

Editorial

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Dear ZAF readers,

You are certain to have noticed that this edition of the ZAF has a new appearance. With this step we wish to make it clear, visually, that the ZAF is now published by a different publisher. The changeover to the Springer publishing house will benefit both the subscribers to the ZAF and its authors in many ways. Springer is a renowned and experienced scientific publishing house with excellent worldwide channels of distribution, so the move will clearly increase the visibility of the ZAF in the scientific community. Moreover, Springer provides a broad range of additional services which are equally useful to subscribers and authors alike. We would like to give you at least a brief overview of these services here:

- From this time onwards the ZAF will be available as a print journal and as an eJournal. This means that all institutions and individuals with subscriptions to the ZAF will automatically have free *electronic access to all of the articles published in the ZAF*. Via its own product page (<http://www.springer.com/economics/labor/journal/12651>), rapid and simple access to all articles, as well as to any electronic additional material, is guaranteed. If you wish to be informed by email about the contents of a newly published issue, you can register on that product page for a corresponding *newsletter (SpringerAlert)*.

- The *Online-first* option makes completed articles available for electronic download even before the print edition has appeared. This means that accepted articles can be published and read more quickly than before.
- All authors have the opportunity to publish their papers via *Open Choice*: for a certain fee to be paid by the author, an article can be made available to the general public for downloading free of charge.
- It is also possible to download any article for a charge (*pay-per-view service*).
- Manuscripts will also be submitted, managed and reviewed in electronic form in the future. Thanks to an internet-supported *Editorial Manager* it is possible to reduce further the time between submitting an article and its publication.

We ask all authors to submit suitable manuscripts straight to Springer online in future. All the necessary information can be found on the ZAF product page cited above. The organisational side of the review and publication process is conducted by an editorial team in the Springer publishing house. The editorial staff at the IAB will be involved only if necessary and will concentrate in future on supporting the editorial board in matters of publication strategy in the broadest sense.

Changing to Springer was an important step towards strengthening the international orientation and thus also the scientific reputation of the ZAF. At this point the editors would like to invite in particular researchers from outside the German-speaking area, too, to submit thematically relevant articles to the ZAF. As the ZAF now benefits from the outstanding international distribution structures of the Springer publishing house, especially concerning electronic marketing, easy and virtually comprehensive access to all

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articles and, therefore, a very high profile of the journal in the scientific community are guaranteed.

Although we are striving for stronger internationalisation of the ZAF, there is still to be scope in future for articles, both in English and in German, dealing with the labour market situation in Germany. In this area the ZAF successfully filled a gap in the market which we do not want to abandon. We also wish to retain the double-blind peer review procedure which we have used so far and which we think has proved itself. So in future, too, there will be an editor responsible for each article that is to be reviewed who deals with the review procedure and suggests suitable referees. There will also continue to be at least one special issue per year covering selected topics of interest. Finally, we would like to continue to publish not only “classical” research papers but also invited papers and discussions in order to preserve the character of the ZAF as a broad and independent discussion forum for the entire field of labour market research.

The current issue testifies to this claim. The research papers are the centrepiece of this issue, too: *Helmut Apel* and *Michael Fertig* present the results of a feasibility study in their article and develop a methodical concept to operationalise employability. The article by *Axel Börsch-Supan* and *Christina Wilke* outlines various scenarios for medium- and long-term employment trends in Germany. According to the authors, if there are no further labour market reforms a drop in the number of people in employment of up to 11 million to 27.4 million can be expected by the year 2040. *Uta Schönberg*'s article looks into the question of whether the IAB employment sample is a suitable dataset for studying career breaks associated with maternity leave.

The invited paper by *Burt Barnow* provides an overview of experiences in the USA with the use of training vouchers. Barnow's conclusion: although such an instrument increases the participants' freedom of choice, the results obtained are sometimes suboptimal as in many cases the participants do not have sufficient information. This issue of the ZAF is rounded off by various discussion papers. In his comments on the minimum wage debate, *Bernd Fitzenberger*, one of the ZAF editors, criticises the inadequate empirical foundation of the debate in Germany – an exception being the study on the effects of the minimum wage in the German construction sector (cf. issue 2 + 3/2008 of the ZAF, p. 327 ff.), whose validity is, however, restricted to this sector and thus needs to be replicated for other economic sectors. The fact that we also wish the ZAF to provide a forum for discussion papers which harshly criticise articles that have already been published in the ZAF is shown by the article by *Werner Sengenberger*, which attests that the editors of the special issue 2 + 3/2008 (Potential for flexibility in heterogeneous labour markets) have, among other things, an unreflected belief in the “destructive, flexibility-dampening effects of regulation”. This prompted us to give the editors of this special issue – *Bernd Fitzenberger*, *Olaf Hübler* and *Kornelius Kraft* – the opportunity to respond, which you can also find in this issue.

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