



## Press Release No. 28/2017

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### Fair inequality?

**A study on gender-specific wage difference documents the societal entrenchment of inequality**

A wage gap of seven to nine percent is viewed by society to be fair. Dr Thomas Hinz, professor of empirical social research at the University of Konstanz, confirmed the existence of this societal perspective in his study on wage inequality between men and women. Through scientific survey experiments, the researcher examined which earning levels were considered to be equitable by the 1,600 participants. They were presented with over 26,000 profiles of fictitious employees with different qualifications, experiences and genders. They were asked to classify their wages into the categories of fair, unfairly high or unfairly low. The results of the study “Why Should Women Get Less? Evidence on the Gender Pay Gap from Multifactorial Survey Experiments” were published jointly by Thomas Hinz along with Professor Katrin Auspurg and Dr Carsten Sauer in the current issue of *American Sociological Review*.

Although participants overwhelmingly acknowledged their support of equal pay for equal work before taking part in the study, they generally assigned women lower wages than men, even when both were equally qualified for the respective positions. „Remarkably, this conclusion is based on responses from both genders. Both men and women considered lower wages for women to be fair”, explains Thomas Hinz. According to him, the normative power of contemporary conditions is responsible for these study results. The survey respondents based their classification of fair wages on their personal experiences. Since unfair wage conditions are so strongly embedded in their society, the study participants have simply become accustomed to the unequal wage conditions. Based on this entrenched way of thinking, they have produced an opinion that contradicts their pre-study attitude regarding the topic of equal pay.

#### **Original Publication:**

Why Should Women Get Less? Evidence on the Gender Pay Gap from Multifactorial Survey Experiments, Katrin Auspurg, Thomas Hinz, Carsten Sauer, *American Sociological Review*, 2017,  
DOI: [10.1177/0003122416683393](https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122416683393)

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**Facts:**

- A study on gender-specific wage difference
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