

Universität Mannheim  
Lehrstuhl für ABWL und Corporate Governance  
68131 Mannheim

**Besucheradresse:**  
L9, 1-2  
68161 Mannheim  
Telefon 0621/181-1595

## Bachelor Theses FSS 2025: Topics

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**TOPIC NR1:**      **Equal Pay? The Gender Wage Gap in Germany**  
Advisor: Larissa Ginzinger

**TOPIC NR2:**      **Women on Boards? Board Gender Diversity in Germany**  
Advisor: Larissa Ginzinger



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**TOPIC NR1: Equal Pay? The Gender Wage Gap in Germany**

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**Advisor:** Larissa Ginzinger

Over the past decades, the raw ("unadjusted") gender pay gap — the hourly pay difference between women and men — has narrowed significantly in many countries. However, the residual ("adjusted") pay gap — the portion unexplained by gender differences in wage determinants such as occupational choice, education, and job roles — has remained largely unchanged over the past 30 years (Blau & Kahn, 2017). According to calculations by the German Federal Statistical Office (2024), the unadjusted (adjusted) gender pay gap for average gross hourly wages was 18% (6%) in 2023. The Equal Pay Day 2025, marking how far into the year women in Germany must work to earn what men earned in the previous year, will take place on March 7th.

The literature identifies several factors contributing to the (residual) gender pay gap, ranging from women's self-selection into occupations and gender differences in qualifications (Blau & Kahn, 2000) to discrimination (Hangartner, Kopp & Siegenthaler, 2021) and differences in negotiation behavior (Roussille, 2024).

**Requirements:**

The student is required to provide a comprehensive literature survey on the gender pay gap. The discussion should include, but is not limited to, (1) the development and current status of the gender pay gap in Germany, (2) a detailed comparison of the gender pay gap and Equal Pay Day in Germany with other countries, (3) an overview of the most common explanations for gender differences in pay, and (4) measures that can help overcome the gender wage gap.

In the context of (1) and (2), the student is required to generate summary statistics on the gender pay gap based on publicly available data, e.g., from the Statista, DESTATIS and OECD databases. Sound Excel knowledge is required for this task.

**Introductory Literature:**

- Bertrand, M. (2011). New perspectives on gender. *Handbook of Labor Economics*, Vol. 4, pp. 1543-1590.
- Biasi, B., & Sarsons, H. (2022). Flexible wages, bargaining, and the gender gap. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 137(1), 215-266.
- Blau, F. D., & Kahn, L. M. (2000). Gender differences in pay. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 14(4), 75-100.
- Blau, F. D., & Kahn, L. M. (2003). Understanding international differences in the gender pay gap. *Journal of Labor Economics*, 21(1), 106-144.
- Blau, F. D., & Kahn, L. M. (2017). The gender wage gap: Extent, trends, and explanations. *Journal of Economic Literature*, 55(3), 789-865.
- Hangartner, D., Kopp, D., & Siegenthaler, M. (2021). Monitoring hiring discrimination through online recruitment platforms. *Nature*, 589(7843), 572-576.
- Olivetti, C., & Petrongolo, B. (2017). The economic consequences of family policies: lessons from a century of legislation in high-income countries. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 31(1), 205-230.
- Roussille, N. (2024). The role of the ask gap in gender pay inequality. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*.

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**TOPIC NR2: Women on Boards? Board Gender Diversity in Germany**

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**Advisor:** Larissa Ginzinger

Despite significant labor market progress over the past decades, women remain severely underrepresented in high-status, high-earning occupations – a phenomenon often referred to as the glass ceiling. It is pervasive and observed even in countries otherwise thought to have made the greatest progress in gender equality. In recent decades, many countries have attempted to address the persistent gender imbalance in the corporate sector through mandatory quotas.

In 2015, Germany introduced a law requiring that women hold at least 30% of the seats on the supervisory boards of large publicly traded companies. According to the DIW (2025), women comprised approximately 39% of the supervisory boards and 26% of the management boards in DAX40 companies as of 2024. Only 5% of CEO positions were held by women. The numbers indicate that gender disparities in leadership positions persist in Germany.

**Requirements:**

The student is required to provide a comprehensive literature survey on corporate board diversity. The discussion should include, but is not limited to, (1) the development and current status of female board representation in the German corporate sector, (2) a detailed comparison of corporate gender imbalances in Germany to other countries, (3) an overview of explanations for gender differences in labor market outcomes, and (4) a comprehensive review and comparison of the studies investigating the effectiveness of gender quotas and a discussion of alternative measures to increase female representation on boards.

In the context of (1) and (2), the student is required to generate summary statistics on women's representation on boards based on publicly available data, e.g., from the Statista, DESTATIS and OECD databases, and the Women-on-Board Index. Sound Excel knowledge is required for this task.

**Introductory Literature:**

- Bertrand, M. (2011). New perspectives on gender. *Handbook of Labor Economics*, Vol. 4, pp. 1543-1590.
- Bertrand, M. (2018). Coase lecture—the glass ceiling. *Economica*, 85(338), 205-231.
- Bertrand, M., Black, S. E., Jensen, S., & Lleras-Muney, A. (2019). Breaking the glass ceiling? The effect of board quotas on female labour market outcomes in Norway. *The Review of Economic Studies*, 86(1), 191-239.
- Bertrand, M. (2020). Gender in the twenty-first century. *AEA Papers and Proceedings*, 110, 1-24.
- Cullen, Z., & Perez-Truglia, R. (2023). The old boys' club: Schmoozing and the gender gap. *American Economic Review*, 113(7), 1703-1740.
- Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung (DIW). (2025). Immer mehr Vorständinnen und Aufsichtsrätinnen, aber nach wie vor ein weiter Weg bis zur Geschlechterparität. DIW Wochenbericht. Retrieved from <https://www.diw.de>
- Gormley, T. A., Gupta, V. K., Matsa, D. A., Mortal, S. C., & Yang, L. (2023). The big three and board gender diversity: The effectiveness of shareholder voice. *Journal of Financial Economics*, 149(2), 323-348.
- Kline, P., Rose, E. K., & Walters, C. R. (2022). Systemic discrimination among large US employers. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 137(4), 1963-2036.