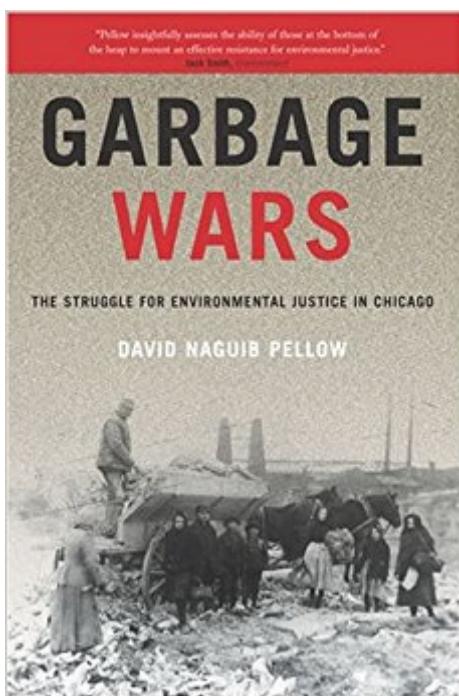


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# Garbage Wars: The Struggle For Environmental Justice In Chicago (Urban And Industrial Environments)



## Synopsis

In *Garbage Wars*, the sociologist David Pellow describes the politics of garbage in Chicago. He shows how garbage affects residents in vulnerable communities and poses health risks to those who dispose of it. He follows the trash, the pollution, the hazards, and the people who encountered them in the period 1880-2000. What unfolds is a tug of war among social movements, government, and industry over how we manage our waste, who benefits, and who pays the costs. Studies demonstrate that minority and low-income communities bear a disproportionate burden of environmental hazards. Pellow analyzes how and why environmental inequalities are created. He also explains how class and racial politics have influenced the waste industry throughout the history of Chicago and the United States. After examining the roles of social movements and workers in defining, resisting, and shaping garbage disposal in the United States, he concludes that some environmental groups and people of color have actually contributed to environmental inequality. By highlighting conflicts over waste dumping, incineration, landfills, and recycling, Pellow provides a historical view of the garbage industry throughout the life cycle of waste. Although his focus is on Chicago, he places the trends and conflicts in a broader context, describing how communities throughout the United States have resisted the waste industry's efforts to locate hazardous facilities in their backyards. The book closes with suggestions for how communities can work more effectively for environmental justice and safe, sustainable waste management.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

With more landfills per square mile than any other American city, Chicago has had some particularly colorful controversies over waste disposal over the last century. University of Colorado-Boulder sociology professor David Naguib Pellow traces these conflicts in *Garbage Wars: The Struggle for Environmental Justice in Chicago*, examining how poor neighborhoods come to be burdened with a disproportionate amount of pollution and refuse. He offers background on Chicago's waste management from the 1880s to the present, focusing in particular on the struggle for environmental justice of the last two decades, and shows how "environmentally friendly" technologies like recycling plants and waste-to-energy incinerators actually end up adding to the pollution in poor neighborhoods. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This is one of the most original, thought-provoking works on environmental justice that I have seen in some time. Its significance lies in Pellow's unique ability to get at the often unspoken issues that affect the movement and its future direction. (Jim Schwab, American Planning Association, author of *Deeper Shades of Green*) *Garbage Wars* provides a detailed and fascinating historical account of an important environmental issue. David Pellow demonstrates that links between waste disposal and environmental injustice are not a recent phenomenon but rather have existed for a century and more. He shows that environmental inequalities result from a complex struggle among multiple stakeholders with varying interests and access to power. This is a truly groundbreaking work that uncovers the roots of an important environmental and social problem. (Paul Mohai, School of Natural Resources and Environment, University of Michigan) Pellow employs the notion of the 'treadmill of production' along with theoretical insights from race and ethnic studies to reveal the contradictions and complexities of the urban recycling and waste management economy. With the publication of *Garbage Wars*, David Pellow has established himself as one of foremost theorists and researchers on environmental inequalities and environmental justice. (Frederick H. Buttell, Professor of Rural Sociology and Environmental Studies, University of Wisconsin, Madison) David N. Pellow has written a unique study. *Garbage Wars* examines environmental racism and environmental justice from a variety of vantage points, including those of workers and whole neighborhoods. In doing so, he raises important questions about how society confronts its waste problems, and who ultimately pays for the choices made. (Martin V. Melosi, Distinguished University

Professor, University of Houston, Author of *The Sanitary City: Urban Infrastructure in America from Colonial Times to the Present*) This is one of the most thoughtful and best-written works ever produced on environmental justice and injustice. (William R. Freudenburg, Professor of Rural Sociology and Environmental Studies, University of Wisconsin Madison)...insightfully assesses the ability of those at the bottom of the heap to mount an effective resistance for environmental justice. (Environment)...An indispensable book for anyone interested in waste...or the continued effects of racism and classism in American society. (The Public Historian)

Do you know what happens to your own garbage? Who has to deal with your waste? Recycling? Interesting history of racial discrimination that harms so many of our communities from the perspective of what happens with our garbage. What an eye opening book!

### Good Quality

I came across this book while doing research on community-based organizations and the environment in Chicago. It's very informative because it gives a historical overview of Chicago's waste management, and because it gets into the nitty-gritty of conflicts within nonprofits in Chicago. There were a couple places though where I had to raise my eyebrow because the analysis seemed a little suspect. For example, the author uses cases of illegal dumping in Chicago to show how minority groups may be more concerned with recycling and the environment than is often thought in mainstream environmental organizations. It seems a little strange to equate recycling centers, and companies that only call themselves recyclers but are actually illegal dumpers.

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