

**Name, E-Mail:** Martina Mysíková; martina.mysikova@centrum.cz

**Institution:** Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences, Prague  
Institute of Economic Studies, Charles University in Prague

**Titel:** Income inequality within couples: female employment and gender wage gap

**Abstract:** This study looks closer at couples, their earnings, and the packaging of the family budget. It analyses income distribution within couples in the Czech Republic and ten European countries. Great importance is attached especially to a comparison between the transition, the new EU member countries (Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, and Slovakia), and the old EU member states (Austria, Belgium, Germany, France, and Luxembourg) included in this study. Current within-couple income inequalities might differ between these two groups of countries and the first group's recent experience of communism could be of great importance.

This analysis provides the first piece of insight into within-couple income inequality in some post-communist countries and reveals that, of the countries considered, it tends to be lower in new EU member states than in the old ones, with the Czech Republic being the exception. With a relatively low female share of total gross couple income, the Czech Republic is more like the old EU member states than the new ones.

I used the very first EU-SILC survey of 2005 because it contains a special module on family histories, with which it is possible to examine whether the traditional model of the family has been transmitted from previous generations to the current one. The results differ in various countries.

Within-couple income inequality has two crucial factors: the employment of the female partner and her wages. In the context of the first, of main interest is the traditional division of female and male roles and the extent to which this still influences decision-making within couples in society today. Couples in which the male and/or female partner grew up in a 'traditional family model', that is, in a family where the father was the breadwinner and the mother was a housewife, could be influenced by this tradition. The inter-generational transmission of the traditional division of roles could have an effect on whether women in such couples work or not. The inter-generational transmission of the traditional family model showed a significant negative impact on the female employment decision mainly in the old EU member states.

Within-couple income inequality among two-earner couples is most significantly affected by the educational gap between partners. In most new EU member states, women and men contribute almost equally to the total gross income in couples in which the woman attained higher education level than her male counterpart.

Finally, to stress the income disparities between individuals living in a couple and singles in general, I compare the gender wage gap and its structure separately for individuals living in a couple and singles. The gender wage gap proved to be higher for cohabiting individuals than for singles, which suggests that women living in a couple are more disadvantaged.