

Urgent Issues, Extraordinary Politics
Fromm Institute, USF
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Precarious Lives in the New Gilded Age: The Decline of the Employment Model of Social Membership and the Growth of Lower Class Vulnerability

I. An Overview of Inequality and Immobility in Contemporary American Society

- A. The Most Unequal Developed Society
- B. The Hollowing Out of the Middle Class
- C. Stagnant Wages
- D. The Decline in Mobility, the Opportunity Gap, and a Contraction in Civic Obligation
- E. Some Thoughts on the Causes of American Inequality

1. Structural Economic Changes

- a. Globalization
- b. Decline in Unions
- c. Immigration
- d. Automation (see Nicholas Carr, *The Glass Cage*)

2. Political Dysfunction:

- a. The Age of Acquiescence (Steve Fraser)
- b. Too Many Veto Players (Stephan and Linz)
- c. Money in Politics

II. The Nature of Work in a Fissured Economy and Monitored World

A. The 'Fissuring' of the Economy and Its Consequences

- 1. The Basic Idea of Fissuring: The Decline of Regular Payroll Employment, The Rise of Outsourced, Contract and Flexible Work (David Weil, *Fissured Workplace*)

B. Its Consequences

1. Freeing Corporations From the Tacit Social Compact—and
2. Two Sources of Fissuring: Financial Capital and Technology

C. The New Technology of Surveillance and the On-going Degradation of Work (Esther Kaplan, Harpers)

1. The Nature and Extent of Workplace Monitoring
2. Telematics: Tracking Motion of Mobile Workers
3. Scheduling Software Systems, Key Performance Indicators,
4. Surveillance of Electronic Work
5. The Consequence for Work: Unstable Schedules and Wage and Labor Cost as a Percentage of Revenue Theft

III. Glimpsing Work's Future: The End of a Full Employment Economy

- A. Deindustrialization and Regional Depression
- B. The Social, Cultural and Psychological Consequences
- C. The Mixed History of Technological Unemployment
- D. The Decline of Labor I
- E. The Decline of Labor II
- F. New Technologies and Machines for the Same Old Work
- G. An Example: ATT vs. Google
- H. The New Job Market
- I. The Growth of Flexible and Precarious Work

IV. Three Trends in a 'Post-Work' Future (Derek Thompson, July issue of *The Atlantic*)

- A. Consumption and the Paradoxes of Work and Leisure
- B. Communal Creativity: The Return of an Artisanal Economy?
- C. Contingency: Piecing Together a Livelihood in a Flexible Economy

V. Some Main Implications

- A. Children Living in Poverty
- B. Hollowing Out of the Middle Class
- C. New Forms of Precariousness as Illustrated by Housing

VI. Some Public Policy Proposals

- A. Moderate Liberal Reformism
- B. Using Law to Bolster Countervailing Powers
- C. Using Law to Produce a More Equal Distribution of the Benefits of Post-Industrial Economic Growth

Additional Works Referred to in Today's Lecture:

- Robert Putnam, *Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis*
- Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett, *Spirit Level: Why Greater Equality Makes Societies Stronger*
- Jack P. Shonkoff & Deborah A. Phillip, *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development*
- Sendhil Mullainathan and Eldar Shafir, *Scarcity: Why Having Too Little Means So Much*
- Anthony B. Atkinson, *Inequality: What Can Be Done?*
- Robert B. Reich, *Saving Capitalism: For the Many, Not the Few*
- Mathew Desmond, *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*
- David Weil, *Fissured Workplace*
- Guy Standing, *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class*
- Steve Phillips, *Brown is the New White*