

Lechmann, Daniel S. J.; Schnabel, Claus

**Working Paper**

## What explains the gender earnings gap in self-employment? A decomposition analysis with German data

IZA Discussion Papers, No. 6435

**Provided in Cooperation with:**

IZA – Institute of Labor Economics

*Suggested Citation:* Lechmann, Daniel S. J.; Schnabel, Claus (2012) : What explains the gender earnings gap in self-employment? A decomposition analysis with German data, IZA Discussion Papers, No. 6435, Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA), Bonn, <https://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:101:1-201207125689>

This Version is available at:

<https://hdl.handle.net/10419/58903>

**Standard-Nutzungsbedingungen:**

Die Dokumente auf EconStor dürfen zu eigenen wissenschaftlichen Zwecken und zum Privatgebrauch gespeichert und kopiert werden.

Sie dürfen die Dokumente nicht für öffentliche oder kommerzielle Zwecke vervielfältigen, öffentlich ausstellen, öffentlich zugänglich machen, vertreiben oder anderweitig nutzen.

Sofern die Verfasser die Dokumente unter Open-Content-Lizenzen (insbesondere CC-Lizenzen) zur Verfügung gestellt haben sollten, gelten abweichend von diesen Nutzungsbedingungen die in der dort genannten Lizenz gewährten Nutzungsrechte.

**Terms of use:**

*Documents in EconStor may be saved and copied for your personal and scholarly purposes.*

*You are not to copy documents for public or commercial purposes, to exhibit the documents publicly, to make them publicly available on the internet, or to distribute or otherwise use the documents in public.*

*If the documents have been made available under an Open Content Licence (especially Creative Commons Licences), you may exercise further usage rights as specified in the indicated licence.*

IZA DP No. 6435

**What Explains the Gender Earnings Gap in  
Self-Employment? A Decomposition Analysis  
with German Data**

Daniel S. J. Lechmann  
Claus Schnabel

March 2012

# What Explains the Gender Earnings Gap in Self-Employment? A Decomposition Analysis with German Data

**Daniel S. J. Lechmann**  
*University of Erlangen-Nürnberg*

**Claus Schnabel**  
*University of Erlangen-Nürnberg  
and IZA*

Discussion Paper No. 6435  
March 2012

IZA

P.O. Box 7240  
53072 Bonn  
Germany

Phone: +49-228-3894-0  
Fax: +49-228-3894-180  
E-mail: [iza@iza.org](mailto:iza@iza.org)

Any opinions expressed here are those of the author(s) and not those of IZA. Research published in this series may include views on policy, but the institute itself takes no institutional policy positions.

The Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA) in Bonn is a local and virtual international research center and a place of communication between science, politics and business. IZA is an independent nonprofit organization supported by Deutsche Post Foundation. The center is associated with the University of Bonn and offers a stimulating research environment through its international network, workshops and conferences, data service, project support, research visits and doctoral program. IZA engages in (i) original and internationally competitive research in all fields of labor economics, (ii) development of policy concepts, and (iii) dissemination of research results and concepts to the interested public.

IZA Discussion Papers often represent preliminary work and are circulated to encourage discussion. Citation of such a paper should account for its provisional character. A revised version may be available directly from the author.

## ABSTRACT

### **What Explains the Gender Earnings Gap in Self-Employment? A Decomposition Analysis with German Data<sup>\*</sup>**

Using a large data set for Germany, we show that both the raw and the unexplained gender earnings gap are higher in self-employment than in paid employment. Applying an Oaxaca-Blinder decomposition, more than a quarter of the difference in monthly self-employment earnings can be traced back to women working fewer hours than men. In contrast variables like family background, working time flexibility and career aspirations do not seem to contribute much to the gender earnings gap, suggesting that self-employed women do not earn less because they are seeking work-family balance rather than profits. Differences in human capital endowments account for another 13 percent of the gap but segregation does not contribute to the gender earnings gap in a robust way.

JEL Classification: J31, J71

Keywords: earnings differential, entrepreneurship, gender pay gap, Germany, self-employed, self-employment

Corresponding author:

Claus Schnabel  
University of Erlangen-Nürnberg  
Chair of Labour and Regional Economics  
Lange Gasse 20  
90403 Nürnberg  
Germany  
E-mail: [claus.schnabel@wiso.uni-erlangen.de](mailto:claus.schnabel@wiso.uni-erlangen.de)

---

<sup>\*</sup> For helpful comments and suggestions we would like to thank Boris Hirsch, Thorsten Konietzko, Michael Oberfichtner and Joachim Wagner.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

It is well-known that women earn less than men in paid employment. The public often perceives this difference in wages as discrimination against women, and policy makers give high priority to overcoming this inequality (see e.g. European Commission 2011). Economic and sociological research, however, has shown that the difference in wages can largely be traced back to women having different productive characteristics than men (in particular different human capital endowments), choosing different occupations and working fewer hours (see Altonji/Blank 1999 for a survey and Weichselbaumer/Winter-Ebmer 2005 for a meta-analysis of this strand of literature). Yet even when accounting for these differences, a substantial part of the gender pay gap cannot be explained and is then usually assumed to reflect employer discrimination against women.

One possibility to ensure not being discriminated by one's employer evidently is being one's own employer, i.e. becoming self-employed. Hence, if employer discrimination played a major role, the gender gap in self-employment earnings could be expected to be significantly lower than the gender wage gap in paid employment (Moore 1983). There is some empirical evidence, however, suggesting that exactly the opposite is the case – both raw and unexplained gender earnings gaps seem to be higher in self-employment than in paid employment (see, e.g., Eastough/Miller 2004, Álvarez et al. 2009). This is somewhat puzzling, in particular as other potential sources of discrimination such as discriminating behavior of customers or capital providers do not seem to play a substantial role for self-employed women. While it is true that women generally start self-employment with less start-up capital than men and that financial constraints seem to contribute to the gender earnings gap to some extent (e.g. Hundley 2001, Walker 2009, Rybczynski 2009), there is no conclusive evidence whether this is due to discrimination by capital lenders (see, *inter alia*, Orser et al. 2006, Verheul/Thurik 2001, Coleman 2000, Fabowale et al. 1995). Also discrimination by consumers does not seem to explain the self-employment gender earnings gap (see Aronson 1991: 72-73, Moore 1983).

Even though there exists a large gender gap in self-employment earnings for which discrimination does not provide a satisfactory explanation, relatively few studies have attempted to explore the causes of this gap (e.g. Hundley 2001 and Walker 2009 for the U.S., Eastough/Miller 2004 for Australia and the U.S., Leung 2006 for Canada, Álvarez et al. 2009 for Spain and Tansel 2000 for Turkey).<sup>1</sup> When it comes to Germany, the empirical evidence is especially scarce. In an early study, Jungbauer-Gans (1999)

---

<sup>1</sup> In addition, quite a few studies relate the gender composition of the management to various indicators of firm performance (i.e. survival, employment growth, sales growth, etc.), see, *inter alia*, Gottschalk/Niefert (2011), Fairlie/Robb (2009), Du Rietz/Henrekson (2000), Fischer et al. (1993).

examines the earnings gap in 1995 using the German Micro Census which, however, only provides earnings data in intervals. For the self-employed, she finds a small earnings gap which becomes larger but insignificant when attempting to correct for selection into (self-)employment, and does not perform a decomposition analysis. A recent survey by Gather et al. (2010) provides some bivariate inspection of the gender earnings gap in Germany. Based on the 2007 wave of the German Socio-Economic Panel (GSOEP) the authors calculate that fulltime self-employed women earn 34.7 percent less than men in self-employment. Observing that, when analyzed on their own, neither human capital nor segregation into industries nor the existence of children can explain the earnings gap, they conclude that multivariate decomposition analysis is needed to identify the determinants of earnings differences (and the unexplained residual) for the self-employed.

Our study attempts to fill this gap in the literature by identifying and decomposing the causes of the self-employment gender earnings gap in Germany, using the gender pay gap in paid employment as a benchmark. Utilizing a rich cross-sectional dataset with continuous information on earnings (rather than earnings intervals), we analyze whether the raw and the unexplained gender earnings gap differ between self-employment and paid employment. Our dataset provides, among others, detailed information on human capital endowments of individuals, on personal characteristics including career aspirations and work satisfaction, on job characteristics such as working hours, working time flexibility, professional field and task profile, and on firm size. This enables us to test whether self-employed women earn less than men because they differ in productivity-related attributes or own different types of businesses. We are also able to analyze whether it is different motivations and non-monetary aspects that contribute to the gender earnings gap, i.e. whether self-employed women earn less because they are seeking work-family balance rather than profits.

In order to explain the gender earnings gap one has to identify variables that differ between male and female self-employed and at the same time affect earnings in such a way that they may account for the lower female earnings. Accordingly this paper is structured as follows: In section 2, after presenting our data, we describe men's and women's distribution of earnings and their differences in endowments, motivations and job characteristics that may be responsible for the gender earnings gap. We then explore the impact of these variables by estimating earnings functions in section 3. Section 4 decomposes the gender earnings gap utilizing an Oaxaca-Blinder-decomposition, and section 5 concludes.

## 2 DATA AND DESCRIPTIVE EVIDENCE

The representative data set used in this study is the *BIBB/BAuA Employment Survey of the Working Population on Qualification and Working Conditions in Germany 2006* (Hall/Tiemann 2006; for a detailed description see Zopf/Tiemann 2010). The data contains information on 20,000 individuals from the German active labor force population (excluding apprentices) who are at least 15 years old and regularly work at least 10 hours per week. The group of self-employed individuals consists of tradesmen and liberal professionals (coded as “Selbständige” and “freiberuflich Tätige” in the data set), but we exclude helping family members and freelance collaborators from our analysis since they are neither typical self-employed nor employees. As paid employees we have white-collar workers, blue-collar workers and civil servants. Observations with weekly working time of 100 hours or more are dropped for plausibility reasons. Additionally we remove self-employed and paid employees within the 1 percent quantiles of their respective earnings distributions to exclude some extremely low values. For the self-employed this means that we lose 13 observations, 9 of which report gross monthly earnings of just €1. Regarding the group of employees, 120 observations with gross monthly wages of €200 and less are eliminated.<sup>2</sup> Our sample then consists of 15,443 individuals who report income data and have no missing covariates. These include 972 male and 496 female self-employed individuals and 7,091 male and 6,884 female paid employees.

(Table 1 about here)

Table 1 displays the distribution of earnings among men and women in paid and self-employment in our sample.<sup>3</sup> Starting with the self-employed, gross monthly earnings of men in self-employment are on average €4,179, while self-employed women earn only €2,324 on average. Calculating the difference and taking men as the reference group yields a gender earnings gap of 44.4 percent in self-employment. A look at the quartiles of the earnings distribution reveals that women often have relatively low earnings and that the gender earnings gap is particularly pronounced in the lower part of the distribution. 25 percent of the women in self-employment report earnings that are not higher than €800 per month. In contrast, the lowest quartile of the male earnings

---

<sup>2</sup> Excluding these extreme values considerably improves the statistical fit of our estimations, without substantially altering our main insights.

<sup>3</sup> Note that for several reasons it is not advisable to compare the absolute levels of earnings between the two occupational groups (cf. Parker 2009: chs. 13.1, 13.2): Data on self-employment earnings usually suffer from under-reporting and large non-response rates, and they often comprise not only labor but also capital income and not only money drawn from the business but also retained profits. As to our data, the self-employed were explicitly asked not to report their business profits but their earnings, whereas paid employees were asked to report their wages. 25 percent of the self-employed refused to answer this question, whereas only 14 percent of the paid employees did so.

distribution amounts to €2,000 – a differential of 60 percent. The income difference between the sexes is clearly smaller when it comes to hourly earnings, reflecting the fact that self-employed women work fewer hours than men. The earnings gap is now 28.9 percent on average, and it is again largest at the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile. Unsurprisingly, women also earn less than men in paid employment. Male employees' monthly gross wages average €3,176 whereas women only earn €2,023 on average, which makes a difference of 36.3 percent. The same is true for hourly earnings, where the gender pay gap amounts to 19.4 percent. Comparing the various differentials makes clear that the gender earnings gap is larger in self-employment than in paid employment.<sup>4</sup>

Several variables that may be responsible for the lower earnings of female self-employed have been identified in the literature (see the reviews by Parker 2009: 191-194 and Minniti 2009: chs. 9, 11). These may be grouped into three categories: (1) human capital, (2) work-family balance and working hours, and (3) segregation, which can be investigated with our data.<sup>5</sup>

#### *(1) Human capital*

Human capital seems to be one major determinant of self-employment earnings (see Parker 2009: ch. 13.6 and the literature cited therein). Therefore, analogous to wage differences in paid employment, women in self-employment should earn less than men if they possess less human capital. Table 2 shows that in Germany women still have lower levels of formal education on average. While the shares of men and women with a university degree are equal among the self-employed, only 3 percent of female (but 14 percent of male) self-employed have attended vocational college, and women are over-represented among those self-employed with only vocational training or no vocational degree at all. A similar gender difference shows up among paid employees (who in general have lower levels of education than the self-employed): Women do have a university degree nearly as often as men, but they still have less education on average. The difference in educational levels, however, seems to be less pronounced for paid employees which could be one explanation for the larger gender earnings gap in self-employment.<sup>6</sup>

(Table 2 about here)

---

<sup>4</sup> Based on GSOEP data for 2007, Gather et al. (2010), report gender earnings differences of similar magnitude: Among fulltime self-employed workers they calculate a gender earnings gap of 34.7 percent, among fulltime paid employees a gender wage gap of 22.6 percent.

<sup>5</sup> A fourth category that has been investigated in the literature is financial capital (see, e.g, Hundley 2001, Walker 2009) but unfortunately our data set does not contain information on this variable.

<sup>6</sup> Of course, even if there were no endowment differences within the occupational groups, it could still be different impacts of endowments that made the difference; this issue will be explored in sections 3 and 4.



Turning to working experience (measured as years since first holding a job), women have slightly less working experience than men in self-employment (21.2 vs. 22.9 years) and they record longer working intermissions. The working intermissions of self-employed men sum up to 0.93 years whereas those of women amount to 2.83 years on average. While this difference between the sexes also exists in paid employment, it is again more pronounced among the self-employed. Additionally self-employed women have less specific working experience, as indicated by a lower tenure at the current job. While men run their current businesses for 10.2 years on average, women run theirs only for 7.9 years. In paid employment the gender difference is much smaller. Taken together, these findings may explain why there is a gender earnings gap and why it is larger in self-employment.

Lazear (2004) points out that for entrepreneurs not only the level but also the diversity of human capital might be relevant, with more diversity inducing more income. Entrepreneurs thus should be jacks-of-all-trades (i.e. generalists) in order to be able to manage their businesses, but employees should specialize in certain tasks. If men have a more diverse professional background than women, this could explain why they earn more in self-employment. Moreover, it could also explain why the gender earnings gap is larger in self-employment, since this diversity would not benefit men in paid employment. Table 2 shows indeed that the self-employed have a more diverse background (measured as the number of changes of profession) than paid employees. However, self-employed women do not report fewer changes of profession than self-employed men, suggesting that diversity of human capital will not contribute to explaining the gender earnings gap.

## *(2) Work-family balance and working hours*

There are some indications that women choose self-employment in order to obtain more flexibility and to better balance work and family (e.g. Boden 1999, Lombard 2001; for a survey see Gerlach/Damhus 2010). At the same time it is evident that the more hours and effort women spend for family and housework responsibilities, the less hours and energy they are able to spend working in their firm, hence earning less money than men whose work efforts are less confined by housework and family engagements (Becker 1985, Hundley 2000, 2001, Walker 2009). Indeed our data in Table 2 show that women's working hours per week (referring to market work only) are quite below that of men, in self-employment as well as in paid employment. Self-employed men work as much as 49.4 hours per week on average, women in self-employment just 37.1 hours. Interestingly, women in self-employment work more hours than women in paid employment, whose average weekly working time amounts to 33.6 hours, which contradicts the view that women choose self-employment in order to have more time for other activities. In addition, self-employed women (as well as self-employed men) do not

seem to be able to better balance working time scheduling with family and private interests than women (respectively men) in paid employment. For instance, 66 percent of female employees and 65 percent of female self-employed state that they succeed often in balancing working time scheduling with family and private interests. Still self-employed women's working time scheduling is far more flexible than men's. Only 50 percent of men in self-employment often succeed in balancing work and life (and 10 percent never do). This could indicate a trade-off between earnings and working time flexibility in self-employment where men and women locate at different combinations.

Being asked about their attitude towards career advancement self-employed women significantly more often stated high career aspirations than women in paid employment, namely 58 percent vs. 47 percent (which is even higher than the share of 54 percent of male self-employed stating high career aspirations). This may indicate that women with high career aspirations choose self-employment because paid employment does not provide them with satisfactory career opportunities (e.g., because of the existence of a "glass ceiling"), whereas women who attach less importance to career advancement (and more to family-work balance) stay in paid employment.<sup>7</sup> Looking at family background, we find no substantial differences in terms of marital status and presence of children in the household between self-employed women and women in paid employment.

Altogether these descriptive findings do not suggest that women choose self-employment primarily as a means of providing more time and energy to family and housework. That said, women clearly work less hours in self-employment than men and their working time scheduling is far more flexible. This may well explain why they earn less in self-employment, but it does not necessarily explain why the gender earnings gap is higher in self-employment.

### *(3) Segregation*

Women tend to concentrate in industries with high competition and low growth and income prospects (Minniti 2009: 568; on self-employed women's sector distribution in Germany see Lauxen-Ulbrich/Leicht 2005: chs. 5.5, 6.3). In our data set we have information on 54 professional fields individuals work in (regarding the classification of the professional fields see Tiemann et al. 2008). In order to provide an intuition on the segregation of self-employed women and men in different fields and for the sake of

---

<sup>7</sup> Table 2 also shows that the smallest share of individuals satisfied with their earnings can be found among self-employed women (63 percent vs. 71 percent among self-employed men and 69 percent among women in paid employment). When comparing men and women with equal earnings (by regressing earnings satisfaction on sex, controlling for earnings), there is no difference in earnings satisfaction between the sexes. Hence it does not seem that self-employed women value income less than do men.

clarity Figure 1 only displays the three professional fields where most self-employed men and the three fields where most self-employed women are active in. It can be seen that a large share of self-employed men, namely 13.9 percent, are active in management, management consultancy and accounting, whereas the share of female self-employed in this field is only 8.5 percent. Many self-employed men also work as engineers and in mercantile professions (without retail, wholesale and credit business), where self-employed women are found less often. In contrast, women in self-employment are mainly active in social professions, as teachers, and in healthcare professions without licensure where the share of self-employed men is considerably lower. But women not only segregate into other professional fields, their businesses also are different from men's in terms of size (cf. Lauxen-Ulbrich/Leicht 2005: chs. 5.6, 6.7). As can be seen from Table 2, the majority of self-employed women, namely 57 percent, are so-called solo-self-employed, i.e. they do not have any other employees. This is only the case for 44 percent of self-employed men.

(Figure 1 about here)

The sectoral segregation of the sexes is also mirrored by the tasks they perform. We have information on 17 tasks that may occur at the work of individuals. Taking nursing, parenting, healing as an example, this task is occurring at the work of 34 percent of female self-employed but is only relevant for 21 percent of self-employed men. Monitoring and governing machines, facilities or technical processes is being performed by 41 percent of male and only 24 percent of female self-employed. Remarkably women not only perform different tasks but they also face fewer different tasks at their work than men, with self-employed men performing 9.80 and self-employed women performing 9.17 tasks on average (see Table 2). A similar difference shows up for paid employees.<sup>8</sup>

We expect that all these facts contribute to the explanation of the gender earnings gap. We cannot say a priori, however, whether segregation should play a more important role in self- or in paid employment.

### 3 DETERMINANTS OF SELF-EMPLOYMENT EARNINGS

We now turn to exploring how the variables discussed above are related to earnings, and whether there are important differences between self-employment and paid employment. This is investigated by estimating various earnings regressions that either

---

<sup>8</sup> This does not necessarily mean that women's work is not as complex as men's since other classifications of tasks might well produce other results.

include a sex dummy or are run separately for men and women. As the dependent variable we use the logarithm of monthly earnings rather than hourly earnings as is usually done in wage regressions of paid employees, because we want to see to what extent gender earnings differences can be traced back to women working fewer hours, and whether this effect differs between paid employment and self-employment. Our explanatory variables, which were already discussed in section 2, are the following: Human capital is captured by 6 dummies for educational degrees, the years of working experience, working intermissions and tenure (all in linear and quadratic form), and the number of changes of profession. The amount and the flexibility of working time are captured by (the logarithm of) weekly working hours and by the frequency at which individuals succeeded in balancing working time scheduling with family and private interests (3 dummies). We use 5 dummies for family status and 4 dummies for the existence of kids of different ages to reflect family background. Furthermore a dummy variable indicating high career aspirations is included. 54 dummies for different professional fields, 17 dummies for the tasks occurring at work and 8 firm size dummies serve as segregation variables. Finally, we include some control variables such as migration background, disability status and place of residence.

(Table 3 about here)

The regression results in Table 3 (column 1) show that the raw gender earnings gap in self-employment amounts to 72.2 log points.<sup>9</sup> When we include all explanatory and control variables (column 2) it decreases to 32.9 log points, which still is a substantial amount and is statistically significantly different from zero at the 1 percent level. In particular this is more than twice as high as the gender wage gap of 12.5 log points which we obtain in the multivariate wage regression for paid employees (column 4). Thus our finding from the descriptive analysis in section 2 that the gender earnings gap in self-employment is larger than in paid employment still holds and is even strengthened when comparing individuals with similar jobs and personal characteristics.

(Table 4 about here)

In order to examine the impacts and the differences of determinants of earnings between the sexes, we now look at separate earnings regressions for men and women. The estimates of these regressions for self-employed and paid employees can be found in Table 4, and we will discuss the results in the same order as in section 2.

---

<sup>9</sup> For small numbers log points are approximately equal to percentage points. For larger numbers as here, one can calculate the approximate corresponding percentage points by the formula  $e^{\beta}-1$ , where  $\beta$  is the estimated coefficient.

### *(1) Human capital*

While women on average have less formal education than men, as reported in section 2, this does not appear to matter in self-employment. The estimated coefficients of the education dummies do not indicate a clear relationship between earnings and education for self-employed men, but tend to go in the expected direction (and are relatively large) for self-employed women. However, none of the education dummies is statistically significant in the self-employment earnings regressions of either men or women, nor are they jointly statistically significant. This is in line with Williams (2003) who also found education to be insignificant for self-employment earnings in Germany, even when attempting to control for education endogeneity and self-selection bias. Quite in contrast, looking at the respective estimates for paid employees shows the expected pattern. The wage generally rises with the level of formal education and formal education is jointly statistically significant at the 0.1 percent level for both sexes. In addition, men benefit more from education than women. Formal education hence clearly seems to explain earnings differences in paid employment but the same does not apply to self-employment.

Working experience also is neither significant for self-employed men nor self-employed women. Working intermissions only seem to be relevant for self-employed men's earnings, where having one additional year of working intermissions is linked to about 4.5 log points less income.<sup>10</sup> For self-employed women intermissions do not appear to be significant, neither in statistical nor in economic terms. Taken together, lower general working experience should not harm women's earnings in self-employment. In paid employment, however, we have the usual results in that working experience and working intermissions have the expected signs and are statistically significant at least at the 1 percent level for both men and women.

The crucial human capital variable for earnings in self-employment seems to be specific working experience measured as tenure at the current job, i.e. how long individuals have been running their current businesses. For men one additional year of tenure is associated with 1.8 log points additional income (average partial effect; significant at the 0.1 percent level). For women the respective average partial effect amounts to 2.9 log points but this is not significantly different from men's. Tenure thus would be able to partly explain gender earnings differences in self-employment. A problem with interpreting this variable, however, might be that reverse causality cannot be excluded since businesses with low profits are likely to be closed first. Tenure is also relevant for

---

<sup>10</sup> Since intermissions have been included in a non-linear manner the respective numbers relate to the average partial effects.

paid employees' earnings, and again it does not affect men's and women's wages differently.

Finally we find that the number of changes of profession has an unexpected negative impact on self-employment earnings, which is insignificant for women. This is contrary to Lazear's (2004) jack-of-all-trades view of entrepreneurship but is consistent with the empirical evidence of Åstebro/Thompson (2011) who also find a negative effect of diversity on entrepreneurial income.

### *(2) Work family balance and working hours*

Working hours have been included in the regressions in logarithmic form, so that the respective coefficients can be interpreted as elasticities (although they should not be over-interpreted since earnings and the number of hours supplied are usually jointly determined). The results in Table 4 show that a one percent increase in working time is associated with an increase of 0.51 and 0.79 percent in self-employment earnings for men and women, respectively. The elasticity of men's earnings with respect to hours is also lower in salaried employment (the respective elasticities are 0.84 and 0.94). This is quite interesting given that men work so much more than women.

Regarding the balance of working time scheduling with family and private interests, more flexibility is associated with higher, not lower, earnings for self-employed women and paid employees (and does not seem to matter for self-employed men's earnings). Therefore one may reject the idea that women trade off earnings against working time flexibility.

Family status and kids do not seem to matter in self-employed women's earnings estimations. The respective dummies are neither individually nor jointly statistically significant. This casts further doubt on the idea that family issues are decisive for self-employed women's lower earnings.

Finally career aspirations have no statistically significant impact on male and female earnings in self-employment. For paid employees the respective coefficients show an unexpected negative sign, but they are not statistically significant at the 5 percent level.

### *(3) Segregation*

Concerning the variables capturing segregation, the dummies for the 54 professional fields are jointly statistically significant at the 0.1 percent level in all four earnings regressions and so are those for the tasks occurring at work. Firm size, however, only plays a role for paid employees' earnings, with wages being higher in large firms, whereas for the self-employed we find no clear relationship between firm size and

earnings. We will analyze in section 4 to what extent these segregation variables contribute to explaining the gender earnings gap.

Taken together, the estimates presented in Table 4 indicate that the determinants of earnings differ substantially between self-employment and paid employment. Quite a few variables that are standard in earnings regressions for paid employees, such as formal education, general working experience and firm size, do not seem to affect earnings in self-employment. Correspondingly, it is much easier to explain the variance of wages in paid employment than that of earnings from self-employment. That said, the explanatory power of all four earnings regressions is highly satisfactory in terms of  $R^2$ , ranging from 45 percent (male self-employed) to 74 percent (female paid employees). Furthermore, with  $R^2$ s of 45 percent for men and 55 percent for women, the explanatory power of the self-employment estimations is still quite high given that some authors in the literature report relatively poor goodness-of-fit diagnostics for self-employment earnings regressions.<sup>11</sup>

A potential problem with our estimations is that the coefficients of the earnings regressions might be biased because individuals did not randomly select into self- and paid employment. We tried to address this issue by correcting for selection into self-employment, utilizing the Heckman (1979) approach and several exclusion restrictions like age, town size and existence of a working spouse. The coefficient of the inverse Mills-ratio (indicating selection) is positive and statistically significant in the regression for self-employed women but insignificant (and negative) in the regression for men. Coefficients of explanatory variables do not change much in both cases. For women, the education dummies exhibit larger coefficients; the dummy for having attended university is then statistically significant at the 5 percent level. However, our instruments are only jointly statistically significant at the 0.1 percent level in the model for male self-employed whereas in the female model they just reach a significance level of 10 percent. Moreover, the inverse Mills-ratios are highly correlated with the variables in the earnings regressions, so that their significance cannot be interpreted properly and subsample OLS may in fact be more robust (Puhani 2000). Unfortunately our data set does not provide us with better instruments to correct for selection, so that we decided to only present and make use of the estimations without selection correction (results of the selection correction regressions are available on request).

Note that our insights still hold when we perform a number of robustness checks. We restricted our sample to individuals aged 18 to 65, thus excluding the small group of

---

<sup>11</sup> Åstebro (2012, forthcoming), for instance, states that “[p]redictors of entrepreneurial earnings are typically weak, and the total explained variance, if one throws in everything and the kitchen sink (except fixed effects), is typically less than 10 percent.” See also Parker (2009: 380) for a similar statement.

older persons in employment (among whom the self-employed play a more prominent role) and an even smaller group of persons aged 15 to 17 (who are mainly employees). We further re-ran our estimations using hourly earnings instead of monthly earnings as the dependent variable (and dropping working hours as an explanatory variable); the results of these estimations are shown in Appendix Table 1. In order to check whether our estimated coefficients differ over the conditional earnings distribution, we also ran quantile regressions (at the 10<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, 50<sup>th</sup>, 75<sup>th</sup>, and 90<sup>th</sup> percentiles). In the pooled self-employment earnings regression the sex dummy indicating the earnings gap decreases with the quantiles (i.e. it is highest at the 10 percent quantile) but it does not differ in a statistically significant way between the various quantiles. In the separate earnings regressions for male and female self-employed the coefficients of the explanatory variables also do not differ over the conditional distribution of earnings (with the exception of some dummies for professional fields, tasks and place of residence). The results of these quantile regressions are not reported in tables but are available on request.

#### 4 DECOMPOSITION OF THE GENDER EARNINGS GAP

While the analyses in sections 2 and 3 indicate which variables may be important in explaining the gender earnings gap, we now want to quantify the actual extent of gender earnings differences these variables account for. We utilize Oaxaca-Blinder decompositions (Oaxaca 1973, Blinder 1973) of self-employed's and paid employees' earnings, alternatively with men and women as the reference group. As self-employed women are not present in several professional fields where self-employed men are (and vice versa), we have to exclude these fields and observations from our analysis for the self-employed (whereas this is not the case for paid employees).

(Table 5 about here)

The results of these decompositions reported in Table 5 make clear that the share of the gender earnings gap which can be traced back to endowment differences is smaller in self-employment than in paid employment. If men (women) form the reference group, in self-employment 38 (37) log points out of a total gender earnings gap of 72 log points can be explained by different endowments, which is a share of 53 (51) percent. In paid employment about 70 (73) percent of the gender wage gap can be explained. This is not surprising, however, given that we are less successful in explaining the variance in self-employment earnings than the variance in wages (remember that the R<sup>2</sup>s are much lower in the self-employment earnings regressions than in the wage regressions for paid employment).



Looking at the relative contribution of our three categories of determinants discussed above, it is obvious that family-work balance and working hours contribute most to the explanation of the earnings differences between the sexes for both occupational groups. For the self-employed these variables account for about 28 percent of the total gender earnings gap and 52 percent of the explained part of the gap if men are the reference group, and these figures are even higher (although the coefficients do not differ in a statistically significant way) if we take women as the reference group. In the group of paid employees, family-work balance and working hours account for 49 (55) percent of the gender pay gap and for 70 (76) percent of the explained gap when men (women) are the reference group. A closer look shows, however, that the importance of this category is entirely due to differences in working hours whereas working time flexibility, family status, kids and career aspirations only play a very minor role. It thus seems that family considerations do not matter for gender earnings differences in self-employment.<sup>12</sup> Interestingly even working hours can explain less of the gender earnings difference in self-employment than they can in paid employment. Altogether we thus conclude that family issues are not able to explain why the gender earnings gap is higher in self-employment. This is consistent with the findings in sections 2 and 3 that there are no differences in endowments or impacts of family and motivational variables between men and women which are likely to explain why women earn less than men in self-employment.

Concerning the role of human capital, about 13 percent of the gender earnings gap in self-employment can be ascribed to differences in human capital endowments between the sexes (which is equivalent to a quarter of the explained gap). This is considerably more than the respective shares in paid employment. Finally, the share of gender earnings differences in self-employment that can be explained by segregation heavily depends on whether we use men or women as the reference group. If women were remunerated in the same way as men, working in the same professional fields, performing the same tasks and running firms of the same size would reduce the gender earnings gap by almost 11 percent. However, when taking the opposite perspective (i.e. using women as the reference group), segregation plays a negligible and statistically insignificant role. In both cases, segregation seems to be of less importance for earnings differences in self-employment than in paid employment.

---

<sup>12</sup> Note that this is not due to working hours picking up the effects of family background. If we remove working hours from the model, family status and kids do not explain a higher share of the gender earnings gap.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

Utilizing a large and representative data set, this study has attempted to provide an explanation for the gender gap in self-employment earnings in Germany using the gender pay gap in paid employment as a benchmark. We find that the raw earnings differential between men and women amounts to 44 percent in self-employment whereas it is only 36 percent in paid employment. The gender gap is not only larger in self-employment, but also the part of it that cannot be explained by differences in the characteristics of men and women is larger in self-employment than in paid employment.

The largest contribution to explaining the gender earnings gap in self-employment is made by differences in working hours. More than a quarter of the difference in monthly earnings can be traced back to women working fewer hours than men. Differences in human capital endowments account for about 13 percent of the gap, and segregation into different jobs and firms can explain up to 11 percent of earnings differences (but the latter result is sensitive to using men or women as the reference group).

Interestingly, in contrast to working hours variables like family background, working time flexibility and career aspirations do not seem to contribute substantially to the gender earnings gap. Our results therefore suggest that self-employed women do not earn less because they are seeking work-family balance rather than profits, as is sometimes claimed.

Our finding that both the raw and the unexplained gender earnings gap are higher in self-employment than in paid employment (which confirms some previous studies for other countries) is somewhat puzzling given that, in contrast to paid employment, there can be no employer discrimination in self-employment. While a possible explanation could be that discrimination by customers, suppliers or capital providers plays a role, there is little empirical support for this from other studies. Nevertheless, in future research it would certainly be sensible to take financial (start-up) capital into account where possible (as has already been done in previous studies for other countries, e.g. by Hundley 2001, Walker 2009 and Rybczynski 2009). Other variables that could help explaining the remaining part of the gender earnings gap might be personality traits like attitude towards risk or competitiveness (for paid employees this has been explored e.g. by Semykina/Linz 2007). A limitation of our data (and of many other data sets) is that such information is not available<sup>13</sup> and that our data is only cross-sectional. Finally,

---

<sup>13</sup> This deficit is also lamented by Caliendo/Kritikos (2012: 323): "In an ideal world researchers would have access to data that includes personality characteristics and psychological traits, motivational factors and cognitive skills. In this respect the research community needs to find new ways to collect these data and make them available for entrepreneurship research."

obtaining suitable data and finding convincing instruments for selection correction would be helpful in future research to improve the reliability of our results.

Despite these caveats, however, our empirical analysis has been able to show that the determinants of earnings as well as the gender earnings gaps differ substantially between self-employment and paid employment. Our finding that both the raw and the unexplained gender earnings gap are higher in self-employment than in paid employment has two unpleasant political implications. First, promoting female self-employment seems to be no panacea for reducing earnings inequality between men and women. Second, as we know less about the causes of the earnings differential in self-employment, politicians eager to overcome this inequality find even fewer political starting-points here. It clearly needs further research before we are able to give policy advice whether and how to address the gender earnings gap in self-employment.

#### REFERENCES

- Altonji, J. G. and R. M. Blank (1999), 'Race and gender in the labor market', in: O. C. Ashenfelter and D. Card (eds.), *Handbook of Labor Economics*, Volume 3, Part C, Elsevier, pp. 3143–3259.
- Álvarez, G., C. Gradín and M. S. Otero (2009), 'Self-employment in Spain: Transition and earnings differential', Universidade de Vigo Departamento Economía Aplicada Documento de Trabajo 0907. Vigo.
- Aronson, R. L. (1991), *Self-employment. A labor market perspective*, ILR Press, Ithaca, N.Y.
- Åstebro, T. (2012 forthcoming), 'The returns to entrepreneurship', in: D. Cumming (ed.), *The Oxford handbook of entrepreneurial finance*, Oxford University Press. New York.
- Åstebro, T. and P. Thompson (2011), 'Entrepreneurs, Jacks of all trades or Hobos?', *Research Policy* 40, 637–649.
- Becker, G. S. (1985), 'Human Capital, Effort, and the Sexual Division of Labor', *Journal of Labor Economics* 3, 33-58.
- Blinder, A. S. (1973), 'Wage Discrimination: Reduced Form and Structural Estimates', *The Journal of Human Resources* 8, 436–455.
- Boden, R. J. (1999), 'Flexible Working Hours, Family Responsibilities, and Female Self-Employment', *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 58, 71–83.

- Caliendo, M. and A. S. Kritikos (2012), 'Searching for the Entrepreneurial Personality: New Evidence and Avenues for Further Research', *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 33, 319-324.
- Coleman, S. (2000), 'Access to Capital and Terms of Credit: A Comparison of Men- and Women-Owned Small Businesses', *Journal of Small Business Management* 38, 37–52.
- Du Rietz, A. and M. Henrekson (2000), 'Testing the Female Underperformance Hypothesis', *Small Business Economics* 14, 1–10.
- Eastough, K. and P. W. Miller (2004), 'The Gender Wage Gap in Paid- and Self-Employment in Australia', *Australian Economic Papers* 43, 257–276.
- European Commission (2011), 'Report on Progress on Equality between Women and Men in 2010. The Gender Balance in Business Leadership', Luxembourg.
- Fabowale, L., B. Orser and A. Riding (1995), 'Gender, Structural Factors, and Credit Terms Between Canadian Small Businesses and Financial Institutions', *Entrepreneurship: Theory & Practice* 19, 41–65.
- Fairlie, R. W. and A. M. Robb (2009), 'Gender differences in business performance: evidence from the Characteristics of Business Owners survey', *Small Business Economics* 33, 375–395.
- Fischer, E. M., A. R. Reuber and L. S. Dyke (1993), 'A theoretical overview and extension of research on sex, gender, and entrepreneurship', *Journal of Business Venturing* 8, 151–168.
- Gather, C., T. Schmidt and S. Ulbricht (2010), 'Der Gender Income Gap bei den Selbstständigen – Empirische Befunde', in: A. D. Bührmann and H. J. Pongratz (eds.), *Prekäres Unternehmertum. Unsicherheiten von selbstständiger Erwerbstätigkeit und Unternehmensgründung*, 1st edn, VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften. Wiesbaden, pp. 85–110.
- Gerlach, I. and C. Damhus (2010), 'Berufliche Selbständigkeit als Strategie zur Vereinbarkeit von Beruf und Familie? Übersicht zum Stand der Forschung', Forschungszentrum Familienbewusste Personalpolitik Arbeitspapier 6, Berlin, Münster.
- Gottschalk, S. and M. Niefert (2011), 'Gender differences in business success of German start-up firms', ZEW Discussion Paper 11-019, Mannheim.

- Hall, A. and M. Tiemann (2006), 'BIBB/BAuA Employment Survey of the Working Population on Qualification and Working Conditions in Germany 2006, suf\_1.0', Research Data Center at BIBB (ed.), GESIS Cologne, Germany (data access), Federal Institute of Vocational Education and Training, Bonn; DOI: 10.4232/1.4820.
- Heckman, J. J. (1979), 'Sample Selection Bias as a Specification Error', *Econometrica* 47, 153–161.
- Hundley, G. (2000), 'Male/Female Earnings Differences in Self-Employment: The Effects of Marriage, Children, and the Household Division of Labor', *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* 54, 95–114.
- Hundley, G. (2001), 'Why women earn less than men in self-employment', *Journal of Labor Research* 22, 817–829.
- Jungbauer-Gans, M. (1999), 'Der Lohnunterschied zwischen Frauen und Männern in selbständiger und abhängiger Beschäftigung', *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* 51, 364–390.
- Lauxen-Ulbrich, M. and R. Leicht (2005), 'Wie Frauen gründen und was sie unternehmen: Nationaler Report Deutschland. Teilprojekt: Statistiken über Gründerinnen und selbständige Frauen', Mannheim.
- Lazear, E. P. (2004), 'Balanced Skills and Entrepreneurship', *American Economic Review* 94, 208–211.
- Leung, D. (2006), 'The male/female earnings gap and female self-employment', *Journal of Socio-Economics* 35, 759–779.
- Lombard, K. V. (2001), 'Female self-employment and demand for flexible, nonstandard work schedules', *Economic Inquiry* 39, 214–237.
- Minniti, M. (2009), 'Gender Issues in Entrepreneurship', *Foundations and Trends in Entrepreneurship* 5, 497–621.
- Moore, R. L. (1983), 'Employer Discrimination: Evidence From Self-Employed Workers', *Review of Economics and Statistics* 65, 496–501.
- Oaxaca, R. (1973), 'Male-Female Wage Differentials in Urban Labor Markets', *International Economic Review* 14, 693–709.
- Orser, B. J., A. L. Riding and K. Manley (2006), 'Women Entrepreneurs and Financial Capital', *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice* 30, 643–665.

- Parker, S. C. (2009), *The Economics of Entrepreneurship*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK; New York.
- Puhani, P. (2000), 'The Heckman Correction for Sample Selection and Its Critique', *Journal of Economic Surveys* 14, 53–68.
- Rybczynski, K. (2009), 'Are Liquidity Constraints Holding Women Back? An Analysis of Gender in Self-Employment Earnings', *Journal of Economic Asymmetries* 6, 141–165.
- Semykina, A. and S. J. Linz (2007), 'Gender differences in personality and earnings: Evidence from Russia', *Journal of Economic Psychology* 28, 387–410.
- Tansel, A. (2000), 'Wage Earners, Self-Employed and Gender in the Informal Sector in Turkey', available at SSRN: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=263275>, DOI: 10.2139/ssrn.263275.
- Tiemann, M., H.-J. Schade, R. Helmrich, A. Hall, U. Braun and P. Bott (2008), 'Berufsfeld-Definitionen des BIBB. auf Basis der Klassifikation der Berufe 1992', Wissenschaftliche Diskussionspapiere des BIBB 105, Bonn.
- Verheul, I. and R. Thurik (2001), 'Start-Up Capital: "Does Gender Matter?"', *Small Business Economics* 16, 329–346.
- Walker, J. R. (2009), 'Earnings, Effort, and Work Flexibility of Self-Employed Women and Men: The Case of St. Croix County, Wisconsin', *Journal of Labor Research* 30, 269–288.
- Weichselbaumer, D. and R. Winter-Ebmer (2005), 'A Meta-Analysis of the International Gender Wage Gap', *Journal of Economic Surveys* 19, 479–511.
- Williams, D. R. (2003), 'Returns to Education and Experience in Self-Employment: Evidence from Germany', *Schmollers Jahrbuch*, 139–150.
- Zopf, S. and M. Tiemann (2010), 'BIBB/BAuA-Employment Survey 2005/06', *Schmollers Jahrbuch* 130, 409–420.

**Table 1:** Distribution of earnings among men and women in self- and paid employment

	Self-employed			Paid Employees		
	male	female	difference (in %)	male	female	difference (in %)
Gross monthly earnings (in €)						
Mean	4,179	2,324	-44.4	3,176	2,023	-36.3
25 <sup>th</sup> percentile	2,000	800	-60.0	2,100	1,200	-42.9
Median	3,000	1,650	-45.0	2,800	1,900	-32.1
75 <sup>th</sup> percentile	5,000	3,000	-40.0	3,800	2,686	-29.3
Hourly earnings (in €)						
Mean	21.5	15.3	-28.9	17.1	13.8	-19.4
25 <sup>th</sup> percentile	10.0	6.2	-37.8	11.6	9.3	-20.0
Median	15.5	10.8	-30.2	15.5	12.8	-17.5
75 <sup>th</sup> percentile	23.3	18.6	-20.0	20.4	17.0	-16.4
No. of observations	972	496		7,091	6,884	

Notes: The data set used is the BIBB/BAuA Employment Survey 2006. Hourly earnings are calculated by dividing gross monthly earnings by average weekly working hours times 4.3.

**Table 2:** Descriptive statistics on the characteristics of self-employed and paid employees

	Self-employed		Paid employees	
	male	female	male	female
no vocational degree ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.02	0.05	0.04	0.06
no vocational degree & FHR/Abitur ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.04	0.04	0.03	0.02
vocational training ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.26	0.30	0.48	0.51
vocational training & FHR/Abitur ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.11	0.15	0.08	0.12
vocational college ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.14	0.03	0.09	0.04
university or university of applied science degree ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.43	0.43	0.28	0.25
working experience ( <i>in years</i> )	22.9 (12.0)	21.2 (11.0)	20.1 (10.8)	20.2 (11.1)
working intermissions ( <i>in years</i> )	0.93 (1.94)	2.83 (4.32)	0.96 (1.88)	2.59 (4.02)
tenure at current job ( <i>in years</i> )	10.2 (9.1)	7.9 (8.1)	8.6 (8.0)	7.9 (7.5)
number of changes of profession	2.08 (1.98)	2.10 (1.63)	1.91 (1.77)	1.64 (1.56)
working hours per week	49.4 (15.9)	37.1 (17.1)	43.2 (9.2)	33.6 (11.8)
working time flexibility: never ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.10	0.05	0.08	0.06
working time flexibility: sometimes ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.41	0.30	0.34	0.29
working time flexibility: often ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.50	0.65	0.59	0.66
married ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.56	0.52	0.54	0.50
single ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.31	0.30	0.36	0.32
divorced ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.13	0.15	0.09	0.15
widowed ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.003	0.03	0.01	0.03
civil union ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.004	0.002	0.002	0.002
kids aged 0-2 ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.08	0.06	0.09	0.06
kids aged 3-5 ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.08	0.10	0.10	0.08
kids aged 6-17 ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.26	0.32	0.26	0.31
kids aged 18 and older ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.11	0.13	0.10	0.14
high career aspirations ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.54	0.58	0.58	0.47
high satisfaction with income ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.71	0.63	0.74	0.69
number of tasks occurring at work	9.80 (3.12)	9.17 (3.22)	8.79 (3.03)	8.12 (3.51)
firm size: 1 employee ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.44	0.57	0.003	0.004
firm size: 2 employees ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.12	0.11	0.01	0.02
firm size: 3-4 employees ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.16	0.10	0.02	0.05
firm size: 5-9 employees ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.14	0.10	0.06	0.12
firm size: 10-19 employees ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.07	0.06	0.10	0.13
firm size: 20-49 employees ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.04	0.04	0.16	0.18
firm size: 50-99 employees ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.01	0.01	0.13	0.13
firm size: 100 employees and more ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.02	0.03	0.53	0.38



---

*Notes: The data set used is the BIBB/BAuA Employment Survey 2006. Std. dev. in brackets (except for dummy variables). FHR (Fachhochschulreife) is the German advanced technical college entrance qualification, Abitur the German university entrance qualification. Working time flexibility was measured by the frequency at which interviewees had succeeded in balancing working time scheduling with family and private interests. The number of employees reported in the firm size variable includes the owner of the firm.*

**Table 3:** OLS monthly earnings regressions, men and women pooled

<i>dependent variable: logarithm of gross monthly earnings</i>	Self-employed		Paid employees	
	univariate	multivariate	univariate	multivariate
female ( <i>dummy</i> )	-0.722*** (0.049)	-0.329*** (0.049)	-0.513*** (0.010)	-0.125*** (0.008)
<i>formal education (reference: no vocational degree)</i>				
no vocational degree & FHR/Abitur ( <i>dummy</i> )		-0.154 (0.147)		-0.011 (0.031)
vocational training ( <i>dummy</i> )		0.036 (0.122)		0.104*** (0.017)
vocational training & FHR/Abitur ( <i>dummy</i> )		0.074 (0.132)		0.156*** (0.019)
vocational college ( <i>dummy</i> )		0.055 (0.128)		0.153*** (0.020)
university or university of applied science degree ( <i>dummy</i> )		0.154 (0.126)		0.284*** (0.019)
working experience ( <i>in years</i> )		0.009 (0.007)		0.024*** (0.001)
working experience squared		-0.0001 (0.0001)		-0.0004*** (0.00003)
working intermissions ( <i>in years</i> )		-0.028** (0.013)		-0.020*** (0.002)
working intermissions squared		0.0003 (0.001)		0.001*** (0.0001)
tenure at current job ( <i>in years</i> )		0.033*** (0.006)		0.018*** (0.001)
tenure at current job squared		-0.001*** (0.0002)		-0.0004*** (0.00004)
number of changes of profession		-0.031*** (0.010)		-0.011*** (0.002)
working hours per week ( <i>in logarithms</i> )		0.675*** (0.054)		0.937*** (0.013)
<i>working time flexibility (reference: never)</i>				
sometimes ( <i>dummy</i> )		0.047 (0.073)		0.056*** (0.013)
often ( <i>dummy</i> )		0.106 (0.075)		0.076*** (0.013)
<i>family status (reference: married)</i>				
single ( <i>dummy</i> )		-0.044 (0.050)		-0.017** (0.008)
divorced ( <i>dummy</i> )		-0.053 (0.058)		-0.016* (0.010)
widowed ( <i>dummy</i> )		-0.205 (0.190)		0.002 (0.025)
civil union ( <i>dummy</i> )		0.169 (0.120)		-0.018 (0.060)

kids aged 0-2 ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.144*		0.037***
	(0.076)		(0.013)
kids aged 3-5 ( <i>dummy</i> )	-0.016		0.013
	(0.071)		(0.011)
kids aged 6-17 ( <i>dummy</i> )	-0.021		-0.001
	(0.043)		(0.007)
kids aged 18 and older ( <i>dummy</i> )	-0.006		-0.030***
	(0.060)		(0.010)
high career aspirations ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.045		-0.009
	(0.038)		(0.006)
professional field (54 <i>dummies</i> )	Yes***		Yes***
tasks occurring at work (17 <i>dummies</i> )	Yes***		Yes***
<i>firm size</i> (reference: 5-9 employees)			
1 employee ( <i>dummy</i> )	-0.087		-0.021
	(0.058)		(0.059)
2 employees ( <i>dummy</i> )	-0.044		-0.069*
	(0.071)		(0.038)
3-4 employees ( <i>dummy</i> )	-0.002		-0.012
	(0.063)		(0.019)
10-19 employees ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.081		0.050***
	(0.079)		(0.014)
20-49 employees ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.125		0.087***
	(0.105)		(0.013)
50-99 employees ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.124		0.101***
	(0.190)		(0.014)
100 employees and more ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.139		0.197***
	(0.168)		(0.012)
Constant	8.055***	4.393***	7.923***
	(0.024)	(0.301)	(0.006)
Number of observations	1,468	1,468	13,975
R <sup>2</sup>	0.15	0.52	0.73

Notes: The data set used is the BIBB/BAuA Employment Survey 2006. Robust standard errors in brackets. \*/\*\*/\*\* indicates statistical significance at the 10/5/1% level. Additional control variables included are: migration background (1 *dummy*), disability status (3 *dummies*) and place of residence (16 "Bundesländer" *dummies*). FHR (Fachhochschulreife) is the German advanced technical college entrance qualification, Abitur the German university entrance qualification. Working time flexibility was measured by the frequency at which interviewees had succeeded in balancing working time scheduling with family and private interests. The number of employees reported in the firm size variable includes the owner of the firm.

**Table 4:** OLS monthly earnings regressions, men and women separately

<i>dependent variable: logarithm of gross monthly earnings</i>	Self-employed		Paid employees	
	male	female	male	female
<i>formal education (reference: no vocational degree)</i>				
no vocational degree & FHR/Abitur ( <i>dummy</i> )	-0.136 (0.180)	-0.023 (0.276)	0.029 (0.044)	-0.092** (0.041)
vocational training ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.063 (0.145)	0.065 (0.218)	0.167*** (0.023)	0.048** (0.023)
vocational training & FHR/Abitur ( <i>dummy</i> )	-0.040 (0.155)	0.210 (0.238)	0.199*** (0.028)	0.109*** (0.026)
vocational college ( <i>dummy</i> )	-0.010 (0.151)	0.275 (0.250)	0.206*** (0.027)	0.113*** (0.032)
university or university of applied science ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.095 (0.152)	0.301 (0.225)	0.371*** (0.027)	0.203*** (0.026)
working experience ( <i>in years</i> )	0.012 (0.008)	0.001 (0.015)	0.026*** (0.002)	0.023*** (0.002)
working experience squared	-0.0002 (0.0002)	0.0001 (0.0003)	-0.0004*** (0.00004)	-0.0003*** (0.00004)
working intermissions ( <i>in years</i> )	-0.046** (0.020)	-0.002 (0.018)	-0.023*** (0.004)	-0.015*** (0.003)
working intermissions squared	0.001 (0.002)	-0.0004 (0.001)	0.001*** (0.0002)	0.0004*** (0.0001)
tenure at current job ( <i>in years</i> )	0.027*** (0.008)	0.041*** (0.013)	0.016*** (0.002)	0.018*** (0.002)
tenure at current job squared	-0.001** (0.0002)	-0.001* (0.0004)	-0.0004*** (0.0001)	-0.0004*** (0.0001)
number of changes of profession	-0.027** (0.011)	-0.023 (0.023)	-0.008*** (0.003)	-0.014*** (0.003)
working hours per week ( <i>in logarithms</i> )	0.507*** (0.069)	0.786*** (0.092)	0.839*** (0.027)	0.940*** (0.016)
<i>working time flexibility (reference: never)</i>				
sometimes ( <i>dummy</i> )	-0.005 (0.080)	0.317** (0.160)	0.042** (0.018)	0.064*** (0.020)
often ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.012 (0.083)	0.380** (0.156)	0.069*** (0.018)	0.072*** (0.020)
<i>family status (reference: married)</i>				
single ( <i>dummy</i> )	-0.113* (0.058)	0.053 (0.110)	-0.063*** (0.011)	0.024** (0.012)
divorced ( <i>dummy</i> )	-0.108* (0.065)	0.044 (0.118)	-0.055*** (0.015)	0.011 (0.013)
widowed ( <i>dummy</i> )	-0.277** (0.130)	-0.141 (0.213)	0.036 (0.046)	-0.002 (0.030)
civil union ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.065 (0.190)	0.269 (0.375)	-0.064 (0.074)	0.040 (0.086)
kids aged 0-2 ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.129 (0.083)	0.120 (0.172)	0.049*** (0.015)	-0.005 (0.022)

kids aged 3-5 ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.030 (0.077)	-0.006 (0.145)	0.012 (0.013)	-0.001 (0.019)
kids aged 6-17 ( <i>dummy</i> )	-0.027 (0.048)	-0.059 (0.089)	0.000 (0.010)	-0.012 (0.012)
kids aged 18 and older ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.004 (0.072)	-0.156 (0.126)	-0.034** (0.014)	-0.029** (0.013)
high career aspirations ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.047 (0.042)	0.006 (0.085)	-0.009 (0.009)	-0.016* (0.009)
professional field (54 <i>dummies</i> )	Yes***	Yes***	Yes***	Yes***
tasks occurring at work (17 <i>dummies</i> )	Yes***	Yes***	Yes***	Yes***
<i>firm size</i> (reference: 5-9 employees)				
1 employee ( <i>dummy</i> )	-0.075 (0.064)	-0.113 (0.150)	0.133* (0.074)	-0.137* (0.083)
2 employees ( <i>dummy</i> )	-0.096 (0.077)	0.057 (0.175)	-0.024 (0.056)	-0.093* (0.050)
3-4 employees ( <i>dummy</i> )	-0.036 (0.071)	0.130 (0.162)	0.032 (0.032)	-0.029 (0.023)
10-19 employees ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.073 (0.090)	0.091 (0.181)	0.051** (0.022)	0.047*** (0.018)
20-49 employees ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.197* (0.115)	-0.044 (0.242)	0.105*** (0.021)	0.079*** (0.017)
50-99 employees ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.143 (0.197)	-0.401 (0.287)	0.111*** (0.023)	0.108*** (0.018)
100 employees and more ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.375* (0.197)	-0.222 (0.277)	0.210*** (0.020)	0.188*** (0.016)
Constant	5.390*** (0.362)	2.864*** (0.615)	3.769*** (0.114)	3.267*** (0.093)
Number of observations	972	496	7,091	6,884
R <sup>2</sup>	0.45	0.55	0.62	0.74

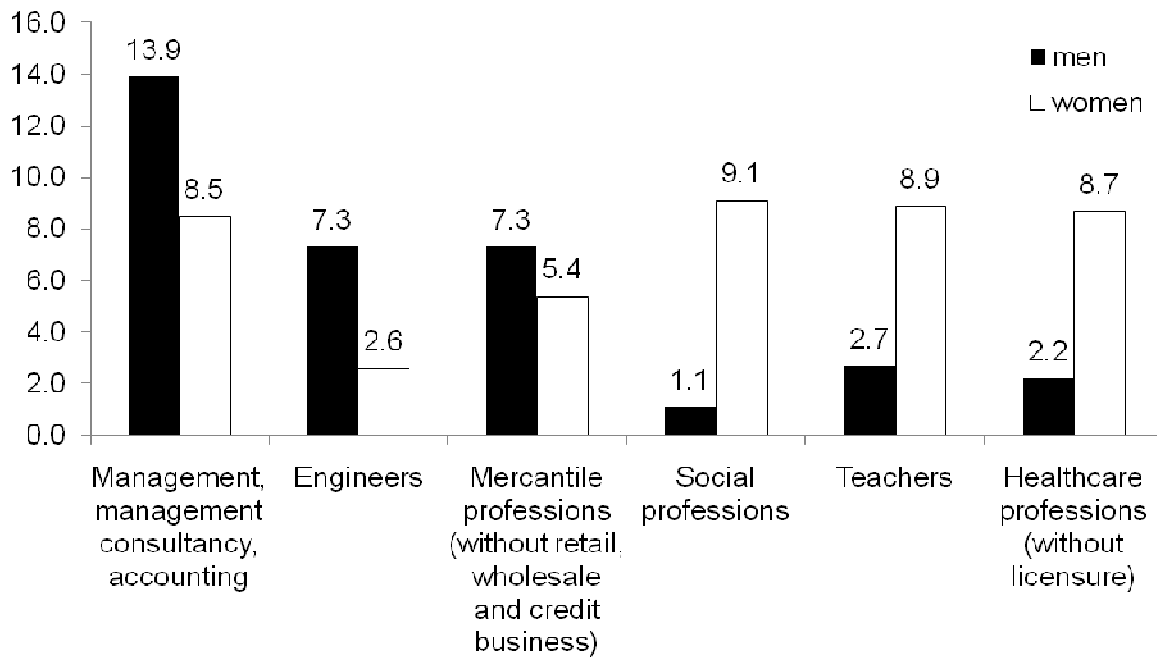
Notes: The data set used is the BIBB/BAuA Employment Survey 2006. Robust standard errors in brackets. \*/\*\*/\*\* indicates statistical significance at the 10/5/1% level. Additional control variables included are: migration background (1 *dummy*), disability status (3 *dummies*) and place of residence (16 "Bundesländer" *dummies*). FHR (Fachhochschulreife) is the German advanced technical college entrance qualification, Abitur the German university entrance qualification. Working time flexibility was measured by the frequency at which interviewees had succeeded in balancing working time scheduling with family and private interests. The number of employees reported in the firm size variable includes the owner of the firm.

**Table 5:** Oaxaca-Blinder decompositions of the gender earnings gap for self-employed and paid employees

<i>dependent variable: logarithm of gross monthly earnings</i>	Self-employed (N=1,207)			Paid employees (N=13,975)		
	log points	share of total gap (in percent)	share of explained gap (in percent)	log points	share of total gap (in percent)	share of explained gap (in percent)
<i>reference group: men</i>						
gender earnings gap explained	0.72*** (0.06)			0.51*** (0.01)		
	0.38*** (0.06)	53.3		0.36*** (0.01)	70.4	
human capital	0.09*** (0.03)	13.1	24.6	0.03*** (0.01)	6.5	9.2
family-work balance & hours	0.20*** (0.03)	27.8	52.2	0.25*** (0.01)	49.1	69.7
<i>thereof:</i> working hours	0.18*** (0.03)	25.6	48.0	0.25*** (0.01)	49.3	70.0
segregation	0.08** (0.04)	10.9	20.5	0.07*** (0.01)	14.3	20.2
control variables	0.01 (0.01)	1.5	2.7	0.003* (0.002)	0.6	0.9
<i>reference group: women</i>						
gender earnings gap explained	0.72*** (0.06)			0.51*** (0.01)		
	0.37*** (0.07)	51.2		0.37*** (0.01)	72.5	
human capital	0.10*** (0.04)	13.3	25.9	0.03*** (0.004)	5.1	7.1
family-work balance & hours	0.26*** (0.04)	36.6	71.4	0.28*** (0.01)	54.9	75.7
<i>thereof:</i> working hours	0.27*** (0.04)	37.2	72.6	0.28*** (0.01)	55.2	76.2
segregation	0.01 (0.05)	0.8	1.6	0.06*** (0.01)	11.9	16.4
control variables	0.004 (0.02)	0.6	1.1	0.003* (0.001)	0.5	0.7

Notes: The data set used is the BIBB/BAuA Employment Survey 2006. Robust standard errors in brackets. \*\*\*/\*\*\* indicates statistical significance at the 10/5/1% level. Control variables are: migration background, disability status, place of residence.

**Figure 1:** Share of self-employed men and women working in certain professional fields (in percent)



*Notes: The data set used is the BIBB/BAuA Employment Survey 2006. The figure displays those three out of 54 professional fields where most self-employed men are active in and those three professional fields where most self-employed women are active in.*

## APPENDIX

**Appendix Table 1:** OLS hourly earnings regressions, men and women separately

<i>dependent variable: logarithm of gross hourly earnings</i>	Self-employed		Paid employees	
	male	female	male	female
<i>formal education (reference: no vocational degree)</i>				
no vocational degree & FHR/Abitur ( <i>dummy</i> )	-0.051 (0.185)	0.067 (0.270)	0.080* (0.042)	-0.072* (0.040)
vocational training ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.062 (0.154)	0.055 (0.220)	0.157*** (0.023)	0.046** (0.023)
vocational training & FHR/Abitur ( <i>dummy</i> )	-0.000 (0.165)	0.222 (0.240)	0.199*** (0.028)	0.108*** (0.026)
vocational college ( <i>dummy</i> )	-0.003 (0.159)	0.303 (0.261)	0.197*** (0.027)	0.111*** (0.032)
university or university of applied science ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.096 (0.161)	0.323 (0.228)	0.360*** (0.027)	0.200*** (0.026)
working experience ( <i>in years</i> )	0.006 (0.008)	-0.002 (0.016)	0.025*** (0.002)	0.023*** (0.002)
working experience squared	-0.0001 (0.0002)	0.0002 (0.0003)	-0.0004*** (0.00004)	-0.0003*** (0.00004)
working intermissions ( <i>in years</i> )	-0.048** (0.021)	-0.002 (0.019)	-0.021*** (0.004)	-0.014*** (0.003)
working intermissions squared	0.001 (0.002)	-0.0003 (0.001)	0.001*** (0.0002)	0.0004*** (0.0001)
tenure at current job ( <i>in years</i> )	0.026*** (0.008)	0.038*** (0.014)	0.016*** (0.002)	0.017*** (0.002)
tenure at current job squared	-0.001** (0.0002)	-0.001 (0.0007)	-0.0004*** (0.0001)	-0.0004*** (0.0001)
number of changes of profession	-0.022* (0.012)	-0.018 (0.023)	-0.008*** (0.002)	-0.014*** (0.003)
<i>working time flexibility (reference: never)</i>				
sometimes ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.058 (0.084)	0.309* (0.160)	0.053*** (0.018)	0.071*** (0.020)
often ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.198** (0.085)	0.422*** (0.151)	0.094*** (0.018)	0.086*** (0.020)
<i>family status (reference: married)</i>				
single ( <i>dummy</i> )	-0.083 (0.061)	0.020 (0.108)	-0.057*** (0.011)	0.016 (0.012)
divorced ( <i>dummy</i> )	-0.149** (0.069)	-0.044 (0.117)	-0.053*** (0.015)	0.001 (0.013)
widowed ( <i>dummy</i> )	-0.300*** (0.103)	-0.181 (0.215)	0.036 (0.046)	-0.007 (0.030)
civil union ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.075 (0.224)	0.194 (0.367)	-0.074 (0.081)	0.040 (0.088)



kids aged 0-2 ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.152* (0.086)	0.172 (0.170)	0.050*** (0.016)	0.003 (0.022)
kids aged 3-5 ( <i>dummy</i> )	-0.0003 (0.079)	0.010 (0.143)	0.013 (0.014)	0.012 (0.018)
kids aged 6-17 ( <i>dummy</i> )	-0.029 (0.050)	-0.038 (0.090)	0.003 (0.010)	-0.001 (0.011)
kids aged 18 and older ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.034 (0.072)	-0.153 (0.130)	-0.032** (0.014)	-0.029** (0.013)
high career aspirations ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.031 (0.044)	0.004 (0.085)	-0.011 (0.009)	-0.018** (0.009)
professional field (54 <i>dummies</i> )	Yes***	Yes***	Yes***	Yes***
tasks occurring at work (17 <i>dummies</i> )	Yes***	Yes***	Yes***	Yes***
<i>firm size</i> (reference: 5-9 employees)				
1 employee ( <i>dummy</i> )	-0.019 (0.068)	-0.111 (0.152)	0.130* (0.075)	-0.130 (0.082)
2 employees ( <i>dummy</i> )	-0.077 (0.081)	0.044 (0.178)	-0.021 (0.055)	-0.089* (0.050)
3-4 employees ( <i>dummy</i> )	-0.047 (0.076)	0.123 (0.165)	0.026 (0.032)	-0.027 (0.023)
10-19 employees ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.081 (0.089)	0.085 (0.185)	0.048** (0.022)	0.044** (0.018)
20-49 employees ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.221* (0.112)	-0.028 (0.242)	0.100*** (0.021)	0.075*** (0.017)
50-99 employees ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.161 (0.217)	-0.401 (0.288)	0.103*** (0.022)	0.102*** (0.018)
100 employees and more ( <i>dummy</i> )	0.422* (0.214)	-0.153 (0.277)	0.206*** (0.020)	0.181*** (0.016)
Constant	2.024*** (0.293)	0.728 (0.553)	1.736*** (0.060)	1.608*** (0.076)
Number of observations	972	496	7,091	6,884
R <sup>2</sup>	0.38	0.40	0.48	0.47

Notes: The data set used is the BIBB/BAuA Employment Survey 2006. Robust standard errors in brackets. \*/\*\*/\*\* indicates statistical significance at the 10/5/1% level. Additional control variables included are: migration background (1 *dummy*), disability status (3 *dummies*) and place of residence (16 "Bundesländer" *dummies*). FHR (Fachhochschulreife) is the German advanced technical college entrance qualification, Abitur the German university entrance qualification. Working time flexibility was measured by the frequency at which interviewees had succeeded in balancing working time scheduling with family and private interests. The number of employees reported in the firm size variable includes the owner of the firm.