

Race and Culture in American Factory: A Case Study

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Abstract

This case study focuses on the 2019 documentary *American Factory* and examines the issues of race and culture through the ethical lens of social justice. The documentary directed by Julia Reichert and Steven Bognar introduces viewers to the transition of a large factory in Dayton, Ohio, from General Motors Company to Fuyao Glass America, a Chinese company.

Summary

The film attempts to capture an all-encompassing view of this transition as it depicts the effects it has on everyone from the CEO of the company to both American and Chinese workers on the factory floor. Lifestyles and workplace cultures clash as the productivity levels of those in the United States does not nearly reach that of China.

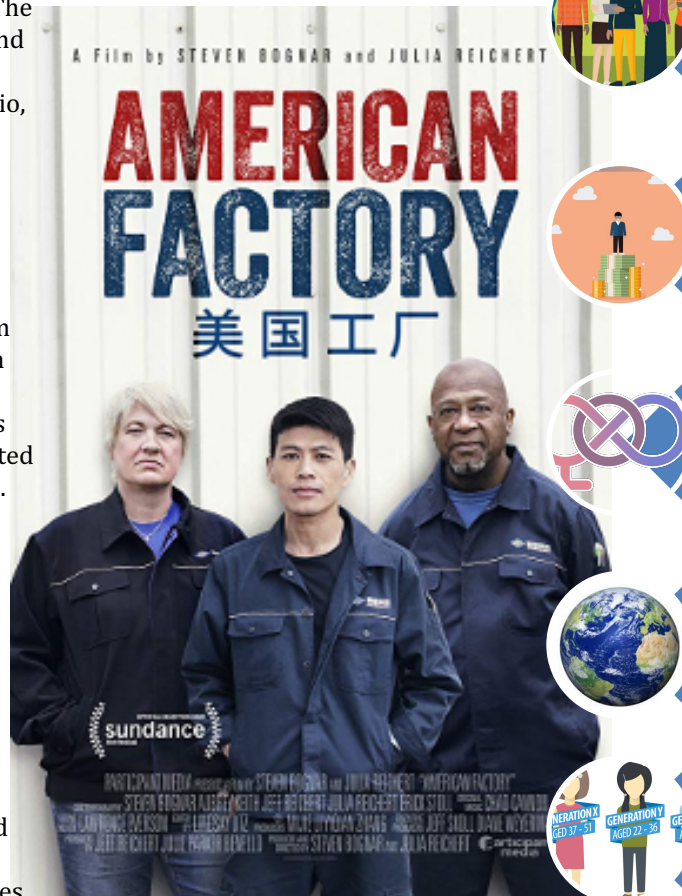
American Transition

- Lower wages, no ability to unionize, unstable employment
- Most who held management positions were quickly replaced.
- Adapting to foreign leadership.

Chinese Transition

- Learn and adapt to a new culture and language.
- Most if not all away from their families.

Ethical Issue: Social Justice



Race and Ethnicity

- Two cultures emerge; American and Chinese. Within the American culture are many subcultures that represent different races; white, black, Hispanic, Asian. Did these subcultures face different challenges and obstacles?

Class

- There is not much context for class. Many Chinese workers lived together, without their families. What does the life of a Chinese worker in a managerial role look like?

Gender

- How do gender roles in China translate in the American context? Were the jobs of American women working in the factory affected by the change in management?

Geography

- Would the narrative be different if the factory were in a different part of the country or closer to a major city?

Generation

- Americans were typically in their 40s-60s. Chinese workers were typically younger in their mid-20s or mid-30s. What does this mean?

