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## Tired but Still Here

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“So much sadness revealed in the very need to be busy. So much grief expressed in the need not to be overwhelmed by grief”, Sara Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2010.

Before the pandemic that has so brutally affected the whole world, and is still far from over as we write, France had been hit by a worldwide wave of neoliberalization which threatens to do away with many of the public institutions that define the French social model: public healthcare, public schools, public retirement funds, labor law... there loomed specific threats on our university system in the shape of the “LPPR”, *loi de programmation pluriannuelle de la recherche*, a law purporting to guarantee funding for public research—the acronym was promptly translated as “loi pour la précarisation de la recherche”, law to make research more precarious, by many, and our journal, as many others, joined in a strike protesting what we felt was a further step in the destruction of the French public university and research system (see editorial to issue 14 by the *Revue en lutte* collective).

We are keenly aware of the precarious status of many of the workers who contribute to the way academia runs, not least because workers with precarious contracts have been central to the operation of *JSSJ* since it began. Voluntary work is the defining ingredient of our journal, which is a fair bargain when those engaging in it are tenured—much less so when young colleagues without such secure jobs are the major contributors. The prospect of more of the same, more precarious employment, more exploitation of unpaid or poorly paid labor, with ever-shrinking opportunities to gain stable employment in academia, was, and is, one we simply could not abide.

We want to take this opportunity to thank all those who, over the years, have worked to keep the journal going, and in particular the outgoing editorial managers Aurélie Quentin and Marianne Morange. They were assisted by a board too numerous to thank individually but which includes both committed colleagues who have been

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with us since the beginning of this venture (Bernard Bret, Philippe Gervais-Lambony, Frédéric Dufaux... come to mind, among several others) and newcomers who have brought equal energy and commitment – not least Tomasz Doussot who has assisted us since 2018.

The concern for working conditions and livelihoods in academia was superseded by the concern for life itself as COVID-19 hit first China, then several other countries, among which France. This public health crisis made all the more obvious previous injustices in terms of ability to shelter at home without losing income, living conditions, and likelihood to be protected and adequately cared for in a pandemic: in the Paris region as in the world, the communities most affected and who lost many members were the already disenfranchised, living precarious lives in promiscuous homes, who had to go out to work in unsafe workplaces, using unsecure public transportation. When additional violence of law enforcement compounded these already tragic situations, it came as no surprise that uprisings and demonstrations started in many cities to proclaim that Black lives, disproportionately claimed by the virus and violent policing, matter. These are issues that we hope to explore further in subsequent issues of the journal, as the pace of research will allow, and with all due respect for the extent of the trauma these events have inflicted on many.

We have resumed work on the journal, as the current issue testifies, out of concern for young colleagues who trusted us with their work, translators with whom we work regularly in order to publish in two languages, and also because analysis in terms of spatial justice seems called for, now more than ever. The coordinators of this *varia* issue worked with authors and translators to finalize the texts in these very unsettled times, and strived to gather perspectives on a variety of situations throughout the world in which social movements and protests draw attention to injustice, or the pandemic makes glaringly visible spatial inequalities and the role they play in dramatically different chances of survival.

As ever, our pages and in particular the Public Space section, remain open to such contributions and welcomes all proposals. This section will now be run by Sophie

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Moreau and Florian Opillard. The board has also decided to include a “*varia*” section in all subsequent issues, allowing for publication of papers that do not necessarily answer one of our thematic calls, but still contribute to the debates on spatial and environmental justice. This section will be run by Judicaëlle Dietrich and Marie-Anne Germaine.

The creation of a *varia* section is part of a broader reflection among members of the editorial committee since 2018. We hope that the upcoming issues will strengthen *JSSJ*'s capacity to report and disseminate analyses on the exacerbation of spatial justice issues, fueled by the increasing pace and scope of social crises worldwide. The Editorial Board is well aware that changes closer to home are also needed. As a reflection of the academic field that gave birth to it and makes it thrive, *JSSJ* can only partially free itself from academia's constitutive power relations and inequalities, but definitely intends to try. We hope to increase diversity among the editorial board, to consolidate the internationalization of the journal and to formalize a more transparent, horizontal and inclusive governance.

In these trying and humbling times, we believe engaging with theories and empirical studies from the world over, and contributing to further dialogues between different linguistic areas, remains an important mission, one that was the initial impetus to create this journal. The renewed board and management looks forward to continuing this dialogue with colleagues of the [Spatial Justice Network](#) and the larger network of our readers and contributors throughout the world.

### **Presentation of the issue**

This issue was coordinated by Gabriel Fauveaud and Marie Gibert. It is the first non-thematic issue published by our journal, which we wanted to open to spontaneous

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proposals for articles. It therefore includes various contributions, reflecting different positions concerning spatial justice.

In his article, Nicolas Kühl explores the way in which discourses formalize social categorizations and their corresponding spatial segregation. With what he calls a "spatial sociolinguistics" approach, the author demonstrates the importance of language in the formation of urban spatial injustices. Taking the example of the framing of spaces of relegation such as projects ("cités" or "quartiers sensibles"), Nicolas Kühl demonstrates the performative importance of language in the perpetuation of exclusion processes. He thus invites the reader, and all those interested in spatial justice, to take a closer look at the discursive processes that contribute to spatial injustice and social exclusion.

Régis Keerle and Laurent Viala's piece considers the creation of territorial centralities (cultural, political, economic...) in three small French towns. Going beyond the metropolitan paradigm, which, in their view, tends to reduce spatial planning issues to a centre-periphery dichotomy, they analyze the way in which "metropolitan hinterlands" reduce territorial inequity by implementing specific development strategies (local partnerships, local development, etc.). By mobilizing the notion of spatial justice applied to land-use planning, the authors thus defend a "meta-territorial" conception of small town development policies and strategies.

Tarik Harroud's article focuses on new entrepreneurial strategies implemented by a Moroccan state-owned phosphate mining company. The author details the company's recent initiatives to develop social, environmental, and educational activities to enhance its commitment to more sustainable urban development, particularly at the local level. Based on extensive fieldwork carried out in three Moroccan mining cities, the paper explains that instead of a real strategy of sustainable local development, the company's discourse and initiatives are the results of the imperatives of corporate social responsibility. Old logics of mining operations, characterized by a strong extraversion and hierarchization of the economic model, by an important exploitation and marginalization of local populations, as well as by

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significant environmental impacts, persist though the discourses and initiatives of sustainable development tend to make them less visible.

Finally, by analyzing the effects of the COVID-19 health crisis in India, Frédéric Landy proposes a critical reading of the spatial injustices in the country. The author focuses on the consequences of the crisis and health policies for migrant populations, the vast majority of whom are precarious workers of rural origin. The author explains how Indian health policies aimed at containing the spread of the virus have added to pre-existing forms of socio-spatial segregation, such as social distancing between castes or segregation. By proposing an original analytical grid (the DIDI scale), Frédéric Landy underlines the injustices generated by Indian health policy, which are linked to the strong pre-existing social inequalities. Finally, the author questions the future of the social issues highlighted by the health crisis, particularly for a migrant population whose “visibility” has been greatly increased, at least temporarily.

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