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[Review of: M. Lussault (2007) L'Homme Spatial: La Construction Sociale de l'Espace Humain; M. Lussault (2009) De la Lutte des Classes à la Lutte des Places]

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specialised bibliography pertaining to what is essentially a supporting field for economic and social geography, which moreover is in Dutch albeit with an English summary. Furthermore, at first glance the hefty volume appears to be a coffee-table book, and an expensive one at that. Was the editor led by the assumption that all geographers appreciate maps – particularly historical ones with their illuminations and flourishes – and that this beautifully produced collection would gratify professionals and modern navigators alike? Or is this volume actually a scholarly work on source materials pertaining to the representation of a core region of the Netherlands? This reviewer believes the latter to be the case and that the volume merits the attention of a wider readership of economic and social geographers.

One last comment concerns the authorship pedigree of this attractive book. It belongs to the series of publications by the ambitious research programme of the small but renowned Explokart programme whose aim it is to make the products of Dutch historical cartography more widely accessible. Interestingly, most of the contributors to this volume and several like it are not trained cartographers but instead represent a wide range of cultivated expertise. They have been recruited as volunteers from among the dedicated professionals and collectors who share an enthusiasm for maps and have participated in the lectures and workshops of the Cartography Section. Eventually, they were absorbed into research projects dealing with specific types of maps, publications, or regions. The painstaking effort undertaken by the authors certainly does pay off: works such as this are expanding the knowledge of Dutch historical cartography. At the same time, all these volumes, and particularly the present one, will provide a wider readership with an academic and aesthetic source of inspiration and diversion.

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#### De la Lutte des Classes à la Lutte des Places.

MICHEL LUSSAULT, Paris 2009: Grasset. 222 pp. ISBN: 978-2-246-73391-1

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#### L'Homme Spatial. La Construction Sociale de l'Espace Humain.

MICHEL LUSSAULT, Paris 2007: Seuil. 364 pp. ISBN: 978-2-02-093795-5

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*De la Lutte des Classes à la Lutte des Places* is a short text for a general public that deserves the attention of geographers and other scholars interested in the spatial dimension of social life. Michel Lussault has written a singularly effective book that succeeds both to present in a condensed way an original geographical approach and to explain to a general public the importance of geography in social life.

Thanks to his *Dictionnaire de Géographie et de l'Espace des Sociétés* (Lévy & Lussault 2003), Michel Lussault is one of the most read French geographers... that is, by French students. Unlike his co-author Jacques Lévy (see also Lévy & Lussault 2000), Lussault does not publish in English. Rather than waiting for an uncertain translation, grab this short text as soon as possible to get an idea of his approach, and if reading French is not too much of a challenge, go on with his previous academic work *L'Homme Spatial* for a more elaborate exposition of his geographical theory. This review will discuss primarily the 2009 book but will also introduce the 2007 volume.

To begin with, it is important to underline that *lutte des places* in the catchy title is a *faux-ami*. It should not be translated into English as place struggle, how nice it would be to preserve the alliteration with class struggle. Place is not the equivalent of place in the geographical vocabulary (this would be *lieu* in French), although it certainly is about space and position. It could be a square (as in *Place Louis Renault in Rueil-Malmaison*), a location (*une bonne place au camping, la meilleure place du parking*), a position (*la première place du classement*), a job (*une bonne place chez Renault*) or a seat (*une bonne place au concert de Renaud*). Locational struggles might be a more adequate translation, if we keep in mind it can relate to sites as small as the space needed for a body to

stand, as well as larger ones like cities, countries, continents or Earth.

The catchy title of the short essay signposts an historical evolution in societal conflicts from collective struggles (class struggles) to more individual struggles for the best positions, a shift that erodes solidarity within and between social groups and aggravates interpersonal competition. Nevertheless it is a bit misleading as the main ambition of the book is to disclose the main dimensions of the spatial condition of social life, and to show how the management of space is the core politics of human societies. With Hannah Arendt (pp. 27–29), Lussault defines the political as the distance and separation between humans. Political struggles are indeed always about spaces, distances, limits, places . . . but space is often taken for granted in political analyses, much to the frustration of many geographers.

The book opens with a familiar spatial experience: the problem of the entrance hall in large housing estates, often vandalised and ‘occupied’ by youths, hanging around in groups, perceived as a nuisance by others and often feeding by their mere presence the feelings of insecurity of other tenants, in other words: the struggle for the control of that specific piece of space between the youths, other tenants, the housing association and the municipality. In three chapters, Lussault shows how social organisation can be understood through the spatial question and how the elaboration of an ethics of the lived space can help redefine the political regulation of contemporary societies.

The first chapter deals with the control of space, which is fundamentally relational for Lussault. He underlines that individuals and groups are not only preoccupied with mobility – that is the overcoming of distance – but also with the reverse: distantiation or separation, the shaping of distance between them. In Lussault’s grammar of the human space, both the social space of each operator and the constructed space of society are the result of a relation between three fields (2009, p. 45): the spatial operators and their operations, the material artifacts and the spatial idealities (or iconographies). These spatial operators can be individual or collective, human, non-human or hybrid (a notion similar to that of actants in the

more familiar vocabulary of Bruno Latour’s actor network theory). Lussault stresses how each act is a transaction between opportunities and constraints of space. He poses that human operators seek spatial control and that there are five main competencies to do so (2009, pp. 75–96): the control of the relevant metrics (the ways to measure distance and proximity and to master mobility, with a main distinction between topographic and topologic metrics), the competence to claim space (to place and to displace), the scalar competence (the ways to comprehend size and articulate spaces at different scales), the competence of delimitation (the ways to divide space in relevant and meaningful entities, like properties and jurisdictions), and the competence of crossing borders, thresholds, and limits.

The remaining two chapters deal with two of these competences and the struggles that relate to them: positioning and border crossing. These two address the two sides of what Lussault calls the pseudo-liberal regime of the position market that characterises our society. This is not a society where people are born into a position and role they should perform the best they could, as in traditional societies; but a society where all positions can be conquered, although individuals do not have equal opportunities and capabilities in this competition.

With many empirical examples, Lussault demonstrates the mechanisms at work with the struggle for the best spot (to place and displace, to locate and to remove), and the control over moving things and peoples (border crossing procedures, access control, filtering, traceability). His examples are based on his observations of micro situations, his interpretation of events widely politicised and publicised, and his ongoing research on urban politics. Many vignettes are French (such as the entrance hall mentioned above or the negotiation of the reintroduction of wolves in the Vercors national park), some are American (the Jena Six story from Louisiana), others are global (container scanning), or generic (the airport). With these short sketches, Lussault is able to make the spatial issues at stake highly visible and to convene convincingly the importance of geographical analysis of conflicts and strategies. As such, it provides geographers with materials to do the same.

The epilogue of the book is a plea for the renewal of spatial (urban, regional) public policies on the basis of a better understanding of the spatial dimension of society. Lussault introduces the notion of 'geologistics' to study the contingent and singular combination of tensions between the main spatial principles: mobility (the will to move), co-spatiality (the will to connect), locational struggles (the will to control positions/sites/places), separation and limitation (the will to create homogenous and protected enclosure), filtering (the will to control access), and traceability (the will to know what is where and why). For him, spatial relations are more and more instrumental and nowadays we put a lot of energy in the geologistics of our daily life to co-ordinate our increasingly numerous and increasingly diverse spatial operations. Therefore he closes the book with a call for the elaboration of a spatial ethics inspired on Foucault's conception of ethics, to be able to invent the necessary regulation to avoid that the increasingly crude competition in locational struggles eventually destroys the will to live together in society.

Interested readers will find a more elaborate exposition of his geographical theory in the earlier volume *L'Homme Spatial: La Construction Sociale de l'Espace Humain* published in 2007. Opening with two pregnant vignettes (the 2004 Asian tsunami and Rosa Park's refusal to leave her seat in the bus in Montgomery, Alabama in December 1955, starting a decisive episode of the civil rights movements in the US), the book operates in three steps. In the first part, Lussault presents the axioms of his theory of geographic space, engaging thoroughly with the geographers' space and geography's vocabulary (with notions as place, area [territory], network, or landscapes). In the second part, Lussault deals with spatiality and how human beings live with organised space focusing on the spatial operations of social operators, including non-human actants (with the SARS virus as example). He discusses more extensively than in the 2009 shorter essay, the importance of the language and discourses and the role of spatial entities like cities, countries, emblematic landscapes and other identity spaces, as quasi-personage and thus as spatial operator (or actant). Finally in the third part, Lussault uses the urban question to demonstrate the perti-

nence of his approach, developing a grammar of urban space underlining differences of urbanity based on density and diversity. He pleads for a new, pragmatic urban planning that would in the first place have to disclose and explain the mechanisms at work in the different urban situations and to make the main characteristics of the spatial organisation that needs to be arranged insightful for a truly public debate.

Indeed Lussault developed his approach with an original analysis of urban politics, taking words seriously and underlining the performative aspects of political discourses. His empirical research engages with the interventions of Jean Royer, a right wing national politician (he was candidate for the presidential election in 1974), who was the Mayor of Tours from 1959 to 1995 and had a great influence on the major redevelopment programme for that agglomeration in a period when French local authorities gained more competencies and powers in that field (see Lussault 1993).

That most of his examples are confined to the urban arena and to micro geographies of place making (the entrance hall of the *grand ensembles*, the bus in Montgomery, Alabama), can be seen as a weakness of the demonstration. Even if at times he deals with polytopical inhabitants (people having different places of residence at once) (2007, pp. 348–349), and spatiophagy of the jet set (2009, pp. 101–102), and if he sees geography as a science of human habitation that reaches from the smallest to the global scale and the Globe as human habitat, Lussault shows little interest for larger collective actors like national states or economic corporations. Nevertheless his approach to the spatiality of social life and to spatial struggles is inspiring for those of us working on larger territories, national integration, international relations, geopolitics or globalisation. Exploring the geologistics of spatial operators relevant to these issues should be an exciting endeavour for many more geographers in the coming period, hopefully not only in French geography.

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**Breakthrough Communities: Sustainability and Justice in the Next American Metropolis.**

M. PALOMA PAVEL ed. Cambridge, MA 2009: The MIT Press. ISBN: 978-0262512350

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We cannot keep the pollution from a cement plant in a neighbouring town from drifting into our airspace and we cannot solve the problems of our cities without the co-operation of regions. In 1990, Dr. Margaret Paloma Pavel founded the Earth House in Oakland, California with a mission to build healthy, just and sustainable communities. The Earth House is committed to building these communities through education and community organisation and its founder realises that this is not viable apart from regional equity. The forward to this work, written by Carl Anthony, describes sustainable communities as being defined by the 'three e's: economically prosperous, environmentally sound, and socially equitable'. Public policies have contributed to segmented poverty in both city centres and increasingly suburbs. Patterns of suburban sprawl played a role in traffic congestion, air pollution, water issues and climate change. Public policies have also been a large factor in racial segregation (spatial racism), and disparities in housing and education within regions. In order to present both the context of and solutions for these social problems, Pavel has written a book about regional sustainability and justice, divided into three parts with Pavel introducing each. Part I presents the history and theoretical basis for regional equity. Part II utilises case studies to explore breakthroughs in equity in metropolitan regions in the United States. Lastly, Part III presents 'visionary voices' describing how we can move forward to a 'more just future'.

The readings of Part I are divided into three sections. The first section frames the regional equity movement in the spatial history of the civil rights movement and early community development, which led to the abandonment of inner cities. The lack of regional planning with the resulting sprawl and demise of inner-ring suburbs is discussed along with hope for transformation in regional equity. John Powell calls for federated regionalism, integrating regional and local policy. The second section focuses on the physical environment, touching on transportation, land use, and the quest for racial justice. Environmental justice and transportation equity call for a new focus on regional equity and planning. The third section describes the geographic context of sustainability and regional equity, looking at economic and racial segregation in rural areas, areas affected by Katrina, and other regions.

Part II presents 16 case studies of 'breakthrough stories' organised around the compasses of transformational leadership of the work of the Earth House. The first point on the compass is 'waking up' in which an awareness of the problem reaches a critical stage, calling for action. Organisers and residents 'say no to the forces destroying the community'. Four stories are presented in this first section: 'Rekindling Hope' and 'Closing the Gaps: The National Vacant Properties Campaign' both stories focusing on communities in Cleveland, Ohio, 'Neighbors Building Neighborhoods' in Rochester, New York and 'Transforming Brownfield Communities: The Naugatuck Valley Project' in New England. The second point on the compass is 'getting grounded,' assessing the community. This assessment includes 'getting grounded' in time, space, and community. In this section, four stories are presented, including: 'Community Activism for Creative Rebuilding of Neighborhoods' in Chicago, Illinois, 'Opportunity-Based Housing' and 'A Regional Approach to Affordable Housing' both in Atlanta, Georgia, and 'Preserving Heirs' Property in Coastal South Carolina.' The third point on the compass is 'exploring new horizons,' examining possibilities outside the old way of thinking and often allying with new regional partners. The stories included in this section are 'LAX Rising and Community Benefits Agreements: A Strategy for Renewing Our