

CALL FOR ARTICLES

RSF: THE RUSSELL SAGE FOUNDATION JOURNAL OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

Issue and Conference on "The U.S. Labor Market During and After the Great Recession"

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The Great Recession of 2007-2009 created the greatest economic upheaval in the United States since the Great Depression of the 1930s. Unemployment rates skyrocketed, housing prices and stock portfolios plummeted, and the lives of millions were disrupted. The profound impact of the Great Recession has prompted numerous studies by social scientists of its causes and consequences for individuals, their families, communities and society more generally. This research has tracked employment, wages and other outcomes throughout the recession and the immediate recovery. Yet, five years into the recovery, labor markets are still weak, long-term unemployment remains high, and labor force participation is substantially below pre-recession levels. This persistent weakness of the labor market is attracting a lot of attention by scholars and policymakers. At this point, we have enough years of post-recession data to begin a deeper analysis of the sources and consequences of the protracted recovery on workers, families, and communities.

This RSF journal issue will address a variety of key topics regarding the U.S. labor market that emerged during and after the Great Recession. Its distinctive feature will be the focus on the sources and consequences of protracted weakness in the labor market. The issue will also put special emphasis on multi-disciplinary and multi-method approaches. Hence, we welcome contributions from a broad range of social sciences (and especially cross-disciplinary collaborations) including economics, sociology, anthropology, industrial relations, management, political science, psychology, and public policy. We encourage submissions that utilize quantitative information on both national and local labor markets as well as qualitative and ethnographic studies on how people coped with unemployment, the housing crisis, and other aspects of the economic downturn. We particularly want to understand how current or past public policies (and other institutions) have helped to shape the trends being analyzed. We also welcome the submission of articles that provide lessons for research and policy by comparing the U.S. experience of the Great Recession to that of other countries.

Proposals could focus on the following illustrative kinds of issues, this list being non-exhaustive:

Aggregate Labor Markets During and After the Great Recession:

- ***Accounting for the Weakness of the Recovery:*** What is causing the continued weakness in the labor market? That is, has the relative importance of cyclical vs. structural factors changed over time (see also "Labor Market Dynamics" and "Restructuring of Work" below)?
- ***The Gap Between Employers and Workers:*** What explains the continued divergence between growth in productivity/profits and stagnant wages during the recovery? What is behind the sustained decline of labor's share of income?

Effects of Unemployment:

- ***Consequences of Long-Term Unemployment:*** What are the impacts of long-term unemployment for economic (wages, health insurance and other benefits) and non-economic (e.g., subjective well-being and physical health) outcomes?
- ***Youth Unemployment and the Great Recession:*** What are the long-term impacts of the recession, both for recent college graduates and those entering the labor market without college degrees? Are there scarring effects that are likely to fundamentally alter the careers of these young people? How has the recession led to changes in young peoples' attitudes, values and behaviors about school, work and careers (e.g., school enrollment, living arrangements)?

Consequences for Demographic Groups:

- ***Gender and the Great Recession:*** How has the recession differentially affected men and women? To what extent has there been a "mancession" that might be tied to an increase in female labor force participation?
- ***Race and the Great Recession:*** Are there likely to be long-term effects on labor force participation and other measures of employment of different race and ethnic groups that go beyond the disproportionate cyclical effects?
- ***Immigration and the Great Recession:*** We know that undocumented migration to the United States slowed significantly during the recession. What is the impact of this on industries, wages, etc.?
- ***Older Workers and the Great Recession:*** What have been the impacts of the recession for retirement security and the retirement decisions of older workers?
- ***Families and the Great Recession:*** How have labor market weaknesses and job disruptions affected family structures and/or household formation such as timing of marriage, divorce, cohabitation, and childbearing?
- ***Effect of Public Policies:*** What public policies during and after the great recession affected outcomes of workers and family? Which groups were most affected and which programs were most effective, and why?

Labor Market Dynamics:

- **Education and the Great Recession:** Was there (and is there still) a skills mismatch between job openings and the skills of job seekers? What are the current patterns in the returns to college education? What are the roles of community colleges and vocational training in workforce preparation in the wake of the recession?
- **Changes in Hiring Patterns:** Has the recession led to changes in demographic displacements? For example, have older workers displaced younger workers in low-wage jobs, or have college-educated workers displaced less-skilled workers in low-wage jobs? Do we expect these possible displacements to have long-term cohort effects? Have employer hiring practices and preferences changed in response to slack labor markets?
- **Worker Mobility:** Has the recession led to changes in regional or inter-firm mobility?
- **Education and the Great Recession:** Was there (and is there still) a skills mismatch between job openings and the skills of job seekers? What are the current patterns in the returns to college education? What are the roles of community colleges and vocational training in workforce preparation in the wake of the recession?
- **Changes in Hiring Patterns:** Has the recession led to changes in demographic displacements? For example, have older workers displaced younger workers in low-wage jobs, or have college-educated workers displaced less-skilled workers in low-wage jobs? Do we expect these possible displacements to have long-term cohort effects? Have employer hiring practices and preferences changed in response to slack labor markets?
- **Worker Mobility:** Has the recession led to changes in regional or inter-firm mobility?

Work Restructuring

- **Industry restructuring:** Have there been structural changes in the mix of industries and the organization of work that we expect to become permanent? Have industries used the recession to restructure work and production?
- **Technology and skills:** What is the impact of the recession on the polarization of jobs? Are we seeing the continued automation of mid-skill jobs? What is the role of technology on changes in the structure of jobs?
- **Bad Jobs and the Working Poor:** Has the recession continued the growth of "bad" jobs, i.e., jobs that pay low wages, provide few if any benefits, are part of the informal economy, are susceptible to wage theft, and/or provide workers with little control over their schedules? Has the growth of such "bad" jobs disproportionately affected gender, race/ethnic and immigrant groups?
- **Impacts on Work Hours:** Has the recession led to a rise in involuntary reduced-hour schedules and part-time work? Have employees' average work hours risen during the recovery (relative to pre-crisis levels), possibly because workers in salaried jobs feel pressure to "over perform" to retain their jobs?
- **Impacts on unions:** What have been the consequences of the recession for unions in the public and private sectors?

Anticipated Timeline

Prospective contributors should submit a CV and an abstract (up to two pages in length, single or double spaced) of their study along with up to two pages of supporting material (e.g., tables, figures, pictures, etc.) no later than 5 PM EST on Monday, February 23 to:

<https://rsfjournal.onlineapplicationportal.com>

All submissions must be original work that has not been previously published in part or in full. Only abstracts submitted to <https://rsfjournal.onlineapplicationportal.com> will be considered. Each paper will receive a \$1,000 honorarium when the issue is published. The journal issue is being edited by Arne L. Kalleberg (Kenan Distinguished Professor of Sociology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) and Till M. von Wachter (Associate Professor of Economics at UCLA) will edit the journal issue. All questions regarding this issue should be directed to Suzanne Nichols, Director of Publications, at journals@rsage.org and not to the email addresses of the editors of the special issue.

A conference will take place at RSF in New York City on **June 22, 2015**. The selected contributors will gather for a one-day workshop to present draft papers (due in a month prior to the conference) and receive feedback from the other contributors and editors. Travel costs, food, and lodging will be covered by the foundation. Papers will be circulated before the conference. After the conference, the authors will submit their final drafts on or before September 4, 2015. The papers will then be sent out to two additional scholars for peer review. Having received feedback from reviewers and the RSF board, authors will revise their papers before February 22, 2016. The full and final issue will be published in the fall of 2016. Papers will be published open access on the RSF website as well as in several digital repositories, including JSTOR.