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Dear friends and colleagues,

As we enter 2025, we are excited to share some of our work from the final months of 2024. The Shift Project has recently advanced our work on technology & AI in the workplace, provided early evidence on California's historic minimum wage increase for fast food workers, presented new research on the effects of unstable work and Fair Work Week laws, and published research related to unemployment insurance, wage inequality, and survey methods.

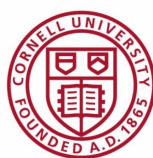
Looking forward to connecting, collaborating, and staying in touch in the new year!

The Shift Team

TECHNOLOGY AT WORK

NEW PAPER: “Changing Technology in the Service Sector: Implications for the Aging Workforce.” Leah Abrams, Daniel Schneider, and Kristen Harknett (Forthcoming). *Journal of Aging & Social Policy*.

Shift data on service sector workers over the age of 50 reveal that some emerging workplace technologies are associated with job satisfaction and planned job exits. Specifically, surveillance technology, especially when punitive, is correlated with lower job satisfaction, whereas rewards for speed are correlated with higher job satisfaction.



ILR

Shift Project Co-Director Danny Schneider presented new work with Nanyun Eom, “A.I. and Service Sector Work: Task Displacement and Labor Control,” at the [Cornell ILR Conference on Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Work](#). Schneider

and Eom examine hourly workers' subjective experiences of exposure to AI technology in the service sector. Workers who are exposed to AI report somewhat higher levels of job insecurity, consistent with labor displacement perspectives on AI. Workers also report much more surveillance and reduced autonomy in workplaces with AI, consistent with AI being used to control the labor process.



In August, the United Food and Commercial Workers Western States Council held a press conference in support of a proposed California law that would implement new safeguards for workers in stores with self-checkout machines. It included a presentation of key findings from [a recent Shift Project brief](#), which found that stores with self-checkout machines are more prone to understaffing and that their workers are more likely to be subject to disrespect from customers. Read more about the press conference [here](#).

CALIFORNIA'S NEW \$20 FAST FOOD MINIMUM WAGE

NEW RESEARCH BRIEF: [Early Effects of California's \\$20 Fast Food Minimum Wage: Large Wage Increases with No Effects on Hours, Scheduling, or Benefits](#)

Shift Project data allow for one of the first looks into the impacts of the unprecedented \$4 increase in California's minimum wage for fast food workers, which went into effect in April of last year. We find that fast food workers experienced an average wage increase of at least \$2.50 following the change, and that there is no evidence of negative effects on work hours, schedule stability, or access to employer-sponsored benefits. Still, many of California's fast food workers continue to grapple with insufficient work hours and highly unstable schedules.

**LA
Times**

**SF
Chronicle**



[Column: The latest info on California's \\$20 minimum wage for fast-food workers – higher pay, no job losses and minimal price hikes](#)

[What's the impact of California's minimum wage hikes? Economists say there's consensus](#)

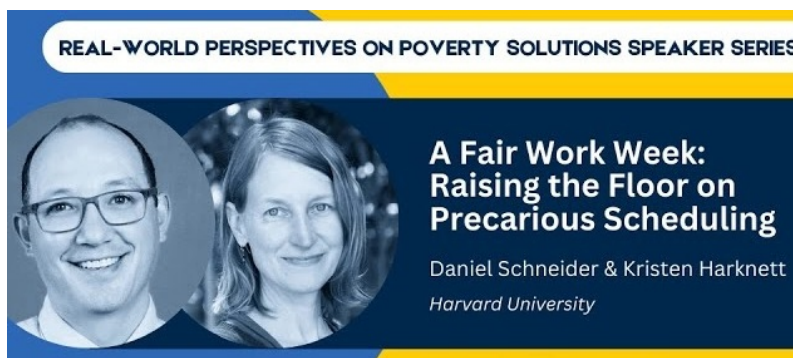
[ICYMI: Another study shows fast food minimum wage increase delivered higher pay without reducing jobs](#)

UNSTABLE SCHEDULING



UNITED NATIONS

Shift Project research was featured in a recent United Nations report, [“The burnout economy: poverty and mental health.”](#) Drawing on Schneider and Harknett’s research on the links between scheduling instability and worker distress, the report details how low-income and precarious labor are global threats to mental well-being. To address this problem, the report recommends that governments prioritize worker welfare and center antipoverty initiatives in their campaigns to improve mental health.



Schneider and Harknett presented new evidence on the effects of Fair Work Week policies as part of the University of Michigan’s Poverty Solutions Speaker Series. Fair Work Week laws—which require employers to compensate employees when their work schedules are changed on short notice, among other provisions—have been implemented in several U.S. cities and one state. Shift Project research has shown that these laws increase the predictability of workers’ schedules and have positive effects on worker well-being. A recording of the presentation can be found [here](#).

OTHER NEW PUBLICATIONS

[“Between-firm sorting and parenthood wage gaps in the US service sector.”](#) Charlotte O’Herron, Daniel Schneider, and Kristen Harknett (2024). *Journal of Marriage and Family*.

[“Engaging Low-Wage Workers in Health and Wellbeing Survey Research: Strategies from Five Occupational Studies.”](#) Erika Sabbath, Meg Lovejoy, Daniel Schneider, Yaminette Diaz-Linhart, Grace DeHorn, and Susan Peters (2024). *American Journal of Public Health*.



Existing research shows that women with children earn lower wages than women without children, while the opposite is true for men. O'Herron et al. use new employer-employee linked data from Shift to show that, in the service sector, this is driven by mothers' segregation into lower-wage firms, while fathers earn a within-firm wage premium.



The difficulty of effectively reaching low-wage workers in survey research has long been an obstacle to understanding this population's experiences. In this paper, Sabbath et al. outline approaches to successfully engage these workers, including the Shift Project's use of social-media recruitment strategies.



[“COVID-19 Employment Shocks and Safety Net Expansion: Health Effects on Displaced Workers.”](#) Daniel Schneider, Kristen Harknett, and Annette Gailliot (2024). *Social Science Research*.

Shift Project data show that unemployment caused by COVID-19 had negative impacts on service sector workers' physical and mental health. However, receipt of expanded unemployment insurance during this time significantly mitigated these negative effects, underscoring the importance of the public safety net in offsetting economic downturns.

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