

Gender Wage Gaps and Worker Mobility: Evidence from the Garment Sector in Bangladesh.

Christopher Woodruff (University of Oxford)
joint work with Andreas Menzel (CERGE-EI)

Abstract:

We examine gender wage gaps in the Bangladeshi garment sector using data from administrative records and surveys from 70 large export-oriented manufacturers. Among production workers, we find that men are paid about 8 percent more than women. Detailed skills assessments available in a subset of the factories suggest that differences in skills differences and sector tenure combined account for just over half of the gap. The other half owes to differences in promotion rates conditional on skills. We show that by adding some structure we can combine the factory-level HR records and the survey data to estimate rates of promotions occurring as workers move across factories and sector exit rates. Differences in promotion rates are largely explained by lower rates of mobility of women across sectors, but these appear to arise mainly from career concerns rather than frictions coming from household responsibilities associated with marriage and children.