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How (and why) justice come to geographers : a french-speaking social geography exploration

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The main purpose of our communication is to understand how and why the geographers are explicitly interested in the question of spatial justice and injustices or, in a more implicit register, with the question of the inequalities, social problems or socio-spatial segregations. Our matter does not aim at providing a reflexion on the concepts of justice, injustices and their derivatives but rather at describing then to understand how the geographers justify to seizing it. For that, the French-speaking social geography, which was founded at the crossing of Humanism and Marxism, offers a particularly fertile field to browse. For example, Renée Rochefort, "mother founder" of the French-speaking social geography, in her work on the irrigation in Sicily published at the beginning of the Sixties, advances that, when it had been understood that "[...] l'eau d'irrigation, incontestable élément du progrès technique, admirable élément d'efficacité des paysages géographiques était, pour cette raison même, un moyen de chantage, de peur et d'exploitation de l'homme par l'homme[il] n'était pas possible, sans duperie, de renoncer à savoir pourquoi, c'est-à-dire à pénétrer dans un complexe cheminement de lois et de réseaux de forces sociales" (Rochefort, 1963, p. 21). And to add that "[...] présenter les jardins irrigués de la Méditerranée comme des espèces de paradis terrestres, ainsi qu'on en avait généralement l'habitude de le faire, était dans ce cas une trahison de la réalité humaine, un abus de confiance scientifique, dans la mesure où les rapports sociaux tissés dans ces espaces en altéraient totalement la signification" (Rochefort, 1984, p. 158). First, this position engages us to exceed the only question of the geographical configurations, of the relative positioning of the geographical objects. Second, it invites to integrate the geographical questioning on spatial justice within the framework of a theory of production of the society. Lastly, it proposes to go beyond the only question of spatial justice in regional planning, to make justice one of the bases of geographical knowledge through the search for a critical and emancipatory knowledge. In order to allow a diachronic prospect for this questioning, we will analyze a corpus of texts published since the end of the Forties, either explicitly placed by their authors under the seal of the social geography through a title, or corresponding at one key moment in the evolution of the thought of these same authors.

Bibliographical references :

Rochefort Renée (1963). Géographie sociale et sciences humaines. *Bulletin de l'Association des Géographes Français*, n° 314-315.

Rochefort Renée (1984). Les classes sociales, l'État et les cultures en géographie sociale. *Revue de géographie de Lyon*, n° 3, 1984.