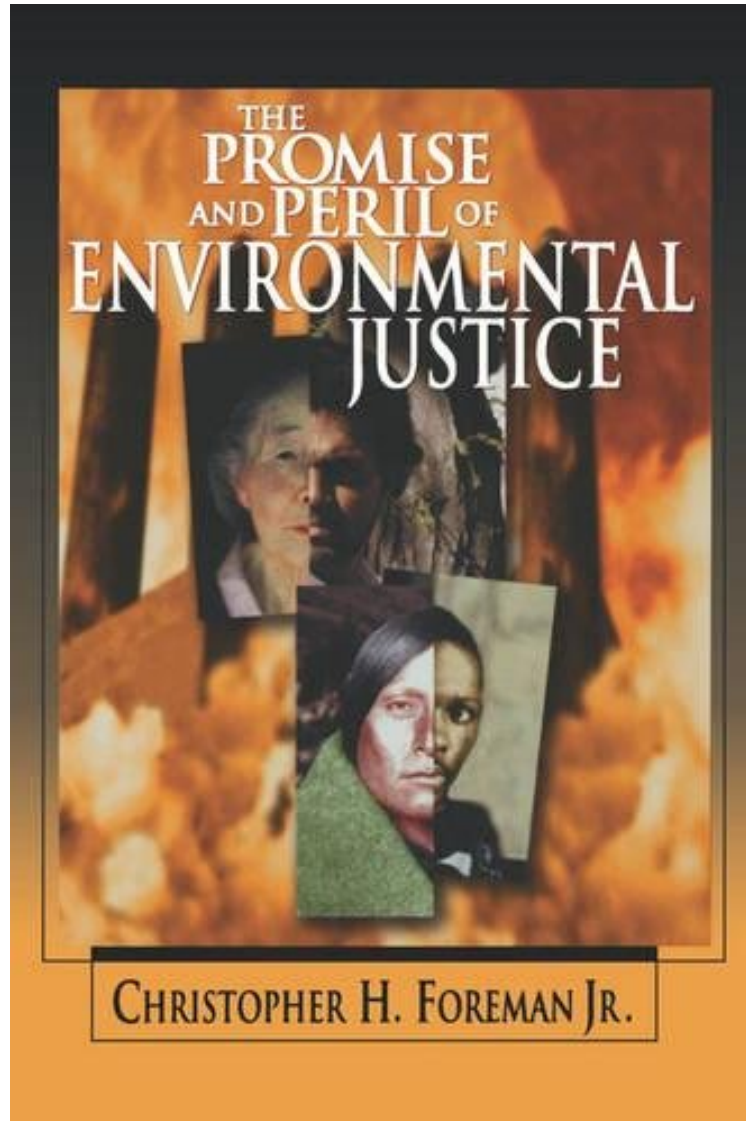


The Promise and Peril of Environmental Justice

Christopher H. Foreman

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#1915367 in Books Brookings Institution Press 2000-05-01 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.02 x .48 x 5.981, .69 #File Name: 0815728778208 pages | File size: 17.Mb

Christopher H. Foreman : The Promise and Peril of Environmental Justice before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Promise and Peril of Environmental Justice:

16 of 17 people found the following review helpful. Ideology heavy, technically light
By C. Zeman
Having a background in solid and hazardous waste, environmental and occupational health, and a very good grasp of the environmental justice area, I was disappointed with the technical content of this work and with its obvious agenda of strong criticism for the EJ movement. Technically, I had many concerns about this work, I will provide two examples here:
1. Chapter 2, pg. 9, Mr. Foreman notes that hazardous waste facilities handle only a fraction of the hazardous

waste generated in the U.S. The remainder being processed on site. These are treatment and concentration technologies that allow the waste to be transferred to TSD facilities in highly concentrated form. This statement is self-evident to anyone with a background in environmental science and engineering..further the source of this quote is cited as a Waste Management Inc. executive, one of the first corporations to be named in the early EJ litigation..hardly an unbiased technical source.2. Numerous statements in the chapter on Health are made concerning the impact of environmental exposures on health which should be supported by sound technical references on the topic. This field with the exception of lead is largely unexplored..which Foreman notes. However, some of the skepticism exhibited in this analysis in regard to the health impacts of environmental exposures is supported by such sources as The Washington Times and The Atlantic Monthly, while wonderful publications in their own right, they are not scientific, technical journals dealing solely with the issue of environmental health and human exposure.The lack of technical rigor exhibited in, what is in my opinion, a highly critical review of a grassroots movement left me disappointed. I had hoped for a work that encouraged and inspired EJ advocates to a more vital movement.9 of 13 people found the following review helpful. The book provides an outstanding analysis of EJ issuesBy rkupiec@adelphia.net"The Promise and Peril of Environmental Justice" provides a brilliant analysis of the public policy setting of Environmental Justice. What I got out of the book is that environmental regulations are inherently flawed because public participation in facility permitting comes near the end of permitting process. Because of this, impoverished communities with fewer political resources feel helpless to affect the siting of industrial facilities. Activists use this feeling of helplessness, along with bogeyman of increased risk, to rally opposition to a given facility. However, as described in the book, the increased risk posed by such a facility is almost always inconsequential. The author argues that the Environmental Justice movement is not about decreasing risk or improving community health, but rather community empowerment. Additionally, the author suggests that quality of life in impoverished communities can be improved through participation in the economic development that is spawned by environmental regulations. An example of this would be community participation in brownfields projects.The book is formatted in a style of a graduate-level textbook, with all of the sources of the book properly documented. This format, however, does not detract from the book's analysis of the public policy issues associated with Environmental Justice. I enjoyed Foreman's writing style and thought some passages were especially well-written. I wish all of my textbooks would have been this compelling.As an environmental compliance professional at a highly visible facility, I never quite understood why certain residents were so hostile toward our facility, why the efforts of local activists were at times disjointed, or why regulators would subject themselves to seemingly unnecessary public meetings. This book clarifies the motivations of these various groups in dealing with controversial facilities. I would recommend this book to both environmental regulators and compliance personnel in the private sector. I believe that meaningful strategies for community involvement in environmental permitting can be crafted based on the analysis presented in this book.6 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Long on ideology, light on substanceBy A CustomerAlthough Foreman outlines the ideological basis of the environmental justice movement quite thoroughly, he fails to provide an adequate examination of how the movement is supposed to function in the real world. He examines the problems that the EJ movement faces in translating its ideological beliefs into real world actions, but Foreman does not present a substantive explanation for how it could be more effective in affecting the changes it desires. Overall, a fairly boring read.

Are we environmentally victimizing, perhaps even poisoning, our minority and low-income citizens? Proponents of "environmental justice" assert that environmental decisionmaking pays insufficient heed to the interests of those citizens, disproportionately burdens their neighborhoods with hazardous toxins, and perpetuates an insidious "environmental racism."In the first book-length critique of environmental justice advocacy, Christopher Foreman argues that it has cleared significant political hurdles but displays substantial limitations and drawbacks. Activism has yielded a presidential executive order, management reforms at the Environmental Protection Agency, and numerous local political victories. Yet the environmental justice movement is structurally and ideologically unable to generate a focused policy agenda. The movement refuses to confront the need for environmental priorities and trade-offs, politically inconvenient facts about environmental health risks, and the limits of an environmental approach to social justice. Ironically, environmental justice advocacy may also threaten the very constituencies it aspires to serve--distracting attention from the many significant health hazards challenging minority and disadvantaged populations. Foreman recommends specific institutional reforms intended to recast the national dialogue about the stakes of these populations in environmental protection.

"The merit of Foreman's book is in terms of the questions that are engendered by his discussion of environmental justice.... [Foreman's] questions underlie the daunting challenge confronting activists who seek to develop policies that promote environmental justice." Gerald R. Visgilio, Connecticut College, Marine Resource Economics, no. 1, 2001From the PublisherChristopher H. Foreman Jr. is a senior fellow in the Governmental Studies program at the Brookings Institution and the author of *Plagues, Products, and Politics: Emergent Public Health Hazards and National Policymaking* (Brookings, 1994) and *Signals from the Hill: Congressional Oversight and the Challenge of Social*

Regulation (Yale, 1988). About the Author Christopher H. Foreman Jr. is a senior fellow in the Governmental Studies program at the Brookings Institution and the author of *The Promise and Peril of Environmental Justice* (Brookings, 1998), *Plagues, Products, and Politics: Emergent Public Health Hazards and National Policymaking* (Brookings, 1994), and *Signals from the Hill: Congressional Oversight and the Challenge of Social Regulation* (Yale, 1988).