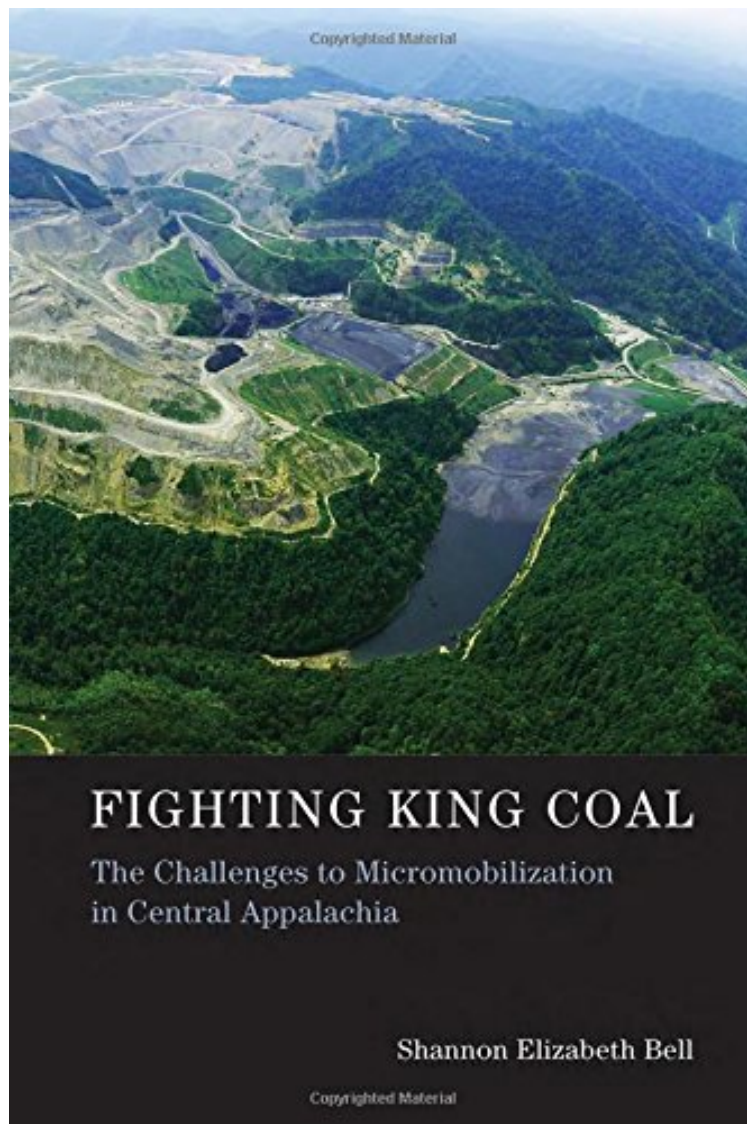


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## **Fighting King Coal: The Challenges to Micromobilization in Central Appalachia (Urban and Industrial Environments)**

*Shannon Elizabeth Bell*

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**Shannon Elizabeth Bell : Fighting King Coal: The Challenges to Micromobilization in Central Appalachia (Urban and Industrial Environments)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Fighting King Coal: The Challenges to Micromobilization in Central Appalachia (Urban and Industrial Environments):

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Brilliant and transformative  
By Customer  
A brilliant scholarly look at a very compelling question: Why do so few people who have been negatively impacted by coal industry practice mobilize in opposition? Bell amasses an impressive amount and diversity of data (interviews, ethnography, photovoice, GIS) to answer this question. What is particularly interesting is that so much of the social movement literature "selects on the dependent variable" (as Bell says), meaning that existing studies look at movement participants and at movements that have been successful. Few look at why people are reluctant to mobilize. I don't want to give away too much of the punchline, but her answer is multi-faceted, involving the erosion of social capital, the cultural dominance of the coal industry, and several other explanations. Has the potential to bridge literatures in environmental sociology, social movements, and research methods. The author's love and concern for the people of Appalachia also permeates the work.  
2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars  
By Vivian L. Stockman  
Shannon Elizabeth Bell does it again. If you want to understand the Appalachian spirit, read her books!  
1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. An excellent text that really delves into the factors that influence ...  
By MAGA  
An excellent text that really delves into the factors that influence individuals going into why individuals become environmental advocates. It covers a breadth of history.

An examination of why so few people suffering from environmental hazards and pollution choose to participate in environmental justice movements. In the coal-mining region of Central Appalachia, mountaintop-removal mining and coal-industry-related flooding, water contamination, and illness have led to the emergence of a grassroots, women-driven environmental justice movement. But the number of local activists is small relative to the affected population, and recruiting movement participants from within the region is an ongoing challenge. In *Fighting King Coal*, Shannon Elizabeth Bell examines an understudied puzzle within social movement theory: why so few of the many people who suffer from industry-produced environmental hazards and pollution rise up to participate in social movements aimed at bringing about social justice and industry accountability. Using the coal-mining region of Central Appalachia as a case study, Bell investigates the challenges of micromobilization through in-depth interviews, participant observation, content analysis, geospatial viewshed analysis, and an eight-month "Photovoice" project -- an innovative means of studying, in real time, the social dynamics affecting activist involvement in the region. Although the Photovoice participants took striking photographs and wrote movingly about the environmental destruction caused by coal production, only a few became activists. Bell reveals the importance of local identities to the success or failure of local recruitment efforts in social movement struggles, ultimately arguing that, if the local identities of environmental justice movements are lost, the movements may also lose their power.

By studying both successful and unsuccessful instances of mobilization against 'King Coal' and local residents who did and did not join these efforts, Bell has authored a highly original book that offers an important corrective to the regrettable tendency of scholars to 'select on the dependent variable' in studying both movements and individual activism. An altogether welcome, if sobering, addition to the literature on movements. (Doug McAdam, Ray Lyman Wilbur Professor of Sociology, Stanford University; coauthor of *Deeply Divided: Racial Politics and Social Movements in Postwar America*)  
In *Fighting King Coal*, Bell presents an innovative approach to a surprisingly undertheorized phenomenon: the problem of inaction in the face of social injustice and oppression. Her methodological design is groundbreaking, providing tools to explore social processes that researchers are not usually able to observe. Bell demonstrates an extraordinary commitment to the highest quality scholarship, and the significance of this book's message and conclusions cannot be overstated. (David N. Pellow, Dehlsen Professor of Environmental Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara; author of *Resisting Global Toxics and Total Liberation*, and coauthor of *The Slums of Aspen*)  
About the Author  
Shannon Elizabeth Bell is Assistant Professor of Sociology and Environmental Studies at the University of Kentucky. She is the author of *Our Roots Run Deep as Ironweed: Appalachian Women and the Fight for Environmental Justice*.