If each community generates its own conception of justice and favours loyalty towards this conception, there cannot be any inter-community debate. Communities then have between them geopolitical relations regulated by power relations and not by the debate on the legitimacy of values. This choice is fraught with consequences.

BB: Yes, with the precision that this affirmation is valid if we conceive of the existence of universal values.

JL: These can be norms rather than values. To use the example of a recent event, there is no value that would make the bikini superior to the burkini, but there are social norms which require wearing one or the other.

BB: What would be just is freedom of choice, provided that this choice is indeed free.

JL: It's a problem of granularity. You make choices in your personal life and this raises the issue of the grain from which you must discuss with others what you have in common, what is appropriate in the working environment and in the public space, where there are things to share. The communitarian tradition (including that of the French State which often behaves like the leader of the national

community) does not recognise a sufficiently fine grain to become self-organised and escape the coercive hold of the group. It is interesting to see, independently from the reasons invoked, *who* contests the freedom, in principle widely recognised in our societies, to present our body in public as we wish (by wearing or not a piece of clothing, make-up, jewellery, by managing one's pilosity in one way or another…).

JNF: Rawls and Sen seek to define justice to end up with conceptions of good. Communitarian forms first seek to define the good. As such, there can be no agreement in this case since there is no community of values.

BB: In Rawls, the right comes before the good. It is explained very clearly. It's less so in Sen, it seems to me, where the matter is not explicitly formulated.

PP: Is this the problem of the good or that of recognition, i.e. each and every one being recognised the right to have their place in the public space?

AP: The problem is that of personal freedom. For communitarians, rights are claimed so that the community can endure without these freedoms being extendable to others. For them and as explained by Charles Taylor (1994), when dealing with groups, one should respect their right to be separate from others and to protect themselves from contact with others. But the problem is that this can infringe on the freedom of individuals, inside and outside the group.

JL: The principles of purity and loyalty towards community standards clash with the idea of justice. If I have the right to refuse the rules of a group of which I'm a member and therefore to leave this group, we're no longer talking about communalism. On the other hand, if the loyalty principle wins, it's the other way around. For example, prohibiting "mixed" marriages among the Jewish community has been a way of maintaining the purity of a group threatened by its small size and by the persecutions he suffered, and a way of preventing its disappearance by melting into the mass of people. Whence a biological and ethnic approach of Jewishness, which was not dominant in the conquering phase of the religion, before the triumph and exclusiveness of Christianity. The troubling fact is that, as shown by Shlomo Sand (2008), this ethnicist conception is fairly close to that which the Nazis imagined about Judaism and Germanity. For the *mainstream* of the contemporary representation of the Jews, whether it comes from Jewish organisations or outside these, the Jews are a *Volk* from which one cannot get out, whether one likes it or not.

BB: Here we need to distinguish on the one hand communities of affinities, such as those mentioned by Iris Marion Young (1990/2011) which anyone can join if one feels an affinity with their values; and on the other hand communities whose members did not choose to be so and who trap the individuals in them. In the latter type, what is considered good is defined as just. Among universalists, it's exactly the opposite.

AP: About the "market of ideas", let us come back to the distinction between Sen and Rawls: a particularity of spatial justice is to take into account social environments. Sen can help us in this regard, because in the components of justice, he introduces the idea of "aggregative good", which corresponds to the notion of systemic good in geography. With this idea, we can consider space as a resource, we can study it not only as an extension with its constraints of distance and access time, but also question what we can do with it and imagine spatial productions which are, in themselves, enabling. For example, the city as a societal experience offers conditions of freedom, progress and emancipation. Henri Lefebvre formulated it. Sen, as to him, uses empirical studies on phenomena such as women's empowerment, with its many contents and effects: education, health, decision-making possibilities within the family and society, economic effects and of gender equality based on these changes. We're dealing here with a systemic perspective.

BB: These multiple contents point to the fact that empowerment has a value in itself as well as an instrumental value, whence the importance of playing on the leverage effects with changes leading to even more changes.

Other influences to conceive of spatial justice

JNF: Concerning the influences I have received, I ask myself a question: what can geography say more than sociology and economics? On the sociologists' side, I'm indebted to Boltanski and Thévenot for their work on *justification*: how can we avoid conflict when we are speaking from distinct *cities* (Boltanski et Thévenot, 2006). On the economists' side, it's Laurent Davezies with *la République et ses territoires* (2008). His works help us to conceive of the redistributive issues of spatial justice. On the philosophers' side, apart from classic authors already mentioned in this interview, I discovered Jean Kellerhals and *Le sentiment de justice* (Kellerhals et Languin, 2008), not concerning the theory of justice, but the way individuals feel justice: easiness in thinking about grand principles (macro-justice), but infringement of this principle in everyday life because we imagine that these infringements are not so important (micro-justice). The more universal the issue or the rarer a resource, the more macro-justice comes into play. These considerations helped me to build interviews. With the advance of our collective works, I wonder if micro-justice still concerns justice. I prefer the notion of *ethical capital*, as the ability to make the link between the society we wish for and our personal actions in achieving it.

BB: To me, this distinction between micro-justice and macro-justice seems particularly interesting in a territorial perspective because it raises the problem of scales.

JNF: It highlights in any case the danger of localism.

JL: Due to the semi-public nature of the configuration, the focus group produces contradictory discourses, especially between the registers of a same person. Indeed, we heard someone complaining about people "who should not be here", before speaking in favour of a world showing more solidary and against exclusion. When we pointed out the contradiction, that person was completely taken aback. It seems to me that the debate on justice is better off if it is integrated in a reflection on the *ethical* turning point, defined as an exit of the moral world. The *moral* age (which was deployed in several regions of the World two or three thousand years ago, during a period Karl Jaspers calls the "axial age"), is the era when we became aware of antinomies between the objectives of the components of society (individuals and groups) and the interests of society as a whole. We then invented principles which are transcendent in the written religions, and immanent in other spiritual constructions, creating a moral world. It's a system of norms and injunctions which are made imperative and without which personal interests would prevail. But this universe has a history and as such is not eternal. The *ethical* approach is based on the idea that there is no antinomy between individuals and society taken as a whole. There can be contradictions, but not antinomies. That's what Ricœur suggests in the first part of *Soi-même comme un autre* (1990). This approach is already present in Spinoza, who contests the presence of transcendent moral values built independently from social interactions. Upon closer inspection, it also appears in Kant. The "categorical imperative" is another way of speaking about the ethical turning point, asserting the necessity to approach others as a set of purposes and not as a means. The purpose of society as a whole can be provided by making the ends of its components cohere. The reflection on the ethical turning point can contribute to problematize justice issues. For example, the expression "equal opportunities" can mean two different things. Either *opportunity* means "chance" and it refers to the fact that everyone is on the same starting line, as a moral obligation in a zero-sum social game where inequalities – blind and insurmountable – will prevail again in any case; or *opportunity* it means condition of possibility and refers to the fact that you are placed in a position of equality to invent the life that suits you; this is the ethical vision based on the

idea of a positive-sum game. The term *opportunity* is in itself ambiguous: it can refer to a situation that can help or harm you, and it can refer to giving people an occasion to exercise their freedom of choice on the way they conduct their existence.

JNF: To come back to spatial justice, there is no zero-sum game. That's what the city shows, a place that leads to the notion of public good. This notion comes from economic science, but it's very appropriate to the debate on justice. A public good is non-rivalrous and non-exclusive. Everyone can have access to it without harming anyone else. The same applies to knowledge which can be considered as public good, where if one of you passes knowledge on to me, you make me richer without becoming poorer yourself. Therefore, a public good is not a zero-sum game, but a positive-sum game since it is more than the sum of its constituent parts. As such, it is a very efficient investment in terms of development. Social interaction is a process of co-production of public goods. Urbanity can be considered as public good, and cannot be divided (to replace Lausanne with several smaller cities, is to lose the level of urbanity of this city); the same applies to cultural goods (it is impossible to cut the Eiffel Tower in smaller pieces so that every city can take advantage of it... for the simple reason that there would be no Eiffel Tower left: therefore the tower is more than the girders that make it up).

AP: In order to exist, a public good depends on the spatiality of inhabitants. Regarding transport, when people prefer to use their individual cars instead of public transport, the increase in public mobility as public good remains difficult. Space allows all of us to become responsible in the development of the ensemble which is our inhabited space.

JL: There is then a correlate fraught with momentous consequence: justice and development become synonymous.

BB: Yes, I am convinced of it. And yet this raises an important issue. If development is justice, while development is necessarily unequal, this means that justice entertains relations that are less obvious than imagined with equality...

Development, difference and inequality

JL: I understand what you're saying, but let me ask the following question: Can development be unequal? Personally, I would say that development is necessarily equal, otherwise it's not development – provided of course that this term defines a self-determined change in society that has the effect of increasing justice conceived as a combination of equality and freedom. To me this demanding definition seems useful to distinguish "growth" or "expansion" from development. There is only development if changes in mass, function and organisation can be read as a progression of justice.

BB: Our points of view are probably not very far removed from each other, and clarifying what we mean will perhaps make them closely akin. If justice is conceived as equality and freedom, then by definition development – itself conceived as a synonym of justice – will be equal. It remains that regarding public services, for example, it is not possible to place a hospital in front of every building, or to guarantee the same access time to emergency services for all inhabitants. We could make an identical reasoning for the geographic distribution of the production apparatus and therefore access to jobs. As a result, we need to formulate the problem differently, and the works of Laurent Davezies can help us to do that. The idea then would be to accept and even favour the differentiation of space, if productive inequality is a condition to finance redistribution and therefore the progress of equality on the entire territory.

JL: Difference and inequality, two notions to discuss and compare. Does the city produce inequality between itself and the rest of the territory? It is not necessarily inequality because urbanity is not necessarily excluding.

BB: Inequality if people are indeed not free regarding their place of residence, if there is truly no freedom of choice. To tell the truth, the city would be just if society was just. Be that as it may, the idea of justice remains a positive utopia, i.e. an objective we will never reach.

JL: Spatial differentiation went more in the direction of justice because urbanity is a public good that guarantees services and increases freedom. Rurality does not include many public goods, urbanity does: services, freedom and solidarity. Rather than unequal development, I would speak of differentiated development. It's particularly true in a federal system or in a spatial organisation with differentiated competencies where choices are not necessarily the same everywhere, which creates difference without automatically engendering inequality.

BB: The geographic concentration of the production apparatus is, at least in certain branches, a condition for producing efficiently and therefore for having wealth to distribute. This enables development. But then in this case a problem of terminology comes up, and you are probably right when you speak about difference rather than inequality.

JL: We did not speak about Alain Reynaud. He did predict the rise in power of poor Asian countries and did show that economic hierarchies could change, especially if the peripheries defined an ascending strategy by accepting themselves as peripheries. This was a time when developmentalists who believed in a repetition of the history of the West, and dependentists who advocated disconnection with developed countries, were confronting one another. Both trends were mistaken, and what happened with Japan, then with the "Dragons" and the "Tigers", with China, and what will perhaps happen tomorrow with India and Sub-Saharan Africa, confirmed that an initial peripheral position is not an eternal destiny. Yet, on the whole, these spectacular successes did belong to a sequence of development: all the classic non-economic indicators of development (living standards, health, education, urbanity...) accompanied (and sometimes followed or preceded) economic growth.

BB: Alain Reynaud did outstanding work. But before him, there were historians and, among others, Samir Amin and the Dependency school of thought. We can say that there is definitely dependency and see how to free ourselves from it without being Leninist! Important authors such as Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Celso Furtado and André Gunder Frank prove it. In any case, and at this stage of our discussion, three notions appear important and are not to be confused: difference, inequality and injustice.

JL: One of the complexities of the notion of development comes from that of progress which is logically associated to it: everyone, at each moment, can propose his or her vision of progress and consider that "it was better before". Let's not forget that, for example, among those who saw themselves as progressive in the 1950s in Europe or North America, many were homophobic and hostile towards the legalisation of abortion, when today these aspects are put forward as markers of Western values. In other words, the idea of progress is always specific and its content inevitably controversial. At the same time, this notion appears as still appears necessary in a society master of itself, and more so if it is democratic. The possibility of progress is a means of giving time to justice, of comparing an unsatisfactory present to a desirable, and at the same time reachable, future. If, on the contrary, we announce that the future will not be better than the present, we incite those who consider themselves as victims of injustice to despair of politics and to transform their frustration into bitterness and acrimony. This makes for a fragile public debate, since we already know that nothing good will come out of it for those who are dissatisfied with

the present. If the hypothesis of a Beyond redressing injustices is ruled out, a world deprived of the idea of progress is a dystopia that will have civil war as the ultimate logical consequence.

BB: We cannot do without a positive utopia, as reflected in the Republican slogan. Even if we doubt that our societies will one day function in complete accordance with liberty, equality and fraternity, to me it seems essential to declare the need to pursue these values as objectives.

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