



Towards a Just Transition

From Extraction to Equilibrium - Transforming Law and Governance

Briefing note 6

Spatial Justice

According to Soja (2010)¹, spatiality is not an external container or fixed background where social relations play out, but an inherent and formative component of them. It is an active force in shaping social processes as much as it's shaped by them. This means that space is not a neutral, blank dimension for our world, but is always produced, contested and shaped by the configuration of power relations. Therefore, injustices across space such as uneven development, territorial inequality or exclusion are not accidental, spontaneous events but are produced outcomes.

The spatial justice perspective is thus crucial for the Just Transition approach, as it focuses on checking not only what changes, but also where and for whom, under what kind of spatial adjustments (see below and footnote)². Based on that, we argue that spatial justice may offer both analytical and political framework to reveal and challenge the structural inequalities and injustices.

The concept of spatial justice involves two interrelated phenomena according to our approach:

- There is a spatial aspect to all issues of social justice such as poverty, housing, education, health, discrimination. Social injustices manifest in urban and rural spaces through spatial relations, and the same spaces take roles in production and reproduction of the social relations.
- In today's political economy, contemporary techniques of capital accumulation heavily rely on spatial transformation and interventions. This leads to legal and administrative structures that have centralized monopoly on spatial governance.³

These dimensions make spatial justice both a mobilizing force, a social demand and a strategic political objective which has an aspect of distribution (of resources, services, spaces, hazards), and an aspect of recognition of differences (differences between individuals and groups with different spatial needs and demands).

Framing just transition and its efforts through this lens allows us to ask more precise, context based and spatially grounded questions on who benefits the most, who bears the costs, and where the process unfolds in regard to transition, which could make sure that no place and community is left behind.

¹ Edward W. Soja, *Seeking Spatial Justice*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

² See Table 1 in Siobhán Airey, Yağız Eren Abanus, Hüseyin Eryılmaz & Daniela Garcia-Caro Briceno, *Towards a Just Transition – Walking Practices & Legal possibilities*, (EUR & CSJ: 2025), at 27. Available [here](https://mekandaadalet.org/en/what-is-spatial-justice/).

³ <https://mekandaadalet.org/en/what-is-spatial-justice/>

A Spatial Justice lens for law and governance

Definition	Key questions
Focuses on how justice plays out in different spaces and scales.	How does location influence decision-making? How do allocations differ across a particular space or scale? Is ownership, use or transference of property significant? Does 'public' space exist, and how is it used? How is privately owned property or space treated?

Excerpt from Siobhán Airey, Yağız Eren Abanus, Hüseyincan Eryılmaz & Daniela García-Caro Briceno, *Towards a Just Transition - Walking practices & Legal possibilities* (ESL-CSJ: 2025), 32. Report available [here](#).

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