

Editorial

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Dear ZAF readers,

Once again the publishers of the ZAF are conferring the Best Paper Award for the best article of the previous year. The prize, which includes prize money of 1,000 euros, goes to Bernhard Boockmann (Institut für Angewandte Wirtschaftsforschung, Tübingen/Germany), Daniel Gutknecht (University of Warwick/United Kingdom) and Susanne Steffes (Zentrum für Europäische Wirtschaftsforschung, Mannheim/Germany). Their article, entitled “The effect of employment protection on the stability of ‘new’ employment contracts (Die Wirkung des Kündigungsschutzes auf die Stabilität ‚junger‘ Beschäftigungsverhältnisse)”, appeared in the topical issue on flexibility potential in heterogeneous labour markets („Flexibilisierungspotenziale bei heterogenen Arbeitsmärkten“, 2–3/2008)¹. In their study, the authors use the lowering of the threshold value in the German Employment Protection Act of 1999 quasi as a natural experiment. The results suggest that employment protection has a positive effect on the employment stability of newly created working relationships. The editorial board sees the study as an original contribution which is of high relevance to labour market

policy, one that is convincing because of its persuasive research design, a very careful preparation and analysis of data, and its clear diction².

Since the changeover to the Springer publishing house in the beginning of 2009, the visibility of ZAF in the scientific community has clearly increased. This is especially due to the large-scale international distribution of the ZAF as an eJournal. A very positive indication is the fact that within the first five months after the changeover to Springer (from March until July 2009) 1,564 articles were downloaded. Nothing has changed, however, with respect to our demand only to publish research papers that fulfill rigorous scientific criteria. This is not mere lip service as the rejection rates show. Among manuscripts submitted in 2007, 44% were rejected, recalled or were not admitted to the referee process. Among the manuscripts submitted in 2008, the rejection rate was 42%³.

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¹The article and an English executive summary can be downloaded at <http://www.iab.de/en/publikationen/zaf.aspx>.

²Articles co-authored by members of the ZAF editorial board were a priori excluded from the appraisal.

³Including manuscripts submitted for special issues