



Seeking Spatial Justice (Globalization and Community)

Edward W. Soja

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In 1996, the Los Angeles Bus Riders Union, a grassroots advocacy organization, won a historic legal victory against the city's Metropolitan Transit Authority. The resulting consent decree forced the MTA for a period of ten years to essentially reorient the mass transit system to better serve the city's poorest residents. A stunning reversal of conventional governance and planning in urban America, which almost always favors wealthier residents, this decision is also, for renowned urban theorist Edward W. Soja, a concrete example of spatial justice in action.

In *Seeking Spatial Justice*, Soja argues that justice has a geography and that the equitable distribution of resources, services, and access is a basic human right. Building on current concerns in critical geography and the new spatial consciousness, Soja interweaves theory and practice, offering new ways of understanding and changing the unjust geographies in which we live. After tracing the evolution of spatial justice and the closely related notion of the right to the city in the influential work of Henri Lefebvre, David Harvey, and others, he demonstrates how these ideas are now being applied through a series of case studies in Los Angeles, the city at the forefront of this movement. Soja focuses on such innovative labor–community coalitions as Justice for Janitors, the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy, and the Right to the City Alliance; on struggles for rent control and environmental justice; and on the role that faculty and students in the UCLA Department of Urban Planning have played in both developing the theory of spatial justice and putting it into practice.

Effectively locating spatial justice as a theoretical concept, a mode of empirical analysis, and a strategy for social and political action, this book makes a significant contribution to the contemporary debates about justice, space, and the city.

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