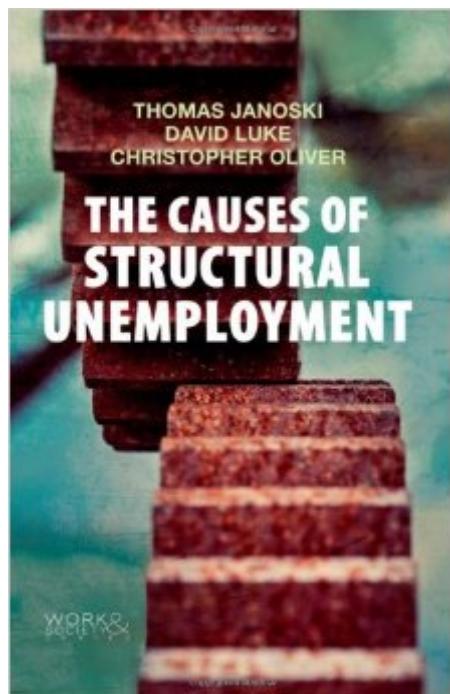


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The Causes Of Structural Unemployment: Four Factors That Keep People From The Jobs They Deserve (Work & Society)



Synopsis

There is a specter haunting advanced industrial countries: structural unemployment. Recent years have seen growing concern over declining jobs, and though corporate profits have picked up after the Great Recession of 2008, jobs have not. It is possible that “jobless recoveries” could become a permanent feature of Western economies. This illuminating book focuses on the employment futures of advanced industrial countries, providing readers with the sociological imagination to appreciate the bigger picture of where workers fit in the new international division of labor. The authors piece together a puzzle that reveals deep structural forces underlying unemployment: skills mismatches caused by a shift from manufacturing to service jobs; increased offshoring in search of lower wages; the rise of advanced communication and automated technologies; and the growing financialization of the global economy that aggravates all of these factors. Weaving together varied literatures and data, the authors also consider what actions and policy initiatives societies might take to alleviate these threats. Addressing a problem that should be front and center for political economists and policymakers, this book will be illuminating reading for students of the sociology of work, labor studies, inequality, and economic sociology.

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Customer Reviews

If you like an academic approach to the problem of unemployment, you've found the right one. If, however, you prefer a clear, concise, easy-to-read approach, you've still found the right book. This is the right book whoever you are if you're seeking more understanding of structural unemployment.

Very highly recommended.

This book is written in a more academic style but that should not deter the reader from pursuing this worthy and comprehensive examination of structural unemployment. The author takes great pains to provide ample definitions and examples throughout. As a business writer and instructor, I tend to read a book while making notes or presenting questions that would likely come from my students in the margins...in each and every case, the questions were shortly addressed in the text making this an accessible book for novice or advanced reader alike. The book is well researched, provides excellent resources throughout and uses solid judgement before coming to a conclusion. It is this last statement which should strike fear in the hearts of some...while spurring a flair of excitement in others because this time things really are different. Structural unemployment is dramatically different than a simple economic downturn with profound implications for college students and retirees alike. Those with marginal skills who are unable to retrain or keep up with the pace of change are likely to face serious consequences. Competition among the college educated is about to heat-up to unprecedented levels thanks to the ability to outsource and offshore formerly secure white collar positions. Even direct services will be further pressed upon thanks to the evolution of "just in time inventory" practices toward the newly emerging "just in time" staffing practices such as those utilized by Walmart. A "must read" for anyone searching for a deeper understanding of unemployment and the future of work.

The authors provide very good examples of how the problems discussed in this book are impacting a wide variety of people that include both the highly and less highly educated. Assembly-line workers who are hanging on to their manufacturing jobs by the thinnest threads will find it difficult to get another similarly-paying job if they're replaced by robots or lower-paid workers elsewhere. Professionals such as radiologists and lawyers are vulnerable also because they can now be replaced by lower-paid offshore professionals working with tools and technologies that make the affected research and x-ray interpretation jobs (of a lawyer and a radiologist, respectively) easier to perform offsite. In all cases, if the displaced workers' current skills and/or specialties are irrelevant to the jobs that may be open to them, they may remain unemployed, or may have to accept lower-paying jobs. The authors' analyses of what's keeping good people from getting and / or holding on to good-paying jobs are comprehensive and incisive, but their proposed remedies -- which include making improvements to our educational system and jobs training, creation, and placement programs, and making businesses live up to societal obligations by paying adequate

taxes instead of skirting them through creative accounting practices -- have been floated before, and yet, they have not gained much traction, so perhaps a good follow-up to this book might be one that analyzes why there's been little progress on these fronts (i.e., what are the challenges and what could help overcome those challenges).

As a social worker I often am sitting alongside of someone who has earnestly been looking for work for years. People who have "retrained" only to be locked out. People who have given up and stopped looking. As I sit with these people I am often transported to the mid 80 when many of my friends parents lost jobs. This book helped me gain some macro prospective on what I see day to day in the micro. It is not just technology, or international trade, or outsourcing, or if multinationals can be trusted. It is a complex web of factors that need to be faced. What factors that diminish one sector may invigorate another. Sometimes with this change income rise sometimes they fall. An amazing book to gain a broader understanding of some of the forces that sway unemployment and the economy.

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