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Power, Justice, and the Environment: Toward Critical Environmental Justice Studies

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> Man's attitude toward nature is today critically important simply because we have now acquired a fateful power to alter and destroy nature. But man is a part of nature and his war against nature is inevitably a war against himself. Now, I truly believe that we in this generation must come to terms with nature, and I think we're challenged as mankind has never been challenged before to prove our maturity and our mastery, not of nature, but of ourselves.
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> —Rachel Carson, "CBS Reports: The Silent Spring of Rachel Carson," broadcast April 3, 1963

Since Rachel Carson spoke these words, our war on nature, and thus ourselves, has continued to accelerate. Despite numerous warnings, the United States continues to act as if the global environment has an unlimited capacity to provide its citizenry with natural resources and to absorb the continued production of toxic materials. Nearly a decade after Rachel Carson's warning, the famous book *The Limits to Growth* was published. "If the present growth trends in world population, industrialization, pollution, food production, and resource depletion continue unchanged," the authors predicted, "the limits to growth on this planet will be reached sometime within the next 100 years." (Meadows et al. 1972) The authors of *The Limits to Growth* updated their analysis 20 years later in *Beyond the Limits* (Meadows et al. 1992). That study maintains that "human use of many essential resources and generation of many kinds of pollutants has already surpassed rates that are physically sustainable."

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, it is clear that we have gone beyond the carrying capacity of Earth's environmental systems. In addition, the experience of these limits to growth is not equally shared. Those who have the resources and political and economic power can reduce their

exposure to these limits. Resource shortages are experienced as increasing prices for basic commodities (housing, food, energy). The affluent can better absorb these price increases than can the poor, working-class, people-of-color, and immigrant populations. Access to a healthy and clean environment is increasingly distributed by power, class, and race. Where one can afford to live has a major effect on the nature and extent of one's exposure to toxic pollutants. Within this dynamic, elites can move from polluted industrial areas to less polluted suburban neighborhoods (Pulido et al. 1996) and locations featuring natural amenities, such as Aspen, Pebble Beach, or the Hamptons. The poor and powerless cannot. They are confined to national environmental sacrifice areas, such as Navajo or Western Shoshone lands, Chester, Pennsylvania, or Cancer Alley, Louisiana. In fact, certain neighborhoods and regions of the United States are defined as "undesirable" not only because of the level of pollution in these places, but also because of the type of persons who occupy these spaces. "Bad" neighborhoods, for example, are as much about the type of ecological disamenities found in these areas as about the type of people found there. Hence, where we find social inequalities we also find environmental and health inequalities.

Limits to growth are thus first and most consequentially experienced by the less powerful of the Earth. The "other" of society—those outside of the dominant cultural, political, and economic elite classes—experience the brunt of the "bads" of industrial production and of the limits to growth. As limits to growth are exceeded, we can expect the experience of a clean and unpolluted environment to become less and less possible for everyone. But since poor and people-of-color communities are the first to feel the adverse consequences of growing ecological degradation, they have also been among the first communities to mount a political challenge to these conditions. Beginning in the late 1970s and the early 1980s, a powerful social force—the environmental justice movement—emerged from within communities of color and poor and working-class white communities around the United States that have been inundated with air, water, and soil pollution (Bullard 2000; Gottlieb 1993). The neighborhoods where these populations "live, work, and play" (Alston 1990) have been disproportionately burdened with a range of toxic and hazardous pollution and other environmental harms. The environmental justice (EJ) movement is a political response to the deterioration of the conditions of everyday life as soci-

ety reinforces existing social inequalities while exceeding the limits to growth. As environmental degradation expands, we can expect that more and more communities will suffer a similar fate and will join in this effort. Thus the EJ movement has laid a foundation for environmental and social justice politics in the twenty-first century.

The EJ movement is viewed as distinct from the larger mainstream environmental movement that has been active in the United States for 120 years (Taylor 1997). Even so, the degree to which the broader environmental movement has fared is in many ways instructive for the EJ movement's prospects. For example, despite the continued development of the environmental movement, environmental degradation and social inequalities continue to increase in the United States and globally. As Blühdorn (2000) notes, despite a vast amount of empirical research and advocacy for environmental issues, this movement has failed to gain sufficient political adherents or strength to effect a transition to a sustainable society, and it has failed "to reach its central aim of changing the most fundamental principles of the capitalist growth economy and the industrial consumer society." Because of this failure, the environmental movement is undergoing a historical transition. In this situation, Blühdorn maintains, there is a need to rethink the movement's tactical and ideological basis and to develop a more self-critical and politically efficacious environmental movement.

It is within this political and cultural space that the environmental justice movement has emerged. The EJ movement has sought to redefine environmentalism as much more integrated with the social needs of human populations, and, in contrast with the more eco-centric environmental movement, its fundamental goals include challenging the capitalist growth economy as well. Despite its numerous successes, this quarter-century-old effort has also confronted the harsh reality that the political economic structures on which the United States operates have not been significantly altered with regard to ecological protection and social justice. If the movement and scholars are to have any possibility of creating an ecologically sustainable and socially just society, we must understand this social movement and critically assess which strategies have worked and which have not.

We start with a theoretical discussion of the social dynamics of environmental degradation through the application of the "risk society" concept (Beck 1986). This perspective is then amplified by summarizing the

empirical work regarding inequality and environmental degradation. Impacted communities have sought to redress this situation through the creation of a number of movements that seek environmental justice. In the second section of the chapter we describe the various components of these movements and offer an assessment of their effects. In the third section we discuss the state of the environmental justice movement today. We outline some of the main political and ideological issues within this movement and discuss the need for the movement to become more self-reflexive in developing a more efficacious political practice. The contribution that academics can make to this project is what we define as "critical environmental justice studies." We conclude with an overview of the chapters in this book that seek to initiate such a dialogue. While many of these topics are controversial and have remained hidden from public and scholarly discussion, we believe it is imperative to openly examine them with the goal of building a stronger environmental justice movement.

Environmental Justice in the Risk Society

The first step toward understanding the origins of and prospects for the environmental justice struggle is to situate the EJ movement within a larger social dynamic of the social production of inequality and environmental degradation. We agree with Ulrich Beck that "environmental problems are fundamentally based in how human society is organized" (1986: 81). Thus, exploitation of the environment and exploitation of human populations are linked. In order to understand and develop meaningful measures to mitigate ecological degradation, this analysis begins with the development of a theoretical perspective on the social processes by which these problems originate.

A well-developed literature locates the origin of environmental problems in the political economy of advanced capitalist economies (Schnaiberg 1980; Schnaiberg and Gould 1994; O'Connor 1973, 1984, 1987). This perspective maintains that the capitalist economy forms a "treadmill of production" that continues to create ecological problems through a self-reinforcing mechanism of ever more production and consumption. The logic of the treadmill of production is an ever-growing need for capital investment in order to generate goods for sale on the market. From the environment, it requires growing inputs of energy and material. When resources

are constrained, the treadmill of production searches for alternative sources rather than conserving resources and restructuring production. The treadmill operates in this way to maintain a positive rate of return on investments. In theory, the state is responsible for reconciling disparities between the treadmill and society's social needs. In practice the state has often acted to accelerate the treadmill in the hope of avoiding political conflict (Schnaiberg 1980: 418). The ecological result of this process is that the use of natural resources continues to increase, regardless of the consequences on the sustainability of the ecosystem. The social result is that inequalities increase and working-class populations receive less and less material benefit from their labor. Thus, both ecological disorganization and race and class inequalities are inherent by-products of the social order.

This perspective has been further expanded by the work of Beck (1986, 1995), who provides a model of the interaction among technology, social dynamics, and the process of ecological degradation. For Beck, the continued development of industrial production is based on the dynamic of modernization and industrialization. These processes are "blind and deaf to consequences and dangers" (1986: 28). At the center of the process of modernization is the application of scientific research and knowledge to expand economic growth. The power to define technological development, and thus our future, becomes concentrated in the private corporate power that controls and directs much of research and development. This results in a shift in the locus of power from the nation state to the corporations and their control over the scientific agenda.

There arise winners and losers in the politics of the distribution of environmental degradation, favoring more powerful communities over others (Beck 1986: 53). "What is denied collects itself into geographical areas, into 'loser regions' which have to pay with their economic existence for the damage and its unaccountability." (Beck 1995: 29). Beck defines the idea of "risk positions," which characterize the levels and nature of technological risk to which people are exposed (1986: 23). He goes on to characterize the distribution of risk positions in which "like wealth, risks adhere to the class pattern, only inversely; wealth accumulates at the top, risks at the bottom" (ibid.: 35).

This "class pattern" is also complemented by a "race pattern" that afflicts neighborhoods, regions, and nations with large concentrations of

people of color. In view of the strong statistical correlation between race and class, this should not be surprising. The research on environmental inequality dates back to the 1970s, when scholars were reporting significant correlations between socioeconomic status and air pollution in US urban centers (Asch and Seneca 1978; Berry 1977; Burch 1976; CEQ 1971; Freeman 1972). In the 1980s, researchers began to focus more directly on the links between pollution and race, via studies of the proximity of hazardous waste sites to communities of color (United Church of Christ 1987; US GAO 1983). This research found that a community's racial composition was the best predictor of where hazardous waste sites would be located in the United States, prompting the use of the term "environmental racism" to characterize these disparities. In the 1990s and the 2000s this body of work was followed by an explosion of studies on a host of questions, including analyses of the relationship between race, class, and environmental hazards (Anderton et al. 1994; Bryant and Mohai 1992; Krieg 1998), the social forces driving and influencing environmental inequalities (Boone and Moddares 1998; Lavelle and Coyle 1992; Maher 1998), the historical trajectory of environmental injustices in particular geographic contexts (Been 1994; Bullard 1996; Pastor, Sadd, and Hipp 2001; Pulido, Sidawi, and Vos 1996), the spread of environmental inequalities and environmental racism beyond the United States to the global South (Adeola 2000; Mpanya 1992), and the emergence of the EJ movement via case studies of community resistance against toxics (Bryant 1995; Bullard 1993, 1994, 2000; Hofrichter 1993).

Advanced capitalism creates wealth for some and imposes risks on others. The problem of ecological destruction, however, ends up returning to impact its creators in a boomerang effect. The risks of modernization catch up with those who create them. This generalization of risks that are not limited in space or time creates a phenomenon labeled by Beck "the End of the Other." In the course of human history, one group of people inflicted violence on the "other," whether in the form of an enemy, a scapegoat, or a dissident. Now the harm caused by global environmental problems, such as global climate disruption or ozone depletion, is inflicted on all persons, regardless of social class or ethnicity (Beck 1995: 27). Property becomes devalued as a result of ecological destruction (ibid.: 60). Ozone depletion creates skin cancers among all classes. Sea levels rise due to global climate

change and flood rich and poor alike. The politics of a risk society thus has the potential to challenge the fundamental premises on which industrial society is constructed. According to Beck (1986: 40), what is at stake in these conflicts is the question of whether "our concepts of 'progress,' 'prosperity,' 'economic growth,' or 'scientific rationality' are still correct. In this sense, the conflicts that erupt here take on the character of doctrinal struggles within civilization over the proper road for modernity."

In view of the potentially explosive political threat posed by environmental risks, Beck argues that these threats must be continually repressed and denied. There is the development of an entire politics that either denies or minimizes the extent and nature of environmental degradation (Beck 1995: 140–142). The environmental justice movement, composed of the representatives of the most marginal communities, is ill equipped at present to overcome this type of entrenched resistance. As a result, not only does the market fail to take into account the ecological consequences of its actions; the state also fails to control the market. Janicke (1990) has developed the concept of "state failure" to explain the inability of states to address the problem of ecological degradation. Janicke maintains that the evidence for state failure is "the inability of governmental reform policies to replace the outmoded postwar pattern of industrialism" (ibid.: x), which he maintains lies at the basis of the problem of ecological degradation. "State failure" results from the tight relationships that develop between the government bureaucracies and industries and from the relative exclusion of the public institutions that are supposed to hold the bureaucracies accountable (ibid.: 14–30). As a result, the response to ecological degradation takes the form of symbolic post facto responses rather than anticipatory and preventive action (ibid.: 41–54).

Movements for Environmental Justice

In the late 1970s and the early 1980s, local EJ groups began to form throughout the United States. These groups originated in working-class neighborhoods and communities of color that were experiencing high levels of environmental degradation, primarily in the form of toxic waste pollution (Freudenberg and Steinsapir 1992). As Bullard (1993: 8) argues, "in many instances, grassroots leaders emerged from groups of concerned

citizens (many of them women) who see their families, homes, and communities threatened by some type of polluting industry or government policy." These groups originated in two different communities. In the white working-class community, it took the form of a "citizen-worker" or "anti-toxics" movement (Gould, Schnaiberg, and Weinberg 1996: 2; Levine 1982; Cable and Cable 1995: 75–84). In communities of color, it took the form of the "People of Color Environmental Movement." Unlike previous environmental movements, the People of Color Environmental Movement was not just characterized by the formation of new groups. While there has been an expansion of new groups articulating the EJ discourse, a significant component of this movement involved the reformulation of the goals of existing civil rights and community organizations to include environmental concerns (Taylor 1993; Bullard and Wright 1993: 47).

Thus the environmental justice movement began in small towns and counties like Love Canal, New York and Warren County, North Carolina and addressed the unequal toxic burdens of working-class and people-of-color communities head on. The movement grew in the 1980s as particular struggles built on lessons learned from previous conflicts (Roberts and Toffolon-Weiss 2001) and as activists convened regional and national gatherings to exchange ideas, tactics, and strategies. By the early 1990s the term "environmental racism" had caught fire in social-movement, scholarly, policy, and media networks and the call for environmental justice had galvanized one of the most exciting and hopeful social causes of the twentieth century. EJ advocates were regularly engaging polluting corporations, regulators, the courts, and elected officials in city councils, in state legislatures, in Congress, and in the White House.

Realizing Environmental Justice?

Since the mid 1980s the anti-toxics and EJ movements have made it extremely difficult for waste-management firms to locate incinerators and landfills anywhere in the United States without a political struggle. Efforts to expand existing polluting facilities have also caused considerable controversy across the nation. The movement has successfully challenged American society to redefine, broaden, and deepen its conception of what constitutes "the environment" and, no less important, which populations exhibit environmental concerns (Taylor 1989). Through numerous partic-

ipatory research ventures and the emergence of lay experts on a host of environmental issues, EJ activists and their allies have challenged the very foundation of the scientific method and the positivist paradigm of the science community (Brown and Mikkelsen 1990). These are significant accomplishments in the movement's short history. That the EJ movement has significantly affected the direction of environmental policy, research, and activism in the United States is unquestionable. However, several dimensions of the movement's influence on society remain unclear. What is the nature and extent of the movement's effects on the United States and other societies? To what degree has the movement achieved its goals? There are four areas of focus.

Local Struggles

Without a doubt, it is at the level of local community struggles that the EJ movement has had its clearest victories. While there may be questions about the indirect effects of a particular victory (i.e., displacing a locally unwanted land use onto another community), the movement has had significant influence at the local scale. Examples include shutting down major incinerators and landfills in Connecticut, California, and Illinois; preventing polluting operations from being built or expanding (such as the plant proposed by Shintech); and relocating and/or buying out residents of polluted areas. If "all politics is local," then the EJ movement has certainly been successful at engaging environmental justice politics where it matters most. People in the above-mentioned communities across the United States have benefited directly from the power of the movement to focus its strength and energy in a local context, a definable space.

Legal Gains and Losses

The litigated cases emerging from EJ conflicts in communities have produced a much less promising record than activists had hoped for (see Gordon and Harley, this volume). The courts have systematically refused to challenge polluters based on Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act without direct evidence of a discriminatory intent. Administrative relief via the US Environmental Protection Agency has also had little effect. Since 1994, when the USEPA began accepting Title VI claims, more than 110 have been filed and none has been resolved. Only one federal agency has thus far

invoked environmental justice to protect a community in a major decision. In May 2001, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission denied a permit for a uranium-enrichment plant in Louisiana, citing its findings that environmental justice issues had been ignored.

National Environmental Policy

Despite a dismal court record, sparse legislative and governmental policy impacts, and little national visibility among mass publics, the EJ movement has succeeded in capturing the attention of high-level elected officials. Most prominent among these successes was President Clinton's signing of Executive Order 12898, mandating all federal agencies to ensure environmental justice in their operations. Less visible on the public radar are more modest and perhaps more meaningful victories. These include Paul Mohai's (2002) finding that the Congressional Black Caucus has one of the strongest environmental voting records of any other group in the US Congress and the passage (or expected passage) of EJ laws and rules in Massachusetts (Carey 2001), Florida (Nicholson-Choice 2000), and California (Keith 2001). More problematic are the participatory schemes that a neoliberal USEPA hatched during the 1990s to address EJ demands. As much as activists and scholars would like to celebrate the development of the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC) and other high-level advisory committees and task forces, because they represent an acknowledgement of the issue by decision makers, these entities are so rife with problems (lack of political power, inequalities among participants, a drain on energy away from grassroots issues) that they are unlikely to bear much fruit. Even the vaunted Executive Order on Environmental Justice has had a very limited effect (Lazaroff 2000). As was noted in March 2004 by the Inspector General of the EPA (EPA 2004), the agency is not doing an effective job of enforcing environmental justice. The Inspector General noted that the EPA has no strategic plans, goals, or performance measurements designed to advance the intent of this Executive Order.

Globalization and Environmental Justice

The evaluation of the EJ movement is of significance because, as economic globalization continues at an unchecked pace, as the United States and other industrialized nations continue to produce greater volumes of hazardous

waste, and as the level of social inequality in these societies also increases, the frequency and intensity of environmental justice conflicts will also rise. These conflicts will become more routine in the United States and in the global South as global North nations continue dumping waste in both domestic and global "pollution havens" where the cost of doing business is much cheaper, regulation is virtually non-existent, and residents do not hold much formal political power. In some cases, these practices have nearly led to military confrontations among nations, threatening geopolitical stability. Impressively, much of the leadership of the EJ movement has been cognizant of the trends toward economic globalization and the transnational corporate move toward the path of least resistance with regard to dumping and polluting wastes. There are numerous instances of communications, information sharing, coalition building, and solidarity work between EJ groups in the global North and South. Since the 1990s, EJ activists and delegates have made high-profile visits to Rio de Janeiro, Durban, Johannesburg, the Hague, Beijing, Istanbul, and Cairo (Environmental Justice Timeline-Milestones, October 2002). However, these efforts have been sporadic and have had meager resource support. Paralleling the hierarchical dynamics between the US mainstream environmental movement and the US environmental justice movement, we often see mainstream global North groups facilitating and dominating transnational discussions and actions around global EJ issues. What is clear is that if the EJ movement cannot curb the excesses of capital and the government inside the United States, it surely will be ill equipped to challenge global corporations on unfamiliar turf in the global South. Furthermore, and most troubling, as the mainstream environmental movement and white communities are partly responsible for influencing the shift in waste dumping into communities of color in the United States and abroad (through anti-toxics mobilizations and the passage of more stringent and costly environmental regulations), the EJ movement may contribute to the globalization of environmental inequality in the same manner.

After this brief overview, what can be said about the state of the movement for environmental justice? The outlook is not positive. The production of toxic chemical waste continues to increase exponentially; the level of cancers, reproductive disorders, and respiratory illnesses is on the rise in

communities of color; environmental inequalities in urban and rural areas have remained steady or increased during the 1990s and the 2000s; the gap between the wealthy and the poor is the greatest seen in several decades; and the labor movement continues to lose ground as corporate power has usurped the ability of ordinary citizens and politicians to ensure that basic sovereignty remains intact in the United States. Moreover, political and economic forces in the African-American community in particular, such as the National Black Chamber of Commerce, have organized nationally to oppose the EJ movement, claiming that the movement seeks to prevent all economic development in communities of color. How the EJ movement understands, analyzes, and challenges this intra-racial resistance and highly organized opposition will be instructive and a harbinger of the future health of the cause.

The State of the EJ Movement

The success of the environmental justice movement is mixed. It is not a case of overall success or failure. Rather, we feel that an analysis and discussion of a number of specific areas will illustrate where the movement itself has either gained or lost ground, and should guide the major themes that EJ activists must address in the coming years. Many of these are often unspoken and unacknowledged by EJ leaders in open forums because of their potentially divisive and controversial nature. But they are burning issues that exist just below the surface and have contributed to a number of setbacks and therefore must be addressed.

Cultural Hegemony and Ideology

Changes in social structures are brought about through a redefinition of what constitutes the common sense embodied in the everyday practices of society. Thus the path to the realization of power in society is through the ability to define what constitutes the common-sense reality that applies to a field of practice (Bourdieu 1985: 729). This allows us to see the symbolic dynamics of the political community as based on the interaction between the dominant worldview and its challengers. We view this as the central battlefield for the EJ movement—the struggle over the definition of environmental and social reality between social movement groups and the corporate-state structures that produce environmental inequalities. This is

a problem of "framing," and the EJ movement has succeeded in framing—redefining—environmental concerns as civil rights, social justice, and human rights issues (Montague 2002a). Because of this success, few of the major environmental organizations and governmental agencies charged with any aspect of environmental protection can ignore the issue of social equity (even if only symbolically). While the movement has gained ground in this effort, its impact on mass publics has not been as significant as would be necessary to disrupt the popular consent of the current hegemonic relations of ruling.

Ideology and Analysis: Race versus Class

So much of the EJ movement has advanced, interacted with, and been informed by social science research that, while it represents a rare level of cooperation between activists and researchers, this close association has created some strategic and ideological limitations. The "race versus class" debate has produced exceptional methodological advances in the study of environmental racism and inequality, but has missed the larger picture. While researchers argue over whether zip codes or census tracts are the most appropriate level of analysis for EJ studies, communities continue to be inundated with pollution. The fact is that environmental injustice is, and has always been, about both race and class (Faber and Krieg 2001). But since the EJ movement has had to work so hard to claim ownership over the discourse, the ideology and framing of the problem has all too often focused so heavily on environmental racism as to exclude considerations of environmental inequality by class within communities of color. The movement must address the issues of class and political hierarchies within communities of color. There are scores of environmental justice conflicts that one simply cannot explain by reducing the cause solely to racism. Some scholars (LaDuke 1999; Pellow 2002) have begun to tackle this question, but movement leaders have been slow to do so. These dynamics go to the heart of social movement theory because they underscore the need for the EJ movement to rethink the way it mobilizes resources, to re-articulate the way it frames the problem and solution, and to re-imagine the particular political opportunities it will seek to create and exploit. By restricting or expanding the vision of environmental justice, each of these strategies will change significantly.

Resource Dependence and Democratization

As much as EJ leaders have portrayed the movement as grassroots, decentralized, and focused on bottom-up decision making, these claims have yet to be evaluated systematically. Is the EJ movement truly characterized by this self-described populist, democratized power structure? We have seen evidence for and against this assertion, at the local, regional, and national levels. For example, many EJ organizations have little to no membership base, even in their own back yards. Instead, these groups have survived hand-to-mouth on grants awarded by foundations and by government agencies and through collaborative ventures with larger environmental groups. What happens in many cases is that these activists become token "representatives" for their entire communities, vested with the authority to speak not only "for themselves" but also for thousands of others. This raises the more immediate question about democratic and participatory decision making (Brulle 2000: 64–68) within EJ organizations (see Brulle and Essoka in this volume). The question of democratization of EJ organizations is closely related to the issue of resource mobilization. If much of the resource focus ('dependence' might be a more accurate word) within EJ groups is on funding from philanthropic and government sources, then there is little attention paid to—and even less accountability to—local publics (Brulle and Caniglia 2005). In view of the extraordinarily minimal funds the philanthropic sector has shared with the EJ movement (Faber and McCarthy 2001), we can only describe this state of affairs as regrettable and urgent. We contend that the EJ movement might model some of its resource-mobilization strategies after other (historical and contemporary) movements. The best example is the civil rights movement, which built its monumental human and financial resource base from within and outside the African-American community by organizing the black church, mobilizing local residents, and gaining the support of synagogues and celebrities from around the nation.

Institution Building

The EJ movement has worked successfully to build up local organizations and regional networks, and it has initiated relationships with pre-existing institutions such as churches, schools, and neighborhood groups. In view of the close association between many EJ activists and EJ researchers,

perhaps it is not surprising that one of the most visible institutional settings the movement has influenced is the university. There are numerous examples of entities in higher education focusing on EJ issues. So the work of institution building with academia and select government agencies has been promising and is ongoing. But the work of institution building must also take root closer to home with a vision toward building sustainable institutions and sustainable communities. And this may be the greatest challenge for the movement—to complement its well-honed acumen for opposition to hazardous technologies and unsustainable development projects with a concrete vision and plan of action for the construction and protection of sustainable communities. A number of EJ groups have indeed taken control over community development functions in their areas and own and manage housing units, agricultural firms, job training facilities, farmer's markets, urban gardens, and restaurants (Gottlieb 2000; Medoff and Sklar 1994; Shutkin 2001). These successes should be noted and celebrated. However, they have been extremely limited in their ecological and social impacts and endurance, in comparison with the majority of business and community development ventures tied to the global market economy. EJ activists, scholars, and practitioners would do well to document these projects' trajectories and seek to replicate and adapt their best practices in other locales.

Boundaries, Parameters, and Limits

Many activists and scholars celebrate the refreshing fact that the EJ movement is one of only a few movements in the United States not founded on a "single-issue" platform. According to Faber and McCarthy (2001), they view the EJ movement as a social force with six sources: the civil rights movement; the occupational safety and health movement; the indigenous peoples' movement; the toxics movement; solidarity, human rights, and environmental movements in the global South; and the community-based movements for social and economic justice that have traditionally focused on housing, public transportation, crime and police conduct, access to jobs, etc. One observer goes even further and argues for adding the movement of persons affected by multiple chemical sensitivities, breast cancer, birth defects, diabetes, chronic fatigue syndrome, Gulf War syndrome, and other illness and the international "zero waste" and "clean production" movements, which are focused on "revolutionizing the material basis of the industrial

enterprise" (Montague 2002b). However, there are limits to how much plurality a movement can embrace. On that question, the EJ movement has yet to find a balance. A flyer announcing the Second National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit noted that potential participants should attend if they were interested in any number of topics, including biopiracy, globalization, food quality, deforestation, oil and mineral extraction, waterfront development, transportation, pesticides, human genetics, citizen participation, military toxins, and smart growth. This is an extraordinary range of issues, all of which we would agree have relevance to the overall goal of environmental justice, but taken as a whole they run the risk of diffusing the movement's focus. The difficulty in drawing boundaries for the EJ movement may stem from its multi-issue focus, its multi-ethnic and multi-racial composition, its multi-national scope, and its origins in multiple related movements. EJ activists must bound and limit the purview of their concerns. If instead they seek to explain every problem at the intersection of development and social inequality in terms of environmental injustice, surely their movement will lose its explanatory (and mobilizing) power (Benford, this volume; Getches and Pellow 2002).

These are just a few of the pressing concerns facing the EJ movement. Yet the literature on the movement is quite problematic. The majority of the literature is not only uncritical of the EJ movement, but quite celebratory. This is, perhaps, unsurprising. The movement's founding was largely premised on a challenge to the mainstream, white middle-class environmental movement and its lack of attention to the crises occurring in communities of color (Gottlieb 1993). What this means is that, while researchers have discussed the myriad contributions the EJ movement has brought to the discourse on environmentalism, only a few scholars have asked how effective the movement has been at achieving its basic goals. For example, in a study of various conflicts over waste in Chicago's communities of color, Pellow (2002) concludes that EJ activists and elected officials of color were complicit in producing or intensifying environmental inequalities in a range of cases. Reasons for this culpability include short-term political and economic gain, limited strategic vision, and historic structural inequalities that leave activists and politicians in marginal communities with constrained choices. Pellow raises serious concerns about the EJ movement's capacity to build power

without also addressing these racial, class, and political divides. Other scholars have raised similar concerns. In two other major works scholars ask whether the movement should continue to put its scarce resources into legal strategies rather than developing a more coherent grassroots network of power (Camacho 1998; Cole and Foster 2001). Foreman (1998) charges that EJ scholars and advocates have mistakenly cast too broad a net around a range of issues only loosely connected to environmental and social justice concerns. Still other scholars argue that the EJ movement has not extended its reach broadly enough, whether to confront the root political economic causes of environmental racism (Faber 1998) or to take seriously the role of natural resource exploitation in the production of environmental inequalities (Mutz, Bryner, and Kenney 2002); we find merit in these critiques. Roberts and Toffolon-Weiss (2001) studied five EJ conflicts in Louisiana and carefully evaluated the degree of success achieved by local movement advocates. Their study offers a starting point for the kind of research that is needed to answer the questions driving our own effort—questions directed at the EJ movement's efficacy and capacities.

Toward Critical Environmental Justice Studies

To move the environmental justice movement forward, we believe, will require a change in the locus and the direction of environmental justice studies. Various concepts and a few theoretical models have been presented in analyses of the problems associated with environmental inequality and racism (Bullard 2000; Capek 1993; Pellow 2000; Taylor 2000). However, little theoretical effort has been exerted toward the purposes of evaluating the effectiveness of the EJ movement. While documentation of environmental injustices continues to teach us a great deal about how environmental inequalities develop and impact communities, the literature suffers from a lack of attention to the larger question of whether this movement has the efficacy or the capacity to achieve its stated goals. We propose a more critical examination of the movement's tactics, strategies, discursive frames, organizational structure, and resource base. It is imperative that we document both successes and failures in gaining political power, and both effective and ineffective rhetorical strategies and practices. Critical environmental justice studies—i.e., studies that can link theoretical models and research—

can help to increase the movement's reflexivity. By linking theory to practice, we might contribute to a more effective movement, and thus aid in the effort to create a socially just and ecologically sustainable society.

We view this volume as the first step in a wider dialogue that includes scholars, theorists, activists, and practitioners from a range of institutions working in the area of environmental justice. This dialogue began with a special panel at the American Sociological Association's annual meeting, in Chicago, on August 17, 2002, at which two social movement scholars and two environmental justice scholars presented papers appraising the EJ movement's record. The dialogue continues in this book.

We invited additional contributors from several different perspectives to submit chapters to this volume. The chapters examine the EJ movement's historical and continuing efforts to realize the goals of environmental justice. The book is divided into three parts, each focused on a major theme that raises fundamental questions about the strength and future direction of the EJ movement.

Overview of the Book

The chapters in part I examine the effectiveness of movements for environmental justice and equality. They examine a number of related themes that illustrate and analyze the EJM's progress, failures, and anticipated challenges. Bryant and Hockman compare the EJ movement with the civil rights movement and draw provocative conclusions from a range of data sources. Benford examines how EJ groups frame and tactically approach problems and solutions to environmental injustice. His analysis raises the possibility that the rhetorical structure of the environmental justice frame is a limiting factor for the success of the EJ movement. Cable, Mix, and Hasting and Toffolon-Weiss and Roberts address the complexities of collaboration between activists and allies as well as what tactical approaches achieve success or failure. Anthony reflects on his experience of more than 40 years as an advocate for civil rights and environmental justice, and on future struggles for environmental justice.

The chapters in part II focus on the development of new strategies, practices, and cultural perspectives to better realize the goals of the environmental justice movement. Sze and Williams break new ground on issues of

energy activism and food security in EJ communities. Peña considers how local groups use the EJ frame to approach problems and mobilize community support; he then describes an alternative frame for local mobilization which he believes would be more effective. Gordon and Harley and Targ focus on the mixed record of the courts and legislatures in realizing environmental justice. Brown et al. discuss the rise of environmental health movements and how these movements can relate to the goals of environmental justice in two EJ conflicts, one in Boston and one in New York. Brulle and Essoka examine the governance structure of existing EJ organizations and discuss how the practices of such organizations can be modified to make the movement more efficacious. Lee's study of four communities presents a new model of collaboration and capacity building articulated in the voices of some of the most successful American EJ activists.

The chapters in part III examine the challenges presented by the processes of globalization and how globalization affects environmental inequality. The chapters in this part ask questions such as the following: What vision have leaders of the EJ movement devised to address larger questions concerning the globalization of capital, social inequality, and environmental injustice? In what ways do transnational environmental injustices present parallel or unique challenges to local and national movement efforts? What is the nature and extent of the EJ movement's effects on the United States and other societies, and how have US-based EJ advocates built alliances with advocates in other nations? Kalan critiques efforts by the US EJ movement to build coalitions with activists in the global South. Palmer and Peek discuss their work as EJ activists doing advocacy work in many different nations. Margoluis explores the complexity of attaining the goals of ecological sustainability and environmental justice. In the concluding chapter, we assess the EJ movement, using the perspectives advanced by the contributing authors.

We believe that the environmental justice movement has the potential to challenge the limits-to-growth and risk-society frameworks on which the global North operates. We are committed to the principles of environmental justice, and we seek to enter this collection of chapters into the tool kit of concerned individuals and institutions that share a vision of an ecologically sustainable and socially just future. Let us end the war against nature and ourselves.