



## The Right to the City: Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space

By Don Mitchell



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Includes a 2014 Postscript addressing Occupy Wall Street and other developments. Efforts to secure the American city have life-or-death implications, yet demands for heightened surveillance and security throw into sharp relief timeless questions about the nature of public space, how it is to be used, and under what conditions. Blending historical and geographical analysis, this book examines the vital relationship between struggles over public space and movements for social justice in the United States. Don Mitchell explores how political dissent gains meaning and momentum--and is regulated and policed--in the real, physical spaces of the city. A series of linked cases provides in-depth analyses of early twentieth-century labor demonstrations, the Free Speech Movement and the history of People's Park in Berkeley, contemporary anti-abortion protests, and efforts to remove homeless people from urban streets.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"In this wide-ranging tour de force, Don Mitchell offers us a rich and geographically grounded exploration of struggles over urban public space. This is scholarship in the best sense of the word: politically engaged, theoretically informed, and powerfully argued. Urban public space emerges not only as a site of brutal and often violent control, but also as a space of liberation and hope. Mitchell shows us that public spaces--the streets and parks of the everyday--matter, and are worth fighting for."--Nicholas K. Blomley, Department of Geography, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC, Canada

"Don Mitchell packs a wallop like the pamphleteering Marx. Polemical, stirring, and angry, this book is required reading for anyone who cares about the fate of our cities and our fragile democracy."--Andy Merrifield, Graduate School of Geography, Clark University

"This provocative work asserts that the right to public space is crucial to advancing the cause of justice. Complex yet comprehensible, the book balances the ideas of legal scholars, cultural theorists, and social scientists with Mitchell's singular voice based on his extensive thinking and research in the area. Mitchell thoughtfully argues that the struggle for rights actually produces public space and thus insists that rights be taken seriously, especially by leftist scholars, as they are central to counteracting exclusionary practices and the pervasive power of the state. This book is especially appropriate for advanced undergraduate and graduate courses on the city."--Sallie A. Marston, Department of Geography and Regional Development, University of Arizona

#### About the Author

Don Mitchell, PhD, is Distinguished Professor of Geography at Syracuse University. After receiving his PhD in 1992 from Rutgers University, he taught at the University of Colorado before moving to Syracuse. He is the author, most recently, of *The People's Property?: Power, Politics, and the Public*, with Lynn Staeheli (2008), and *They Saved the Crops: Landscape, Labor, and the Struggle for Industrial Farming in Bracero-Era California* (2012). Dr. Mitchell is a recipient of MacArthur, Fulbright, and Guggenheim Fellowships. He was the founder of the People's Geography Project and serves on the advisory board of Syracuse Community Geography.

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#### Contents

Introduction. The Fight for Public Space: What Has Changed?

Chapter 1. To Go Again to Hyde Park: Public Space, Rights, and Social Justice

Chapter 2. Making Dissent Safe for Democracy: Violence, Order, and the Legal Geography of Public Space

Chapter 3. From Free Speech to People's Park: Locational Conflict and the Right to the City

Chapter 4. The End of Public Space?: People's Park, the Public, and the Right to the City

Chapter 5. The Annihilation of Space by Law: Anti-Homeless Laws and the Shrinking Landscape of Rights

Chapter 6. No Right to the City: Anti-Homeless Campaigns, Public Space Zoning,

and the Problem of Necessity

Conclusion. The Illusion and Necessity of Order: Toward a Just City

References

Index

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Tara Wilson:**

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