

# The gendered division of labour and the just pay gap

Barbara Zimmermann and Ben Jann

University of Bern

Annual Conference of Experimental Sociology (ACES)  
Monte Verità, September 15–17, 2021

# Outline

- 1 Motivation
- 2 Hypothesis
- 3 Design
- 4 Data
- 5 Results
- 6 Conclusions

# Motivation

- Studies using experimental designs (factorial surveys) have found what is called a “just gender pay gap”. The studies reveal a double standard in judging the salary of identical men and women (e.g. Auspurg et al. 2017, Jasso/Webster 1997).
- Further studies have documented a “male marriage premium” in just earnings. That is, respondents awarded married men higher salaries than identical single men (Jann et al. 2021; Lang/Groß 2020; McDonald 2020). Related to this, the “just gender pay gap” only seems to prevail with respect to people living in a relationship, not with respect to singles.
- What is the explanation for these findings?

- 1 Motivation
- 2 Hypothesis
- 3 Design
- 4 Data
- 5 Results
- 6 Conclusions

# Male breadwinner hypothesis

- Background: Gendered division of labour
  - ▶ Social norms attributing women the responsibility for childcare and domestic work (Breen/Cooke 2005, Greenstein 2000).
  - ▶ Male-breadwinner-model (Cunningham 2008, Trappe et al. 2015).
- Male breadwinner hypothesis:
  - ▶ Respondents make assumptions about the roles of household members. By default, males rather than females (even if economically active) are assumed to be main breadwinners.
  - ▶ As a consequence, higher salaries are considered as just for men.
  - ▶ The gap should be absent for singles (no other person who could be the breadwinner).
  - ▶ The gap should be absent in case of people living in same-sex partnerships (gendered division of labor not possible).
  - ▶ The gap should decrease if there is information suggesting that the roles in a couple deviate from the norm.
  - ▶ The gap should increase with the level of need/responsibility (e.g. if there are children).

- 1 Motivation
- 2 Hypothesis
- 3 Design**
- 4 Data
- 5 Results
- 6 Conclusions

# Design

- We use different strategies to test the “male breadwinner hypothesis”.
  - ▶ Does provision of information about the economic activity of the partner decrease the gap?
  - ▶ Does the gap vanish for people living in same-sex relationships?
  - ▶ Does the gap increase if there are children in the household?
- Three types of vignettes:
  - 1 person living in a heterosexual couple without children
  - 2 person living in a same-sex couple without children
  - 3 person living in a heterosexual couple with children
- Each respondent evaluates three vignettes (one of each type; order as above).
- Fully factorial design.

# Experimental factors

Gender	male	Mr. Müller / Mr. Huber
	female	Mrs. Müller / Ms. Huber
Need	low	gainfully employed partner (full time)
	high	partner not gainfully employed
	no info	no information on employment status of partner
Desert	low	average job performance
	high	above-average job performance
Salary	low	CHF 5'000
	medium	CHF 6'000
	high	CHF 7'000



## Example vignette

Mrs. Müller, 35, is in a childless marriage with a full-time employed partner. She works full-time as a commercial clerk in the accounting department of a medium-sized service company, where she performs at an average level. Her gross monthly income is CHF 6,000.

How do you rate this person's income? Do you think the income is fair? Or is it unfairly high or low?

much  
too low

fair

much  
too  
high

☐

-5

☐

-4

☐

-3

☐

-2

☐

-1

☐

0

☐

+1

☐

+2

☐

+3

☐

+4

☐

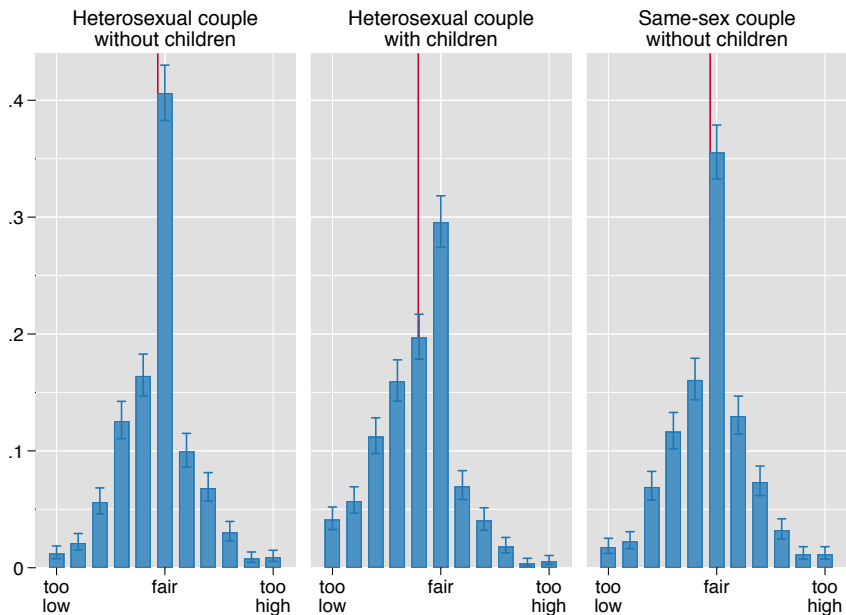
+5

- 1 Motivation
- 2 Hypothesis
- 3 Design
- 4 Data**
- 5 Results
- 6 Conclusions

# Data

- MOSAiCH 2019 (~ Swiss ISSP 2009 module on Social Inequality), conducted by FORS, funded by SNSF.
- SRS from Swiss population (age 18+), drawn from the register-based sampling frame by the Swiss Federal Statistical Office.
- Survey modes: online or paper-and-pencil (push-to-web design). Three separate parts/questionnaires, administered sequentially (Part 1: RR 39%, Part 2: RR 26%, Part 3, online only: RR 21%).
- Our vignettes have been included at the beginning of the Part 3 questionnaire.
- Sample size: 1660 respondents

# Distribution of ratings

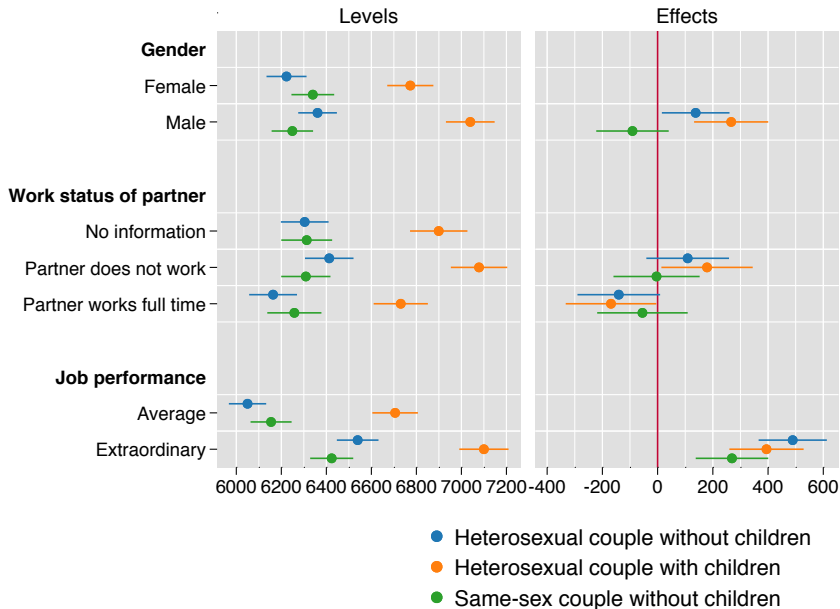


- 1 Motivation
- 2 Hypothesis
- 3 Design
- 4 Data
- 5 Results**
- 6 Conclusions

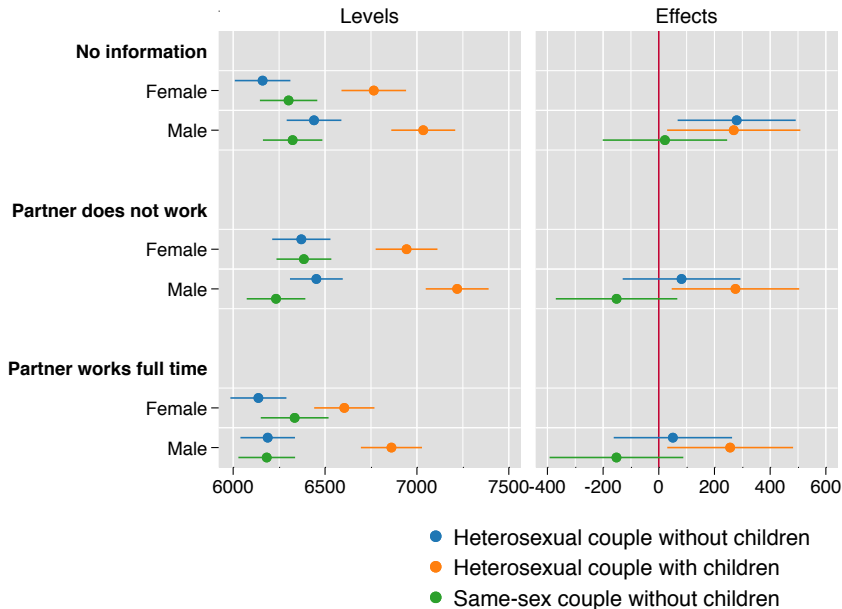
## Type of results displayed below

- Predictive margins and marginal effects from regression-adjustment models (regression models including all interactions between vignette types and experimental factors, but a joint effect of the salary).
- For easier interpretation, all results are expressed in CHF (willingness-to-pay approach; effect of salary on ratings identifies the CHF value of the rating scale units).

# Main effects (in CHF)



# Interaction effects: gender $\times$ partner's work status





- 1 Motivation
- 2 Hypothesis
- 3 Design
- 4 Data
- 5 Results
- 6 Conclusions

# Conclusions

- Overall, our results suggest that the “male breadwinner hypothesis” explains the “just gender pay gap” found in factorial surveys.
- As hypothesized, the gap is absent in case of same-sex couples.
- The gap appears to be more pronounced if there are kids (breadwinner concept more relevant due to higher need).
- Gap appears to be less pronounced if information on the work status of the partner is provided.

# References

- Auspurg, K., T. Hinz, C. Sauer (2017). Why should women get less? Evidence on the gender pay gap from multifactorial survey experiments. *American Sociological Review* 82(1): 179-210
- Breen, R., L.P. Cooke (2005). The Persistence of the Gendered Division of Domestic Labour. *European Sociological Review* 21(1): 43-57.
- Cunningham, M. (2008). Changing Attitudes toward the Male Breadwinner, Female Homemaker Family Model: Influences of Women's Employment and Education over the Lifecourse. *Social Forces* 87(1): 299-323.
- Greenstein, T.N. (2000). Economic Dependence, Gender, and the Division of Labor in the Home: A Replication and Extension. *Journal of Marriage and Family* 62(2): 322-335.
- Jann, B., B. Zimmermann, A. Diekmann (2021). Lohngerechtigkeit und Geschlechternormen: Erhalten Männer eine Heiratsprämie? *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie*. doi:10.1007/s11577-021-00757-9
- Jasso, G., M. Webster Jr (1997). Double standards in just earnings for male and female workers. *Social Psychology Quarterly* 60(1): 66-78.
- Lang, V., M. Groß (2020). The just gender pay gap in Germany revisited: The male breadwinner model and regional differences in gender-specific role ascriptions. *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility* 65: 100473.
- McDonald, P. (2020). The Male Marriage Premium: Selection, Productivity, or Employer Preferences? *Journal of Marriage and Family* 82(5): 1553-1570.
- Trappe, H., M. Pollmann-Schult, C. Schmitt (2015). The Rise and Decline of the Male Breadwinner Model: Institutional Underpinnings and Future Expectations. *European Sociological Review* 31(2): 230-242