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“Theoretical and practical approaches to the study of spatial diffusion of religious ideas: Relationships between actors and the circulation of information”

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Summary

The issue of globalization has triggered many protest and identity crises. This outbreak is conveyed by the three big monotheist religions and by new religious movements. Considering this, the study will be focusing on these movements through one school of thought, which is called creationism. This movement lauds a universalism between all religions. In order to achieve this, creationist use a representation, in which the world was created by an upper creator and they rely on the Scriptures. The purpose of this study is to examine the different modalities of spatial circulation and diffusion of this current of thought. Indeed it is suitable to analyze the places and practices – at different scales in time and in space – linked to creationism.

In geography, the Torsten Hägerstrand’s works (Innovation diffusion as a spatial process, 1953) allowed to observe in the diffusion of innovations as well as some temporal and spatial regularities. So, these works allowed creating studies and patterns about phenomena in movement. Practical applications are realized in particular regarding technological and economic innovations, and about epidemics. Few studies of spatial diffusion were interested in the ideas, and their role in the production of new places and spaces. Besides, in the T. Hägerstrand’s works, actors were not studied much. Indeed the stress was put on processes and not on the conditions of appearance of places in space. To study these, the PhD suggests introducing sociologist thoughts, which are linked to the diffusion of individuals and groups: notably the key works of Everett M. Rogers (1962) or Gabriel Tarde (1890). As a result, it will be interesting to introduce the actors in four notions which were developed by T. Hägerstrand in his works: information, strategies, adoption and the stake in contact. This theoretical initiative implies the development of news methodologies allowing the analysis of creationism.

