Introduction # Putting job design in context: Introduction to the special issue

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Summary   This special issue introduces new cross-disciplinary, cross-level, and cross-cultural perspectives on job design. The authors examine job design from the viewpoints of organizational behavior, sociology, economics, corporate strategy, entrepreneurship, and evolutionary psychology. They consider job design in the context of interpersonal interactions, teams, leadership, networks, occupations, organizational structures, national cultures, and institutional fields. They explore how employees take initiative to craft their jobs, negotiate idiosyncratic deals, and navigate entrepreneurial roles, corporate director roles, executive roles, and careers. Copyright © 2010 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

In the past three decades, research on job design has played a critical role in building a bridge between theory and practice. Prominent theories such as the job characteristics model (Hackman & Oldham, 1976, 1980), socio-technical systems theory (Trist, 1981; Pasmore, Francis, Haldeman, & Shani, 1982), action regulation theory (Hacker, 2003), and the interdisciplinary work design framework (Campion & McClelland, 1993) have stimulated much of the research in the field. As a result, researchers have accumulated extensive insight about the diverse task, knowledge, and physical characteristics of jobs; the psychological and behavioral effects of job design; the mediating mechanisms that explain these effects; and the individual and contextual factors that moderate these effects (e.g., Fried & Ferris, 1987; Humphrey, Nahrgang, & Morgeson, 2007; Parker & Wall, 1998). Existing research appears to paint a comprehensive portrait of the nature, antecedents, mechanisms, consequences, and boundary conditions of job design, as well as providing a clear, robust set of guidelines for practitioners to design work to promote employee performance and well-being. Accordingly, there has been a reduction in interest among researchers in exploring issues in job design, stemming from a shared belief that most of the important theoretical and practical questions in job design research have been answered (e.g., Ambrose & Kulik, 1999).

However, a number of scholars have recently pointed out that current theoretical models and empirical studies of job design no longer reflect—and have yet to integrate—the impact of the dramatic changes in work contexts that have occurred over the past few decades (Grant & Parker, 2009;

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Humphrey et al., 2007; Parker, Wall, & Cordery, 2001; Rousseau & Fried, 2001). These changes include a shift from a manufacturing to a service-oriented economy; an increase in the scope and importance of the knowledge-based industry, and the 'knowledge workers' who are exposed to challenging cognitive demands; an increase in emotional and interpersonal tasks in service work; an increase in task interdependence and the use of teams; significant growth in globalization and global operations across different countries, societies and cultures; and the growing use of continued breakthrough technology and flexible work methods ranging from virtual teams to telework as a basis for operations. All of these changes, moreover, are associated with increased unpredictability and uncertainty. At the same time, the nature of the workforce itself is changing considerably, with more women involved, greater ethnic diversity, more educated employees, an aging population, and altered psychological contracts between employers and employees.

These changes give rise to new questions about the nature, effects, and design of jobs. Scholars have begun to consider how these changes may affect job design theory, research, and practice. For example, they have drawn attention to the increased importance of social and relational characteristics of jobs (Grant, 2007; Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006; Molinsky & Margolis, 2005) and they have accentuated the active role that employees play in taking the initiative (Frese & Fay, 2001) to alter the task and relationship boundaries of their own jobs (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). However, relatively few major steps have been taken to break theoretical and empirical ground to orient job design research toward fresh topics and phenomena. The goal of this *JOB* Special Issue is to motivate scholars to refocus on job design as a major area of research in the emerging and increasingly complex world of work. ''Putting job design in context'' in the 21st century requires the incorporation of cross-disciplinary, cross-level, and cross-cultural perspectives.

We are excited to present a total of 22 papers—six articles and 16 invited commentaries—designed to answer this call. Many of the papers offer cross-disciplinary perspectives that draw on sociology (Davis, 2010; Kilduff & Brass, 2010), economics (DeVaro, 2010; Osterman, 2010), corporate strategy (Becker & Huselid, 2010; Westphal, 2010), entrepreneurship (Baron, 2010), and evolutionary psychology (Lawrence, 2010; Nicholson, 2010). They also offer cross-level and cross-cultural perspectives that expand the dominant focus on individual job incumbents to an emphasis on interactions (Grandey & Diamond, 2010), teams (Cordery, Morrison, Wright, & Wall, 2010; Harrison & Humphrey, 2010; Johns, 2010) and leaders (Piccolo, Greenbaum, Den Hartog, & Folger, 2010), networks (Kilduff & Brass, 2010), occupations (Morgeson, Dierdorff, & Hmurovic, 2010), organizational structures (Juillerat, 2010) and cultures (Erez, 2010), and institutional fields (Davis, 2010). In addition, several of the papers highlight the timely issue of the initiative and proactivity that employees take in crafting their jobs (Berg, Wrzesniewski, & Dutton, 2010), negotiating idiosyncratic deals (Hornung, Rousseau, Glaser, Angerer, & Weigl, 2010), and navigating entrepreneurial roles (Baron, 2010), corporate director roles (Westphal, 2010), executive roles (Munyon, Summers, Buckley, Ranft, & Ferris, 2010), and careers (Hall & Las Heras, 2010).

We have organized the papers into three primary sections. In the first section, we present the six articles accepted for the special issue, which cover job crafting among employees at different ranks (Berg et al., 2010), the customization of job content through idiosyncratic deals (Hornung, Rousseau, Glaser, Angerer, & Weigl, 2010), the interplay of formalization and work design (Juillerat, 2010), the role of task uncertainty in moderating the effects of team autonomy on team performance (Cordery et al., 2010), the role of autonomy and task significance in mediating the relationship between ethical leadership and individual performance (Piccolo et al., 2010), and the joint optimization of relational job design and compensation (DeVaro, 2010).

In the second section, we present the first five commentaries, which adopt social and relational perspectives on job design from different disciplinary angles spanning new institutional theory (Davis,

2010), social networks (Kilduff & Brass, 2010), impression management (Westphal, 2010), diversity (Harrison & Humphrey, 2010), and service work (Grandey & Diamond, 2010). In the third section, we present the 10 contextual commentaries, which place job design in different disciplinary, organizational, occupational, and environmental contexts. In the commentaries, scholars reflect on unanswered questions about the role of context in job design (Morgeson et al., 2010), unintended consequences of job design (Johns, 2010), the potential interplay between job design and entrepreneurship (Baron, 2010), the strategic nature of jobs and their impact on organizational performance (Becker and Huselid, 2010), cross-cultural differences in job design and reactions (Erez, 2010), the interface between the labor market and job designs (Osterman, 2010), the history of job design theories (Lawrence, 2010), the implications of evolutionary psychology for job design (Nicholson, 2010), the design of executive jobs (Munyon et al., 2010), and the cross-fertilization of job design and careers (Hall & Las Heras, 2010).

Fittingly, the issue closes with an incisive reflection on the articles and commentaries by Oldham and Hackman (2010). Since these two authors played such a central role in launching this line of inquiry, we are honored to have their insights appear in the special issue. We hope their generative questions and advice will have a lasting impact on the future of job design theory and research.

Articles

We were impressed by the quality of papers submitted to the special issue. Those accepted provide a series of new vantage points on new and important issues in job design. The first two articles focus on the proactivity and initiative that employees exercise in shaping their own job designs. Berg et al. (2010) use qualitative data to explore how employees at different ranks perceive and respond to challenges in job crafting. Their research, which offers one of the first empirical studies of job crafting, identifies two surprising insights. First, whereas conventional wisdom suggests that employees at higher ranks will have greater freedom and autonomy to craft their jobs, Berg and colleagues find that lower-ranked employees actually experience fewer constraints and higher efficacy in job crafting. Second, whereas researchers have gone to great lengths to differentiate adaptive behaviors (reacting to change) from proactive behaviors (initiating change), Berg and colleagues show how adaptive responses to challenges can pave the way for proactive job crafting behaviors, highlighting the interdependence of actions previously thought to be independent. Taken together, their findings reveal how navigating the road to job crafting requires employees to adapt to bumps, rocks, and occasional hairpin turns.

Hornung et al. (2010) focus on task-related idiosyncratic deals (i-deals)—agreements to customize job content negotiated between employees and employers—which appear to be increasingly common as employee expectations rise and employment relationships become more flexible. Their articles provides a theoretical integration of the emerging literature on i-deals with existing views of top-down job design by managers and bottom-up job crafting by employees. They situate task i-deals as an alternative form of work redesign that places agency and authority jointly in the hands of managers and employees. Using quantitative data from the US and Germany, they show that task i-deals are more likely to be negotiated successfully in high-quality leader-member exchange relationships, and that task i-deals predict more favorable perceptions of work characteristics in terms of higher complexity and control, as well as lower stress, which are in turn associated with higher reports of initiative and engagement. Their paper underscores how the joint negotiation of customized jobs and tasks may serve to benefit both employees and employers.

Juillerat (2010) challenges the assumption that formalization is an impediment to enriched work, and thus to individual and organizational performance. In a conceptual paper, she explores how formalization at the organizational level can operate in synergy with enriched work designs at the individual level to

facilitate proficient and adaptive performance by encouraging mindfulness, creativity and innovation, and effective decision-making. Her model takes us "back to the future" in presenting a thought-provoking case for the productive configuration of formalization and job enrichment.

Cordery et al. (2010) develop a cross-level perspective to explain conflicting findings about the effects of team autonomy on team performance. They propose that team autonomy is most likely to produce performance benefits under conditions of task uncertainty, which introduce variability and unpredictability that can be handled more effectively when a team has autonomy. In a longitudinal field study of wastewater treatment teams using an interrupted time-series design, they find that an intervention to provide team autonomy was most effective in improving the performance of teams with high task uncertainty. Their research demonstrates how task and team characteristics interact to influence team performance.

Piccolo et al. (2010) integrate job design research with the literatures on ethics and leadership. They propose that ethical leaders design jobs to provide higher levels of autonomy and task significance, thereby enhancing employees' effort, and thus increasing task performance and organizational citizenship behaviors. Using multisource data from individuals in a wide range of jobs, the authors find that ethical leadership, as rated by employees, predicts higher coworker ratings of employees' autonomy and task significance, which are in turn associated with higher coworker ratings of effort, task performance, and organizational citizenship behavior. Their research provides an original viewpoint on the role of ethical leadership in job design.

In another theoretical piece, DeVaro (2010) takes an economic perspective on the integration of relational job design and compensation. He develops a formal mathematical model of the joint optimization of relational job design (opportunities for impact on and contact with beneficiaries of one's work) and compensation (wages). His model takes valuable steps toward integrating theories of job design and compensation, suggesting that employers and employees may jointly weigh, and consider tradeoffs between, social and financial factors in both recruiting and effort decisions.

Social and relational commentaries

The social and relational commentaries provide generative insights about how job design theory and research can inform—and be enriched by—theoretical perspectives on new institutional theory, social networks, impression management, diversity, and service work. In a provocative commentary, Davis (2010) examines the potential imports and exports between job design and new institutional theory from organizational sociology. He argues persuasively that new institutional theory can shed light on the adoption and diffusion of job design practices within and between different institutional fields, explaining how forces such as coercion, mimicry, and normative standards are likely to shape the design and redesign of jobs. He also discusses how the shift from manufacturing jobs to service jobs has not eliminated the Tayloristic elements of work, with employees selling rather than making products in low-wage retail and fast food jobs, and new technology being used in the guises of oppressive performance monitoring and "electronic sweatshops."

Kilduff and Brass (2010) bring together sociological and psychological perspectives to understand the role of social networks in job design, a long-neglected area. They describe how dense networks can facilitate interpersonal trust but constrain individual job autonomy; how diverse networks can provide enhanced feedback, skill variety and task significance; and how similarities between employees' job attitudes may be shaped by social cohesion with demographically and psychologically similar peers and by social comparisons with structurally equivalent peers occupying similar roles. They also consider how job designs can influence opportunities to play brokerage roles in bridging structural holes, how high self-monitors are more likely to select into and craft such roles, and how task structures may moderate the performance effects of social networks.

Westphal (2010) takes job design into the board room. He advances a socio-political perspective on how corporate directors engage in impression management activities to frame their job characteristics strategically in ways that enhance their power and influence. His commentary presents a fascinating twist on Salancik and Pfeffer's (1978) social information processing perspective. Instead of treating job incumbents as *recipients* of social cues about jobs, Westphal proposes that job incumbents are also *agents* of social cues, which they use proactively to exert influence and wield power. He observes decoupling in how corporate director jobs are commonly framed—but not necessarily experienced by incumbents—in terms of high autonomy, task significance, task identity, and skill variety. He also describes the social processes through which directors sometimes cooperate, and at other times compete, in how they manage impressions about job characteristics, as well as the potential consequences of such activities.

Harrison and Humphrey (2010) examine job design in the context of diverse teams and groups, an increasingly salient a topic that is increasingly salient in practice but largely overlooked in theory and research. They address a fundamental question about whether tasks should be designed to fit pre-existing teams (designing for diversity) or whether teams should be designed based on the primacy of organizations' task requirements (diversity for design). With respect to designing for diversity, they discuss important but unexplored issues around how tasks are distributed to diverse members, such as the possibility that high-status team members may hoard enriched tasks, leaving unpleasant assignments for lower-status members or relying on stereotypes to determine task assignments. They encourage researchers to study different ways to solve these problems, such as job rotation and the intentional assignment of individuals to counter-stereotypical roles. With respect to diversity for design, they tackle team composition questions and propose a set of innovative ideas for matching tasks with varying forms of complexity to teams with different types of diversity.

Grandey and Diamond (2010) answer recent calls to bridge job design and emotional labor perspectives on the effects of interactions with the public, which are a defining feature of the service jobs that have begun to dominate many labor markets. They introduce a compelling contingency view to explain when interactions with customers offer the motivation benefits identified in job design research versus the stress costs identified in emotional labor research. Using four key dimensions of service behavior, they propose that the two perspectives can be reconciled by attending to differences that employees encounter in the content and mode of communications with the public, the temporal duration of interactions and relationships, the amount of autonomy afforded in interactions, and the complexity of interactions. We anticipate that their framework will inspire empirical studies that take meaningful steps toward resolving the job design and emotional labor perspectives on interactions with the public. More generally, we see all five of these commentaries as having excellent potential to stimulate new research streams on the social content and context of job design.

Contextual commentaries

The 10 contextual commentaries examine job design in new disciplinary, organizational, occupational, and environmental contexts. Morgeson et al. (2010) open with an overview of how organizational and occupational contexts can influence the emergence of job characteristics and their effects on outcomes such as job performance, customer service behavior, and stress. They present interesting and testable propositions about how occupational contexts emphasize different values, which are likely to shape which job characteristics are common in particular occupations, as well as how individuals in a given occupation react to their job characteristics. They also delve into how organizational climates can shape the salience and meaning of job characteristics, and thereby moderate the effects of job characteristics

on performance outcomes, along with how technology and organizational structure can both constrain and enable the emergence and effects of different job characteristics.

Johns (2010) builds on this emphasis on context by examining the unintended consequences of job design. He explores how jobs with high potential meaningfulness are often designed with insufficient autonomy to promote learning and creativity, or in ways that threaten the identity of job incumbents. He also addresses the double-edged sword of interdependence and the costs of highly enriched jobs. He offers insightful recommendations to devote greater attention to context-context interactions, not only person-context interactions, utilize configural approaches to study the effects of different bundles or combinations of job characteristics, and simultaneously measure multiple criterion variables in order to gain a more complete understanding of the full range of effects of job designs.

Baron (2010) extends job design to the novel context of entrepreneurship. He proposes that job design theory and research can shed light on the motivations and experiences of entrepreneurs, who are often drawn to new ventures by the search for job characteristics such as autonomy, task identity, task significance, and skill variety, yet experience these characteristics at such high levels that their costs may outweigh their benefits. He also identifies ways in which social characteristics of jobs, including interaction outside the organization, social support, and interpersonal feedback, are important influences on entrepreneurs' effectiveness. Furthermore, he describes how the field of entrepreneurship can enrich job design research by providing contexts for studying extremely high levels of job enrichment and the impact of job designs on firm-level outcomes, as well as by calling attention to the sparsely studied role of affect as a moderator of reactions to job characteristics.

Becker and Huselid seek to unite the literatures on job design and strategic human resource management (SHRM). The SHRM field, like Baron's commentary, points to the value of building and testing theory about the impact of job designs on organizational performance outcomes. Becker and Huselid (2010) suggest that strategic jobs, which are defined in terms of rarity, strategic impact, and incumbent performance variability, are likely to play an especially important role in organizational performance. In addition, they recommend studying how jobs vary not only in task significance (impact on other people), but also in strategic significance (impact on organizational performance), and how job design can contribute to the creation of competitive advantage. They propose that in turn, job design should be incorporated as a dimension of high-performance work systems or a moderator of their effects, and that job design research can inform how new HR roles are structured. The focus of their commentary also raises interesting strategic questions about job design. For example, what role does job design play in organizations using a cost-savings business strategy, compared to organizations using a growth or differentiation strategy? And do organizational and industry productivity rates influence how managers choose to design jobs?

Erez (2010) embraces the importance of national cultures in shaping preferences for and reactions to job design. She begins by drawing connections between three different approaches to designing work and the distinctive values emphasized in the cultures that embraced each approach: Job enrichment in the US, autonomous workgroups and socio-technical systems in Northern Europe, and quality control circles in Japan. She then argues that, in light of globalization, it is critical to gain a deeper understanding of how job designs popular in one culture influence the reactions of employees in other cultures. She discusses evidence that differences in cultural values such as individualism-collectivism and power distance are likely to moderate how employees react to job design. She also raises the captivating possibility that job designs are influences on, not only products of, cultures, as job designs can influence the values emphasized in teams, departments, organizations, and industries. Her commentary paves a promising path toward a new wave of cross-cultural studies on job design.

Osterman (2010) takes a macroeconomic perspective on job design in the context of the labor market. He summarizes major changes in internal labor markets, the administrative rules that govern

firms' employment practices, which include increased skill demands due to technological advances, rising competitive market pressures, decreased prominence of unions and associated weakening of enforcement of regulations for wages, hours, and overtime, increased job insecurity due to restructurings, and flattening hierarchies. He links these trends to the development of new ways of organizing work, such as teams, job rotation, and quality programs, as well as enhanced diversity in employment arrangements and the persistence of a low-wage labor market. Taken together, his observations highlight opportunities for job design researchers to investigate the effects of new technologies and accompanying increases in skill demands, along with increasing variability between organizations in job design practices.

The next two commentaries, by Lawrence (2010) and Nicholson (2010), both take evolutionary psychological viewpoints on job design. This is an important development given that early job design theory and research was based largely implicit views of human nature as involving universal needs for attributes such as autonomy, variety, feedback, and meaning. Lawrence (2010) looks back more than 60 years to the early experiences that shaped his classic research on job design, reinterprets the original Turner and Lawrence (1965) findings through his newer framework on universal human drives to acquire, defend, bond, and learn, and reminds scholars that Tayloristic job designs remain a serious theoretical and practical concern. Nicholson (2010) leverages evolutionary psychology as a framework for understanding the self-regulatory goals and strategies that employees adopt in jobs, the impact of personality and sex differences on reactions to job designs and job crafting activities, the role of status in shaping decisions about jobs, and the impact of job designs on cooperation and competition.

The last two regular commentaries focus on integrating job design with the related literatures on executive work and careers. Munyon et al. (2010) introduce executive work design as a neglected topic. They describe how accountability, autonomy, job demands, information processing, and social interaction are salient features of executive jobs. Creating an intriguing point of synergy with Westphal's commentary, they identify fruitful directions for future research on the impact of boards of directors on the design of executive work. Hall and Las (2010) take a long view of jobs as building blocks of careers, suggesting that the two areas can (re)inform each other. They discuss how career theory can extend job design research by encouraging research on longer-term subjective and objective career outcomes using temporal designs, the role of calling orientations as moderators of reactions to job design, and the impact of job characteristics on work-life outcomes. They further propose that job design theory can advance career research by providing a framework for studying how job characteristics influence career outcomes, such as career growth.

Finally, Oldham and Hackman (2010) provide an important perspective on the past, present, and future of job design. They identify several key questions about the increasing significance of social and relational characteristics, calling attention to the value of developing theoretical models that advance our knowledge of the differential effects of specific social and relational characteristics, their unique associations with outcomes such as helping and learning, their interactions with task characteristics, and their impact as a function of individual differences. They raise novel questions about whether benefits of job crafting are due to actual changes made by incumbents in the nature of work or engagement in the process of crafting, the types of structural and psychological mechanisms that may account for beneficial effects of job crafting, the individual differences that motivate different forms of job crafting, and the likely dysfunctional consequences of job crafting. And they offer recommendations for investigating how organizational contexts and the design of work for teams may influence our knowledge of job design. Their commentary outlines many exciting directions to guide upcoming decades of job design research. It also reminds us that although many of the changes in jobs are new, the challenges are recurring, and the emerging theoretical perspectives have deep roots in classic scholarship.

Reflection and new directions

We are quite enthusiastic about the depth and diversity of new directions for job design research that are suggested by this special issue. At the same time, we are struck by the fact that there are many other critical topics related to job design that merit attention in future research. We close with a focus on some key topics which are important as a result of both changes in the nature of the workforce (generational differences) and changes in the environmental context within which work occurs (the legal and policy environment, globalization, labor relations and unionization, and ethics).

Generational differences

One of the most crucial topics for job design research concerns whether the nature of employees is changing. As the Millennial generation enters the workforce in droves, the popular press has put the cart before the horse in claiming that Millennials hold fundamentally different values from their Generation X, Baby Boomer, and Veteran predecessors. Surprisingly little empirical research has examined generational differences in work motivations and values, which makes it difficult to draw conclusions about how job designs might need to be adapted to fit this new workforce. A central challenge of conducting studies on generational differences is that generational cohorts are confounded with differences in age and experience.

Twenge (2006), writing for a popular audience, provides an excellent summary of her research on generational differences published in leading psychology journals. She uses cross-temporal meta-analyses to compare survey responses of different generations at the same ages and life stages (e.g., during college). Her research suggests that Millennials are characterized by higher levels of self-esteem, narcissism, external loci of control, and assertiveness—and less concern for social approval—than individuals from earlier generations (e.g., Twenge, 2009a, 2009b). This evidence raises interesting questions about job design. For instance, with respect to interpersonal feedback, are Millennials more likely to expect praise and reject criticism? And do higher assertiveness and lower concern for social approval suggest that Millennials will be especially comfortable taking initiative to craft their jobs and negotiating i-deals, but at the same time, less motivated to do so in ways that facilitate organizational goals? Or does an external locus of control discourage initiative and proactivity in job crafting and negotiating i-deals? We hope that job design researchers will begin to systematically study these types of questions.

Moreover, the decreasing birth rates in the US and Europe, coupled with increasing longevity, have led to a trend for a higher proportion of elderly and retired people to either continue working or return to work (e.g., Kanfer & Ackerman, 2004). This raises some additional interesting questions about job design. For example, are these elderly employees as interested in and motivated by demanding jobs as their younger counterparts, or are they more interested in holding peripheral jobs that allow more time for family, social and leisure activities? Will their motivation depend more heavily on task significance as they seek to leave behind meaningful contributions (e.g., Grant & Wade-Benzoni, 2009)? How will older workers and the Millennials work together? Many of the diversity issues described by Harrison and Humphrey (2010) are even more salient in workplaces that include employees spanning more generations than ever before. We hope to see greater attention to issues of how sustainable work systems can be created and managed (see Docherty, Kira, & Shani, 2009).

Legal issues, policy issues, and globalization

In the legal environment, anti-discrimination laws and regulations have an important influence on human resource practices (e.g., Cihon & Castagnera, 2008). We believe that the legal environment may also play an important role in job design. For example, under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA; 1991), employers are required to make reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals

who are disabled. By law, ''qualified'' is defined in terms of the capability of perform the essential functions of the job. For example, when individuals perform rotating tasks in teams, disabled individuals may not be required to perform tasks that are not defined as essential functions of the entire job. Thus, to accommodate qualified disabled individuals, employers need to define what the essential functions of the job require in terms of skills and responsibilities, which can help to appropriately accommodate disabled individuals without adversely affecting productivity. However, additional research would help us to better understand the processes by which disabled and non-disabled individuals can work together interdependently across the differences in job design that accommodate the disabled.

Broader legal and policy issues also apply to work design. For example, threats of litigation and malpractice create a tendency to enhance the standardization of work in sectors such as healthcare, thereby potentially constraining autonomy. Fear of legal or political consequences can also stifle job crafting, role innovation, and other proactive efforts to redesign one's own work. For example, in public sector environments, deviations from the norm can attract negative media publicity. A further issue is that policies involved in transitioning people back to work after illnesses or injuries frequently take into account physical aspects of the work, but generally neglect consideration of psychosocial issues such as the motivational and relational qualities of the work. For example, research might identify what job characteristics are more important for individuals who have been off work due to high levels of anxiety relative to those who are experiencing high levels of depression. In addition, the broader issue of how to formulate government policy to support the design of enriched jobs is not informed by the existing research base (Vough & Parker, 2009). Systematic comparisons across countries, to try to understand how variation in work design is influenced by the wider policy and institutional context, would have substantial theoretical and practical value.

Toward this end, we know very little about how job design is done in transitional economies—those undergoing rapid development, such as Thailand, and those transitioning from socialist to market economies, such as China or India (e.g., Fay & Frese, 2000). Several billion people live in these economies, and many Western jobs have been transported to them. Are there similar developments in job design as in Western industrialized countries, moving from authoritarian regimes to Tayloristic design to more modern, group-based job designs? Do these economies use new job design ideas because of their lack of resources, as occurred with lean production in Japan (Womack, Jones, & Roos, 1990)? How are modern attitudes of blue and white collar workers developed through different forms of job design (e.g., Fay & Kamps, 2006)? These types of questions raised by globalization have received inadequate attention.

Labor relations and unionization

Furthermore, as Osterman (2010) notes, the effects of the relationship between unions and management in the dynamic global economy may become an increasingly interesting topic to study. Traditionally, unions have advocated standardized work rules and procedures that limit the variability in job characteristics between individuals within particular job categories. The competitive global environment, and the reduced sense of job security, may lead to increased unionization in new employment sectors such as service, where growth in unionization has been already evident. At the same time, the competitive global environment, the decline of unions, and the increased focused on individualization in the Millennial generation may cause unions to change their traditional approaches toward tolerating higher variance in job design, and perhaps supporting personal job crafting and i-deals. It would be interesting to study the conditions under which such changes may occur, and their effects on union growth and on labor-management relationships.

Ethics

Building on the article by Piccolo and colleagues, we hope that researchers will continue to study the role of ethics in job design. Molinsky and Margolis (2005) call attention to the fact that many jobs are designed to include ''necessary evils''—tasks that require employees to harm others in the interest of a perceived greater good, such as managers delivering downsizings, police officers arresting criminals, military officers shooting enemy soldiers, and principals expelling students. On one hand, job characteristics such as task significance, autonomy, and social support may assist employees in coping with what Molinsky and Margolis describe as the ''internal drama'' of guilt, anxiety, cognitive load, and sympathy evoked in causing harm. On the other hand, the very job characteristics that facilitate coping may skew employees' moral sensibilities, reducing their feelings of responsibility for—and moral qualms about—tasks that are fraught with ethical ambiguities.

Work design might also affect moral development (Parker & Wall, 1998), and thereby influence corruption. Parker and Axtell (2001) found that individuals with enriched jobs were more likely to empathize with the perspective of others in their work environment, and to develop a 'big picture' understanding of how the whole department works. Other research similarly suggests that narrow, simplified jobs lead to a 'that's not my job' mentality (Parker et al., 1997), which Ashforth and Anand (2003) suggested will promote corruption. These scholars argued, for example, that narrowly defined roles limit access to information, which acts to reduce perceptions of responsibility and thereby justifies engagement in corrupt acts. Altogether, we see considerable theoretical and practical value in research on how job designs affect moral judgment and ethical decision-making, as well as the longer-term moral development of employees.

Conclusion

In sum, changes in who is working, as well as changes in the wider legal, policy, and ethical context, give rise to many meaningful areas of further research. Indeed, our recommendations represent just a small slice of the interesting and important topics that need further inquiry. Other papers have advocated equally relevant topics that apply to today's context, such as designing work to reduce overload (Elsbach & Hargadon, 2006) and support resource allocation (Parker & Ohly, 2008), how technological changes necessitate extending work design research into the home (Rousseau, 1997), job design in the context of teams (Hackman, 1990, 2002) and the physical work environment (Oldham, Cummings, & Zhou, 1995), the impact of job design on creativity and innovation (Oldham & Cummings, 1996), work design from a cross-cultural perspective (Kirkman & Shapiro, 1997), the application of work design principles to customers increasingly expected to co-produce a service (Cordery, 2006), and how work design facilitates organizing (Parker & Ohly, in press) and integrates with wider systems (Cordery & Parker, 2007). It remains to be seen how newer technological developments, such as the advent of virtual teams and Blackberries, influence work design. Of course, as we have already suggested, the commentaries and papers in this special issue are rich with new ideas and possibilities. We hope that this special issue reinvigorates work design theory and research to take into account the ever-changing world of work.

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