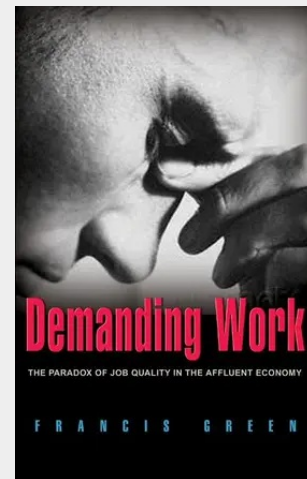


Demanding Work

The Paradox of Job Quality in the Affluent Economy

Since the early 1980s, a vast number of jobs have been created in the affluent economies of the industrialized world. Many workers are doing more skilled and fulfilling jobs, and getting paid more for their trouble. Yet it is often alleged that the quality of work life has deteriorated, with a substantial and rising proportion of jobs providing low wages and little security, or requiring unusually hard and stressful effort. In this unique and authoritative formal account of changing job quality, economist Francis Green highlights contrasting trends, using quantitative indicators drawn from public opinion surveys and administrative data. In most affluent countries average pay levels have risen along with economic growth, a major exception being the United States. Skill requirements have increased, potentially meaning a more fulfilling time at work. Set against these beneficial trends, however, are increases in inequality, a strong intensification of work effort, diminished job satisfaction, and less employee influence over daily work tasks. Using an interdisciplinary approach, *Demanding Work* shows how aspects of job quality are related, and how changes in the quality of work life stem from technological change and transformations in the politico-economic environment. The book concludes by discussing what individuals, firms, unions, and governments can do to counter declining job quality.

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