

Review

Anne Harley and Eurig Scandrett (eds) (5th June 2019) *Environmental Justice, Popular Struggle and Community Development*, Policy Press, Bristol, Paperback, 228 pages, ISBN 978-1447350859, cost £21.59

The book is a very extensive collection of richly informative experiences of career activists, academics and academic activists. Besides the wide variety and extensive range of the nature of issues covered in the book, it captures experiences of actors (activists, academics and academic activists) from across the globe. Consequently, in my opinion, there is something for anyone interested in the subject of environmentalism, environmental justice and popular struggle, irrespective of ethnic background.

As much as I enjoyed the richness and coverage of the issues discussed, I also enjoyed the connections between the various experiences of the actors with what can be referred to as the diverse historical development of environmental justice, the movements and how experiences have often shaped future struggles.

Most of the experiences shared in the book also shine a light on the intricacies of the environmental justice struggle. It was particularly remarkable to read of how a single environmental issue could be the converging point for different groups who previously were very different and could not be imagined co-operating. On the other hand, the way and manner the role and objectives of supposed sponsors subtly influence environmental justice movements, processes and outcome was also a good expose. And the later sharply brings into focus, issues about ‘empowerment’ and ‘taking control’. While most environmental struggles nowadays are geared towards ‘empowering’ the local community (or protecting a vulnerable group), the different cases in this book shine a much closer light on the powerplay that often ensues in the quest for ‘empowerment’ and exposes how often those who masquerade as sponsors and financiers simply desire ‘taking control’.

Another major take from the book is the fact that it situates environmental struggles firmly in the realms of public sociology. While the importance of science has often been acknowledged, the cases in this book highlight the key role of sociology, and especially public sociology in today's world. It is easy for different people to interpret scientific data into different 'facts' but the actors in many of the cases in this book display just how public sociology could easily become the go-to glue to focus every valid but diverse view.

Finally, the case studies in the book show that the interaction between activists, academics, and activist-academics, and the fusion of their experiences, is very vital to the development of modern-day environmental struggle. With the advent and prevalence of social media, it has become imperative to develop astuteness in the micro and macro management of the different intricacies of environmental movement, struggle and justice. This book is a go to place for insight.

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