

[IZA News](#)[About IZA](#)[Organization Chart](#)[People](#)[Research](#)[Labor Policy](#)[Publications](#)[Discussion Papers](#)[Policy Papers](#)[Standpunkte](#)[Books](#)[Research Reports](#)[IZA Compact](#)[IZA in the Press](#)[Publication Record](#)[Journals](#)[Events](#)[IZA Prize / YLE Award](#)[Teaching](#)[Links / Resources](#)[Press](#)

IZA



Occupational Tasks and Changes in the Wage Structure

by Sergio Firpo, Nicole M. Fortin, Thomas Lemieux
(February 2011)

Abstract:

This paper argues that changes in the returns to occupational tasks have contributed to changes in the wage distribution over the last three decades. Using Current Population Survey (CPS) data, we first show that the 1990s polarization of wages is explained by changes in wage setting between and within occupations, which are well captured by tasks measures linked to technological change and offshorability. Using a decomposition based on Firpo, Fortin, and Lemieux (2009), we find that technological change and deunionization played a central role in the 1980s and 1990s, while offshorability became an important factor from the 1990s onwards.

Text: See [Discussion Paper No. 5542](#)

[Back](#)