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Dear friends and colleagues,

This new year, The Shift Project is reflecting on the work we have done in 2023 to deepen our understanding of working conditions in the service sector and inform labor policy at the state and federal levels. Over the last 12 months, we have collected 2 waves of survey data capturing the experience of over 30,000 workers, as well as conducted over 100 in-depth qualitative interviews with workers. We have used these data to advance our work on *paid leave, work scheduling, wages and job mobility, and workplace conditions*. Our **Year in Review** Newsletter highlights our work in these domains from 2023.

In 2024 we are looking forward to continuing work in areas including *surveillance and technology in the workplace, labor violations and enforcement, and employer policies and unemployment*.

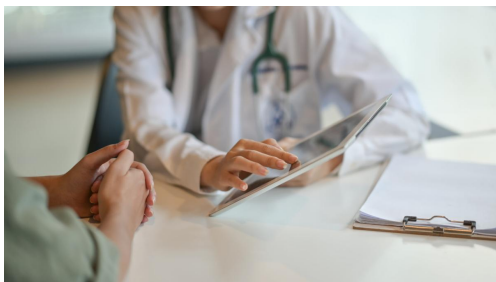
## Paid Leave

Many workers in the U.S. lack access to both paid sick leave and paid family & medical leave. This year the Shift Project focused on understanding the impact of these paid leave programs on service sector workers across the U.S.

**ARTICLE:** [Racial/Ethnic and Gender Inequities in the Sufficiency of Paid Leave during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Evidence from the Service Sector](#)

Access to paid family and medical leave (PFML) conveys health and economic benefits for workers and their families. However, without a national PFML policy, access to paid leave remains limited and unequal. Previous work documenting inequitable access by socioeconomic status and race/ethnicity primarily focuses on parental leave, measures theoretical access to paid leave rather than actual leave uptake, and lacks an accounting for why workers of color and women may have less access to PFML. This article by Julia Goodman and Daniel Schneider extends this literature by looking at leave-taking for medical needs or caregiving among a high-risk population during the COVID-19 pandemic.





## RESEARCH BRIEF: [Most Hourly Workers at Large Service Sector Firms Still Lack Paid Sick Leave](#)

New research from Shift finds that paid sick leave access at large service sector firms is still sorely lacking. Authors Elizabeth Kuhlman and Daniel Schneider argue that despite this, it is still possible and important for firms to provide paid sick leave.

## Intergenerational Consequences of Work Schedule Instability

Kristen Harknett gave a talk on paid family and medical leave at [Paid Leave for All](#) in November.



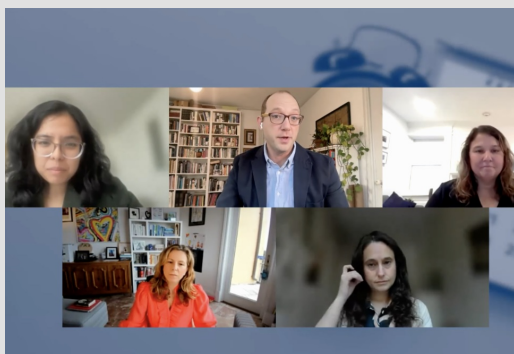
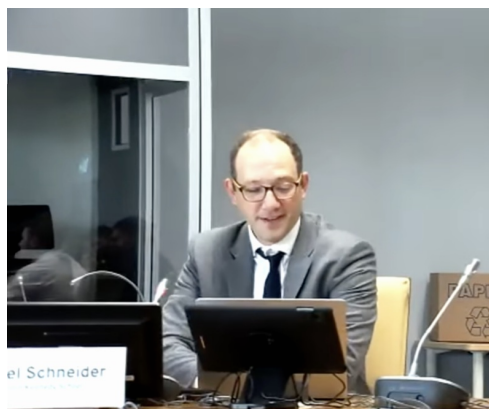
## Work Scheduling

Many hourly workers in the U.S. experience unpredictable and unstable work schedules. This year, the Shift Project worked to understand the impact of unpredictable work schedules on U.S. service workers.



## [Hard Times: Routine Schedule Unpredictability, Worker Wellbeing, and What to do About it](#)

Daniel Schneider gave a talk at the International Labor Organization on schedule instability in the service sector.

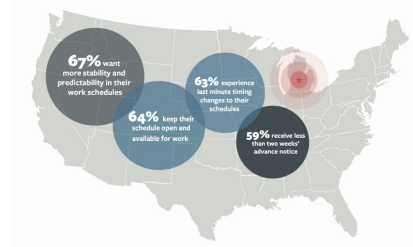


## [Unstable Schedules: Unwrapping the Challenges and Solutions for Service Workers](#)

Daniel Schneider presented on an Aspen Institute panel on schedule instability and fair workweek laws.

## [Working in the Service Sector in Michigan](#)

Our research brief on schedule instability highlighted the challenges that service sector workers face in Michigan. Daniel Schneider [presented](#) the team's results at a Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity webinar.



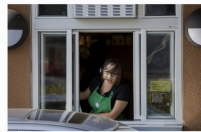
### PARENTAL EXPOSURE TO PRECARIOUS WORK

27% of retail and food service workers are parents

Source: ACS 2011-2021



Working Anything but 9 to 5



### Intergenerational Consequences of Work Schedule Instability

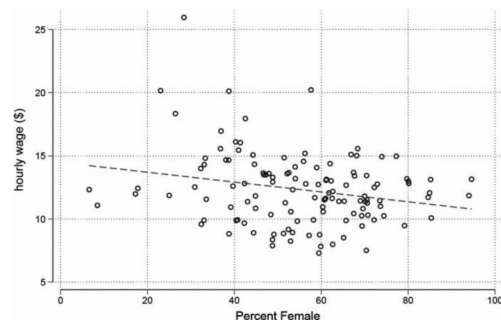
Kristen Harknett was featured panelist in a briefing for staff of the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) of the Administration for Children and Families in the US Department of Health and Human Services, co-organized by Poverty Solutions at the University of Michigan and the Institute for Research on Poverty at the University of Wisconsin.

## Wages and Job Mobility

This year, the Shift Project focused on wages and job mobility, from researching disparities in wages to investigating why workers decide to change jobs.

### [ARTICLE: The Gender Wage Gap, Between-Firm Inequality, and Devaluation: Testing a New Hypothesis in the Service Sector](#)

In this paper, Carmen Brick, Daniel Schneider, and Kristen Harknett show the importance of between-firm gender segregation in explaining gender wage gaps. The authors also examine what explains the relationship between firm gender composition and wages. In contrast to prevailing economic explanations that trace between-firm differences in wages to differences in firm surplus, they find evidence consistent with devaluation and potentially a gender-specific use of “low road” employment strategies.





**RESEARCH BRIEF:** [Dreams Deferred: Downward Mobility and Making Ends Meet in the Service Sector](#)

In this brief, Charlotte O'Heron and Daniel Schneider find that that hourly service sector workers are coping with economic insecurity and these jobs provide too few with an upward trajectory. Most service sector workers reported that their jobs are worse than their parents', regardless of their age or life course stage, highlighting diminished job quality. Service sector work does not appear to promote economic well-being or upward mobility, but the sector could do more to make this more attainable.



**RESEARCH BRIEF:** [Why are Young Workers Leaving Their Jobs?](#)

New research from Shift finds that, during the "Great Resignation," service sector young workers left bad jobs to find better ones, not because they didn't want to work. Authors Tyler Woods, Dylan Nguyen, Daniel Schneider, and Kristen Harknett find strong evidence that young workers who moved jobs were able to upgrade to higher wages and more stable schedules. In short, young service sector workers took advantage of a tight labor market to improve their working conditions

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## Talks



[The Reality of Work at America's Largest Firms: The High Road, the Low Road, but Mostly Just Getting By](#)

Daniel Schneider gave a talk on wages for the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility.



[Precarious Work: Economic Mobility in and From Low-Wage Jobs](#)

Kristen Harknett gave a talk on economic mobility at the National Academy of Sciences Committee on Population.

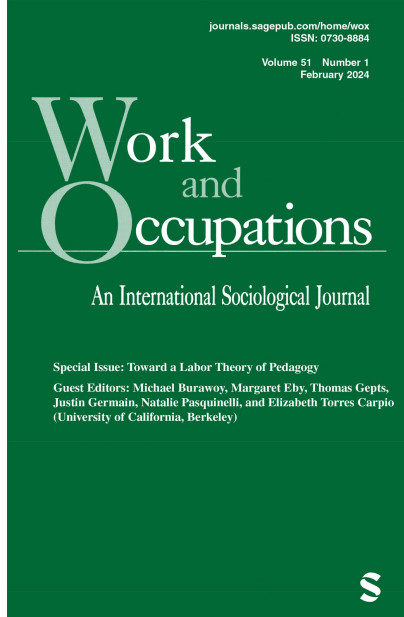
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## Workplace Conditions

**NEW ARTICLE**

[The Politics of Prevention: Polarization in How Workplace COVID-19 Safety Practices Shaped the Well-being of Frontline Service Sector Workers](#)

In this paper, Tyler Woods, Daniel Schneider, and Kristen Harknett examine how support for former President Trump moderates the relationship between COVID-19 safety practices



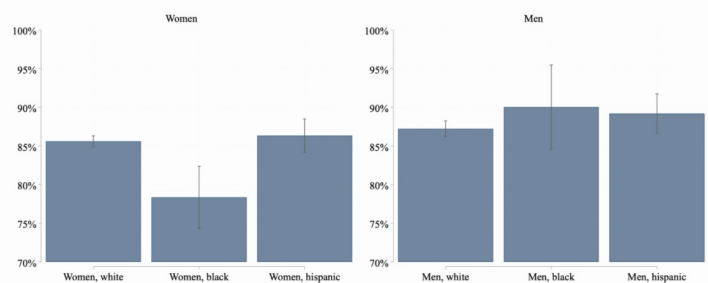
(masking, social distancing, staying home while sick) and workers' feelings of safety and well-being. They find that workplace safety measures are positively associated with workers' self-assessments of feeling safe and with mental health, but only for Biden voters.

## FORTHCOMING

### ARTICLE:

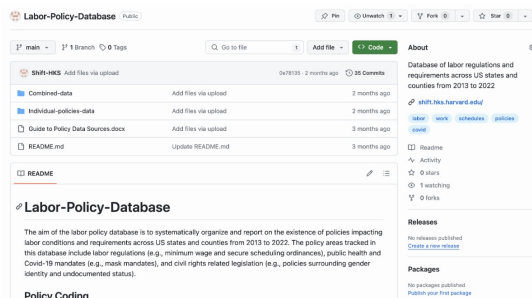
Can't Catch a Break:  
Intersectional  
Inequalities at Work

Figure 2: Access to Work Breaks by Race and Gender



Charlotte O'Herron, Evelyn Bellow, and Kristen Harknett's forthcoming paper in [Sociological Science](#) finds that Black women are less likely than their counterparts to get a break during their work shift. Although union membership and work breaks laws increase access to breaks for workers overall, they do not reduce the inequality Black women face in access to work breaks within the service sector.

## New Data Release

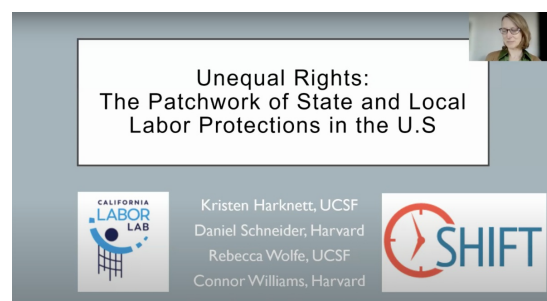


The Shift Project published a database of policies impacting labor conditions and requirements across US states and counties from 2013 to 2022.

Access the database [here](#).

## Unequal Rights: The Patchwork of State and Local Labor Protections in the U.S

Kristen Harknett gave a talk at the California Labor Lab about labor policies in the United States.





## Team Retreat

The extended Shift Project team gathered for a retreat in Massachusetts this October. We enjoyed in-person research discussions and lots of team bonding.



## The Shift Project is hiring!

Daniel Schneider and David Weil are hiring a full-time post-doc to work on new strategic enforcement research. Folks interested in computational methods, labor policy, industrial relations, or labor economics should please apply. [Applications](#) are due 1/8/24; fall 2024 start.

Kristen Harknett and Daniel Schneider are hiring pre-doctoral fellows to work at the Shift Project. Folks interested in labor policy, work scheduling, paid sick leave, firms, or survey methods should please apply. [Apply](#) here; summer 2024 start.

## Upcoming Events

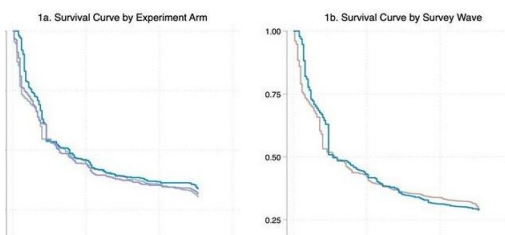
### February Monthly Meeting



On February 20th from 3 to 4 PM ET, Dylan Nguyen, a pre-doctoral fellow at the Shift Project, and Rebecca Wolfe, a sociology PhD candidate at UCSF, will be presenting their paper, "Frontline Service Workers as Servicescape Managers in Public-Private Establishments".

### Shift presenting at PAA and MPSA

Shift Project colleagues will be presenting at the [Population Association of America](#) Annual Meeting on April 17-20, 2024 in Columbus, Ohio, and the [Midwest Political Science Association](#) Conference on April 4-7, 2024 in Chicago, Illinois.



**PAA:** Don't Save the Demographics for Last: No Attrition Penalty for Placing Demographic Items Early in Web-Based Surveys



**PAA:** Older Workers in the Service Sector: Exposure to and Implications of Automation and Surveillance



**PAA:** Work Schedule Instability and the Production of Parental Stress and Parenting Time

**MPSA:** Political Segregation at Work

## Shift in the News



[Dollar Stores: Last Week Tonight with John Oliver](#)



[Front-line employees don't envy remote workers, Gallup data shows](#)



[Childcare is a Challenge for the Many Parents with Unpredictable Work Hours](#)



[The Catch-22 for Working Parents](#)



[Sick Workers Tied to 40% of Food Poisoning Outbreaks, C.D.C. Says](#)



[America Needs to Improve How it Treats its Older Workers](#)

## Fair Labor Standards Act Violations and Strategic Enforcement:

We are leveraging existing Shift Project data along with matched establishment data to develop predictive models of labor standards violation to advance research on strategic enforcement. This project is funded by new grants from the [James Irvine Foundation](#) and [WorkRise](#).

## COVID-19, employer policies, unemployment, and the safety net:

We are integrating existing Shift Project data with information on company and public policies and risk environments during the pandemic to understand the relationship between job displacement and health. This project is funded by a new R56 grant from the [National Institute on Aging](#).

## IKEA:

We are continuing our collaboration with IKEA studying scheduling practices. This project is funded by grants from [WorkRise](#).

## Surveillance, technology, and the life course:

We are using Shift Project data to estimate the effects of exposure to surveillance and monitoring, schedule unpredictability and constraint, and automation on adult health and wellbeing and healthy aging. This project is funded by an R01 grant from the [National Institute on Aging](#) and the Social Security Administration through the [University of Wisconsin's CFS RDRC](#).

### **The Shift Project**

The Malcom Wiener Center for Social Policy  
Harvard Kennedy School  
<https://shift.hks.harvard.edu/>

The Shift Project is grateful for the generous support of our sponsors.

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Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

 **WorkRise**

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