

# The high cost of low prices

[Business](#), [Employment](#)



The activist Robert Greenwald produced a documentary named Wal-Mart: High Cost of Low Prices to enlighten Americans of the effects this major company has on society. In this documentary, Greenwald interviews former employees from different ranks. Greenwald also uses crime rate statistics to demonstrate the lack of surveillance in the parking lot of the store. The producer also interviews the Chinese factory workers who are exploited in China. He also points out facts of the lack of healthcare and this company's effects on society.

The main purpose of this documentary was to show Americans why they get low prices at Wal-Mart. These low prices are available to people after many others have suffered in return, starting with Chinese workers and ending with the US employees. This documentary shows how employees are treated at Wal-Mart. Many of the Wal-Mart employees were not allowed to work overtime and their managers would change their payroll. Wal-Mart employees were also encouraged to work off the clock or they would face termination.

Most of their employees don't have health care benefits and are encouraged to go on welfare. Wal-Mart also encourages its employees to "use taxpayer's dollars" by going on food stamps, WIC, and Medicare. Nearly 1 out of every 2 children of Wal-Mart workers are either uninsured or on public health care. Many of Wal-Mart's commercials have a family orientated foundation, but their actions are contradicted with the facts. The documentary also shows footage of illegal immigrants cleaning the store for half of the minimum wage.

These illegal workers were locked inside the store until the next morning. Wal-Mart also discriminates against women by neglecting their promotions because of their sex. Like women, other minorities have also suffered the same discrimination. The documentary also demonstrates how as Wal-Mart moves into towns and cities, small businesses move out. The documentary shows how many families lost their family business because of Wal-Mart's. Like the family shown in the video, many families across towns have experienced the same misfortune.

Because of Wal-Mart's introduction to towns, many downtowns have become ghost towns. This happens when small businesses go out of business. The film by Greenwald also showed how Wal-Mart rejected the formation Unions. Employees who were part of any unions would face harder working conditions or termination. Employees abroad received the worst treatment of all. For example, Chinese factory workers received \$3 a week and had to live in dorms provided by factories. These dorms had very little space, they were filthy, and they were charged for the utilities.

Even if factory workers did not live there, they still had to pay rent which was discounted from their paychecks. Like Chinese workers, Bangladesh civilians and Honduras's civilians who worked at a factory suffered low wages and worked twelve to sixteen hours a day. The documentary concludes with many protest around the US that has prevented Wal-Mart to enter city limits. These Protest have proved to be effective since Wal-Mart has been driven away from many towns all over the US. ? The High Cost of Low Prices Reflection Wal-Mart's monopoly has a grave impact on society which has negative long term affects.

This company's discrimination against minorities, its low wages, and low morals brings down the average American's standard of living. The company affects everyone who has a store in its town or city. This company puts into play the intersection theory when an African American woman was denied a promotion because she was a black woman. This provides women with glass ceiling preventing them from achieving a promotion and thus raising their standard of living. The company promotes gender inequality and this will continue through out the country unless it is stopped at an early state.

Wal-Mart pays low wages which in turn causes the government to pick up the tab. Wal-Mart fails to provide health care to over 775, 000 workers and their families which causes them to ask for assistant through Medicare, WIC, and Food stamps. This company costs taxpayers 1. 4 billion a year, and is projected to cost \$9. 1 billion over the next five years. This means taxes will raise and our wages will continue to be the same. Women will continues to earn 23% less than men and they will as a result have to pay more taxes. When Wal-Mart moves into a community, every worker's wage declines by 5 %.

As a major corporation, Wal-Mart sets standards for other companies or corporations. This means that if Wal-Mart sets low wage standard then other companies will do the same. Every worker's wage would decline while the standard of living would increase. Wal-Mart seeks to reduce the cost of productivity by outsourcing factories to third world countries. As the number of companies that are outsourced increase, the unemployment rate in the US increases. I believe that this company should be investigated and laws should be enforced to prevent the increase of unemployment rate.

I also think people should abstain from shopping at Wal-Mart because we are really shopping for unemployment. Laws should be enforced to decrease discrimination in the company. The monopolization of Wal-Mart affects everyone and me most of all. I am a Hispanic woman who will be discriminated against if I were to ever apply for a position at Wal Mart. As unemployment increases the probability I have to gain a high paying job decrease. If Wal-Mart continues to expand its horizons the idea of having my own business someday would be destroyed.

Wal-Mart destroyed towns because it drove small businesses away. ? Wal-Mart continues to pay poverty-level wages, forcing many of its workers to rely on public assistance programs. Wal-Mart fails to provide health care to over 775, 000 workers and their families. In fact, nearly 1 out of every 2 children of Wal-Mart workers are either uninsured or on public health care. Wal-Mart costs taxpayers as much as \$1. 4 billion a year, and is projected to cost \$9. 1 billion over the next five years, because so many Wal-Mart workers and their families are forced onto public health care.

Studies in Iowa have shown that some small towns lose up to 47% of their retail trade after 10 years of a Wal-Mart store moving in nearby. Another recent study showed that when Wal-Mart moves into a community, wages decline by 5% for all workers, not just retail. The Panhandle Ethical Shoppers are a group of citizens in Northwest Florida and South Alabama who work to expose the negative effects that Wal-Mart's practices have on our society. They work with other concerned citizens across the U. S. in pressuring Wal-Mart to make much needed reforms. They have monthly meetings and can be contacted