

## BOOK REVIEW

### The Search for Environmental Justice

Martin P, Bigdeli SZ, Daya-Winterbottom T,

Du Plessis W and Kennedy K (eds)

*The Search for Environmental Justice*

(Edward Elgar UK 2015) ISBN 978-1-78471-941-8

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#### Abstract

This contribution provides a short overview of the book by Martin P, Bigdeli SZ, Daya-Winterbottom T, Du Plessis W and Kennedy K (eds) *The Search for Environmental Justice* (Edward Elgar UK 2015) ISBN 978-1-78471-941-8.

#### Keywords

Environmental, justice

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## 1 Introduction

Environmental justice has become an increasingly important topic globally. The concept is not easily definable but broadly requires that environmental benefits and burdens be equitably distributed and that vulnerable people not be disadvantaged as a result of environmental hazards. The appearance of environmental injustice is, of course, also context specific. While people in the Pacific island region struggle with the effects of climate change, many in the Southern African region face challenges regarding access to services that are dependent on their immediate environment, such as water. These and other similar issues are relevant to environmental justice, and some of them are explored in the book.

## 2 Context of the book

The book is divided into four parts. The first part of the book is entitled "Framing the search for environmental justice". This part considers some of the different theoretical perspectives on environmental justice. The Hon Justice Preston's contribution deals with a multivalent approach to environmental justice, including not only the distributive aspect of environmental justice but also procedural justice in the context of environmental justice. In the next chapter Bosselman frames the concept of environmental justice in the context of the promotion of ecological sustainability. Against the background of the first two chapters, Godden and O'Connell explore the contributions that can be made to biodiversity justice by offsetting.

The second part of the book explores 'Rights-Based Conceptualisations'. In the first chapter in this part, Glazebrook discusses the arguments for and against a human right to the environment, and to what extent an environmental right adequately addresses environmental concerns. Hudson discusses the right to pollute within the context of the right to property. Colon-Rios evaluates the effect of giving rights to nature itself as opposed to having an environmental right in the Constitution.

The third part of the book moves on from the theorisation of the first two parts to consider the important aspect of challenges to the implementation of environmental justice, including issues of environmental governance, policies and institutional structures. Phromlah and Martin investigate the legal and constitutional challenges of the carbon trading mechanism REDD+<sup>1</sup> and the ultimate goal of such a mechanism. Keene discusses the

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<sup>1</sup> As explained by the authors, Phromlah and Martin on page 137, REDD+ "is a carbon trading mechanism for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest

level at which decisions regarding freshwater regulation should be made. She particularly looks at 'consensus federalism' and how this model can lead to better decision-making. Rose evaluates how regional and international law impacts on the Pacific island region. Rive discusses whether or not New Zealand has an obligation to open its borders to displacements as a result of climate change in the South Pacific. Telesetsky argues for the adoption of a black carbon strategy by each state. With the growing number of multinational corporations, Chaulk explores the remedies that exist for plaintiffs when transnational harm has been committed by such corporations. Karky and Perry consider how the advances made in bio-technology affect environmental justice.

The fourth and final part of the book deals with the recognition of indigenous people's interests. In the first of three chapters in this section, Gachenga evaluates customary resource governance systems. Craig also explores indigenous governance, but with regard to climate change. In the final chapter of the book Aseron, Greymorning and Williams offer suggestions on how to incorporate indigenous knowledge systems into environmental justice systems.

### **3 Concluding remarks**

This new edition of the Edward Elgar environmental series is welcomed as it explores issues of environmental justice from a variety of theoretical and practical perspectives. Eleven esteemed academics and practitioners in environmental issues participated in this publication, providing different perspectives and dimensions to the topic of environmental justice. As explained by the editors, the book "provides the reader with the diversity and richness of scholarship in this fascinating and strengthening field" and it is a must read for anyone with interest in environmental justice.