

## TRENDS IN JOB QUALITY: A SPECIAL ISSUE CALL FOR PAPERS

The *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* is calling for papers for a conference and subsequent special issue devoted to understanding trends in job quality. Paul Osterman (MIT) will be the guest editor of the issue.

Scholars interested in participating should submit an abstract to the Journal by August 1, 2011. The abstract should be about two pages long and contain a description of the problem addressed as well as sources of data and methodology to be used. If possible, the nature of the arguments and findings should be previewed.

Authors whose abstracts are accepted will be invited to a conference to be held at Cornell University in Ithaca, NY on November 3 and 4, 2011. Conference expenses will be partially subsidized. Papers presented at this conference should be suitable for immediate submission to external reviewers. Based on the reviewers' recommendations, discussions at the conference, and fit with the issue, a subset of authors will be asked to undertake revisions with the expectation that their papers will be published in the special issue. Papers that reviewers deem of good quality but are not selected for the special issue will be considered for publication in a regular issue of the journal.

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It is well known that the shape of organizations and the configuration of employment have changed substantially in recent years. Trends in organizational design include the flattening of some firms, the proliferation of network forms, and the increased use of outsourcing and sub-contracting. Just as non-standard work arrangements have proliferated, so has the spread of high performance or high commitment systems involving teams and job rotation. Technical change has increased the demand for skills in many occupations whereas in others older deskilling processes may be at play. Wage inequality has increased dramatically at the same time that new forms of compensation have multiplied

The shifts described above represent only a partial list of changes during what has been a dynamic period of shifting employment arrangements. Although there has been a great deal of work documenting many of the shifts, the impact of these developments on the nature of work and employee welfare has not been fully understood, nor has it been examined in a coherent manner.

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This, then, is the goal of the special issue. The perspective taken here is that in some respects these developments have boded ill for at least some employees whereas for others they have meant opportunities for growth. The point, in other words, is not that overall developments add up to “good” or “bad” news; rather, it is about understanding what has actually happened, where it has happened, and why.

Papers responding to this call may represent a range of methodologies including survey research, fieldwork in the form of qualitative or quantitative case studies, and the use of archival data. Both domestic (U.S.) and international research is encouraged. Potential topic areas include the following:

- intensification and new pressures at work
- changing skill trajectories
- voice and control both in formal ways (e.g. union representation) and less formal ways (individual autonomy or self-managed teams)
- changes in job security patterns and the consequences thereof for employees’ economic welfare as well as organizational loyalty and citizenship
- the diffusion of “non-standard” employment arrangements such as contingent work and independent contracting and the consequences for employee well-being, autonomy, and creativity
- new compensation patterns and the consequence for effort and morale
- new patterns of upward mobility or lack thereof
- equity along dimensions such as gender, race, and sexual orientation
- trends in particular sectors such as the low-wage job market
- work/family developments

Other topics in the area of job quality are also welcome. What submissions should have in common is that they be empirically based and that they address the questions of what has happened and the consequences for employee welfare.

To submit your abstract for consideration, please visit:  
<http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/ilrreview/>  
Click on the “submissions” link and follow the on-screen instructions.