

IAB-Colloquium zur Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung

The Gender-Wage Gap in Inventive Jobs

Prof. Dr. Karin Hoisl, MBR

*Hans-Sauer-Stiftungs-Juniorprofessur für Erfindungsprozesse und
Intellektuelles Eigentum, Munich Center for Innovation and Entrepreneur-
ship Research (MCIER) und Munich School of Management, Ludwig-
Maximilians-Universität München*

The study examines differences in income between women and men in creative and highly skilled jobs, those that result in technological inventions. We build on theories developed in the innovation management, labor market, and personnel economics literature. Data pertaining to 8,973 inventors from all over the world show that female inventors have lower incomes than their male peers. The gap resists to controlling for several sources of heterogeneity – like education, experience, productivity – and to the selection of inventors into different types of jobs and tasks. Literature from sociology suggests that, even in these skill intensive and creative jobs, women trade income against family related benefits, and that this contributes to explaining the gap when they have children. However, instrumental variables technique reveals that a possible relationship between children and wage is due to reverse causality, i.e. inventors have children once they can make their living with a family.

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