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## The Early Career Gender Wage Gap among University Graduates

Previous research on the sources of the gender wage gap has shown that differences in human capital endowment explain the current gap less than in the past, while factors, such as occupational segregation, field of study, or personality traits, remain important. However, the magnitudes of the remaining sources are not well understood yet. Additionally, little is known about when the gap emerges and whether it exists at the onset of careers when human capital levels between gender groups within a field of study are similar.

This paper analyzes the sources of the gender wage gap among university graduates at labor market entry and over several years after entering the labor market using data of graduates from a German University linked with administrative employment records. The linked dataset includes information on pre-graduation characteristics such as working during study, final grades, field of study and post-graduation characteristics such as occupation, industry and other firm characteristics. The data allow us to investigate the gender wage gap at the first job after graduation and the contribution of pre- and post- graduation characteristics. Furthermore, we can account for characteristics that prior studies miss, such as working experience accumulation before graduation, job changes, as well as the time between graduation and the first job. With this approach and a novel dataset, we attempt to fill the remaining blind spots in the literature.

We present evidence for a significant gender wage gap at labor market entry. However, estimations within different cohort groups reveal that conditional gender wage differences are eliminated for the recent cohort group. The most important contributors to the gender wage gap are occupation, industry and the share of women in an establishment. For the last cohort group, occupation is the most significant contributor. Finally, the gender wage gap increases over time after starting the first job.

**Keywords:** Gender wage gap; University graduates; Decomposition; Germany