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*Spatial justice in the city of difference:
urban planning for redistribution, recognition and encounter*
*La justice spatiale dans la ville de la différence:
Planification urbaine pour la redistribution, l'identification et la rencontre*

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This paper is concerned with urban social planning and its role in contributing to spatial justice. Our aim is outline a framework for urban social planning which can adequately respond to the different forms of difference which characterise urban life. The framework we offer in this paper draws on recent debates about social justice conducted by feminist and critical theorists, in order to disentangle the different kinds of difference which characterise urban life and to identify the planning responses these differences demand.

In recent times, efforts to generate new approaches to urban social planning have typically emphasised the need for planners to find new ways to deal with difference in cities. Notions of a universal 'public good' or 'public interest' which provided the political foundations for urban planning have been attacked on the grounds that they failed to recognise the heterogeneity of urban populations. New frameworks have tended to focus on establishing better processes of communication and consultation with different stakeholders, and/or on recognising the diverse identities and needs of urban populations. Questions of redistribution which animated previous frameworks for urban planning are frequently either left aside or attacked.

In this paper, we will argue that Nancy Fraser's concept of 'parity of participation' is a useful tool both for diagnosing the problems with existing approaches urban planning, and for formulating new visions for urban planning better suited to achieving spatial justice. Strategies for achieving social justice, as Fraser argues, must begin by identifying the particular harms that block meaningful participation in social and political life. As such, different kinds of difference require different responses from planners. With Fraser, we argue that different harms require different combinations of redistribution and recognition. We further suggest that planning to achieve 'parity of participation' must also create opportunities for encounter among urban inhabitants. Follow Henri Lefebvre in equating meaningful participation in urban life with a 'right to the city', we argue that spatial justice is not only a matter of adequate access to resources and recognition of group differences. Urban inhabitants must also have opportunities to establish fleeting connections with others as strangers in pursuit of a variety of projects whose outcomes are not pre-determined.

After illustrating our framework with examples of planning practice, the paper will conclude with some reflections on the challenges of working towards redistribution, recognition and encounter simultaneously.