



Environmentalism and Economic Justice: Two Chicano Struggles in the Southwest (Society, Environment, and Place)

By Laura Pulido

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Ecological causes are championed not only by lobbyists or hikers. While mainstream environmentalism is usually characterized by well-financed, highly structured organizations operating on a national scale, campaigns for environmental justice are often fought by poor or minority communities.

Environmentalism and Economic Justice is one of the first books devoted to Chicano environmental issues and is a study of U.S. environmentalism in transition as seen through the contributions of people of color. It elucidates the various forces driving and shaping two important examples of environmental organizing: the 1965-71 pesticide campaign of the United Farm Workers and a grazing conflict between a Hispano cooperative and mainstream environmentalists in northern New Mexico. The UFW example is one of workers highly marginalized by racism, whose struggle--as much for identity as for a union contract--resulted in boycotts of produce at the national level. The case of the grazing cooperative Ganados del Valle, which sought access to land set aside for elk hunting, represents a subaltern group fighting the elitism of natural resource policy in an effort to pursue a pastoral lifestyle. In both instances Pulido details the ways in which racism and economic subordination create subaltern communities, and shows how these groups use available resources to mobilize and improve their social, economic, and environmental conditions.

Environmentalism and Economic Justice reveals that the environmental struggles of Chicano communities do not fit the mold of mainstream environmentalism, as they combine economic, identity, and quality-of-life issues. Examination of the forces that create and shape these grassroots movements clearly demonstrates that environmentalism needs to be sensitive to local issues, economically empowering, and respectful of ethnic and cultural diversity.



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Editorial Review

From the Inside Flap

Ecological causes are championed not only by lobbyists or hikers. While mainstream environmentalism is usually characterized by well-financed, highly structured organizations operating on a national scale, campaigns for environmental justice are often fought by poor or minority communities. "Environmentalism and Economic Justice" is one of the first books devoted to Chicano environmental issues and is a study of U.S. environmentalism in transition as seen through the contributions of people of color. It elucidates the various forces driving and shaping two important examples of environmental organizing: the 1965-71 pesticide campaign of the United Farm Workers and a grazing conflict between a Hispano cooperative and mainstream environmentalists in northern New Mexico. The UFW example is one of workers highly marginalized by racism, whose struggle--as much for identity as for a union contract--resulted in boycotts of produce at the national level. The case of the grazing cooperative Ganados del Valle, which sought access to land set aside for elk hunting, represents a subaltern group fighting the elitism of natural resource policy in an effort to pursue a pastoral lifestyle. In both instances Pulido details the ways in which racism and economic subordination create subaltern communities, and shows how these groups use available resources to mobilize and improve their social, economic, and environmental conditions. "Environmentalism and Economic Justice" reveals that the environmental struggles of Chicano communities do not fit the mold of mainstream environmentalism, as they combine economic, identity, and quality-of-life issues. Examination of the forces that create and shape these grassroots movements clearly demonstrates that environmentalism needs to be sensitive to local issues, economically empowering, and respectful of ethnic and cultural diversity.

From the Back Cover

Environmentalism and Economic Justice spotlights another front in the ongoing wars over environmental issues, a front being fought by Chicano communities in the American Southwest. The book concentrates on struggles surrounding both the 1965-71 pesticide campaign of the United Farm Workers and a grazing conflict involving a Hispano cooperative and mainstream environmentalists in northern New Mexico. Within these stories, readers will find broader implications for understanding how minority groups are using available resources to mobilize and improve their social, economic, and environmental conditions.

About the Author

Laura Pulido is an assistant professor of geography at the University of Southern California. A native of Los Angeles, she is a member of the Labor/Community Strategy Center and has served as a commissioner for the Environmental Affairs Department of the city of Los Angeles.

Users Review

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