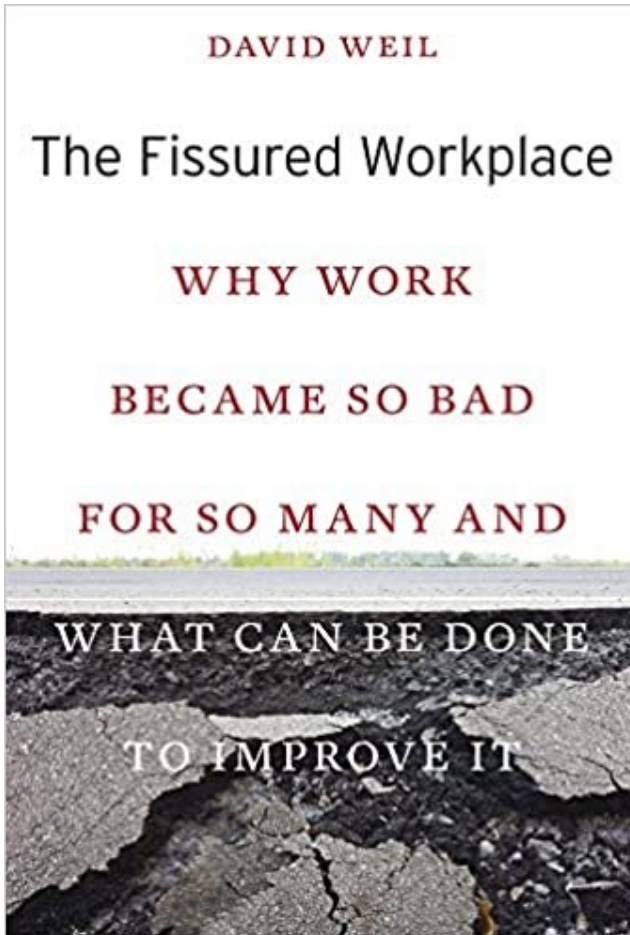


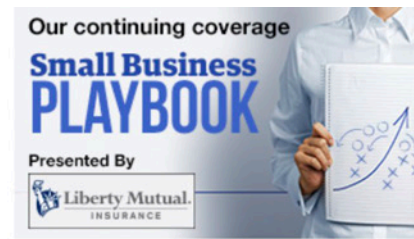
David Weil - professor of economic and public policy and Dean at Brandeis



“Fissured workplace” – when lead businesses externalize work and employment that would have previously occurred within the context of the business itself; this can include outsourcing, sub-contracting, franchising, etc.

Weil, David. *The Fissured Workplace: Why Work Became So Bad for So Many and What Can Be Done to Improve It*. Harvard University Press, 2017. © Harvard University Press. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>.

Shocker: 40% of Workers Now Have 'Contingent' Jobs, Says U.S. Government



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Tucked away in the pages of a new [report](http://www.gao.gov/assets/670/669899.pdf) (<http://www.gao.gov/assets/670/669899.pdf>) by the U.S. General Accounting Office is a startling statistic: 40.4% of the U.S. workforce is now made up of contingent workers—that is, people who don't have what we traditionally consider secure jobs.

There is currently a lot of debate about how contingent workers should be defined. To arrive at the 40.4 %, which the workforce reached in 2010, the report counts the following types of workers as having the alternative work arrangements considered contingent. (The government did some rounding to arrive at its final number, so the numbers below add up to 40.2%).

- Agency temps: (1.3%)
- On-call workers (people called to work when needed): (3.5%)
- Contract company workers (3.0%)
- Independent contractors who provide a product or service and find their own customers (12.9%)
- Self-employed workers such as shop and restaurant owners, etc. (3.3%)
- Standard part-time workers (16.2%).

Pofeldt, Elaine. "[Shocker: 40% of Workers Now Have 'Contingent' Jobs, Says U.S. Government.](#)" *Forbes*, May 25, 2015. © Integrated Whale Media Investments, China and the Forbes Family. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>.

From Forbes magazine, by Elaine Pofeldt, 5/25/2015

Factors leading to “fissured workplaces”:

- revenue based impetus (Wall St emphasis on “core competencies”)
- cost-based impetus (employees become externalized “costs”)
- standards as “glue” holding it together (technology enables transformation)



Genoways, Ted. "[The Spam Factory's Dirty Secret](#)." *Mother Jones*, July/August 2011. © Mother Jones and the Foundation for National Progress. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>.

Cut *and* Kill

First, Hormel vanquished the union, slashed wages, and gutted benefits. Then, it spun off the worst jobs into a shell corporation and sped up the line. And when a mysterious neurological disease began afflicting workers, they got canned.

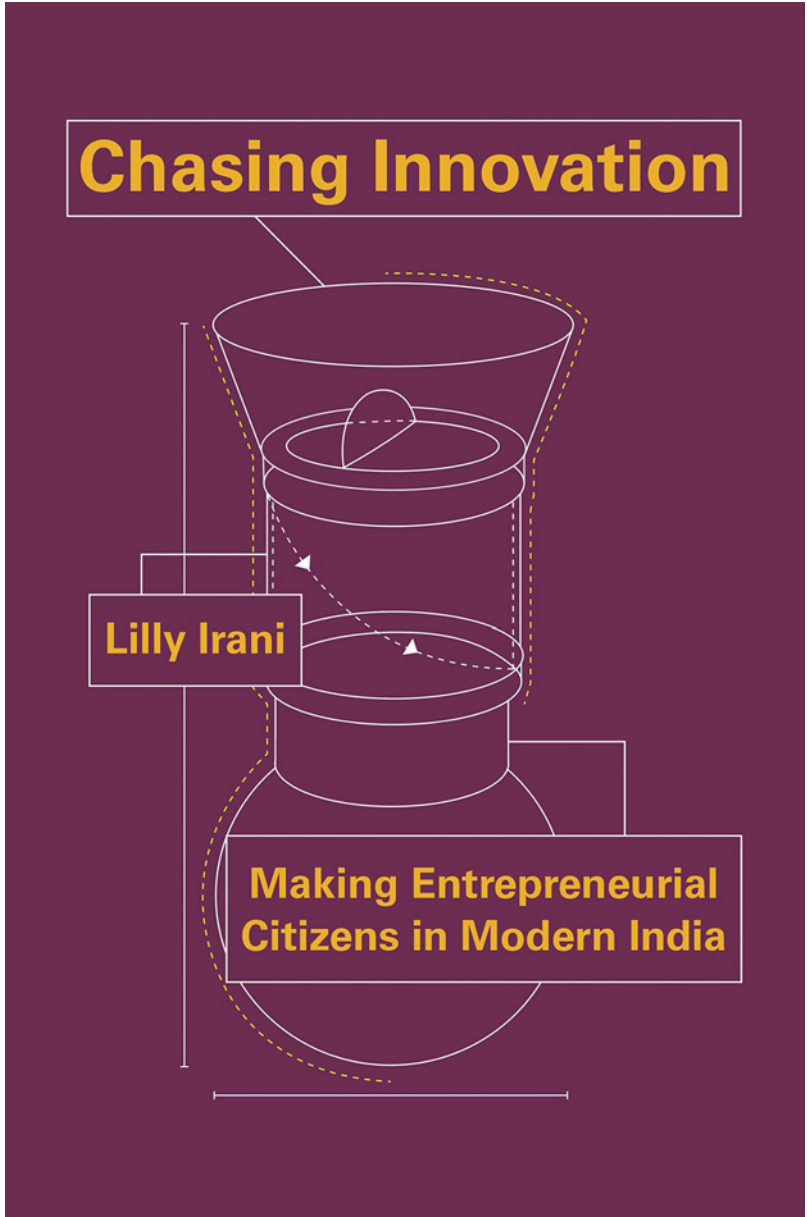
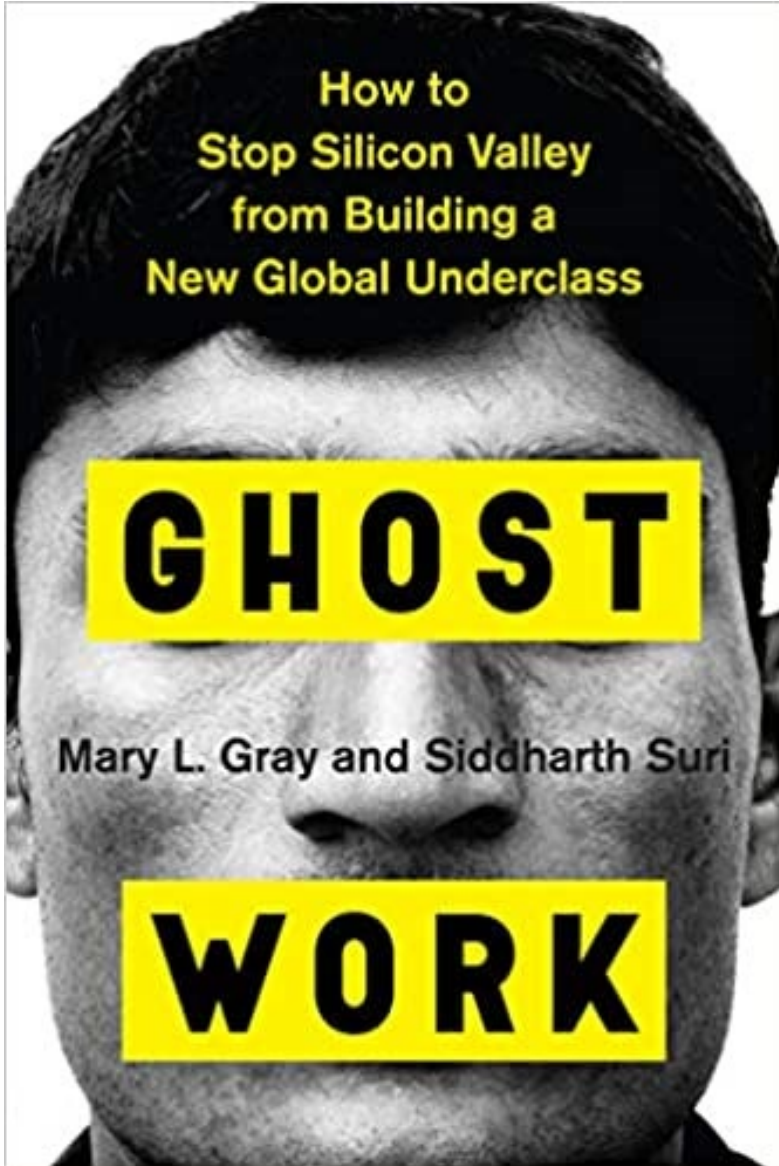
by **TED GENOWAYS** photographs by **ALEC SOTH**

"Fissured workplace" as way to make sense of transformations in industrial work (use of temp and contract work, two-tier wage scales, and shell companies) as well as in service work (fast food franchises, temp services, sub-contractors, etc.)

Apple in 2014 directly employed 63,000 workers out of 750,000 workers globally that help create their products

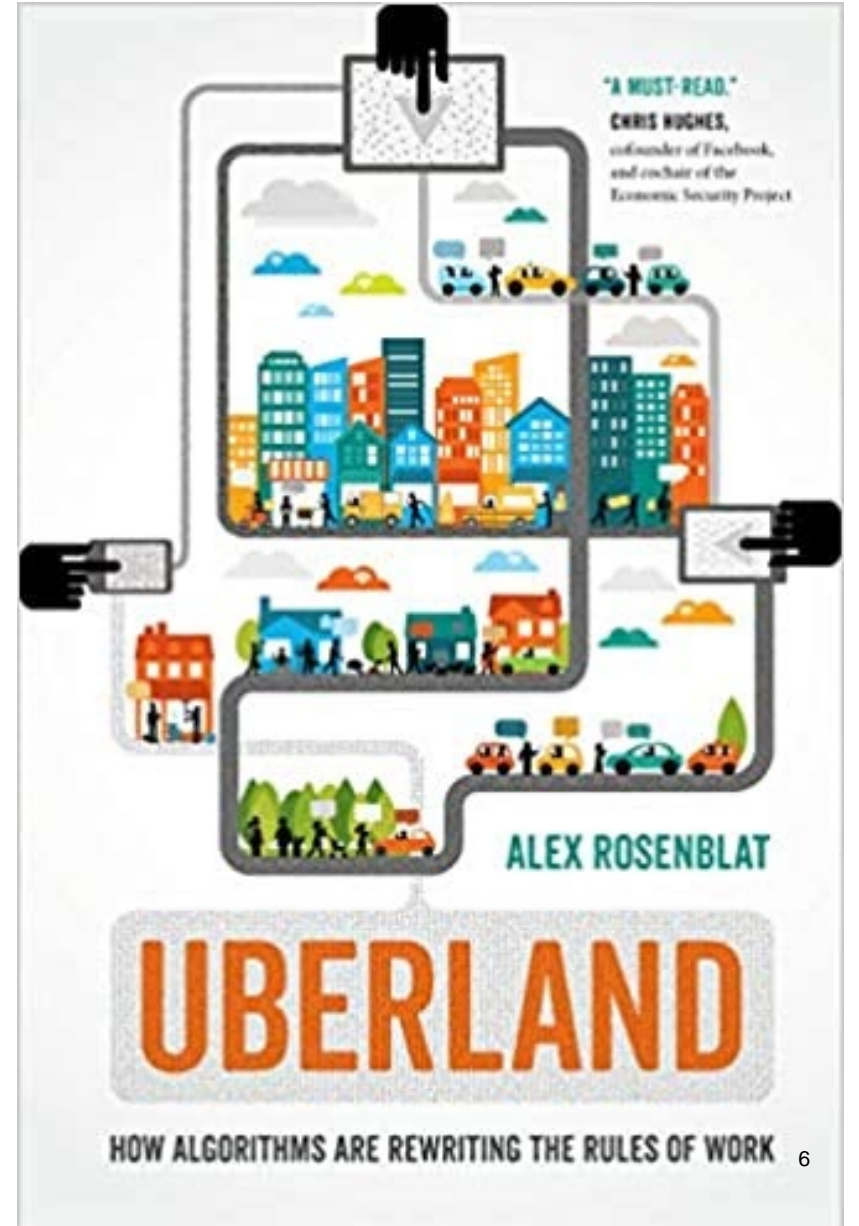
In contrast, ONE steel mill in mid-twentieth century might directly employ 30,000 workers

Gray, Mary L., and Siddharth Suri. *Ghost Work: How to Stop Silicon Valley from Building a New Global Underclass*. Harper Business, 2019. © Harper Business. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>.



Irani, Lilly. *Chasing Innovation: Making Making Entrepreneurial Citizens in Modern India*. Princeton University Press, 2019. © Princeton University Press. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>.

Rosenblat, Alex. In *Uberland: How Algorithms Are Rewriting the Rules of Work*. University of California Press, 2019. © University of California Press. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>.



- workers create social work environments through online chatrooms or in person to mentor each other and provide instruction, support, and information
- Experiences of algorithms as bosses
- Different experiences with different kinds of sites (LeadGenius and Amara vs. Mturk)
- cultural cache of high tech covers over issues of low wage employment

Ghost Work by Gray and Suri

In small groups, discuss what you see as PROS and CONS of ON DEMAND and GIG ECONOMY labor

Make a list based on what you know or readings

Possible topics for final papers

- contingent faculty in academia
- debates over franchising
- Fast Food Forward/Fight for \$15
- debates over UBER and gig economy jobs
- Amazon warehouse jobs
- Pandora papers/tax havens

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21A.461 What is Capitalism?
Fall 2021

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