



# From the Ground Up: Environmental Racism and the Rise of the Environmental Justice Movement (Critical America)

*Luke W. Cole, Sheila R. Foster*

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When Bill Clinton signed an Executive Order on Environmental Justice in 1994, the phenomenon of environmental racism—the disproportionate impact of environmental hazards, particularly toxic waste dumps and polluting factories, on people of color and low-income communities—gained unprecedented recognition. Behind the President's signature, however, lies a remarkable tale of grassroots activism and political mobilization. Today, thousands of activists in hundreds of locales are fighting for their children, their communities, their quality of life, and their health. *From the Ground Up* critically examines one of the fastest growing social movements in the United States, the movement for environmental justice. Tracing the movement's roots, Luke Cole and Sheila Foster combine long-time activism with powerful storytelling to provide gripping case studies of communities across the U.S.—towns like Kettleman City, California; Chester, Pennsylvania; and Dilkon, Arizona—and their struggles against corporate polluters. The authors effectively use social, economic and legal analysis to illustrate the historical and contemporary causes for environmental racism. Environmental justice struggles, they demonstrate, transform individuals, communities, institutions and even the nation as a whole.

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