



# **The Servant Class City: Urban Revitalization versus the Working Poor in San Diego (Globalization and Community)**

*David J. Karjanen*

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San Diego, California, is frequently viewed as a model for American urban revitalization. It looks like a success story, with blight and poverty replaced by high-rises and jobs. But David J. Karjanen shows that the much-touted job opportunities for poor people have been concentrated in low-paying service work as the cost of living in San Diego has soared. *The Servant Class City* documents how, over a period of three decades, San Diego's urban transformation actually eroded the economic standing of the city's working poor.

Karjanen demonstrates that urban policy in San Diego, which has been devoted to increasing tourism, has fostered the creation of jobs that do not actually provide either livable wages or paths to upward mobility. Marshaling a wealth of heretofore uncollected data, he challenges the presumption that decades-long stagnation of job mobility in the United States is a result of insufficient worker training or a "skills mismatch," or is attributable to various personal qualities of the urban poor.

Karjanen interweaves profiles of people with a compelling presentation of data. Each chapter addresses a significant topic: hospitality industry jobs, retail work, informal employment, "fringe banking," and economic barriers to mobility. In revealing the true story of the "poverty traps" that are associated with low-wage jobs in the service economy, *The Servant Class City* complicates the rosy picture of life in an American tourist boomtown.



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