

INTERPRETIVE PLAN

CRC Research

Spatial Justice Video

SPATIAL JUSTICE





PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This short animated film introduces the concept of 'spatial justice' to general audiences, with particular reference to Edward Soja's work. The purpose of the short is to show the distributive geographic dimensions of place and justice by illustrating how choices affect every person and every space: the uneven accessibility of services and amenities, the impacts of by-products, and economic vulnerabilities. The film concludes with ways to address spatial justice, ranging from individual actions such as supporting the localization of food production to broader societal imperatives of improving sustainable infrastructure in remote communities.

"Location will always have attached to it some degree of relative advantage or disadvantage.



Edward Soja



TOPIC & RELEVANCE

BEYOND THE ACADEMY

Soja's concept of spatial justice and his seminal article on Writing the City Spatially are out of reach for a vast number of people. Using the medium of animated short film, this visual communication project takes the concept and makes it meaningful beyond the academy by drawing attention to its local and global importance. Relatable everyday scenes that may resonate more deeply with audiences are used to reconnect place, space, and social justice.

THE DISCONNECT

The importance of 'place' is now coming to the attention of decision-makers in their implementation of policies, programs, and incentives for communities. Yet, it is too often taken for granted in people's day-to-day decisions, as are the impacts of these decisions internationally. For example, many of us do not consider how our food travels to the grocery store, or where our waste ends up. Globalization has made the world hyper-connected, but place has become increasingly disconnected as more and more public spaces are becoming commodified and privatized. Given this disconnect, this short aims to communicate why it is imperative that society considers the uneven and over development of places and their impacts on social justice.

SPATIAL EXAMPLES

Because the concept of spatial justice is complex, we needed to rethink the perspective of our examples. We do not want to assume a spatial 'centre', which too-often serves to advance spatial injustices. Since many of our go-to spatial descriptions use binary phrases like 'local' and 'far-away,' we wanted our representations to show space as a diverse and moving concept, rather than a divisive and pre-defined one. To this end, we illustrated examples from a wide range of spaces and places, as well as those that affect animals and environment rather than humans. However, our main goal was to resonate with people from all sectors and disciplines, and so we tried to balance our language and examples in order to highlight what may be familiar to North American policy-makers and citizens, alongside examples that go across borders, species, and other demarcated intersections.



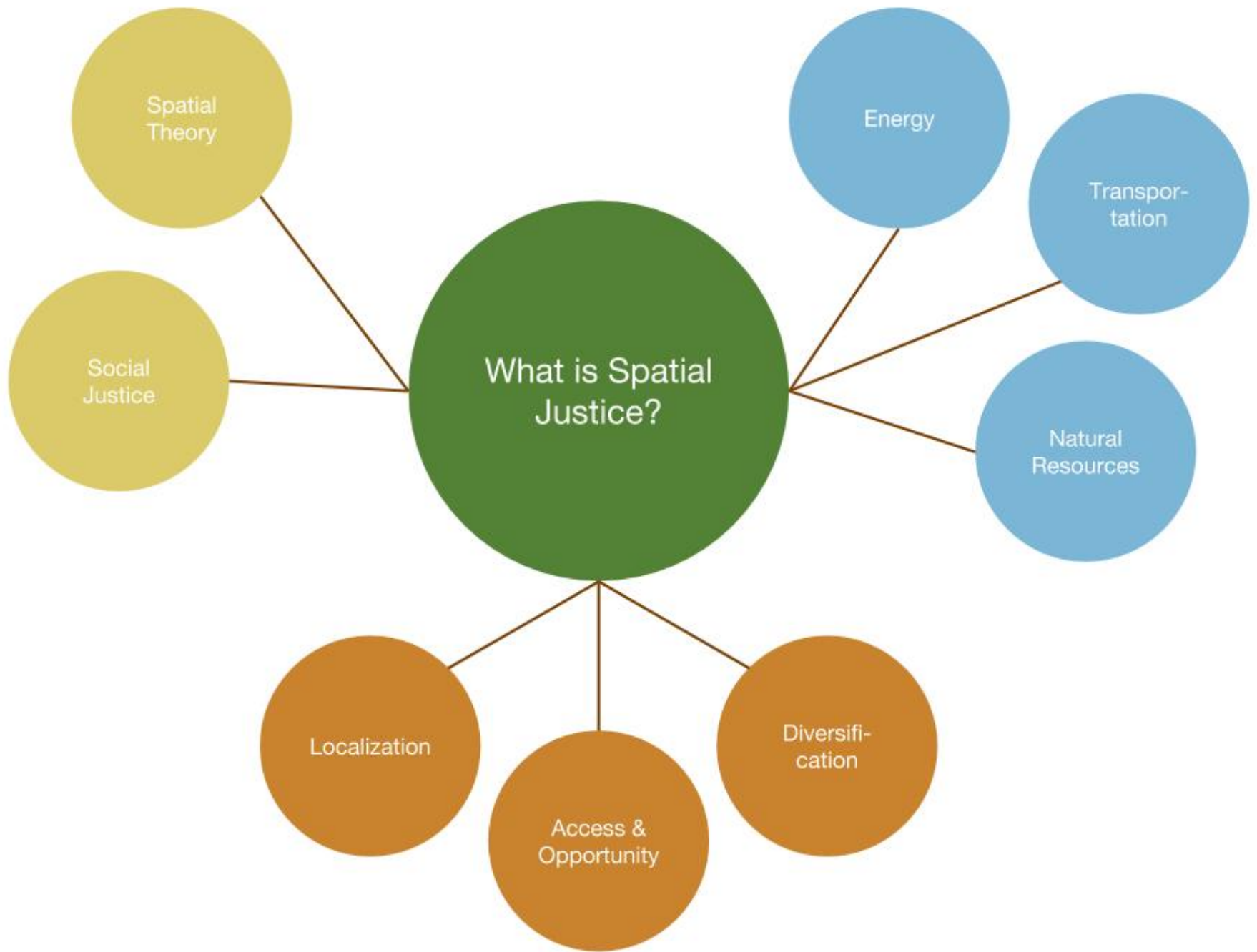
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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- Harvey, D. (2009). *Social justice and the city*. Athens: University of Georgia Press.
- hooks, bell. (2009). *Belonging: A Culture of Place*. New York: Routledge.
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- Jacobs, J. (1961). *The death and life of great American cities*. New York: Random House.
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- Soja, E. W. (2010). *Seeking spatial justice*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
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THEMES

THEMES	IDEAS
Big Idea: What is Spatial Justice?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Applying social justice to space- Thinking about the spatial dimension of social justice- Merging social justice and space to make spatial justice
Social Justice: Who & When	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Who: Underrepresented Groups (i.e. Feminism)- When: Pivotal Historical Moments
Spatial Theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Thinking about the spatial implications of how we live- Edward Soja: "Location will always have attached to it some degree of relative advantage or disadvantage."
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Transportation networks (reliable city transit, bike sharing programs etc.)- Negative effects: traffic, pollution, road safety, and noise
Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Energy grids vary from city to city- Demand and consumption- Energy production sites- Negative effects of by-products- Industrial production by-products
Natural Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Economic vulnerability of small and/or rural communities- Lack of job diversity- Lack of job security
Localization: leading to more access	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Localization of food- Support for local businesses- Localizing energy production sites- Increase access and opportunity
Diversification	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Build resilience against economic downturn- Diversify job opportunities





STORYBOARD

<p>SCENE 1: Introduction</p> <p>What is Spatial Justice?</p> <p>IMG: Sidewalk with title and dandelion</p>		
<p>SCENE 2: Justice and Injustice</p> <p>IMG: Feminism & Protest Signs</p>	<p>WHO</p> 	<p>WHEN</p> 
<p>SCENE 3: Where Justice is Distributed</p> <p>IMG: Map with "Where"</p> <p>IMG: Soja Quote & Picture</p>		<p>"Location will always have attached to it some degree of relative advantage or disadvantage."</p>  <p>Edward Soja</p>
<p>SCENE 4: Space cannot be separated from how we experience the world</p> <p>IMG: Binoculars</p>		

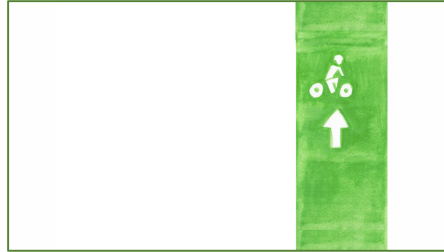
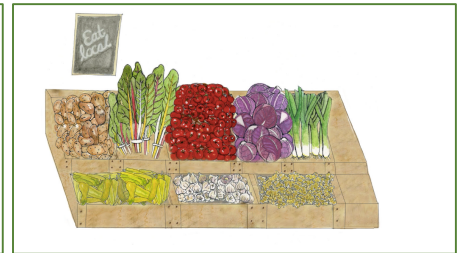
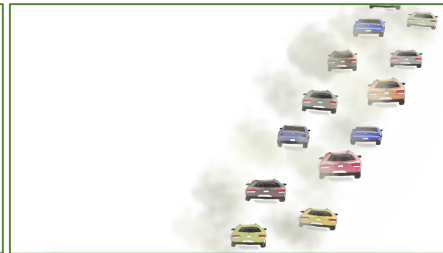
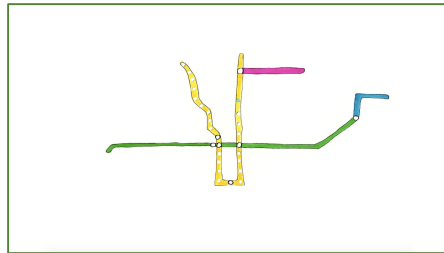
SCENE 5: Social Justice Definition

IMG: Social Justice Definition



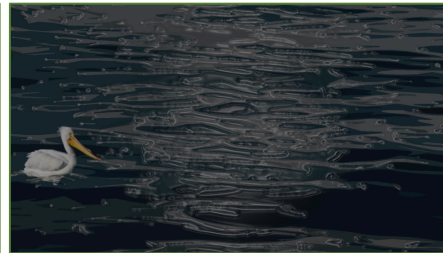
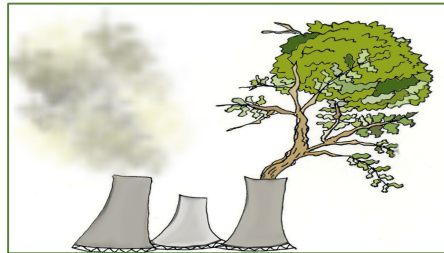
SCENE 6: Transportation Examples

IMG: Subway Map
IMG: Car Sequence
IMG: Grocery Store
IMG: Bike Lane
IMG: Community Garden



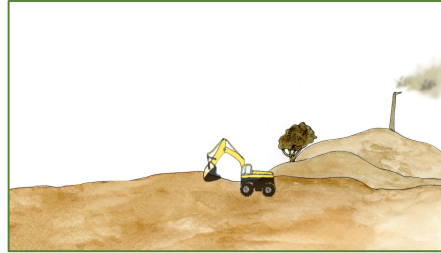
SCENE 7: Energy Examples

IMG: Energy World Map
IMG: Windmills
IMG: E-Waste
IMG: Tree with Industrial Towers
IMG: Oil Spill with Crane



SCENE 8: Natural Resources
Example

IMG: Fish in Net
IMG: Construction Site



SCENE 9: Solutions

IMG: What can we do to increase Spatial Justice?

What can we do to help increase spatial justice?

DIVERSIFICATION

LOCALIZATION

- Food Production
- Energy Production

ACCESS & OPPORTUNITY

SCENE 10: Credits

IMG: CRC Research Team
IMG: Music Credit

A film created by
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Jaime Clifton-Ross

Music Credit
Odyssey
By Kevin Macleod
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CREATIVE PROCESS

ILLUSTRATIONS

The subject of each illustration was selected based on their adaptability to the artistic medium and their relevance to the script. Scenes from everyday life were included to illuminate the inequities between cities and regions. For example, some regions have heaps of produce and are well-served by transportation, as illustrated in a grocery store scene and animated subway map, while others are near sites of electronic waste or energy production plants. Many strategically include familiar icons—such as a bike lane symbol, the Toronto Subway map, everyday produce, and signs from well-known historic movements—to act as visual cues.

All illustrations were hand-drawn using pen and watercolour. Inspired by the aesthetics and visual effects of stop-animation, each image still was edited using various Adobe Photoshop tools. This enhanced each frame with more realistic textures and colours, such as the sidewalk cement or the wood grain in the produce stand. Each animated sequence was then imported into Adobe Premiere Pro to assemble them into video mode, which required extensive editing, looping, and sound effects.

SCRIPT

To successfully interpret a complex and relatively unknown concept, it is imperative that the narrative is communicated using everyday examples that resonate with both the public and decision-makers. Our goal is to help viewers situate themselves within the context of the video so they establish meaningful connections with the subject. By doing so, they may better understand how the spatial distribution of their community affects them, positively and negatively, and in turn, how it impacts other communities.

While the script received many revisions, the final version was written in a conversational tone in order to convey a dialogic voice, rather than a written academic voice. We intentionally integrated casual language into the script, such as “well” and “so”, and eliminated any academic jargon (despite the concept’s academic roots) to assert the inclusive nature of the project. Examples of how spatial justice can be increased intentionally use the word “we” to emphasize how it effects everyone. It also asserts a need for public dialogue and on-the-ground action.



OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVES	To transition the concept of “Spatial Justice” from a purely theoretical sphere into transdisciplinary practice.
	Educate and engage the public and policy-makers on issues surrounding job diversity, transportation, and access to services in relation to geography.
	To offer solutions that will instigate a dialogue on what can we do to increase spatial equity.





WHAT WORKED & WHAT DIDN'T WORK

EXAMPLES

Many examples are relatable to audiences less familiar with sustainable development, including scenes illustrating community resources (libraries, community gardens, grocery stores) and transportation networks. These amenities are present in the daily lives of most people. However, other examples point to sectors that are less visible and maybe less tangible to some. For example, energy and grid locations, by-product effects, and the effects of natural resources for those who live outside of the impacted areas. Some may feel that less tangible examples should have been broken down further, especially when referenced during the solutions segment.

ILLUSTRATING EXAMPLES

Since some examples do not trigger an immediate visual association, illustrating examples that are less tangible and less universally familiar required simple and iconic visual anchors. One example represented energy grids through an illuminated world map with accompanying beeping sound effects. Another example was of industrial by-products which were represented by a bird sitting in an oily body of water. While these may be immediately recognizable to some, others may not relate so quickly.

SOLUTIONS SEGMENT

The concluding segment on solutions could have included a wider range of micro and macro examples. This would have given audiences more concrete ideas on how they, as individuals and/or communities, could take action on the ground. As it stands, the video suggests buying local ingredients and supporting local business, both of which address individual consumers. However, this segment quickly shifts to more collective imperatives to improve infrastructure—such as localizing energy grids and improving infrastructure—which may resonate less with individuals and more with decision-makers.



COMMUNITY RESEARCH CONNECTIONS (CRC RESEARCH)

Community Research Connections (CRC Research) is dedicated to building civic literacy and useful knowledge for integrated decision-making around critical social issues, particularly Canadian community development, that is more sustainable. We believe the urgency has never been greater for Canadian society to act now on modern day challenges of climate change adaptation and mitigation and biodiversity conservation. We are deeply committed to making a difference with our research, working in collaboration wherever possible with a diversity of Canadians across the country. We are also faithful to timely research dissemination, sharing our work on the ground, and to creating novel e-communities of commitment, passion, and innovation around sustainable community development.

Community Research Connections
crcresearch  Sustainable Community
Development

WHO WE ARE

A trans-disciplinary team of researchers, practitioners, and artists dedicated to the production of useful knowledge and tools for Canadian communities to transition to more sustainable development paths.