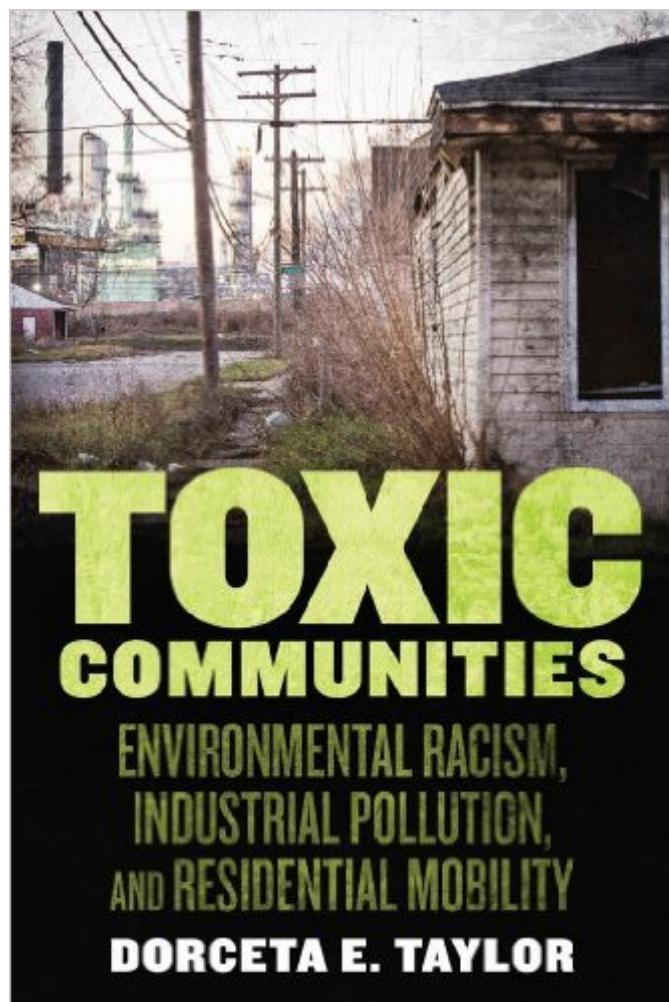


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Toxic Communities: Environmental Racism, Industrial Pollution, And Residential Mobility



Synopsis

From St. Louis to New Orleans, from Baltimore to Oklahoma City, there are poor and minority neighborhoods so beset by pollution that just living in them can be hazardous to your health. Due to entrenched segregation, zoning ordinances that privilege wealthier communities, or because businesses have found the "paths of least resistance,"TM there are many hazardous waste and toxic facilities in these communities, leading residents to experience health and wellness problems on top of the race and class discrimination most already experience. Taking stock of the recent environmental justice scholarship, *Toxic Communities* examines the connections among residential segregation, zoning, and exposure to environmental hazards. Renowned environmental sociologist Dorceta Taylor focuses on the locations of hazardous facilities in low-income and minority communities and shows how they have been dumped on, contaminated and exposed. Drawing on an array of historical and contemporary case studies from across the country, Taylor explores controversies over racially-motivated decisions in zoning laws, eminent domain, government regulation (or lack thereof), and urban renewal. She provides a comprehensive overview of the debate over whether or not there is a link between environmental transgressions and discrimination, drawing a clear picture of the state of the environmental justice field today and where it is going. In doing so, she introduces new concepts and theories for understanding environmental racism that will be essential for environmental justice scholars. A fascinating landmark study, *Toxic Communities* greatly contributes to the study of race, the environment, and space in the contemporary United States.   

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

It won't take a book like this to convince me of the points here. Throughout the world, it's been common practice to dump garbage in poorer communities, and if not, the lower income resident usually live in the most polluted areas, near the dumps, coal bins, canals, and slaughterhouses. Take Vancouver's "Low Track" as an example; it was a low-lying area that flooded easily, so you'd get sewage pollution whenever it rained, and who would want to live there? London's Camden Lock is another example of low-income housing built near a polluted waterway. It may be stylish now, but in 1992, it was a mess. Tourists and locals came to the Camden Lock market to shop, browse, and take pictures, but you couldn't be there at night. The smell from the canal made it the least desirable place to live. Toxic Communities turns things up a notch by studying how racism as well as poverty drives the "dump in the poor town" practice. Triana, Alabama, for instance, was polluted with DDT from the Tennessee River, and the locals were eating toxic fish, not out of a desire to eat local, but because they were hungry. Warren County, North Carolina, was the scene of a 1979 lawsuit to stop a PCB landfill. Love Canal is barely cited in this book, because it had nothing to do with racism or poverty. On the contrary, the dump was there before the houses were built, and the owners warned the town not to build there. The problem was that the town thought the canal was leak-proof, and it wasn't. The residents were all white, so you can't blame racism, but what if the town built low-income housing on the site? Could the town have forced Section-8 tenants to move in, so they could sell valuable land where existing housing projects were? Native American land in the USA is also in danger of pollution.

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