Nobel prize awarded to historian for gender gap research

An American economic historian who examined wage inequality between men and women with research experts believe will have “vast societal implications” has won the 2023 Nobel economics prize.

The Royal Swedish Academy Of Sciences said Claudia Goldin was “surprised and very, very happy” to have won the prestigious award.

The prize-giving body said the 77-year-old Harvard professor “provided the first comprehensive account of women’s earnings and labour market participation through the centuries”.

In a statement, it added: “Her research reveals the causes of change, as well as the main sources of the remaining gender gap.”

In 1990, she became the first woman to be tenured at the Harvard economics department and is only the third woman to win the Nobel economics prize.

Her book from the same year, Understanding The Gender Gap: An Economic History Of American Women, was seen as a hugely influential examination of the roots of wage inequality.

Prof Goldin followed up with studies on the impact of the contraceptive pill on women’s career and marriage decisions, women’s surnames after marriage as a social indicator, and the reasons why women are now the majority of undergraduates.

Randi Hjalmarsson, a member of the economic prize committee in Stockholm, said: “Claudia Goldin’s discoveries have vast societal implications.

“By finally understanding the problem and calling it by the right name, we will be able to pave a better route forward.”

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Jakob Svensson, the prize committee’s chairman, added: “Understanding women’s role in the labour market is important for society.

“Thanks to Claudia Goldin’s groundbreaking research, we now know much more about the underlying factors and which barriers may need to be addressed in the future.”