
Improving Job Quality: Changing Employers' Worker Scheduling Practices

Susan Lambert

Professor,

Crown Family School of

Social Work, Practice, and Policy

Why work schedules are an important component of job quality

- **Wages X hours = earnings**
 - The majority of workers in Illinois are paid by the hour
 - **Benefit eligibility conditioned on work hours**
 - Public benefits, e.g., TANF, FMLA, UI
 - Employer benefits, e.g., health insurance, paid sick time
 - **Work hour instability and unpredictability undermine worker and family well-being**
 - Financial hardship
 - Difficulties managing personal and family responsibilities, e.g., childcare, school
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Not a boutique problem:

Wide prevalence of problematic schedules (2016 GSS)

- 82% of hourly workers in US report fluctuations in weekly work hours
 - that differ on average by 13 hours week to week
 - which is 35% of their usual hours
 - 47% say their employer controls the number of hours they work with little or no input from them (64% say employer controls timing)
 - only 17% say they determine their hours on own or within guidelines
 - 40% report a week or less advance notice
 - **17% a day or less notice**
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Scheduling practices are a source of racial and gender disparities

■ Surges and shortfalls

- Direction of fluctuations matter for earnings
- Black, part-time, female workers in hourly jobs more likely than their counterparts to experience *shortfalls* in hours and earnings

■ Combinations of practices

- Triple Whammy: High volatility + no input+ short notice
 - **19% Black**, 16% Hispanic, 15% White
 - **19% ≤HS**, 8% >HS
 - **24% lower-paid**, 12% higher-paid
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Two avenues to improve employer scheduling practices

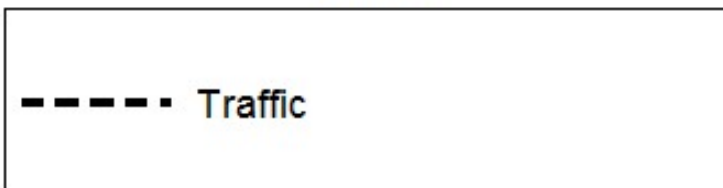
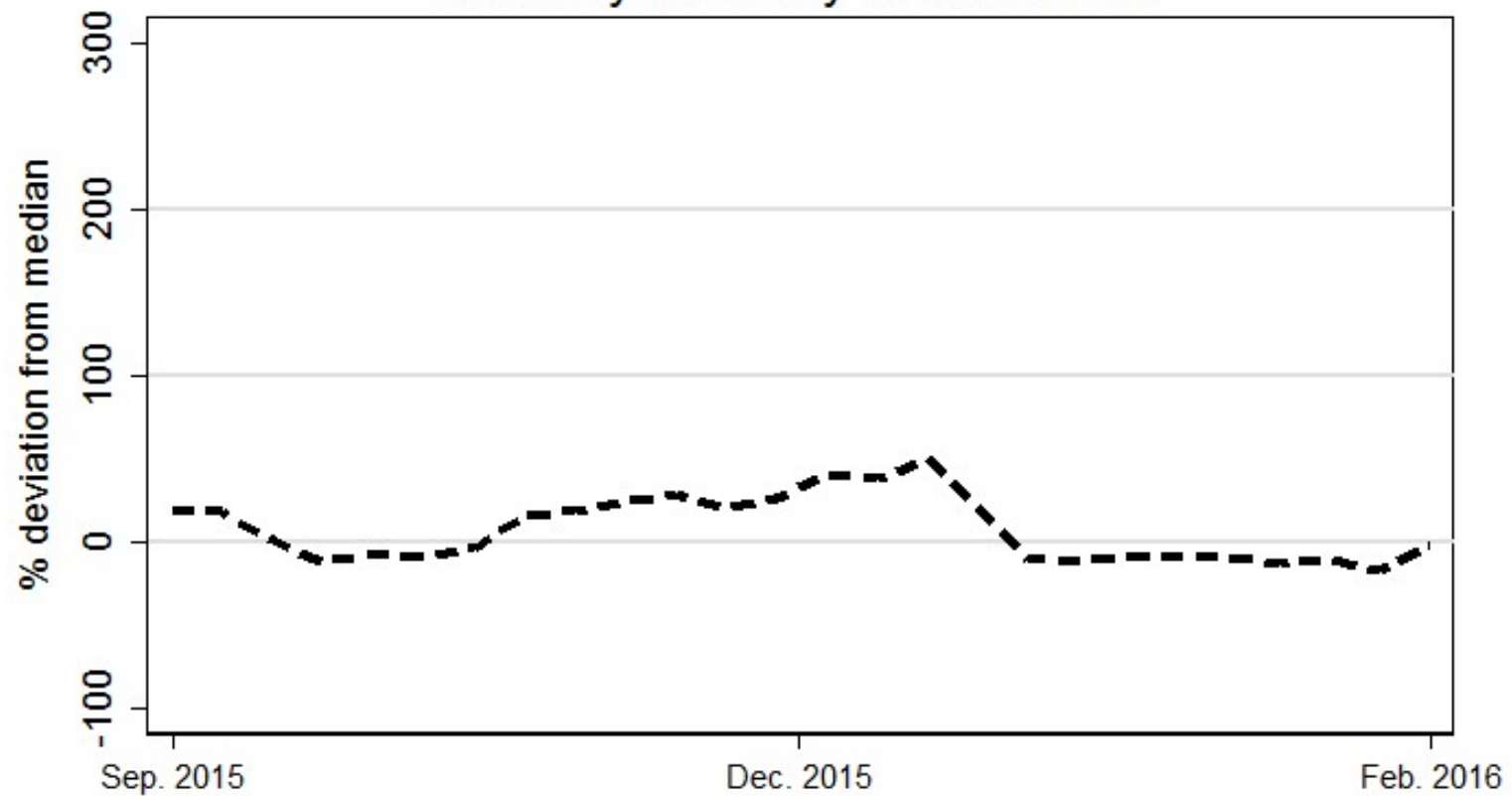
- Voluntary employer action
 - Employment laws

 - Both are needed to set new work hour standards for Illinois workers.
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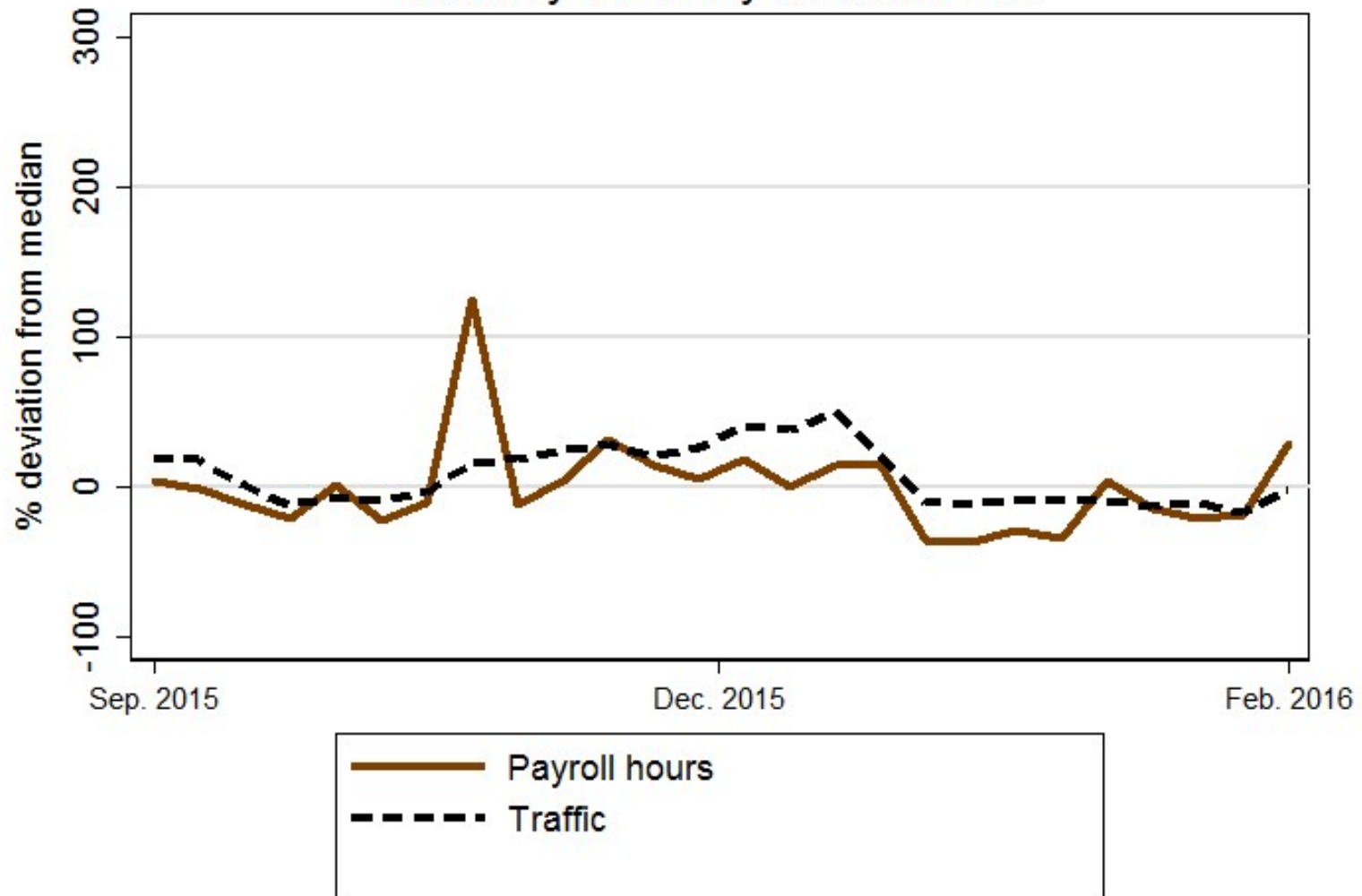
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- Why do employers vary employees' hours and post schedules with little advance notice?
 - Perhaps workers' hours vary a lot because customer demand varies a lot
 - Perhaps keeping labor flexible is good for business

True, but...

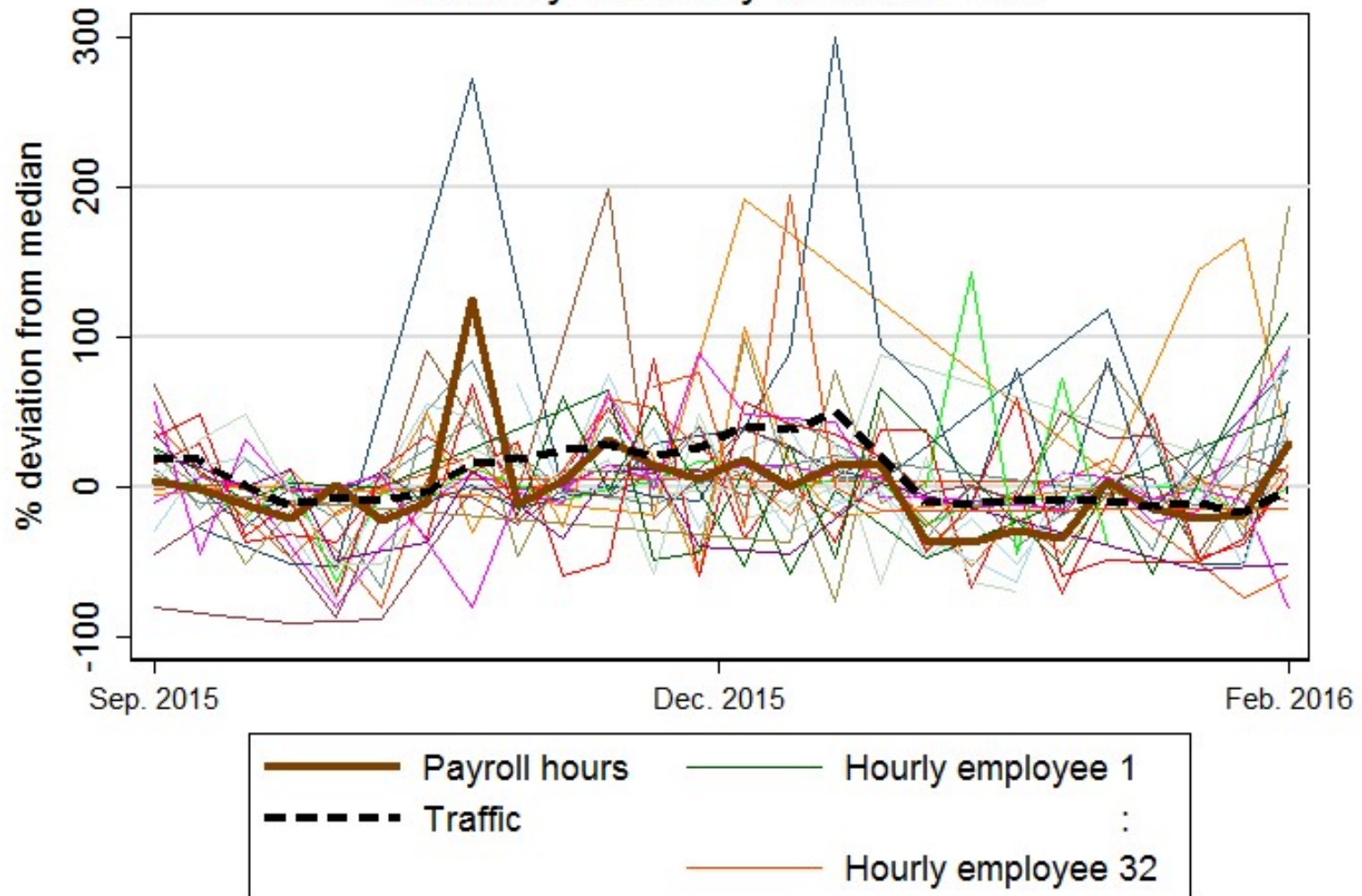
Weekly volatility in store 120



Weekly volatility in store 120



Weekly volatility in store 120



The Stable Scheduling Study

Authors (of initial report, March 2018):

Joan C. Williams, University of California Hastings College of Law


Susan J. Lambert, University of Chicago School of Social Service Administration

Saravanan Kesavan, UNC Kenan-Flagler School of Business

Peter J. Fugiel, Lori Ann Ospina, Erin Devorah Rapoport, Meghan Jarpe, Dylan Bellisle, Pradeep Pendem, Lisa McCorkell & Sarah Adler-Milstein

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STABLE
SCHEDULING
INCREASES
PRODUCTIVITY
AND SALES

The Stable Scheduling Study

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- **Responsible Schedule Practices that take both worker and business well-being into account**
 - Did not change accountability metrics
 - Still had labor flexibility, just some new tools to achieve it
 - **Increased store productivity by 5.1%**
 - a result of increasing sales (by 3.3%) while also **decreasing** labor (by 1.8%).
 - Findings counter the common assumption that putting parameters around employers' ability to adjust employees' hours will result in using more labor and in turn, lower profits.
 - **Mechanisms**
 - Additional employee effort (increase in sales)
 - Increased conversion rate and basket-size
 - Improved employees' schedule adherence (reduction in labor)
 - Reduced tardiness and its cascading effects on coworkers
 - Improved store execution
 - Managers could complete planned tasks
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Work Scheduling Legislation

- **Retail Workers' Bill of Rights** (San Francisco); 2015
 - **Secure Scheduling Ordinance** (Seattle); 2017
 - **Fair Workweek Ordinance** (Emeryville, CA); 2017
 - **Fair Workweek Laws** (NYC); 2017
 - **Fair Workweek Employment Standards** (Philadelphia); 2020
 - **Fair Workweek Ordinance** (Chicago); 2020

 - **Predictable Scheduling Law** (Oregon); 2018
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Legislation: Helping set new work hour standards

- **Advance notice**
 - Two weeks advance notice of the work schedule
 - Good faith estimate of hours and shifts at point of hiring
 - **Schedule change premium** (*predictability pay*) **for employer-driven schedule changes**
 - Additional hours (shift additions and extensions)
 - Reduced hours (shift cancellations and reductions/unused on-calls shifts)
 - **Right to decline hours not on original schedule w/o retaliation**
 - **Right to request** changes to regular schedule **and the right to receive** accommodation for major life events, such as school and caregiving
 - **Access to hours**
 - Employer must offer hours to current employees before hiring
 - **Right to rest (“clopening” provision)**
 - Right to decline to work closely-spaced shifts and additional\$ if do work shift
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