

Book Review: When Good Jobs Go Bad by Jeffrey S. Rothstein

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Abstract

In 1996, auto assembly jobs were among the best blue-collar jobs in the United States, in Mexico, and around the world. In 2016, auto assembly jobs are still among the best blue-collar jobs in the United States, in Mexico, and around the world. But those jobs are appreciably worse than they were in 1966—pay is much lower in relative terms (especially for new hires), the benefit package is far more limited, the pace of work is brutal, and the implicit threat of closing looms over every assembly plant across the globe.

Why? Jeffrey Rothstein's insightful *When Good Jobs Go Bad* takes on this question, connecting the degradation of auto work to broader processes of globalization. To come up with answers, he spent years doing ethnography at three General Motors plants that during the years of his study cranked out around a million SUVs a year to supply the North American market. These three factories, in addition to competing head-to-head, represent three distinct cohorts of GM production facilities: the Janesville, Wisconsin, plant (which closed in 2008) dated to 1919, the dawn of U.S. auto mass production centered in the Midwest; the Arlington, Texas, plant opened in 1954, the heyday of the sector but also a time of expansion to lower-cost sites across the United States; the Silao, Guanajuato (Mexico), facility opened in 1994, timed to take advantage of NAFTA as globalization went into full swing.

Full Text:

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Refbacs

There are currently no refbacs.

Book Review. *When Good Jobs Go Bad: Globalization, De-unionization, and Declining Job Quality in the North American Auto Industry*. By Jeffrey S. Rothstein. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2016. Pp. xi+184. Jennifer Bair, "When Good Jobs Go Bad: Globalization, De-unionization, and Declining Job Quality in the North American Auto Industry by Jeffrey S. Rothstein," *American Journal of Sociology* 124, no. 3 (November 2018): 980-982. <https://doi.org/10.1086/702218>.

MOST READ. Jeffrey S Rothstein. In *When Good Jobs Go Bad*, Jeffrey Rothstein looks at the impact of globalization on workers in the North American auto industry, revealing that globalization has had a deleterious effect on even the most valued of blue-collar jobs. Rothstein shows how the consolidation of the Mexican and U.S.-Canadian auto industries, the expanding number of foreign automakers in North America, and the spread of lean

production have all undermined organized labor and harmed workers. Start by marking "When Good Jobs Go Bad: Globalization, De-unionization, and Declining Job Quality in the North American Auto Industry" as Want to Read: Want to Read saving... Want to Read. Rothstein's engaging comparative analysis, which incorporates the viewpoints of workers, union officials, and management, sheds new light on labor's loss of bargaining power in recent decades, and highlights the negative impact of globalization on all jobs, both good and bad, from the sweatshop to the assembly line. ...more. by Jeffrey S. Rothstein (Author). 4.2 out of 5 stars 3 ratings. Editorial Reviews. Review. "When Good Jobs Go Bad is an excellent study: strategically designed, executed well, historically grounded, theoretically fruitful, gracefully written, and blessedly free from jargon Best of all, it furnishes students with a vibrant and contemporary examples of C. Wright Mills' 'sociological imagination' revealing the complex and unhappy intersections of biography and history in the lives of automobile workers." , *Contemporary Sociology*. "Rothstein's book provides us with much of what we need to understand why wages and the quality of work life in the US and Mexican auto industries has deteriorated since the late 1970s." , *Journal of World-Systems Research*.