

University of Essex

Research Methods and Professional Practice

Unit 10: Research Proposal Presentation

Evaluation of ideological factors of family care work in capitalist and former communist countries in Europe on the gender pay gap in the technology sector.

Michael Geiger

Student ID: 12687713

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Introduction

Hello, my name is Michael Geiger. In this presentation I discuss the Research Proposal as part of the Research Methods and Professional Practice module of the Cyber Security Master's program at the University of Essex. The aim of the research is the evaluation of ideological factors of family care work in capitalist and former communist countries of Europe on the gender pay gap in the technology sector.

In the following, the importance of this subject area and the associated research is emphasized and the resulting research questions and goals are developed. In addition, central literature and the methodology of the research design are explained. Ethical considerations will be reflected and finally the planned artefacts and a planned time schedule are presented.

Significance & Research Problem

In 1995, the resolution of the UN World Conference on Women to promote gender equality in all areas of society was passed, to which 189 of the world's 193 countries have committed themselves (United Nations, 1995). Equal pay is a central part of this gender equality. However, when examining the gender pay gaps in European countries, it is striking to see that twenty of twenty-eight countries still have double-digit percentage wage gap (Eurostat, 2022).

Regarding the technology sector, it can be observed that both genders earn more on average than in other sectors. Taking the information and communication technology (ICT) sector as an example, 38% of women and 46% of men in ICT are in the top 5th income quintile. In non-ICT sectors, this applies to only 12% of women and 27% of men (EIGE, 2020). With regard to the entire vertical segregation, it can also be stated

that the ICT sector tends to show a higher income distribution for both genders than in comparison to other sectors. In addition, Beckert (2020) argues that the technology sector represents a steadily growing labour market with a continuous demand for skilled workers. The technology sector thus points to an attractive labour market.

However, it should be noted that there are significant differences in relation to the segregation of the gender pay gap in Europe. With an unadjusted gender pay gap of 25%, Germany has an above-average pay gap in the technology sector (Honeypot, 2018). The gender pay gap is also above the state average in Italy at 17.4% and Belgium at 11.8%. On the other hand, Latvia has a gender pay gap in the technology sector, which at 10.9% is below the state average of 17%. This above-average gender pay gap in the technology sector in some countries can lead to women perceiving the technology sector as an unattractive industry and consequently avoiding it.

A decisive factor for the gender pay gap in Germany is the family-related career break of women (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2017). At the same time, significant regional differences in gender-specific wage equality can be found in Germany. In 2020, the unadjusted gender pay gap in western Germany was 19%, more than three times as high as in eastern Germany (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2022).

Even more than 30 years after the end of the Soviet Union and the resulting move away from communist systems, there are still differences between West and East Germany with regard to the gender pay gap (Schrenker & Wrohlich, 2022). The reason for the significant differences in the gender pay gap between East and West Germany is assumed to be the different social perception of family care work due to previously prevailing divergent ideologies (Hobler et al., 2020). However, this theory

is not subject to any international comparative study to refute or verify the assumption.

Research Questions

In order to be able to evaluate whether the theory of the ideologically determined social perception of family care work as an influencing factor on the gender pay gap can be verified, a historical and current study of the capitalist countries of Europe in comparison to the former communist countries has to be carried out. The first central research question is therefore, do the former communist countries of Europe show differences in relation to the gender pay gap compared to traditionally capitalist European countries?

With this question, a backward-looking investigation of the development of the gender pay gap in the countries of Europe is planned, so that the scientifically necessary condition of the theory can be determined.

In order to be able to scientifically confirm or disprove the theory in the further course, the second central question follows, can the theory of the different social perceptions of family care work between East and West Germany be confirmed as the cause of the prevailing regional differences in the gender pay gaps in the technology sector in an international comparison? The countries highlighted in the first question are to be examined as examples with regard to former ideologies in comparison to the prevailing gender pay gaps.

Aims & Objectives

The questions result in clear aims and objectives that must be achieved in order to find the results of the research topic. First an identification of outstanding gender pay gap countries in Europe in a positive and negative context needs to be done, as well as a comparison of the gender pay gap rates from countries of the former Soviet Union with capitalist countries.

On the one hand, this identification enables a segregation of representative countries of both ideologies. On this basis, an in-depth investigation can be carried out in the next step using exemplary countries. On the other hand, these aims form the first research question and thus the scientifically necessary condition.

In the further course, an evaluation of the historical development of the gender pay gaps in selected European countries will be carried out. This task serves to work towards the final and scientifically sufficient condition to be able to evaluate the validity of the underlying theory. Based on an analysis of statistical significance to verify or falsify the theory in the macroscopic context and in the microscopic context including horizontal and vertical segregation, a validated and verifiable result will be developed.

The macroscopic view, in which all European countries are included, is intended to provide information as to whether a general trend can be observed in relation to the theory. However, the macroscopic view should be treated with caution, since the results can be distorted due to different developments in the respective countries. Therefore, based on the previous aims, a microscopic evaluation of selected countries is planned, which examines the vertical income differences between women and men, but also deals with horizontal segregation.

Key Literature

As a preparation of the research project, a literature analysis was carried out. The basis of the research project is the theory of Hobler et al. (2020), who essentially states that 'the division of Germany in the GDR and the FRG produced two very different political systems. This was accompanied by diverging cultural values, which are particularly reflected in the role of women in the labour market'.

It can also be stated that there are regional socio-economic differences due to childcare (Schober & Stahl, 2014). However, while Hamjediers (2021) argues that gender ideologies can have an impact on the gender pay gap, Brainerd (2000) comes to the conclusion that the gender pay gap was comparable to capitalist systems even in communist times. This could lead to the assumption that the ideology of communism has no influence on wage equality. However, it must be taken into account that the departure from communism has increased the gender pay gap in the respective countries (Newell & Reilly, 2001).

A statistical study of the national gender pay gaps shows that a large number of former communist countries have a general gender pay gap below the European average (Honeypot, 2018). However, in relation to the technology sector, particularly high wage differentials can be observed.

Two assumptions can be made from this. On the one hand, some ex-communist states point out that ideology can influence the gender pay gap. On the other hand, the increased wage differentials in the technology sector indicate that this cannot be generalized.

In the case of Poland, for example, it can be seen that the technology sector is particularly vertically segregated (Gomolka, 2018). With regard to childcare, it can be

observed that women in high-income households perform childcare more intensively (Cukrowska-Torzweska & Lovasz, 2020).

However, this influencing factor on the gender pay gap, which can be observed in the high-income technology sector, is not limited to the former communist countries and can also be found in Italy, for example (Kowalczyk, 2021). It can therefore be assumed that instead of ideological factors in childcare, socio-economic factors play a more important role in the gender pay gap in the technology sector. A more detailed listing of the key literature can be found in the appendix of the transcript.

Methodology & Research Design

As can be seen from the previous presentation of the research proposal, there should be a strict orientation towards the scientific method. The questions are formed on the basis of the observation of the Europe-wide diverging gender pay gaps. Background research has found that there are significant regional differences between West and East Germany and as one theory to justify this observation this is due to ideological discrepancies as a result of past communist influence in East Germany.

On this basis, hypotheses are formed as to whether the theory can be confirmed or disproved by an investigation at European level. To test the hypothesis, a conceptual approach is pursued, since the aim is to examine current data and literature with regard to the observed phenomenon (Zins, 2007).

A deductive reasoning will be followed. The aim is therefore to determine a sufficient burden of proof for evaluating the theory in an international context.

Due to the scope and the multidimensionality of the gender pay gap, as well as taking into account that reducing the reasons for the gender pay gap to a decisive influencing factor should be rated as insufficient, the research project is carried out as exploratory research.

A mixed method research consisting of quantitative and qualitative investigation is chosen for the analysis and conclusion. With the help of the quantitative investigation, the statistical data can be analysed in order to be able to develop a basic evaluation of the assumptions. The qualitative investigation draws on existing Surveys and Research Analysis to evaluate evidence supporting the theory.

Ethical Considerations & Risk Assessment

Since the research proposal is to be based exclusively on existing literature in this module, no ethical considerations in the context of people involved need to be considered. However, fundamental ethical principles of scientific research must be observed. At no time should there be any bias regarding the outcome of the research project. A one-sided interpretation of the determined results must also be avoided. Also the transparency of the data used, the procedure and the evaluation represents a central part of scientific quality. In addition to the fundamental ethical concerns, there are some risks in relation to the research project that should also be taken into account.

Results could be distorted by a generalized view. A reflected handling of statistical values and distinction between necessary and sufficient justification should be followed. Also apparently valid results could be superimposed by unconsidered dominant factors.

The Evaluation of the literature could lead to contrary conclusions. A detailed discussion and qualitative assessment of the significance of the results is therefore absolutely necessary.

A targeted demarcation in the literature evaluation in relation to the gender pay gap in general and explicitly in the technology sector could be difficult. Again, a transparent evaluation and goal-oriented discussion is necessary. Also validity problems as well as data overload could be a challenge.

Description of Artefacts:

Based on the research proposals presented, clearly planned artefacts result. These are on the one hand a qualitative structuring of the existing literature and analysis of the focal points found in relation to the gender pay gap in the technology sector and a quantitative evaluation of the European gender pay gaps considering the capitalist and former communist states.

On the other hand a qualitative investigation of European ideological differences in child care and its impact on the gender pay gap in the technology sector will be evaluated as well as an evaluation of the theory of Hobler et al. (2020) on the different social perceptions of family work due to earlier prevailing divergent ideologies as a significant factor in the gender pay gap.

Timeline:

Finally, a schedule is presented that takes the individual work steps into account.

The timeline presented here is intended to give an impression of the planned time.

One week is scheduled at the beginning of the project for further literature research. This is followed by a classification and structuring of the literature, for which one week is available. A quantitative analysis and statistical evaluation will then occur, which should not take more than a week.

As a result, it may be necessary to conduct further literature research on individual countries. Up to two weeks are planned for the second literature search. This is followed by the qualitative analysis, which should take place within two weeks. Based on the results obtained, it is now possible to create a first outline, which may indicate gaps in the literature. One week is planned for the creation of the first draft and for closing any gaps in the literature.

Finally, the final evaluation of the research results and the preparation of the research paper follow. Up to eight weeks are planned for this step. The project is completed with a revision and correction of the research paper within two weeks. The project thus comprises a total of 20 weeks.

Thank you for listening to my presentation of the project proposal evaluation of ideological factors of family care work in capitalist and former communist countries in Europe on the gender pay gap in the technology sector.

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Appendix

Literature Review

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