1

Why Spatial? Why Justice? Why L.A.? Why Now?

> [A] kind of paradigm shift is occurring; we are perhaps now acceding to a new, invigorated sense of looking at the struggle over geography in interesting and imaginative ways.
>
> —Edward Said, *Edward Said's Culture and Imperialism,* 1994

Putting Space First

As I hope I have made clear, spatial justice is not a substitute or alternative to other forms of justice but rather represents a particular emphasis and interpretive perspective. I have also argued that foregrounding a critical spatial perspective and seeing the search for social justice as a struggle over geography increase the possibility of opening up new ways of thinking about the subject as well as enriching existing ideas and practices. The discussion continues here with a more detailed look at the resurgence of interest in a critical spatial perspective that has been developing in recent years, and how it is provoking and being provoked by new modes of thinking about the spatiality of (in)justice and the (in)justice of spatiality.

The Spatial Turn

Foregrounding the spatial aspects of justice is one of many "spatializations" that are being generated by what scholars are now calling a *spatial turn,* an unprecedented diffusion of critical spatial thinking across an unusually broad spectrum of subject areas. An emphasis on space and

Soja, Edward W.. Seeking Spatial Justice.
: University of Minnesota Press, . p 32
http://site.ebrary.com/id/10400723?ppg=32

spatiality has traditionally been given particular attention in only a few disciplines, mainly geography, architecture, urban and regional planning, and urban sociology. Today, it has reached far beyond these spatial disciplines into such fields as anthropology and cultural studies, law and social welfare, postcolonial and feminist critiques, theology and bible studies, race theory and queer theory, literary criticism and poetry, art and music, archaeology and international relations, economics and accounting.

Often these applications of a spatial perspective are superficial, involving little more than a few pertinent spatial metaphors such as mapping this or that or using such words as cartography, region, or landscape to appear to be moving with the times. In some fields, however, such as in current debates in urban archaeology and development economics, radically new ideas have been emerging from an understanding of socio-spatial causality, the powerful forces that arise from socially produced spaces such as urban agglomerations and cohesive regional economies. What can be called the stimulus of socio-spatial agglomeration is today being assertively described as the *primary* cause of economic development, technological innovation, and cultural creativity, one of the strongest claims ever made for urban spatial causality. (For more on this, see Notes and References.)

Whether affecting mainstream thought or more peripheral subject matter, this spatial turn and the new spatial consciousness it has engendered are beginning to reverse a century and a half of relative neglect of spatial thinking. Moreover, a critical spatial perspective has also begun to extend its influence beyond the academic world into a wider public and political realm, as exemplified by the increasingly active search for spatial justice and the right to the city. Perhaps never before has the spatial organization of human society, particularly as it takes shape in the modern metropolis and the expansive global economy, been as widely recognized as an influential force shaping human behavior, political action, and societal development.

A critical spatial perspective of some sort has become increasingly relevant to understanding the contemporary condition, whether we are pondering the increasing intervention of electronic media in our daily routines, trying to understand the multiplying geopolitical conflicts around the globe, or seeking ways to act politically to reduce poverty, racism, sexual discrimination, and environmental degradation. What you are reading is a product and an extension of this transdisciplinary diffusion of a critical spatial perspective from its original academic confines into social and political theory and practice. From local and urban contexts to the regional, national, and global scales, a new spatial consciousness is entering into public debates on such key issues as human rights, social inclusion–exclusion, citizenship, democracy, poverty, racism, economic growth, and environmental policy.

As I view it, the spatial turn is signaling what may turn out to be a profound sea change in all intellectual thought and philosophy, affecting every form of knowledge production from the abstract realms of ontological and epistemological debate to theory formation, empirical analysis, and practical application. In particular, it represents a growing shift away from an era when spatial thinking was subordinated to historical thinking, toward one in which the historical and spatial dimensions of whatever subject you are looking at take on equal and interactive significance, without one being inherently privileged over the other. This rebalancing of spatial and historical perspectives deserves further explanation.

Space and time, along with their more concrete and socially constructed extensions as geography and history, are the most fundamental and encompassing qualities of the physical and social worlds in which we live. For most scholars and across the wider public, however, thinking historically about society and social relations is more familiar and has tended to be seen as potentially if not inherently more revealing and insightful than thinking spatially or geographically. Few would deny that understanding any subject, in the past or present, will be significantly advanced by adopting an inquisitive historical perspective. After all, we are essentially temporal beings. Our biography defines our individual lived time. Time brings us to life, tempers our existence, makes us unalterably and irreversibly contemporary, and, in the end, unavoidably temporary.

It is over time that we also create our collective selves, construct the societies and cultures, polities and economies within which our individual experiences are expressed and inscribed. Time and its socially produced outcome, history, almost self-evidently define human development and change, create problems and solutions, motivate, complicate, expand, and eventually extinguish our being. Although only under

Soja, Edward W.. Seeking Spatial Justice.
: University of Minnesota Press, . p 34
http://site.ebrary.com/id/10400723?ppg=34

conditions given to us from the past, we make our histories, transform society, move from tradition to modernity, produce justice and injustice as social attributes, and so much more.

The larger significance of the spatial turn and the resurgence of interest in critical spatial thinking arise from the belief that *we are just as much spatial as temporal beings,* that our existential spatiality and temporality are essentially or ontologically coequal, equivalent in explanatory power and behavioral significance, interwoven in a mutually formative relation. Human life is in every sense spatio-temporal, geo-historical, without time or space, history or geography, being inherently privileged on its own. There is no a priori reason to make one more important than the other. Yet despite this relational equivalence, the interpretive balance between space and time, spatial and historical perspectives, has for the most part tended to be distorted, at least in Western social thought, with time and history taking precedence and privilege in virtually every field of knowledge formation, academic theory building, and public consciousness.

That such intellectual discrimination persists was brought home to me when I saw the film *The History Boys,* based on the autobiographical writings of Alan Bennett and an award-winning play of the same name. If you have seen it, you will remember that the title refers to the eight brightest students at a grammar school in northern England who are assiduously educated to obtain entry to Oxford or Cambridge. They share a deep interest in history and debate its merits and complexity with great skill, assisted by the history instructor, seemingly the most balanced and perceptive of the teaching staff. The primary villain in all this is a sniveling headmaster who basks in the students' accomplishment but is deeply jealous of their cleverness. While interviewing someone he hopes can help the students spice up their test essays, he grudgingly admits that he did not go to Oxford or Cambridge. "It was the fifties after all," he says. "It was a more adventurous time. I was a geographer and went to [the University of] Hull." One could almost hear the audience snigger, especially when composed of largely British viewers: a geographer at a minor university being almost as far away from the intellectual status of the history boys as one can be. It was the almost unquestionable matter-of-factness of the historian's superiority that came through most vividly.

The spatial turn has emerged against the grain of this continued privileging of the historical over the geographical imaginations. Its most

Soja, Edward W.. Seeking Spatial Justice.
: University of Minnesota Press, . p 35
http://site.ebrary.com/id/10400723?ppg=35

ambitious objective is to bring about a restoration of sorts, a complementary rebalancing of historical and geographical thinking and interpretation. Achieving this, at least for the present moment, involves some degree of foregrounding if not a strategic but temporary privileging of the spatial perspective over all others. This means inverting the usual order, putting space first as the primary discursive and explanatory focus, as is intended in spatializing such concepts as justice, development, politics, and planning.

Putting space first does not mean that spatial thinking should be practiced alone, divorced from life's social and historical realities. I cannot emphasize enough that foregrounding a spatial perspective does not represent a rejection of historical and sociological reasoning but an effort to open them up to new ideas and approaches that have been systematically neglected or marginalized in the past. Driving the spatial turn forward is the expectation of significant theoretical and practical payoffs, for this strategic foregrounding of the spatial flexes interpretive muscles that have not been well developed or widely applied in the past. This in turn raises new possibilities for discovering hidden insights, alternative theories, and revised modes of understanding, such as has been occurring in the aforementioned discovery of the generative effects of urban agglomeration and in the search for spatial justice.

Toward a New Spatial Consciousness

Moving the argument further, it is important to realize that spatial thinking today has evolved in several new directions that make it different from the way space was conventionally conceptualized and studied. When space is referred to here, it is more than just a physical quality of the material world or an essential philosophical attribute having absolute, relative, or relational dimensions. These physical and philosophical features of space have dominated the historical discourse on space for the past century, especially among geographers. They remain relevant to our contemporary understanding of the spatiality of human life, but focusing exclusively on them can lead us away from a cogent, active, and critical understanding of human geographies.

Although some may think this to be too obvious to mention, the spatiality of human life must be interpreted and understood as fundamentally, from the start, a complex social product, a collectively created

Soja, Edward W.. Seeking Spatial Justice.
: University of Minnesota Press, . p 36
http://site.ebrary.com/id/10400723?ppg=36

and purposeful configuration and socialization of space that defines our contextual habitat, the human and humanized geography in which we all live out our lives. Such socialized lived space, constructed out of physical and natural spatial forms, mentally and materially intertwines with our socialized lived times to create our biographies and geo-histories. Human life is consequently and consequentially spatial, temporal, and social, simultaneously and interactively real and imagined. Our geographies, like our histories, take on material form as social relations become spatial but are also creatively represented in images, ideas, and imaginings, to take us back to Edward Said's incisive opening comments.

Building on this foundational starting point are other defining principles of critical spatial thinking. As intrinsically spatial beings from birth, we are at all times engaged and enmeshed in shaping our socialized spatialities and, simultaneously, being shaped by them. In other words, we make our geographies just as it has been said that we make our histories, not under conditions of our own choosing but in the material and imagined worlds we collectively have already created—or that have been created for us. In this way, our lives are always engaged in what I have described as a socio-spatial dialectic, with social processes shaping spatiality at the same time spatiality shapes social processes. Stated another way, our spatiality, sociality, and historicality are mutually constitutive, with no one inherently privileged a priori.

Here too there has been a great imbalance in our intellectual traditions. Much greater emphasis continues to be given to how social processes shape spatial form as opposed to the reverse relation, how spatiality and spatial processes shape social relations of all kinds, from the immediacy of interpersonal interaction to relations of class and social stratification to long-term patterns of societal development. To emphasize again, this is not to say that spatial processes are more important than social processes or to suggest a simplistic spatial determinism. As with the relations between space and time, the social and the spatial are dialectically intertwined, mutually (and often problematically) formative and consequential.

This perspective and the new spatial consciousness that is arising from it strive to rebalance the spatial, the social, and the historical dimensions of reality, making the three dynamically interactive and equivalent in inherent explanatory power. The actual production of useful

Soja, Edward W.. Seeking Spatial Justice.
: University of Minnesota Press, . p 37
http://site.ebrary.com/id/10400723?ppg=37

knowledge will almost surely emphasize one of these interacting modes more than the others, but there should be no predetermined disposition to subordinate any one of the triad to the others, as has arguably been the case when the spatial is reduced to physical form or a mere reflection or background environment to social and historical processes. Emphasizing the spatial does not mean simply reversing the biases of the past to create a new spatial determinism, but neither should there be a continued acceptance of the space-blinkered social historicism that has prevailed in nearly all the human sciences to this day.

Activating this strategically foregrounded spatial perspective and extending its reach from theory into practice is the even bolder recognition that the geographies in which we live can have both positive and negative effects on our lives. They are not just dead background or a neutral physical stage for the human drama but are filled with material and imagined forces that affect events and experiences, forces that can hurt us or help us in nearly everything we do, individually and collectively. This is a vitally important part of the new spatial consciousness, making us aware that the geographies in which we live can intensify and sustain our exploitation as workers, support oppressive forms of cultural and political domination based on race, gender, and nationality, and aggravate all forms of discrimination and injustice. Without this recognition, space is little more than a background complication.

Leading us closer to the search for spatial justice is still another fundamental realization. Since we construct our multiscalar geographies, or they are constructed for us by more powerful others, it follows that we can act to change or reconfigure them to increase the positive or decrease the negative effects. These efforts to make changes in our existing spatial configurations, whether they involve redecorating our homes, fighting against racial segregation in our cities, creating policies to reduce income inequalities between the developed and developing countries, or combating global warming do not express innocent or universally held objectives. They are the target and source of conflicting purposes, competing forces, and contentious political actions for and against the status quo. Space is not an empty void. It is always filled with politics, ideology, and other forces shaping our lives and challenging us to engage in struggles over geography.

Translating these ideas as a template for this book, it can be said that

Soja, Edward W.. Seeking Spatial Justice.
: University of Minnesota Press, . p 38
http://site.ebrary.com/id/10400723?ppg=38

- justice and injustice are infused into the multiscalar geographies in which we live, from the intimacies of the household to the uneven development of the global economy;
- the socialized geographies of (in)justice significantly affect our lives, creating lasting structures of unevenly distributed advantage and disadvantage;
- these geographies and their effects can be changed through forms of social and political action.

It becomes clear then that seeking spatial justice is a vital political objective but not an easy task, as it is filled with countervailing forces aimed at maintaining existing geographies of privilege and power. With this reformulated critical spatial perspective in mind, we look next at the concept of justice, for it too is being redefined and reasserted in the contemporary context.

Seeking Justice Now

Justice has several dictionary definitions. With a capital *J* it refers to the department of national government (federal in the United States) responsible for enforcing the country's laws. A related definition describes the public official authorized to decide questions brought before a court of law, such as a justice of the Supreme Court or, at a much lower level of authority, a justice of the peace. Still within a legal framework but moving closer to how it will be discussed here, justice in the practice of the law refers to the act of determining rights and assigning rewards or punishment. Here a key link is made to the concept of human rights and to the etymological root of the word "justice," from the Old French *justice,* derived from the Latin *jus,* meaning both law and right. The French word *droit* carries this double meaning of law and right.

Although never completely uprooted from the law and legal adjudication, the concept of justice obtains a much broader meaning as the quality of being just or fair. In this sense of justice as fairness and in conjunction with the establishment of rights under the law, the concept expands in scope to apply to many other conditions of social life and everyday behavior. It links the active notion of seeking justice to other broad concepts referring to the qualities of a just society: freedom, liberty, equality, democracy, civil rights. Seeking to increase justice or to

Soja, Edward W.. Seeking Spatial Justice.
: University of Minnesota Press, . p 39
http://site.ebrary.com/id/10400723?ppg=39

decrease injustice thus becomes a fundamental objective in all societies, a foundational principle for maximizing human dignity and fairness.

All these related terms have been used as mobilizing and consciousness-raising political symbols, but it seems that seeking justice has obtained a stronger hold on the contemporary public and political imagination than its alternatives. Seeking freedom has added increasingly conservative overtones, as in the unbridled idealization of the freedom of choice; liberty feels somehow outdated; equality as such is often made to appear unattainable; and even the demand for universal human rights has connotations of excessive abstraction and lack of attachment to particular times and places. For many today, a new, more grounded and inclusive *justice politics* is emerging to mobilize and guide collective action.

Although difficult to prove conclusively, I am suggesting here that justice in the contemporary world tends to be seen as more concrete than its alternatives, more oriented to present-day conditions, more open to a multiplicity of interconnected perspectives and hence to more successful coalition building and connections between different social movements. Seeking justice today seems to be imbued with a symbolic force that works more effectively across cleavages of class, race, and gender to foster a collective political consciousness, create a sense of solidarity based on shared experience, and focus attention on the most challenging problems in the contemporary world in ways that span large segments of the political spectrum.

The search for justice has accordingly become a powerful rallying cry for contemporary political movements of many different kinds. Achieving specifically social and economic justice has long been at the core of debates on liberal democracy and a focus for social activism and political debate. In recent years, however, the mobilizing force of the concept of justice has been extended into many new political arenas. In addition to familiar social and economic modifiers, many new terms now define particular types of justice struggles and activism: environmental, racial, worker, youth, global, local, human, community, peace, monetary, border, territorial, and, of particular relevance here, spatial. To illustrate the widening use of justice as a mobilizing concept, a partial list of current national and regional organizations and action campaigns in the United States with *justice* specifically in their title is presented in Notes and References.

Soja, Edward W.. Seeking Spatial Justice.
: University of Minnesota Press, . p 40
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Why growing attention seems to be given to justice as a political objective has several possible explanations. Particularly relevant has been an increasing awareness of the negative social, political, cultural, and environmental effects arising from globalization and the formation of the New Economy. Many have benefited from globalization, economic restructuring, and the new technologies, but it is also clear that these developments have magnified many existing inequalities in contemporary society, such as between the rich and the poor, between men and women, and between different racial and ethnic groups. They have also accentuated other forms of social and political polarization, such as the clash between domestic and immigrant populations over resources, state policies, and civil rights. Cities such as Los Angeles, New York, and London now have income disparities that rank among the highest in the world, and it is no surprise to see new justice movements arising with particular force in these highly globalized city regions.

Globalization has also been associated with state restructuring and challenges to the political domination of the nation-state as the exclusive political space for defining citizenship, legal systems, and hence justice itself. Struggles for justice, more than ever before, stretch across political scales, from the global to the local, as the feminist political theorist Nancy Fraser observes in her recent book *Scales of Justice: Reimagining Political Space in a Globalizing World* (2008). Her key point is that the theory of justice needs to be reconstituted in a "post-Westphalian" world, referring to the origins of the now outdated nation-state system. All struggles over democracy, solidarity, and the public sphere revolve around rethinking the concept of justice.

Also affecting the attention being given to justice have been environmental factors. Growing problems of global warming, erosion of the ozone layer, the health dangers of hazardous wastes, and destruction of the rain forests have expanded the scope and intensity of the environmental justice movement beyond what David Harvey (2000) and others have called merely "militant localism." The increasingly urgent need to deal with famine, genocide, Third World debt, weapons of mass destruction, the devastating wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and multiplying threats to world peace has at the same time invigorated a global justice movement, which, like the environmental justice movement, often focuses on explicitly spatial strategies and objectives.

Soja, Edward W.. Seeking Spatial Justice.
: University of Minnesota Press, . p 41
http://site.ebrary.com/id/10400723?ppg=41

These social and spatial movements have spread the politicization of justice to many different arenas or scales of social activism. Labor unions, NGOs, community-based organizations, and urban civil society more generally have increasingly adopted the cause of achieving socioeconomic, environmental, and global justice to further their own local objectives. This has created a new kind of multiscalar embeddedness for worker-, community-, and neighborhood-based activism, in which localized justice struggles are connected to larger urban, regional, national, and global contexts and campaigns. Particularly relevant here and in later chapters discussing the new labor–community coalitions emerging in Los Angeles is the mobilizing concept of *community-based regionalism,* the notion that local efforts at community development can be fostered by adopting a regional perspective and recognizing how the regional economy shapes local events. Also relevant has been the creation of a World Charter for the Right to the City, discussed in more detail in chapter 3.

Further encouraging the emergence of justice as a unifying force for social activism has been the shift away from a traditional binary, or we/they, politics of economic equality, attached to rigidly defined and often exclusionary channels of oppositional resistance based on class, race, gender, or sexual preference. In the development of what some call the new cultural politics of difference, simply achieving equality or destroying the dichotomous relations between labor and capital, black and white, male and female, gay and straight is not the singular goal or the only driving force. Instead, the emphasis is on an inclusive and combinative rather than exclusive and narrowly channeled political mobilization, one that is radically open to new bases of support and aimed at building effective coalitions between different social movements and organizations. Achieving greater justice here becomes a more encompassing, inclusive, and above all feasible goal than achieving full equality or fomenting revolutionary transformation.

Justice in the contemporary world has been developing a political meaning that transcends the defined categories of race, gender, class, nationality, sexual preference, and other forms of homogeneous and often exclusive group or community identity. In doing so, it helps to bring together the diverse movements built around each of these specific axes of unequal power relations in a common project. Concluding this

Soja, Edward W.. Seeking Spatial Justice.
: University of Minnesota Press, . p 42
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first look at the concept of justice as it is being used today is another key point guiding the forthcoming chapters, that adding spatial to justice, collectively seeking an explicitly spatialized form of social and economic justice, can be particularly effective in providing an organizational and motivational adhesive, or "glue," that can encourage and maintain heterogeneous and pluralistic association and coalition building. All who are oppressed, subjugated, or economically exploited are to some degree suffering from the effects of unjust geographies, and this struggle over geography can be used to build greater crosscutting unity and solidarity.

Foregrounding Los Angeles

Seeking justice as an organizing strategy and political objective has been particularly prominent and effective in Los Angeles over the past twenty years. Leading the way has been the Justice for Janitors movement (J4J) and related struggles for a living wage for all workers. The J4J experience also significantly influenced the events of spring 1992 in Los Angeles, when banners proclaiming "No Justice—No Peace" were prominently displayed in what many now call the Justice Riots. Justice continues to be the focus today for local struggles over jobs and urban regeneration, as activist groups punctuate their demonstrations at strategic locations with demands not to stop all new development but to achieve "Development with Justice."

Growing out of these justice struggles has been a remarkable resurgence of the labor movement, driven largely through new coalitions between union locals and a wide range of community-based organizations. Innovative organizing strategies, especially with regard to immigrant workers, and a series of successful justice-oriented campaigns have helped to transform what was once considered an intensely antilabor environment into what some national observers today see as the most vigorous and effective urban labor movement in the United States.

Accompanying and to some extent driving this resurgence of the labor movement has been the rise of local and neighborhood consciousness and place-based politics. What was once a notoriously "placeless" urban world, where local communities rarely impinged on people's lives, has now become a hive of community-based organizations and grassroots activism that rivals what can be found in any other major urban

Soja, Edward W.. Seeking Spatial Justice.
: University of Minnesota Press, . p 43
http://site.ebrary.com/id/10400723?ppg=43

region. Springing from this place-based politics has been an integrative regional consciousness, an awareness of how the regional economy significantly shapes local conditions. A strategic community-based regionalism has entered the activists' agenda and has facilitated coalition building and the formation of what might be described as regional confederations or networks bringing together diverse organizations that in the past would rarely work together.

These local and regional achievements are even more remarkable given the deteriorating economy, huge job losses, and declining union power that have characterized most of the rest of the country over the past thirty years. Describing how this dramatic change took place, why it happened in Los Angeles of all places, and specifically examining the role played by strategically incorporating the spatiality of (in)justice in organizational mobilization and action will be the focus for the last three chapters.

Linked into the history of labor–community coalition building has been an important university connection. Particular attention is given in chapter 5 to how students and faculty in urban planning at UCLA have contributed to the translation of theoretical developments and empirical research into social activism and effective coalition building. These university–community connections have been especially effective in such organizations as the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE), Strategic Action for a Just Economy (SAJE), and the recently formed Right to the City Alliance.

Suggested in these discussions is the idea that a critical spatial imagination entered the world of political practice earlier and more deeply in Los Angeles than in almost any other major metropolis in the country. Also implied is the argument that this early development was at least in part a reflection of the emergence at UCLA and later other local universities of an exceptional cluster of scholars specialized in making theoretical and practical sense—from an explicitly spatial perspective—of the dramatic changes that were taking place in cities around the world over the past forty years. This spatially oriented research cluster built their more general theorizations primarily on empirical studies of urban restructuring in the region of Los Angeles.

As noted earlier, I do not intend to resolve the issue of whether or not these developments deserve to be described as a unified "school," but

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: University of Minnesota Press, . p 44
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whatever one's position on this debate, there is little doubt that a remarkable expansion of academic research and writing on Los Angeles occurred after the mid-1970s and that it had a significant influence on urban and regional studies around the world. While many contributed, this research was most densely and creatively generated from faculty and students in the urban planning and geography departments at UCLA and revolved primarily around new ways of thinking about urban and regional development and change. It will also be argued that these achievements fed off an unusually stimulating two-way flow of ideas and experiences between the university and local and regional social activists and labor and community-based organizations.

Contemporary Applications

Before the turn of the twentieth century, the specific term *spatial justice* was almost entirely absent from the literature, at least in English. As will be discussed in more detail in chapter 3, one journal article (Pirie 1983) and a pamphlet on "interdictory space" (Flusty 1994) were the only publications to use spatial justice in their titles. Since 2000, however, the use of the term has become much more widespread. The following discussion continues to add new elements to the evolving definition of spatial justice and illustrates how the term is currently being used.

References to spatial justice appear throughout my book *Postmetropolis* (2000) and its broad examination of the crisis-generated restructuring processes that have been reconfiguring the modern metropolis over the past forty years. To balance the rather bleak picture of the new urban forms that were emerging in Los Angeles and other large urban regions, with their deepening economic inequalities and rampant social polarization, I concluded the book with some glimmers of hope and optimism in a section entitled "New Beginnings: Struggles for Spatial Justice and Regional Democracy." I looked with hopeful expectation to the Bus Riders Union, the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE), and other successful local organizations as inspirational models for the future and added regional democracy to the struggle for spatial justice, reflecting a new regionalism that was emerging at the time in the local academic discourse as well as in the community-based regional coalitions that had formed in the 1990s (Pastor, Benner, and Matsuoka

Soja, Edward W.. Seeking Spatial Justice.
: University of Minnesota Press, . p 45
http://site.ebrary.com/id/10400723?ppg=45

2009). In essence, *Seeking Spatial Justice* was initiated in these concluding eight pages.

Mustafa Dikec, a doctoral student in urban planning at UCLA at the time, took the lead in publishing a more elaborate and explicit theorization and discussion of the concept of spatial justice in "Justice and the Spatial Imagination." Starting with a quote from G. H. Pirie, whose article "On Spatial Justice" was published in 1983 in the same journal, *Environment and Planning A*, Dikec (2001) reviewed the relevant literature and developed his own "dialectical formulation of the spatiality of injustice and the injustice of spatiality." He described the spatiality of injustice as focusing on how injustice is embedded in space, while the injustice of spatiality emphasizes how injustice is created and maintained through space.

Without belaboring this distinction, Dikec goes on to draw some significant political conclusions and allusions, anticipating the growing connections between seeking spatial justice and struggles over the right to the city. He calls for the development of new urban spatial sensibilities and a new ideological discourse that will activate struggles for spatial justice (mentioning the Bus Riders Union as an example) informed by the idea of the right to the city and the related rights to difference and resistance. In his subsequent research, Dikec took these ideas into the world of French urban policy to assess the injustices embedded in the formation of the now immigrant-dominated *banlieues*, the dense inner suburbs of Paris and other large French cities, which exploded in 2005. I will return to his work on the *banlieues* in the next chapter, as an example of how spatial injustice is produced top-down through the political organization of space.

The most comprehensive and focused publication of the decade was a special double issue on spatial justice of *Critical Planning*, the UCLA student-managed and refereed journal of urban planning, published in 2007. A list of the articles that contained spatial justice in their titles appears in Notes and References. Here are some brief excerpts from the editorial note:

> [T]he renewed recognition that space matters offers new insights not only to understanding how injustices are produced through space, but also how spatial analyses of injustice can advance the fight for social justice, informing concrete claims and the activist practices that make

> these claims visible. Understanding that space—like justice—is never simply handed out or given, that both are socially produced, experienced, and contested on constantly shifting social, political, economic, and geographical terrains, means that justice—if it is to be concretely achieved, experienced, and reproduced—must be engaged on spatial as well as social terms.
>
> Thus, those vested with the power to produce the physical spaces we inhabit through development, investment, planning—as well as through grassroots embodied activisms—are likewise vested with the power to perpetuate injustices and/or create just spaces. . . . What a just space looks like is necessarily kept open, but must be rooted in the active negotiation of multiple publics, in search of productive ways to build solidarities across difference. This space—both process and product—is by definition public in the broadest sense; the opportunity to participate in inscribing its meaning is accessible to all. . . . Justice is therefore not abstract, and not solely something "handed down" or doled out by the state, it is rather a shared responsibility of engaged actors in the socio-spatial systems they inhabit and (re)produce.

An exhibition on Just Space(s) was held in fall 2007 at the Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions center (LACE) to coincide with the publication of the special issue of *Critical Planning*. The exhibits and panel discussions were intended not just to show what is unjust about the world but also to encourage active participation in producing more just space(s).

In March 2008 the first international conference on spatial justice ("Justice et Injustice Spatiales") was held at the University of Paris X–Nanterre, the site where the Paris uprising of May 1968 first erupted almost exactly forty years earlier. The university, located near one of the dense *banlieues,* was also where Henri Lefebvre, the French philosopher who originated the concept of the right to the city, taught for many years and for whom the main auditorium where the plenary sessions took place was named. Various panels examined spatial justice and its relation to urban and regional planning, globalization, segregation, environmental politics, and cultural identity. The main conference organizer was Philippe Gervais-Lambony, a professor at Nanterre and a specialist on South Africa.

The concept of spatial justice had already appeared in French urban studies and geography. The geographer Alain Reynaud's *Societé, espace et* *justice: inégalités régionales et justice socio-spatiale* was published in 1981, and Lefebvre's writings on the closely related concept of the right to the city continued to be influential, although somewhat muted, in the closing decades of the twentieth century. Growing out of the conference and under the leadership of Gervais-Lambony is a new journal, with the bilingual name *Justice Spatiale/Spatial Justice.*

Among those present at the conference were Peter Marcuse and Susan Fainstein, two prominent figures in urban planning and planning theory and promoters of a parallel discourse to spatial justice and the right to the city revolving around the normative search for what they call a "just city." This discourse is preeminently normative, reflecting the strong utopian tradition among planning theorists. It rarely adopts a critical spatial perspective, although the intrinsic appeal of its underspatialized concept of justice has attracted many geographers and others who prefer not to emphasize a more forceful form of spatial explanation. As such, it has captured increasing attention in contemporary theoretical and practical debates on spatial justice and the right to the city.

In recent years, the specific concept of spatial justice has begun to enter university curricula and research institutes as well as undergraduate textbooks. For example, Social Well-Being and Spatial Justice is now a research and teaching cluster in the Department of Geography, University of Durham, UK; Social Exclusion and Spatial Justice is a course in the Department of Geography, Newcastle University, UK; and Spatial Justice in the United States is taught in the Department of Geography, University of Vermont. An online teaching module with the title Global Theme II: Spatial Justice forms part of an introductory text in human geography written by Sallie Marston and Paul L. Knox. They provide a basic definition of spatial justice and prepare students for an exercise in how spatial injustices produce and aggravate local, national, and global health problems related to increasing obesity.

Although they do not use the specific term, also worth mentioning with regard to teaching related to spatial justice are two additional initiatives. The inaugural Summer Institute for the Geographies of Justice (SIGJ), organized by *Antipode: A Radical Journal of Geography* in conjunction with the International Critical Geography Group (ICGG), was held in Georgia, United States, in 2007, and another was scheduled to occur in 2009 in Manchester, UK. Topics studied include activist geographies

Soja, Edward W.. Seeking Spatial Justice.
: University of Minnesota Press, . p 48
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and scholar activism, producing relevant public geographies, locating the boundaries of the geographies of justice, working with and researching social movements, and mapping the future of radical/critical geographies.

The second initiative is exemplified by a working paper by the geographer Heidi Nast, "Statement of Procedure in Developing a Certificate Program in International Spatial Justice and GIS," part of a series sponsored by the People's Geography Project based at Syracuse University and directed by Don Mitchell, author of *Right to the City: Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space* (2003) and journal articles on the geography of injustice and scales of justice. While these activities relate closely to the concept of spatial justice as defined here, the seemingly determined avoidance of the specific term by many radical geographers, especially those influenced by the writings of David Harvey, is significant, as I will explain further in chapter 3.

Clearly, the concept of spatial justice has entered the contemporary agenda in a variety of areas. At the same time, a cluster of associated and overlapping concepts and discourses has also emerged. Some, like the ideas about the right to the city, add significantly to the evolving definition of spatial justice, while others, such as the "just city" discourse, tend to draw attention away from the core arguments about the innovative possibilities that arise from applying an assertive and explicit spatial perspective. I will continue to address at least some of these alternatives to the specific notion of spatial justice in chapter 3. I turn next to the many different ways unjust geographies are produced and reproduced.

Soja, Edward W.. Seeking Spatial Justice.
: University of Minnesota Press, . p 49
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