

The Politics and Impact of Environmental Racism

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Abstract

This article explains the negative impact of environmental racism, which is occurring throughout the United States, by certain corporations, in terms of polluting minority communities. Indeed, these large, polluting industries profit from establishing power plants and waste treatment facilities in predominantly depressed neighborhoods. Unfortunately, the American people are extremely uninformed about the health risks and dire consequences and disastrous changes taking place within such minority communities.

That said, this article is not a comprehensive examination of the Environmental Racism issue; however, it attempts to offer a short synthesis of the major controversial, environmental concerns. In no uncertain terms, the American people cannot ignore the damaging and appalling consequences for African Americans, Native Americans and Hispanic Americans – such as their ill-health and unnecessary deaths – living in polluted areas. This is to say that poor minorities are the ones who suffer, in such areas (polluted by modern-energy companies). Indeed, the Environmental Racism issue has metastasized, as polluting industries have held back measures needed to effectively clean up the nasty busy of their pollution.

Unfortunately, some industries evade the topic and the serious alacrity of the Environmental Racism issue entirely, as polluted, minority lands drift toward environmental disaster. In so many words, shouldn't such industries be responsible for their pollution, as it involves the various affected minority communities throughout the United States? Such a profound question adds fuel to the vexing Environmental Racism arguments from environmentalists and others. Nevertheless, polluting industries are unruffled because the Environmental Protection Agency (or EPA) does not seriously fine or punish such unscrupulous businesses. So is the U.S. government's loosening of regulatory standards a way of appeasing certain polluting industries?

To be sure, shouldn't the EPA rigorously enforce regulations that protect minority communities from industrial pollution? It is also perhaps ironic that the Environmental Racism issue is mostly ignored by members of Congress and other politicians who receive campaign contributions from certain polluting businesses, rendering them essentially ineffective, particularly when it comes to representing the interests of minority people and their respective neighborhoods.

It is now time for American citizens to have some degree of concern about minority residents living in polluted areas, despite the setbacks of many U.S. government policies and worsening industrial pollution. Finally, the Environmental Racism issue means that the American government must develop effective environmental strategies that will make industries think twice about polluting minority communities, while at the same time, equipping such energy companies with sufficient technological expertise to combat their pollution, without sacrificing the health and lives of minority people. In a nutshell, this environmental issue is the immediate concern of the ages. Therefore, it is imperative that as a nation we should try to resolve some of the environmental problems and stresses that negatively affect our poor, minority communities.

INTRODUCTION

From the outset, it should be pointed out that industrial wastes and contamination in areas where African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders and Native Americans live is a serious environmental issue that must be continuously addressed and brought to the attention of the mass public, without equivocation. This dangerous trend, which is called *environmental racism* refers “to the specific targeting of a minority community with industrial operations that use unsafe environmental procedures resulting in an unsafe environment for that community.”¹ It should also be made abundantly clear that polluting industries and corporations profit mightily from building and erecting chemical plants or coal-fired power plants, and waste treatment facilities, as well as establishing contaminant landfills in these predominantly low-income, ethnic minority communities.

Of course, selective industrial pollution should trouble us all; especially as mostly poor people are being exposed to hazardous wastes and carcinogenic chemicals on almost a daily basis. Indeed, many toxic substances detected in many minority neighborhoods includes deadly and noxious “chemicals that can potentially cause birth defects; neurological, renal, and liver impairment; and disorders of other bodily systems.”² In this regard, Americans must understand and know the unimaginable dangers of lethal and toxic waste, which could have disastrous consequences for the health of all humans, as we (humankind) are not impervious to various man-made toxins and pollutions.

Beyond all measure, some American communities are becoming saturated (to a great extent) with certain pollutants. According to Professor Michael K. Heiman, “residents of poor communities and in communities of color in the United States bear a “disproportionate” burden of toxic contamination, both through the generation and release of hazardous chemicals in their neighborhoods, and via the location of waste management facilities.”³ To be sure, industrial operations have been a disruptive force in many of these minority neighborhoods, with their economic growth and entrepreneurial endeavors.

Unfortunately, some minority populations, like the two-hundred African-American families in Augusta, Georgia’s *Hyde Park*, who have been fighting for over twelve years for environmental justice and compensation from the polluting industries in the area, are frustrated over their inability to stop respective, corporate polluters.⁴ No doubt, the people in such minority communities, living next door to such polluting, *behemoth* industries and toxic sites are in danger. However, some polluting industries don’t seem especially bothered by the damage they are causing to minority communities.⁵ Or so it seems. Question: How can “we-the-people” hold polluting industries accountable for their pollution activities? This question for some minority community members, can be terribly frustrating and irritating, to say the least. It is sure no accident or coincidence that polluting waste materials and/or different polluting industries are being deliberately established in these poor minority neighborhoods.

For example, “three out of five Americans in the United States live in communities with uncontrolled toxic waste sites.”⁶ Moreover, in Michigan, “8.3 percent of the people living in high-risk areas are Hispanic, though Hispanics make up [only] 3.3 percent of state-wide population.”⁷ As things stand, some polluting industrialists simply do not respect the dignity of the people in these particular minority neighborhoods. Is it because dark-skinned individuals and certain other minorities are expendable people? Or is this a subtle way by those who are in power, to commit some sort of *genocide* on people of color?

According to Heiman, “race is the central determining factor with toxic exposure.”⁸ Similarly, the 1987 breakthrough environmental report, “Toxic Wastes and Race in the United States,” tells us that there is “a serious relationship between the treatment, storage and disposal of hazardous wastes and the issue of race” in America.⁹ Unfortunately, the surging demand for scarce and/or precious resources, like natural oil and gas and coal energy has produced excessively greedy industries and polluting corporations that actually hurt the health and well-being of countless human beings.

Indeed, according to Professor James Lee Ray, “perhaps the most notorious pollution *results* from the world’s reliance on fossil fuels (coal, oil, and natural gas) to generate most of [our] industrial energy.”¹⁰ Unfortunately, the production of this energy is accomplished and accompanied by entrenched racial barriers and pollution of certain minority communities. Indeed, such facts raise troubling allegations about the *real* reasons why industrial polluters are not that concerned about the long-term consequences of their business/pollution activities. Some polluters, perhaps, don’t even believe that there should be environmental regulations to govern them, like government control of the polluting emissions from power plants.

Of course, Robert Bullard, the former Director of the Environmental Justice Resource Center at Clark Atlanta University states that “People of Color across the United States have learned the hard way that waiting for government to respond to toxic contamination can be hazardous to their health and health of their communities.”¹¹

Some industrial leaders, moreover, don’t see the problem with selective waste dumping; nor do many see it as being a good or bad thing; but, perhaps, they see it as somewhere in between. Or sometimes it seems that the captains of industry and private industrial businesses don’t necessarily care about the legal or ethical dilemma inherent in their callous, environmental decisions, especially about the placement of polluting enterprises. About polluting industrialists, environmentalist Herman E. Daly tells us that, in the end, “an efficient servant will become an unjust and unsustainable master,”¹² especially if they are not checked by the political forces that be. In the final analysis, “environmental racism and justice has become a pressing issue in many neighborhoods, especially poor minority areas where housing has knowingly been built on contaminated land.”¹³

ENVIRONMENTAL EQUILIBRIUM

Although many polluting industries and misbegotten businesses believe that science and scientific methods support their positions on the environment and should *trump* anyone’s fears about waste storage or toxic spills, and dictate the necessity for dumping hazardous materials, the political and health issues are more complicated than what some of these polluting companies make them out to be.¹⁴ In fact, never before has indigenous people and other minority communities been threatened and under assault as much as now. Which is to say that “inequities in the distribution of toxic waste sites in minority communities remain common place in America.”¹⁵

Therefore, all of us should be concerned with the survival of indigenous people and other minorities in industrial polluted locations. Or we must be certainly concerned about the massive suffering and ecological damage being done to specific polluted communities today. In fact, such places should be considered ill-conceived urban planning, or environmental disaster areas.

According to sociologists Ralph W. Conant and Daniel J. Myers, “Inadequate local arrangements [about pollution and trash-disposal facilities] can be costly and [indeed] hazardous to human life and urban communities.”¹⁶ Consequently, “prevention of [environmental] perturbations [in minority neighborhoods should be] a major goal of ecosystem management.”¹⁷ This is important to understand, because according to Bullard, “hazardous waste and toxic products pose some important health, environmental, legal, political, and ethical dilemmas.”¹⁸ Additionally, it should be noted that many of the toxins released into our environment and atmosphere never entirely break down, because of the very nature of some deadly chemicals.¹⁹ Hence, we must be engaged with these environmental issues for the long haul, and on an ongoing basis, particularly in regards to how we cope with a shortage of scarce or energy resources—and the fact that polluting corporations illogically dump man-made waste and other pollutants, which will create more environmental problems, such as a chemically altered environment.²⁰

Knowing this, people should *never* be fraught with such dangers and self-destructiveness; but we are, nonetheless, faced with escalating environmental lawlessness (by some industrial polluters), which will negatively affect all humankind in the future. Furthermore, many industries that pollute seem to resent the fact that environmentalists and others question their “goodwill” and ability to make a profit from their corporate activities or businesses.²¹ However, if “approximately 75 percent of all landfills are located in close proximity to African American communities,”²² these industries and our various governments (no doubt) should be definitely concerned about the health and welfare of those who reside in these particular areas. Indeed, the American people should be given the opportunity to see and understand *exactly* what is happening in these sometimes decimated, ethnic minority communities.

Unfortunately, as Deans writes, “Some of the industries that produce pollution as a byproduct of their operations expect the public to pay for that pollution, through dirty water, for example, poisoned air, loss of arable lands, health problems, missed work days, mental impairment, or premature deaths.”²³ In this regard, “African American children and adults are disproportionately affected” by environmental pollutants, and “are known to have higher rates of certain types of cancer, like leukemia and neurological malignancies,”²⁴ which have increased tremendously in recent years because of environmental pollution by corporations. Toward this end, and generally speaking, Professor Benjamin Cardozo suggests that a new Civil Rights Movement be instituted that would focus on “the segregation of minorities concerning environmental hazards.”²⁵

Of course, adopting such a civil rights approach is especially necessary today because many minorities affected by pollution are besieged by various health problems, and might likely die or suffer health complications—in the future—from being exposed to waste landfills, carcinogenic chemicals and other contaminants.²⁶ In fact, Native Americans are put at even greater risk for certain pollution related illnesses—like neurological and metabolic disorders or certain mental diseases and death—who live within a one mile radius of many of these big-time polluting operations.²⁷ Consider, for example, the Native American-Moapa Paiute community in southern Nevada, which is being negatively affected by toxic dust blown from an affiliated NV Energy Plant’s “coal-ash waste landfill.” This polluting subsidiary business has contaminated the surrounding environment and irreparably harmed some nearby Moapa residents.²⁸ Indeed, members of this Native American Paiute Tribe blame the severe pollution from NV Energy’s *Reid Gardner Generating Station* “for a host of medical problems, including respiratory ailments, heart disease, headaches and strokes.”²⁹

Furthermore, nothing has been really done to completely remedy these pollution issues and horde of health symptoms that make this Native American Paiute Tribe sick. Unfortunately, “across the country, a disproportionate number of power plants operate near or on tribal lands.”³⁰ In this respect, is it true that many industrial businesses have personal and commercial interests in mind, and are only concerned about profits, instead of their pollution? Or is their goal really to make money at the expense of unfortunate people? In the early 1990s, for example, the Shintech Corporation wanted to build a \$700 million polyvinyl chloride plant in the predominantly poor African American community of Romeville, Louisiana; but Shintech abandoned this plan after the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), in 1997, ordered the delay of the proposed plant, deciding that “blacks would suffer disproportionately from allegedly cancer-causing emissions from the plant.”³¹

But to avoid any further EPA delays and opposition, the Shintech Corporation decided “to locate its plant in a nearby community that was largely white.”³² As we can perhaps ascertain from the aforementioned case, some pollution producing companies can be so unprincipled that they will quickly switch focus, or change their corporate plans, to sell their ideas to establish even more polluting power plants—sometimes stating that it would be in the best interest to the respective minority community—supposedly because of the jobs they (industrial power plants) would provide. But jobs created from polluting industries are usually elusive and not guaranteed in the long term. The problem for polluting industries, of course, has always been to figure out expedient ways to dispose of the dangerous waste they produce, in an effort to provide energy (in some cases), and the ultimate monetary payoff.

Suffice it to say, some environmental technologies are worrisome for industrial polluters, because of government regulations, and the enormous cost involved, as well as any delay in new, factory-building. But establishing such polluting industries can be disingenuous if there is a *cover-up* about the possible waste produced by the facilities. At the very least, polluting industries should inform individuals about the potential dangers of their businesses/operations. Indeed, CEOs and top executives at such industries should be more concerned about people, in general, and certain fragile eco-systems. Many industrial polluters, however, are not particularly enthusiastic about telling people of color (in minority neighborhoods) the truth about the devastating effect of their pollution. Moreover, it is just unimaginable or inconceivable that some polluting industries just won’t admit to what they are doing, in terms of destroying our different environments, and lives of minority people and their communities.

THE POLLUTED ENVIRONMENT

Corporate pollution remains a reality and a serious problem in regards to environmental racism. This is to say that energy-plant pollution on minority lands is not some abstract or hypothetical thing. Hence, polluting corporations often think about their *bottom line* in terms of profits, as mentioned, and the cost-benefit analysis of their sometimes deliberate, polluting activities. But polluting industries must also consider the *human equation*, especially as their pollution and/or other dangerous particulate matters will cause harm or unnecessary harm to people. No doubt, it might be too expensive for some polluting industries to consider alternatives to dumping terrible toxins in minority neighborhoods; but they shouldn’t have *carte blanche* to do whatever they want. This is to say that pollution and “toxic dumping” *anywhere* comes at a high price when it comes to the personal, causative, health-risk factors on humans. More importantly, exposure to airborne pollution, including carbon pollution, as well as water and land pollution, and a wide variety of toxic chemicals can be deadly.

In essence, we must control industrial waste and other pollution at all cost. The key is to penalize industrial polluters—that is, make them pay fines for creating pollution at the federal and state levels. Furthermore, industrial polluters should be made, by our governments, to consider *where* they build power plants, most especially if such operations are in someone’s backyard, so to speak. Unfortunately, some industrial polluters may see some toxic dumping in local minority communities as their only alternative. Indeed, they may believe that “the dumping and recycling have to take place somewhere. [But] many of the recycling plants and trash dumps are located in areas where poor people and minorities live.”³³ Therefore, it is important to understand the nature of the various industries that pollute, for the stakes are certainly high for minorities living in these affected communities.

Moreover, the leaders of these polluting operations must realize that storing man-made waste *anywhere* will have an economic and detrimental effect on many people in the long run. Consequently, the idea of trying to reverse or fix affected, polluted areas, especially in minority neighborhoods, might prove to be insurmountable. However, it is unimaginably important to expose the pretense, greed, and treachery taking pace in some minority communities by polluting corporations. Furthermore, it is crucial that polluting industries even with state and local government involvement, shouldn’t ignore the real problems of their pollution, and despite clean emission technologies. The question for all polluting industries should be: How *exactly* can affected minority environments be restored and protected? Professor Tony Arnold suggests that minorities, affected by industrial pollution, should continue to rely on the environmental justice movement, which “has used political activism, civil rights and constitutional law, environmental law, and new policies at all levels of government to seek fairness in environmental and land used decisions.”³⁴

Moreover, can minority people on polluted lands depend on the government at all levels to help protect them? Perhaps. These concerns present the heart of this matter: Do corporate polluters, in general, really care about the health and well-being of affected minorities? Perhaps not. Equally important, as Bullard writes:

Why do some communities get dumped on while others escape? Why are environmental regulations vigorously enforced in some communities and not in other communities? Why are some workers protected from environmental and health threats while other workers (such as migrant farm workers) are allowed to be poisoned? How can environmental justice be incorporated into environmental protection? What institutional changes are needed in order to achieve a just and sustainable society? [Finally], what community organizing strategies and public policies are effective tools against environmental racism?³⁵

Ultimately, we must figure out the factual impact of corporate studies and economies of scales and basic outlooks (when it comes to ecological/environmental disasters); which to say the least, should be the immediate concern about this controversial issue. Unfortunately, it is a regrettable fact that many polluting industries are not necessarily concerned, as already mentioned, about the negative impact of their businesses on certain fragile environments; nor is toxic dumping in the backyards of poor minority neighborhoods a serious concern with them either. To be sure, certain polluting industries disrupt the lives of some minority communities, creating environmental sprawl and danger, while psychologically affecting the people who reside in such places. Take for example the intrepid city of Chester, Pennsylvania, which should confirm our worst suspicion about corporate pollution.

This small city of 60 percent African Americans, ten miles south of Philadelphia, is under siege as the place has been essentially bombarded by “a profusion of waste treatment facilities.”³⁶ Unfortunately, the city of Chester, Pennsylvania is “governed by a Republican political machine that’s been in near-continuous control of the city for more than 130 years.”³⁷ Many of these conservative politicians are not going to change things or challenge the polluters in the foreseeable future, or *opt* for a possible relocation of some of these waste treatment facilities, especially if it means that certain monies or private funds will no longer go into the financial coffers of the local city government. Furthermore, the risks of contamination to the black inhabitants of Chester, Pennsylvania are *real*, not imagined, as evidenced by the high mercury content in some fresh water fish from the location.³⁸

Therefore, the African Americans in Chester, Pennsylvania should continuously *agitate* and voice their considerable concerns about removing some of these waste treatment facilities through the environmental justice movement.

After all, many of the African Americans living in these “toxic hot spots” are not blind to this monumental, environmental problem, as they know that these waste treatment facilities are a threat to their very existence.

We should also be cognizant that many of the black people in such polluted locations do not have the economic wherewithal, or simply can’t afford to pick-up and move out of affected areas; nor can they protect themselves against certain diseases and cancers caused by pollutants, and other toxic substances found in waste landfills and groundwater.

Thus, can the city government of Chester, Pennsylvania do what’s right by its minority citizens in this case? These are just a few of the questions that need to be seriously addressed and answered, as some polluting industries establish their contaminating networks in former *pristine* environments. To that end, also, it should be understood that some contaminating former factories in the United States, which “operated from the 1930s to the 1960s” are still leaching contaminants like “dangerous levels of lead” where unsuspecting people live nearby.³⁹ Again, the sad truth is that industrialists and owners of these lumbering waste sites could care less about the lives, welfare and possible health concerns of the people living near such locations. Or so it seems. Is this because the residents are a disposable people?

Journalist Alison Young, for example, points out that the lead contamination at former polluting foundry sites, which has left toxic dust in the soil in places like Newport, Kentucky and Portland, Oregon, put our children “at risk of lost intelligence and other health problems if they put dust-covered hands or toys in their mouths.”⁴⁰ In many ways, this should be cause for concern and alarm. Finally, the conservative city fathers of Chester, Pennsylvania should seriously look at the negative impact that the waste treatment facilities are having on the inner and outlying black communities. But will they? Probably not. Of course, closing down such waste treatment facilities would be an incredibly bold and correct thing to do, if it ever happens.

More importantly, how exactly can black members of such minority communities engage in a positive dialogue that would divert waste treatment facilities and prevent their neighborhoods from being targeted for toxic dumping? If city officials in Chester, Pennsylvania are unwilling to do *something*, to stem the tide of toxic dumping, it is possible that such polluting industries will get away with what they have done in the past, and are continuing to do. Interestingly, this entire issue is not an inconsequential matter. There is certainly a need to tackle this controversial issue and towering environmental problem. But it remains to be seen if politicians throughout our nation will legislate industries into doing the right thing in cleaning up our polluted, ethnic minority communities, where power plants, mining operations, and hazardous waste disposal facilities are located. Julian Agyeman and Tom Evans offer us the following novel solution to the issue of environmental racism. Essentially, any decision about establishing a polluting industry must be made by the residents of a particular area in what Agyeman and Evans call “community-based decision making.”⁴¹ In the long term, this residential decision-making will allow for clean, livable communities for all people in order to reduce all forms of pollution.⁴²

CONCLUSIONS

Mass publicity and a national debate about the industrial pollution of ethnic minority communities are crucial if *anything* is going to be done about polluting companies. Moreover, “direct action” should be used against corporations that pollute, where minorities who are affected by pollution can demand to be heard and voice their complaints. Of course, such a tactic will be an uphill battle, as these polluting industries might hide behind (the cloak of) conservative support for deregulation. Our politicians, however, on both sides of the ideological spectrum shouldn’t politicize the lives of humans for the sake of obtaining natural resources, or campaign contributions from polluting corporations. In this regard, many environmentalists claim that industrial development on the part of polluting companies is often the result of thoughtless environmental exploitation.⁴³ If this is true, our politicians should not feel ambivalent about environmental protection when it comes to protecting the lives of people.

This is why it is critical for us to have a federal regulatory agency, like the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Indeed, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is ultimately responsible for regulating pollution and carbon emissions from related businesses, which is a tough job in itself. Nevertheless, our government can and should do more to protect the lives of all American citizens from unscrupulous, polluting industries by creating more stringent regulations and policies to control them. Additionally, there must be an urgent need to make sure that toxic waste and other harmful by-products are removed or carried away from affected minority neighborhoods.

Unfortunately, some dumping in many ethnic minority communities has already set a dangerous precedent. Still, our federal and state governments must be willing to “foot-the-bill” to relocate American citizens in harm’s way from polluting industries. Furthermore, appropriate compensation must be given to those sick and dying individuals—and minority community members who are displaced by the pollution.

Equally important, “we-the-people” cannot be indifferent to the negative effects of pollution on the mentioned communities. The question that remains is whether our federal government is willing to limit the number of polluting industries in the United States? Moreover, an empowerment plan, perhaps under the auspices of the United Nations, could be instituted for ethnic minorities living in affected areas. This plan would “empower low-income communities of color to shape the environments in which they live and work.”⁴⁴ Although this measure might not seem like much of a solution on the surface, it has the potential to develop into something more substantial down the line, where affected minorities could take unilateral action to dispel polluting corporations from their neighborhoods.

In this context, ethnic minorities must never *tough* it out, so to speak, or take a “wait-and-see” attitude while being paid to keep quiet about what corporate polluters are actually doing. More importantly, the alarm must be sounded about the dangers of allowing such polluting ventures. Clearly, it is a very difficult thing to be optimistic about allowing for polluting companies and toxic dumping for *anyone*, anywhere. Which is to say that our whole society should be extremely upset about the contamination of our minority environments; meanwhile, we must make an extraordinary effort to dismiss certain corporate polluters outright, and enforce their accountability. Furthermore, corporations must spend the necessary funds for other technologies and alternatives to deal with pollution in specific depressed neighborhoods. African Americans and other minorities must also be included in the greater discussions about our nation’s energy and waste storage facilities, especially if the development of polluting businesses pollute areas with a wide variety of dangerous chemicals, or aggravates; and specifically, if the operation creates health problems for minorities in the places where they live.

In addition, minorities living in affected areas must recognize that they don’t have to tolerate certain pollution inconveniences, if their specific health is being compromised. In the end, many industries that pollute actually miss this crucial point. This is to say that polluting corporations often argue constantly about missed business opportunities without really considering the negative, *long-term* effect of their operations on the environment; perhaps this is because such industries are afraid of the truth or the revelation that their polluting organizations can cause serious harm to people. In the short run, we must also recognize why environmental issues, like building landfills, or dumping toxic waste and other hazardous materials, which wreak havoc in predominantly minority neighborhoods, “are often linked to wider demands for sociopolitical change and/or economic reform from groups lacking [political] power,”⁴⁵ like with the Moapa Paiute Tribe in Southern Nevada, who refuse to move or relocate from their tribal/ancestral lands, to appease or accommodate a polluting industry. It behooves the corporate bosses of industry, then, to stop trying to come up with extravagant ways to pollute, without anyone noticing; or devising new, ingenuous methods to hide their pollution.

Furthermore, polluting corporations must clean up their contaminated sites and communities, no matter the cost; or they might risk converging environmental catastrophes. Indeed, it should be pointed out that not cleaning up massive waste treatment areas will become a major problem in the future; therefore, any delay in addressing such environmental issues might be, as discussed earlier, to our detriment as humans. Also, in this regard, our federal government must continue to create proactive legislation that will combat environmental pollution everywhere in the future. The idea of doing nothing about such matters is breathtakingly wrong, as it will definitely affect the long term survival of mankind, or all living beings around the world. The fact that some corporate polluting giants complain mightily about the necessity for government regulations, which are used to police these businesses environmentally, should be ignored. And if such corporations do things, needlessly, to harm people, it should be pointed out to the public immediately, or the whistle should be blown, especially if their actions create unnecessary risks for certain ethnic minority groups.

Corporate polluters must also know that we are all part of a greater whole, as humans, even if this environmental issue is about the “conflict between haves and have nots.”⁴⁶ Question: Is the trade-off in human lives worth the profits made by polluting corporations? There is really only one answer to this question, and that is—No. Hence, industrial polluters must clean up their act, as mentioned, and put their respective houses in order, while doing penance by cleaning up the environmental areas they helped to pollute and inundate with contamination sources.

Establishing new government policies could possibly help them along the way. In the final analysis, the American public should also support the idea of cleaning up these contaminated areas for the good of *everyone*.

All in all, the public outcry about this serious environmental matter (in terms of negatively affecting minorities) should be deafening. Environmentalist Ervin Laszlo argues that “if humanity does not respond in time, we face an irreversible collapse that may spell the end of civilization.”⁴⁷ Finally, the people must illuminate the truth and try to drive home the message that there is something profoundly wrong with the devastation of some ethnic minority communities by corporate pollution/polluters, which will have far-reaching, negative consequences in the future. Let us hope that we are not at a point of no return.

NOTES

1. “Environmental Racism Continues in U.S,” *The Media Freedom Foundation*, <http://www.mediafreedominternational.org/2010/02/21/environmental-racism-continues-in-u-s> (4/18/2013), 1-3. See also Deborah M. Robinson, “Environmental Racism: Old Wine in a New Bottle,” *Echoes*, May 27, 2007.
2. Jewel Crawford, Wade W. Nobles, and Joy De Gruy Leary, “Reparations and Health Care for African Americans: Repairing the Damage from the Legacy of Slavery,” in *Should America Pay? Slavery and the Raging Debate on Reparations*, ed. Raymond A. Winbush (New York: Amistad, 2003), 272.
3. Michael K. Heiman, “Race, Waste, and Class: New Perspectives on Environmental Justice,” Editor’s Introduction for a Special Edition of *Antipode*, *Antipode*, April 1996, 28.
4. Melissa Checker, *Polluted Promises: Environmental Racism and the Search for Justice in a Southern Town* (New York: NYU Press, 2005), 6-150.
5. Steve Coll, *Private Empire: Exxon Mobil and American Power* (New York: Penguin Books, 2012), 177-193.
6. “Environmental Racism Continues in U.S,” 1-3.
7. Dave Pace, “More Blacks Live With Pollution,” The Associated Press, 2006, in Paula S. Rothenberg and Kelly S. Mayhew, *Race, Class, and Gender in the United States: An Integrated Study* (New York: Worth Publishers, 2014), 35.
8. Heiman, “Race, Waste, and Class,” 28.
9. “Toxic Wastes and Race in the United States: A National Report on the Racial and Socio-Economic Characteristics of Communities with Hazardous Waste Sites,” *Commission for Racial Justice: United Church of Christ* (New York: New York, 1987), ix.
10. James Lee Ray, *Global Politics*, 7th edition (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1998), 551.
11. “Toxic waste and race: Report confirms no progress made in 20 years,” ([/new/releases/3253-toxic-waste-and-race-report-confirms-no-progress-made-in-20-years](http://new/releases/3253-toxic-waste-and-race-report-confirms-no-progress-made-in-20-years)), <http://ns.umich.edu/new/releases/3253> (7/14/2013), 1.
12. Herman E. Daly, “Free-Market Environmentalism: Turning a Good Servant into a Bad Master,” *Critical Review* 6 (1992), 182. It should be pointed out that some polluting corporations are good at secretly defying government regulations, while publicly denying any wrong doings when it comes to their conscious pollution of the respective environments. Many polluting businesses also are not strong enough to take criticism about what they are doing to poor people, in terms of polluting their communities.
13. Jeanne H. Ballantine and Keith A. Roberts, *Our Social World: Introduction to Sociology* (Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press, 2012), 523.
14. Bob Deans, *Reckless: The Political Assault on the American Environment* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2012), 52-53.
15. Benjamin N. Cardozo, “Environmental Justice: A New Chapter in the Civil Rights Debate,” unpublished paper (2005), 1. When it comes to the issue of pollution in poor neighborhoods, it is time for a new environmental paradigm, to change things for the better. See also Julian Agyeman and Kee Warner, “Putting ‘Just Sustainability’ into Place: From Paradigm to Practice,” *Policy and Management Review*, volume 2, issue 1 (2002), 8-40.
16. Ralph W. Conant and Daniel J. Myers, *Toward a More Perfect Union: The Governance of Metropolitan America* (Novato: Chandler & Sharp Publishers, 2006), 235. Unfortunately, black people and other minorities are sometimes considered nonentities; but corporations must respect the rights of minorities in the ongoing political and environmental debate.
17. Marten Scheiffer, et.al, “Catastrophic Shifts in Ecosystems,” *Nature* 413 (2001), 596.

18. Robert D. Bullard, "Poverty, Pollution and Environmental Racism: Strategies for Building Healthy and Sustainable Communities," <http://www.ejrc.cau.edu/povpolej.html> (3/18/2013), 1.
19. Donella H. Meadows, Dennis L. Meadows, Jorgen Randers, and William W. Behrens III, *The Limits to Growth: A Report for the Club of Rome's Project on the Predicament of Mankind* (New York: Universe Books, 1981), 45-87.
20. Benjamin Ross and Steven Amter, *The Polluters: The Making of Our Chemically Altered Environment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 1-171.
21. Deans, "Reckless," 53.
22. Crawford, Nobles and Leary, "Reparations and Health Care," 273.
23. Deans, "Reckless," 52.
24. Crawford, Nobles and Leary, "Reparations and Health Care," 273. To ameliorate such environmental health problems, corporations that pollute must judiciously focus on resolving this matter, not dismiss these affected minorities as irrelevant or superfluous.
25. Cardozo, "Environmental Justice," 1. Creating potentially larger environmental risks, there is apparently no hand-wringing by corporate polluters about some of the adverse environmental decisions they make in regards to their polluting industries/businesses.
26. Ibid. See also "Emerging Links between Chronic Disease and Environmental Exposure: Parkinson's Disease," (Washington, D.C.: Physicians for Social Responsibility, 2003), 4.
27. Frankie Sue Del Papa and Timothy Hay, "Out with the Old," *Las Vegas Review Journal*, May 13, 2012.
28. Ibid. Clearly, there will come a point in time when poor Native Americans, affected by pollution, will say enough is enough, as some industrial polluters cannot credibly justify their actions, no matter how they try to *spin* things about their environment damage in minority communities.
29. Henry Brean, "Paiutes Relate Pollution's toll," *Las Vegas Review Journal*, May 4, 2012.
30. Cristina Silva, "Many on Indian Reservations situated close to power plants," *Las Vegas Review Journal*, July 5, 2012.
31. Steffen W. Schmidt, Mack C. Shelley, and Barbara A. Bardes, *American Government and Politics Today*, 2001-2002 edition (Belmont, California: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 2001), 467.
32. Ibid.
33. Ballantine and Roberts, "Our Social World," 440.
34. Tony Arnold, "Planning for Environmental Justice," *Planning & Environmental Law*, volume 59, issue 3 (March 2007), 3.
35. Robert D. Bullard, "Poverty, Pollution and Environmental Racism: Strategies for Building Healthy and Sustainable Communities," A Discussion Paper prepared for the National Black Environmental Justice Network (NBEJN) Environmental Racism Forum World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) Global Forum Johannesburg, South Africa, July 2, 2001, <http://www.ejrc.cau.edu/povpolej.html> (3/18/2013), 1.
36. Jim Motavall, "Toxic Targets: Polluters that Dump on Communities of Color are Finally Being Brought to Justice," *emagazine*, October 25, 2005, <http://www.emagazine.com/view/?250>.
37. Ibid. Occurring at an alarming rate, the waste treatment facilities in Chester, Pennsylvania, has negatively changed the landscape of the place. Indeed, the actions of the white city fathers have actually hurt the black community, especially psychologically.
38. Ibid.
39. Alison Young, "Senator Calls on Ohio EPA for Answers on Lead Risk," *USA Today*, May 21, 2012. The waste from pollution in certain areas is a major problem; it has also been psychologically damaging to the people who live in polluted communities.
40. Alison Young, "2 States Follow Up on Testing Soil for Lead," *USA Today*, May 25, 2012. For some reason, corporate bosses feign concern for the people living in polluted areas, when clearly they have other business agendas. And they purposely speak out publicly to defend themselves against any criticism about their polluting businesses/activities.
41. Julian Agyeman and Tom Evans, "Toward Just Sustainability in Urban Communities: Building Equity Rights with Sustainable Solutions," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 590 (November 2003), 36. See also Julian Agyeman, *Sustainable Communities and the Challenge of Environmental Justice* (New York University Press: New York, 2005), 14-112.

42. Ibid. See also Robert D. Bullard, ed, *Growing Smarter: Achieving Livable Communities, Environmental Justice, and Regional Equity* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2007), 1-8, 50-69, 103-121, 345-363.

43. Jeff Haynes, *Politics in Developing Worlds: A Concise Introduction* (Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 216. As a result of corporate pollution, drastic changes have been made in some areas, where some neighborhoods have been fundamentally altered for the worst, as short-sighted executives don't really care about the viability of the polluted communities for the future.

44. Tony Arnold, "Planning for Environmental Justice," 3-12

45. Haynes, "Politics in Developing Worlds," 215. Polluting corporations should have some kind of social responsibility for their actions. Indeed, they should not indecorously laugh in the face of people, as they cannot finesse this environmental issue away.

46. Ballantine and Roberts, "Our Social World," 523.

47. Ervin Laszlo, *The Chaos Point: The World at the Crossroads* (Charlottesville: Hampton Roads Publishing Company), 85.

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