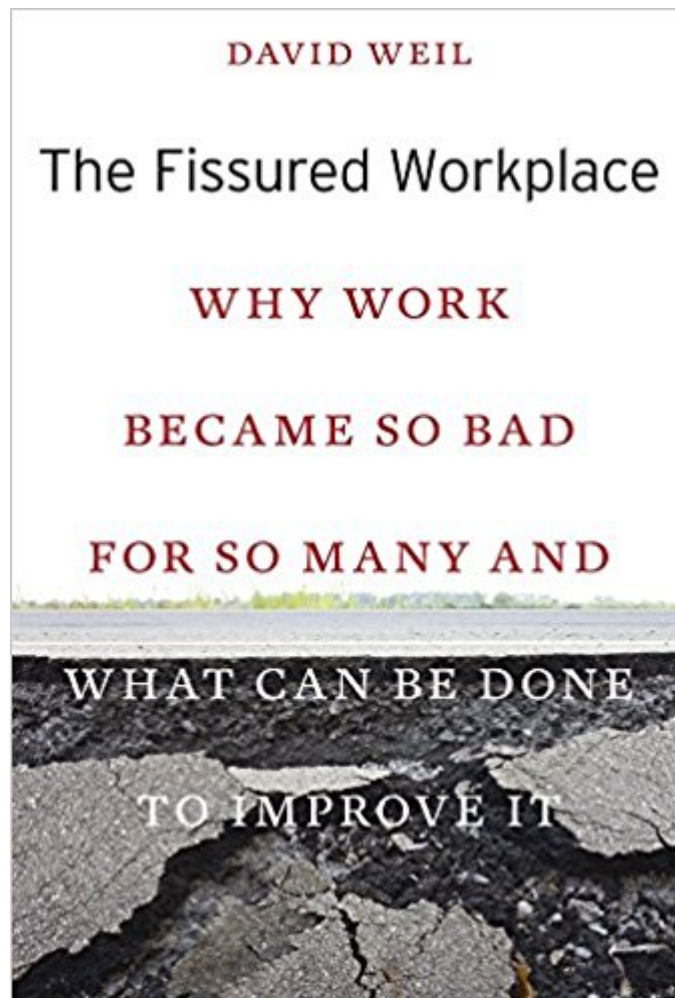




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The Fissured Workplace: Why Work Became So Bad For So Many And What Can Be Done To Improve It



Synopsis

For much of the twentieth century, large companies employing many workers formed the bedrock of the U.S. economy. Today, as David Weil's groundbreaking analysis shows, large corporations have shed their role as direct employers of the people responsible for their products, in favor of outsourcing work to small companies that compete fiercely with one another. The result has been declining wages, eroding benefits, inadequate health and safety conditions, and ever-widening income inequality. "[The Fissured Workplace] shed[s] important new light on the resurgence of the power of finance and its connection to the debasement of work and income distribution." Robert Kuttner, New York Review of Books "The kinds of workplace fissuring discussed here—subcontracting, franchising and global supply chains—have been the subjects of a number of studies detailing the employment effects that Weil describes. The Fissured Workplace is unusual in bringing this research together into an integrated, detailed and decidedly policy-oriented analysis. It makes a convincing case that the better regulation of fissured workplaces is a first step towards reversing the erosion of pay and conditions at the bottom of the labor market." Virginia Doellgast, Times Higher Education

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Customer Reviews

As inequality has drawn increased public debate, most recently thanks to Thomas Piketty's influential work, the changing conditions of employment have gotten far

too little attention. Work remains the prime source of income for most people. The fissuring of work, Weil finds, is one of the main factors in the widening gap between productivity and earnings because it allows corporations to batter down labor costs—people’s paychecks.

[The Fissured Workplace] shed[s] important new light on the resurgence of the power of finance and its connection to the debasement of work and income distribution. (Robert Kuttner New York Review of Books 2014-10-23)

The kinds of workplace fissuring discussed here—subcontracting, franchising and global supply chains—have been the subjects of a number of studies detailing the employment effects that Weil describes. The Fissured Workplace is unusual in bringing this research together into an integrated, detailed and decidedly policy-oriented analysis. Through linking organizational strategies that share an underlying logic, it makes a compelling case that workplace fissuring should be given a more prominent place in analyses of the causes of growing inequality. Along the way, Weil shows that fissuring constitutes a fundamental and formidable challenge to existing employment regulations.

It makes a convincing case that the better regulation of fissured workplaces is a first step towards reversing the erosion of pay and conditions at the bottom of the labor market. (Virginia Doellgast Times Higher Education 2014-03-06)

This book is an excellent application of institutional analysis in economics. In exacting detail, Weil describes the process by which employers subcontract business functions in pursuit of efficiencies, but often at the expense of employees. (D. C. Jacobs Choice 2014-07-01)

With insight and precision, David Weil has brought to light the shell game played by so many modern business organizations. Today, the company whose logo is on your work shirt, smock, or ID badge may not be the one that recruits, hires, manages, pays, disciplines, and sometimes even houses you. This fracturing of the basic employer-employee relationship is reshaping lives and industries. If there’s one book you should read about work today, this is it. (Richard Trumka, AFL-CIO President)

The Fissured Workplace paints a striking picture of the underside of the U.S. labor market: the workers who service expensive hotels but need food stamps and income support for their families to survive; the ‘independent contractors’ who clean office buildings under contracts that pay below minimum wages; and hundreds of thousands of others struggling in an economy where you work not for branded name companies in the open light but for subcontractors behind the scenes. Weil documents the growth of the fissured labor market, tells us how it contributes to the impoverishment of America, and offers ways to make matters better. You will think differently about the world of work after reading this marvelous book. (Richard B. Freeman, Harvard University)

The book persuasively argues that widening income inequality has less to do with technological innovations and more to do with organizational innovations. The deep dive that

Weil does on subcontracting, franchising, and supply chains is a must-read for anyone interested in how these practices have affected pay and working conditions. He goes beyond just documenting what is happening and presents a detailed proposal on how and why we need to mend, through legislation and enforcement, the increasingly fissured relationship between workers and their employers. (Lisa M. Lynch, Dean, The Heller School for Social Policy and Management, Brandeis University) --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

David Weil served as President Barack Obama's Wage and Hour Administrator in the U.S. Department of Labor from May 2014 to January 2017. He currently is Peter and Deborah Wexler Professor of Management in the Department of Markets, Public Policy, and Law at Boston University Questrom School of Business and serves as a co-Director of the Transparency Policy Project at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government.

This book gives an in depth look into modern business practices. How this notion of fissuring is causing extensive damage within big businesses in the public sector, making unions a thing of the past and causing a great strain on the working class. Before this book I was not fully aware of the impact outsourcing had on big business and I am extremely glad to have found this. This author writes to a specific audience, one with an economic background so it can be a little confusing at times but well worth the read.

This is a path breaking book exploring and analyzing the increasing complex employment relations as employers franchise, subcontract, and otherwise construct intermediaries to insulate themselves from the obligations of being an employers. It is a must read for anyone in the field

The Fissured Workplace focuses on the downsides of the new economy for workers. The book is thorough and well researched, but also long and wonky at times. It provides many examples of how workers are hurt by the new economy shifts towards outsourcing, partnering and contingent work. The book blames the usual suspects (the rich, Wall Street, corporate execs, etc.) for these shifts. I would have preferred a more balanced analysis of these shifts instead of the one sided, politically progressive point of view presented in this book. But the downsides of the new economy are real and this book does a good job of chronicling them. Liberals will definitely prefer this book over conservative readers. But if conservatives can get past the liberal rhetoric they will learn a lot about the downsides of the new economy.

Extremely well-written. Insightful as well as enlightening.

Great Book. Read it for a labor economics class!

The book is, admittedly, a tough read and intended for a scholarly audience. It's important as an insight into the Dr. Weil's intellectual paradigm. Dr. Weil is the Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division at the Dept. of Labor. There are a number of public policy issues that Dr. Weil will deal with during his tenure at the agency and this book gives a peak into his thinking.

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