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Research Paper

Examining education and economic disparity between genders - czech republic

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the relationship between education and economic disparities in the Czech Republic. In Czech Republic women have achieved educational equality, but they continue to face unequal economic outcomes, particularly in traditionally female-dominated fields that offer lower salaries. This study aims to critically evaluate and expand upon Eagly and Karau's Role Congruity Theory by showing how traditional gender role expectations of women as nurturing and cooperative are embedded in Czech Republic's educational framework. This research aims to analyze how level of education impacts labor market opportunities for women.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Gender disparity is an ongoing and common issue which societies across the globe are attempting to address. It exists in various forms, including disparities in education and economic opportunities between genders. The Czech Republic, like many other countries, has experienced gender disparity in both these domains. As a post-communist country, the Czech Republic is shaped by robust societal norms that significantly impact the educational choices made by girls and subsequently influence

their future employment prospects in the labor market. Throughout history, these societal norms and gender stereotypes have played a pivotal role in shaping educational decisions and career trajectories, resulting in unequal outcomes for both men and women.

This term paper explores the following research question: How does education lead to economic disparity between genders? The aim is to explore the complex relationship between education and economic disparities based on gender. To narrow down our research question we will focus only on Czech Republic. The main objective of this research is to examine the gender disparities in level of education and labor market outcomes in the Czech Republic. There are non-technical fields, such as nursing and pre-school/school education, that have been traditionally dominated by women, yet have historically offered lower salaries.

By addressing this research question and achieving the objective, this study seeks to contribute to the existing knowledge on the topic by building up on Eagly and Karau's Role Congruity Theory [1], [2] by demonstrating that traditional gender role expectations, which depict women as nurturing, supportive, and cooperative, are deeply embedded in the educational framework of Czech Republic.

2. RELATED WORK

The literature review includes a range of studies that have explored the relationship between education and economic disparities, with a focus on gender-based disparities. These studies look into the complex relationship between education and economic outcomes. The literature review aims to gain a comprehensive understanding of how level of education influences economic disparity, with a specific focus on the gender dimension. [3] In his article from the early 90's highlights the importance of education. Education enhances individuals' productivity and contributes to economic results. Education is seen as a means to increase individuals' productivity and economic prospects.

[4] Article examines factors that contribute to gender wage differences. The following factors are being examined: human capital, occupational segregation, labor force experience, and discrimination. They found out that human capital factors are not only sufficient to account for the entire gender disparity. The review underscores the complexity of gender wage differentials and emphasizes the significance of considering both individual characteristics and structural influences. It highlights the need for further research and policy interventions to address and reduce gender-based wage disparity.

In their work [5] demonstrate that gender disparities in education and labor force participation have harmful effects on human capital accumulation and productivity, resulting in slower economic growth. Both of the study highlights the significant role of discriminatory institutions in maintaining gender inequalities, including legal frameworks, cultural norms, and social practices that disadvantage women and restrict their economic opportunities. To empower women based on the study it is necessary to identify and remove gender-based barriers in order to contribute to economic growth. For example, promoting gender equality in education, employment, and political representation, can improve productivity and promote new ideas. This will ultimately lead to more inclusive and sustainable economic results.

[6] In their work analyzed data from income dynamics between 1980-2010 to investigate the gender wage gap. Their findings show a decline in the wage gap in the examined period. The traditional human capital factors (such as employee knowledge, skills, know-how, good health, and education), explaining only a small portion of it by 2010. Occupation and industry differences remained significant, and the gender pay gap narrowed more slowly at the top of the wage distribution. Work interruptions, shorter hours, gender roles, and discrimination were identified as important factors. Psychological attributes and noncognitive skills played a smaller role. Overall, occupation and industry effects had a greater impact on the gender pay gap than other factors.

[7] examine the trend of women outperforming men in educational achievements, particularly in terms of college enrolment and completion rates. Under the factors which contribute to the gender gap can be changes in social expectations, labor market conditions, and educational policies. The article

highlights the potential consequences of this trend for the future workforce and calls for a re-evaluation of educational strategies to ensure equal opportunities for both genders.

DiPrete and Buchmann's work sheds light on the evolving dynamics of gender and education in the United States. In their article they also draw attention to how the share of women graduates between 1970 and 2010 has dramatically increased. In that period of time the women's rate of completing a B.A almost tripled, whereas the men's completion rate of a B.A in the same period grew only by 7%. But even though there is a significant increase of female graduates the gender wage gap is still apparent. In the US, the author mentions that between 1978 and 2011, there was a significant improvement in the earnings of full-time working women compared to their male counterparts. In 1978, women earned approximately 62 cents for every dollar earned by men. However, by 2011, this gender wage gap had narrowed, with women earning around 82 cents for every dollar earned by men. This positive shift indicates progress in reducing gender-based wage disparities over the span of these years. The author also mentions that boys have been outperformed by girls in school grades throughout at least the past 100 years, however women were forced to choose between having a family or career. In the 1950s, there was a shift towards making education more accommodating to family life. However, prevalent societal beliefs still cantered around the notion that the primary purpose of women was to enhance their roles as wives and mothers, reinforcing the idea that a woman's place was within the domestic sphere [7].

[8] In his book argues the important role of education in enabling individuals to break cycles of poverty, inequality, and discrimination especially in light of equality. The Global Gender Gap Report [9], published annually by the World Economic Forum, reviews gender disparities across the following attributes: economic participation, education, health, and political empowerment. Based on these indicators, it ranks countries how well they perform in regards of gender equality performance. The annual report highlights areas of progress and identifies gaps that needs to be focused on. It also contributes to global discussions on gender equality and promotes equal societies. In the following chapters the situation in Czech Republic will be analyzed.

3. METHODOLOGY

In chapter 4, a quantitative research methodology is being employed. Primary data sets from government sources have been transformed into figures and graphs. Therefore, these secondary data are being evaluated and interpreted throughout this study. The first focus is on the education between genders from 2020-2022. The analysis examines not only the level of education but also the fields of study across genders. For level of education, although Czech Republic has achieved gender equality overall, the study will explore enrollment rates at primary, secondary, and tertiary education levels. Particular attention will be given to the potential gender segregation in fields of study, which may contribute to disparities in future economic participation and career outcomes. This leads this study to a second focus, which centers on economic participation and opportunity. The study will examine the labor force participation rate by gender, exploring differences in male and female workforce involvement.

Additionally, the representation of women among professional and technical workers will be assessed to highlight gender differences in high-skilled occupations. These indicators will allow for a comprehensive analysis of how education influences gender-based economic disparities in the Czech Republic.

Education, Labor and Gender in the Czech Republic

The Global Gender Gap Index measures scores on a 0 to 100 scale and scores can be interpreted as the distance covered towards parity. It measures four domains: Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, Political Empowerment. According to the Global Gender Gap 2022, Czech Republic is placed on rank 76 out of 146 countries with score 0.710 just in front of Poland, Liberia and Thailand [9]. The highest score 0.908 has Iceland, followed by Finland. Most of the North and West European countries do occupy the highest ranks [9].

This study focuses on analyzing two domains: Educational Attainment and Economic Participation and Opportunity. The domain of Educational Attainment has achieved a perfect score of 100 and 1st place in all the domains analyzed in the section. In the top position alongside countries such as Argentina, Armenia, Belgium, Botswana, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Estonia, Finland, France, Honduras, Ireland, Israel, Jamaica, Japan, Lesotho, Malta, Netherlands and New Zealand [9]. As shown in Table 1 indicated below, in terms of Economic Participation, the Czech Republic received a score of 0.645, ranking 95st. Over the past 15 years, the Czech Republic has dropped 43 places in this domain. The Table 1 provides an overview of the overall scores, a comparison to the previous year (2021), and the specific indicator being reviewed [9].

Table 1. Global Gender Gap Index 2022– Czech Republic

Subindex	Calcualtion Results	Compated to 2021	Indicator
Economic Participation and Opportunity	0,645	0,005	Labor force participation rate, wage equality for similar work, estimated earned income, legislators, senior officials & managers, and professional and technical workers
Educational Attainment	1	Constant	Literacy rate, enrollment in primary, secondary & tertiary education
Health and Survival	0,978	-0,002	Sex ratio at birth, healthy life expectancy
Political Empowerment	0,216	0,014	Women in parliament, women in ministerial positions, years with female head of state (last 50), share of tenure years

Table layout made by the author

There are also other reports which look at gender disparity. For example, Gender Inequality Index (GII) developed and measured by the United Nations Development Programme, which measures three key dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment, and labor market participation [10]. Furthermore, there is the EIGE Gender Equality Index (EU-Focused) a tool measuring and tracking progress towards gender equality in the European Union (EU) [11]. Additionally, there is also the OECD Gender Data Portal [12] offering statistics on gender disparities in education, employment, earnings, entrepreneurship, work-life balance and other focusing on OECD and partner countries. For the purpose of this study we have chosen the Gender Gap Index as the most compatible measurement tool for this study.

3.1. Education and Gender in Czech Republic

The Global Gender Gap 2022 report presents compelling data regarding the education attainment, showcased in the Table 2 below [9]. These data indicate a positive trend in female enrollment across primary, secondary, and tertiary education, surpassing male enrollment in terms of percentages. The index measures also the enrolment in secondary education, which for example for Germany is a big problem as it is placed on 112th place. Germany places a lot of focus in their education on apprenticeships and that can be one of the reasons why its ranking is so low.

Table 2. Global Gender Gap 2022 Report

	Rank	Score	Avg	Female	Male	F/M
Educational attainment	1	1.000	0.950			
Literacy rate, %	1	1.000	0.897	-	-	-
Enrolment in primary education, %	1	1.000	0.755	89.5	86.8	1.03
Enrolment in secondary education, %	1	1.000	0.950	91.5	89.6	1.02
Enrolment in tertiary education, %	1	1.000	0.927	75.3	53.4	1.41

This showcases that the Czech Republic does not face significant challenges regarding women's access to education. The underlying issue lies in the disparity arising from societal cultural norms dictating the educational choices of women. This disparity, in turn, has consequences for future employment and wage differentials, as non-technical fields often offer lower remuneration.

Gender disparities in career paths emerge at an early stage, influenced by the choice of educational paths following nine years of compulsory primary education. When examining the fields in which apprenticeship certificates are obtained, it becomes apparent that over 50% of girls pursue apprenticeships in domains such as cooking, waitressing, hairdressing, and confectionery. Conversely, boys, comprising 46% of apprenticeship certificate recipients, tend to concentrate in domains such as car mechanics, electricians, and cooking and serving. The total number of girls receiving apprenticeship certificates (31,847) is significantly lower than that of boys (59,409). This difference may be explained by the accepted perception that apprenticeships are reserved for those who perform poorly academically. This often discourages girls, who perform well at school to pursue such paths. As shown in Figure 1 below which indicates the results [13].

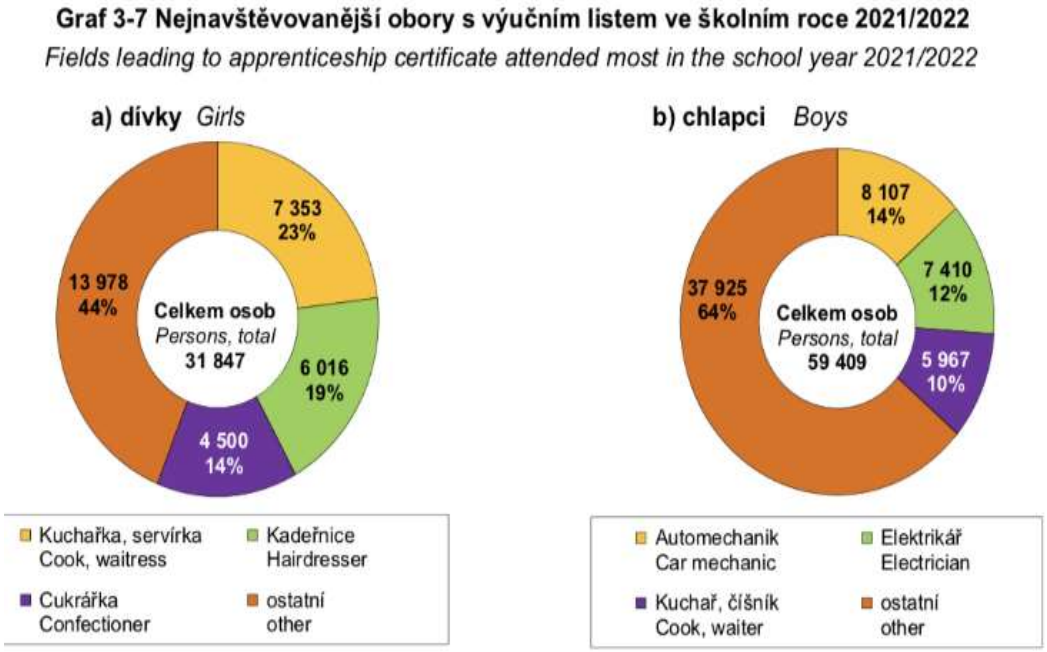

Figure 1. Fields Leading to Apprenticeship Certificate Attended Most in the School Year 2021/2022

Furthermore, when analyzing the fields of study leading to A-level examinations, it is evident as you can in the Figure 2 [13], that girls are more inclined towards A-level examination leading to university admission. As summarized in Figure 2, approximately 40% of girls choose fields like business and administration, nursing, or lyceum (non-technical fields), while the remaining 60% choose different fields for their A-level examinations. In contrast, Figure 2 shows that 42% of boys select fields such as ICT, electrical engineering, or business and administration, with the remaining 58% pursuing alternative fields of A-level examination. Figure 2 also indicates that there are approximately 7,000 more girls than boys studying in these fields during the school year 2021/2022. This is in stark difference to Figure 1 where the absolute number of boys was higher.

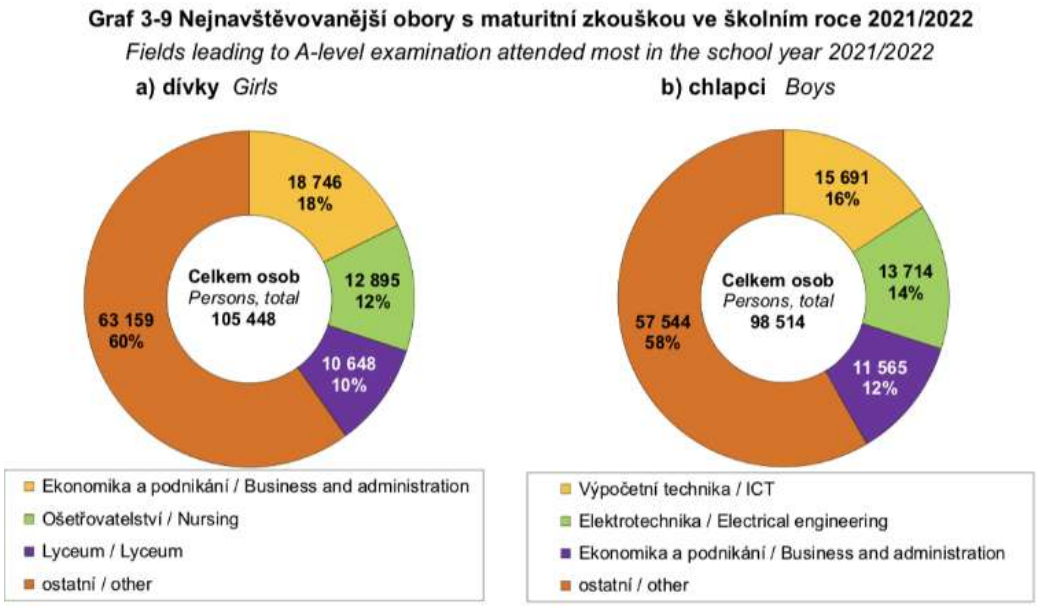

Figure 2. Fields Leading to A-Level Examination Attended Most in the School Year 2021/2022

Continuing from previous discussion on education, girls also demonstrate a continued pursuit of higher professional schools. As shown in Figure 3 indicates [13], out of the 15,421 girls enrolled in such schools in the 2021/2022 academic year, 64% choose fields related to nursing, pre-school and after-school teaching, and social work and education science. In contrast, approximately 29% of boys opt for fields such as security and legal activities, ICT, and nursing, while the remaining 71% choose other fields of study. However, a significant disparity exists in the enrollment at higher professional schools, with the number of girls outnumbering boys by approximately three times.

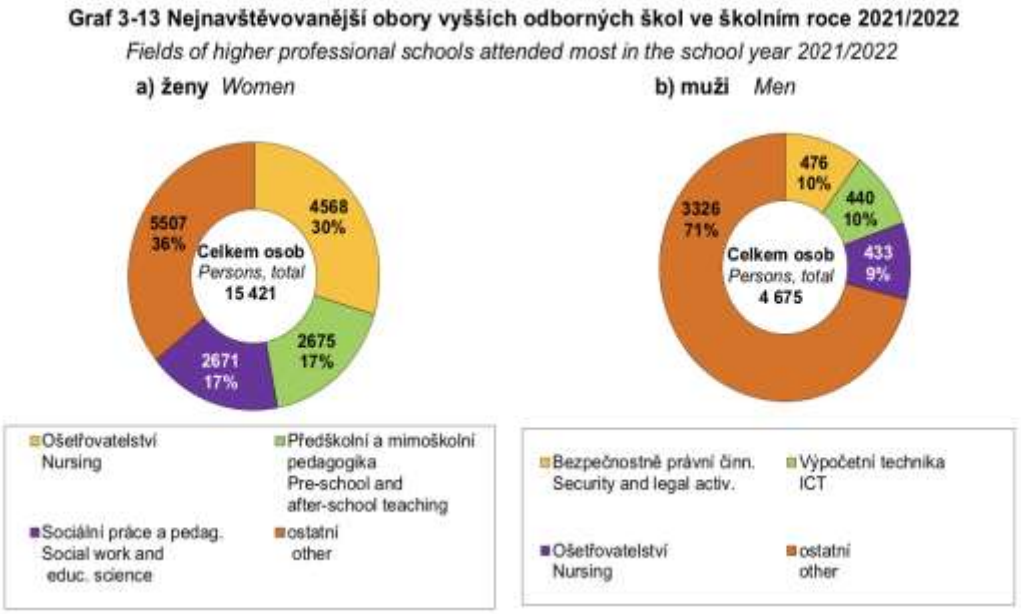

Figure 3. Fields of Higher Professional Schools Attended Most in the School Year 2021/2022

Moving in our paper analysis towards university education. Figure 4 [13], shows the total number of students male and female pursuing bachelor, master and doctoral studies between 2006 -2021. Development shows that in 2011 there were about 140 000 women and 110 000 males pursuing a bachelor degree. This was a peak attributable also to the demographic development in the country. The

total number has decreased throughout the time however women are still dominant in pursuing both bachelor and master degree.

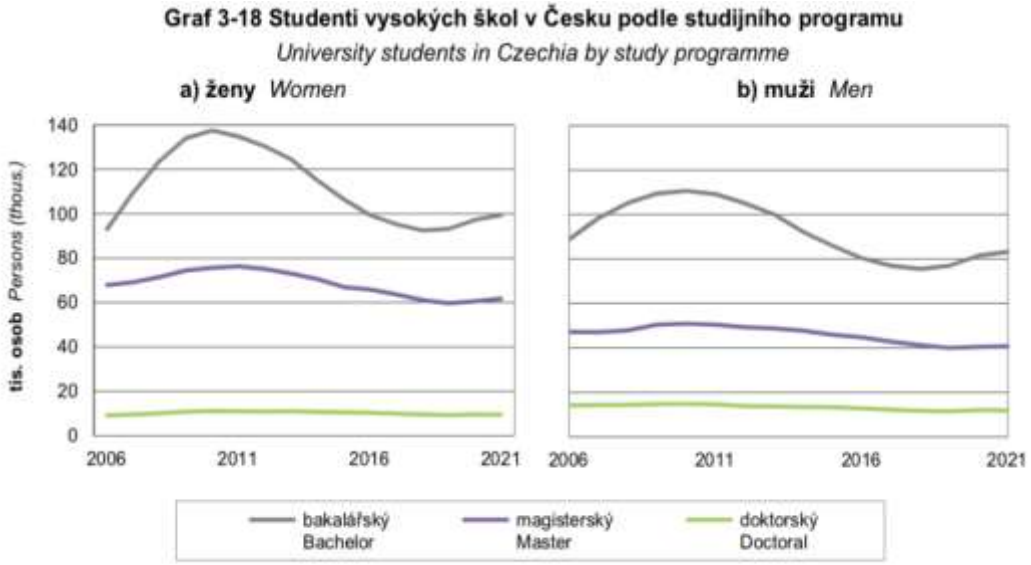

Figure 4. University Students in Czechia by Study Programme

Figure 5 shows [14] how the proportion of male and female graduates developed between 2010 and 2019. We can observe that the total amount of students (MA) and graduates (MA) is a higher share of women, whereas students (PhD) and graduates (PhD) as well as researchers leads towards a higher proportion of males.

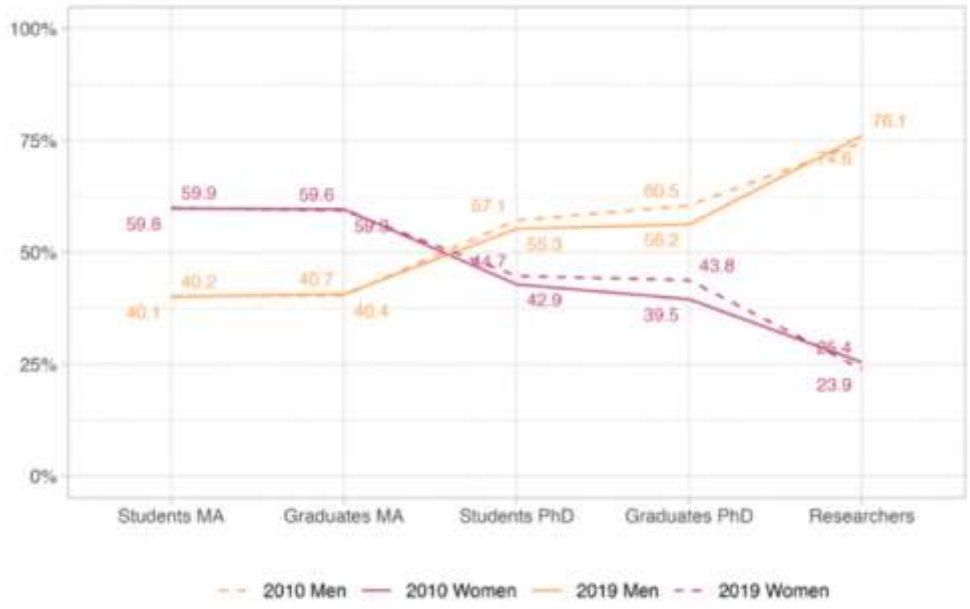

Figure 5. Proportion of Male and Female Graduates Development 2010-2019

Figure 6 [13], below provides detailed information on graduates of Master's programs. The left graph illustrates graduates in science fields, where women dominate. Although the overall number of graduates has decreased between 2011 and 2021, women constitute a significantly larger share. In

contrast, the right graph displays graduates in engineering fields, which are predominantly male. Similarly, the total number of graduates in engineering fields is gradually declining.

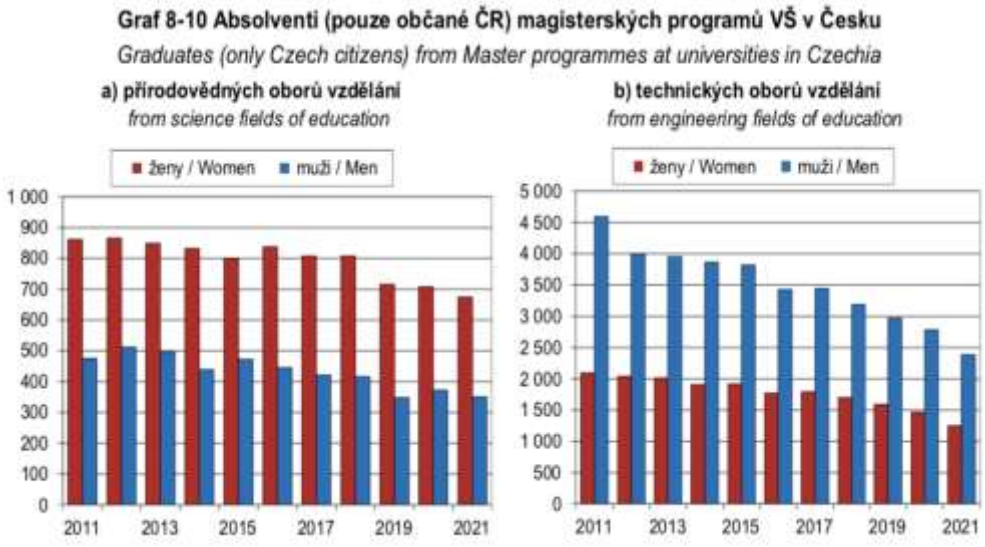

Figure 6. Graduates of Master's Programs at Universities in Czechia (Only Czech Citizens)

Continuing our analysis, let's delve into the specific field of education for university graduates in 2021. Figure 7 [13] below indicates, that the share of women is higher in certain fields, such as education, health and welfare, and arts and humanities, accounting for 83%, 77%, and 70% of graduates in 2021.

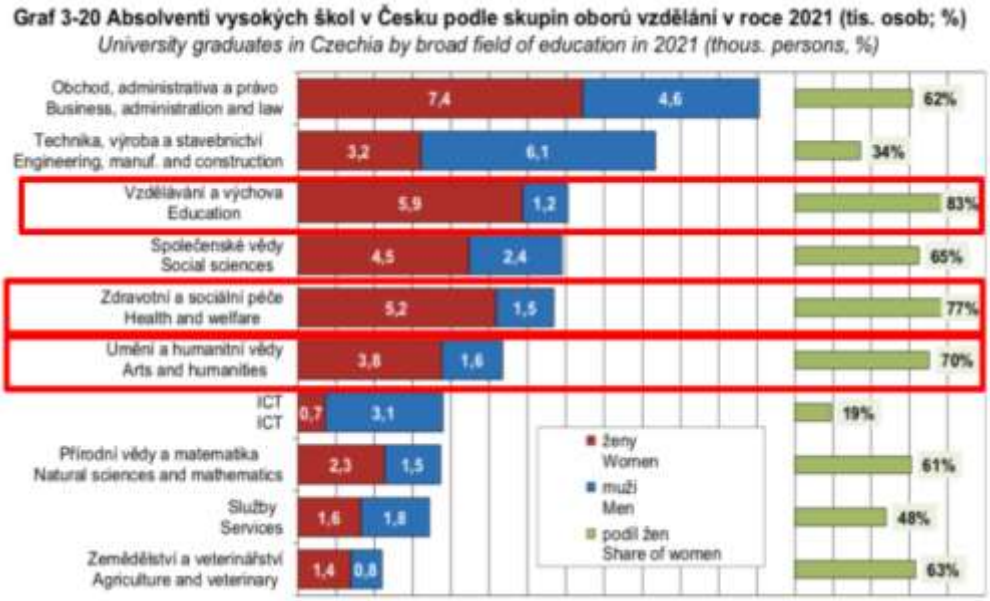

Figure 7. University Graduates in Czechia by Broad Field of Education in 2021 (Thousands. Persons, %)

In comparison with the EU (EU27) countries women share in university education (tertiary education) is placed seventh, as shown on the Figure 8 [13]. Far above the average of EU27. This indicates a positive trend towards gender equality in higher education [15]. This trend suggests progress in challenging traditional gender roles and stereotypes, as more women are pursuing advanced degrees and expanding their knowledge and skills across various fields of study. Below there is comparison of EU Countries (EU27) share of women's participation on tertiary education.

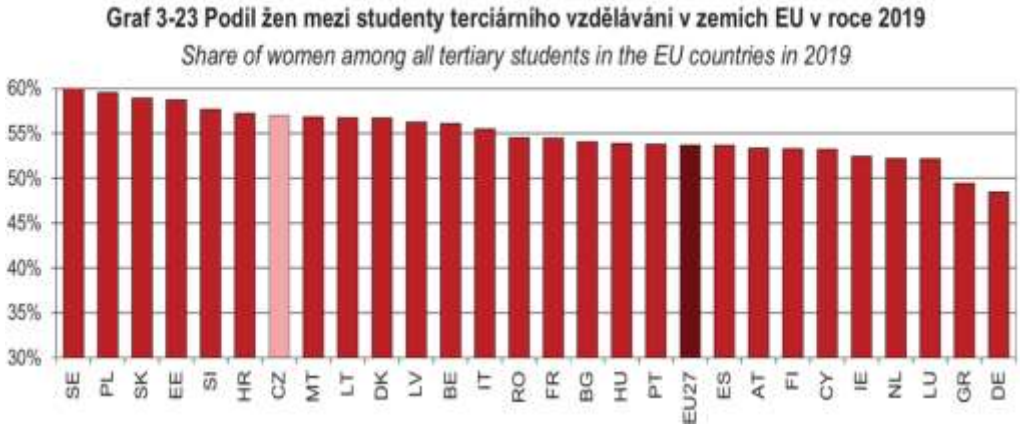

Figure 8. Share of Women among all Tertiary Students in the EU Countries in 2019

This graph below summarizes university graduates according to their field of education. Women ar Based on Eurostat data from 2019, the tertiary education enrollment rate was 19.8 males and 12.2 females per 1,000 inhabitants [16].

3.2 Economic Participation and Opportunity gender disparity in Czech Republic

It is not only the education women receive that has impact on the economic gender disparity. The Global Gender Gap 2022 report data reveals gender disparity regarding Economic Participation and Opportunity. Placing Czech Report on 95th place in comparison with a total of 146 countries.

Based on data from the Czech Statistical database, there exists an average monthly wage disparity of 7,000 CZK between women and men. Interestingly, since 2015, women have experienced a higher average salary growth rate of 54%, surpassing the male rate of 47% [17]. As shown in Figure 9 below indicates [13], there is a higher occurrence (percentage) of women earning salaries between 15,000 and 35,000 CZK. On the other hand, salaries exceeding 35,000 CZK are predominantly earned by men. The income distribution in Czech Republic the underlying reasons are discussed more in detail in this article [18].

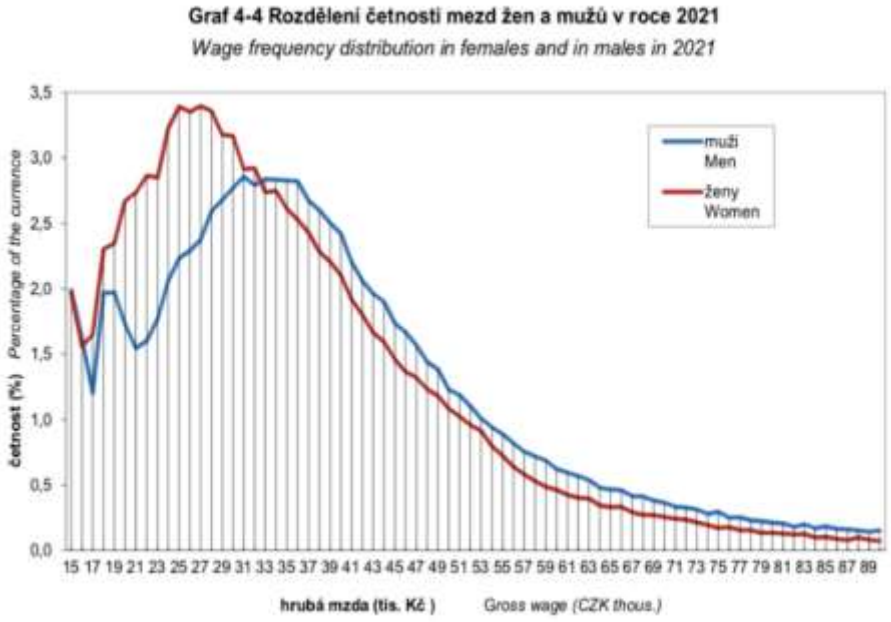

Figure 9. Wage Frequency Distribution in Females and in Males in 2021

Figure 10 below presents [13] the annual wages of women as a percentage of men's wages. This comparison reveals that women's average earnings are significantly below the average of EU27 countries. On average, women in Czech Republic earn only 82% of men's salaries.

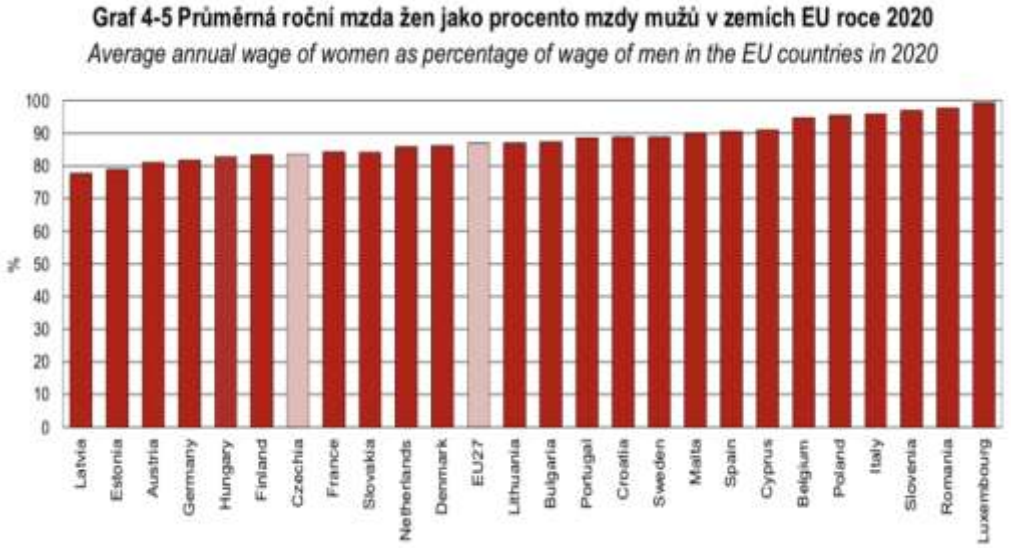

Figure 10. Average Annual Wage of Women as Percentage of Wage of Men in the EU Countries in 2020

Figure 11 [13] provides a comparison of salaries between science and engineering professionals in the public and private sectors. It is evident that women continue to earn less than men, and the wage gap appears to remain consistent from 2016 to 2021.

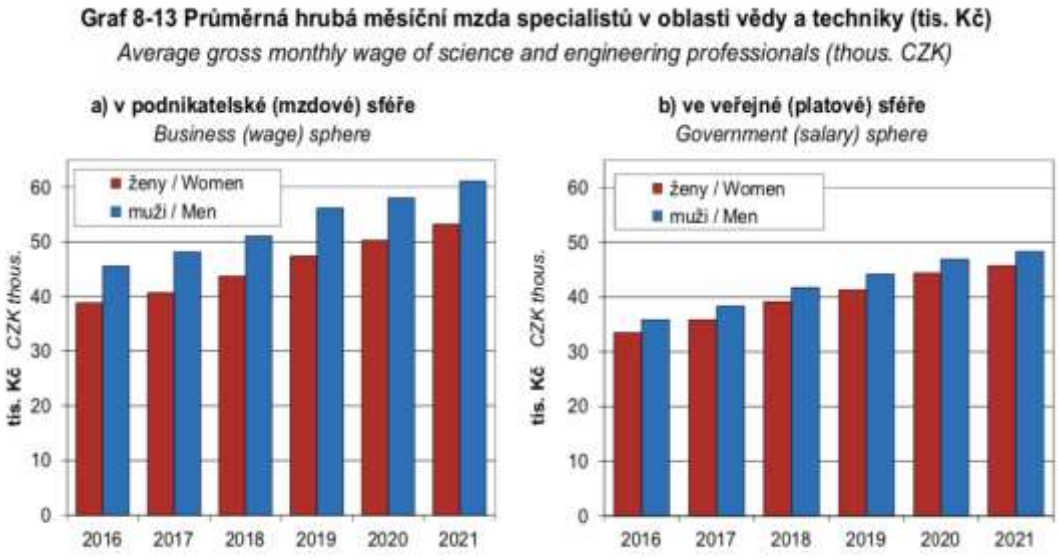

Figure 11. Average Gross Monthly Wage of Science and Engineering Professionals (Thous. CZK)

Additionally, comparing the average gross monthly salary in 2022. The Gender Pay Gap was 17.7%. Women earned an average of 38, 861 CZK on contrary male an average of 47,239 CZK a difference of 8,378 CZK [19]. Figure 12 [13] illustrates the total share of women researchers as a percentage of the total number of researchers in 2020. Czech Republic ranks among the listed countries with the lowest representation of women researchers, share of only about 22%.

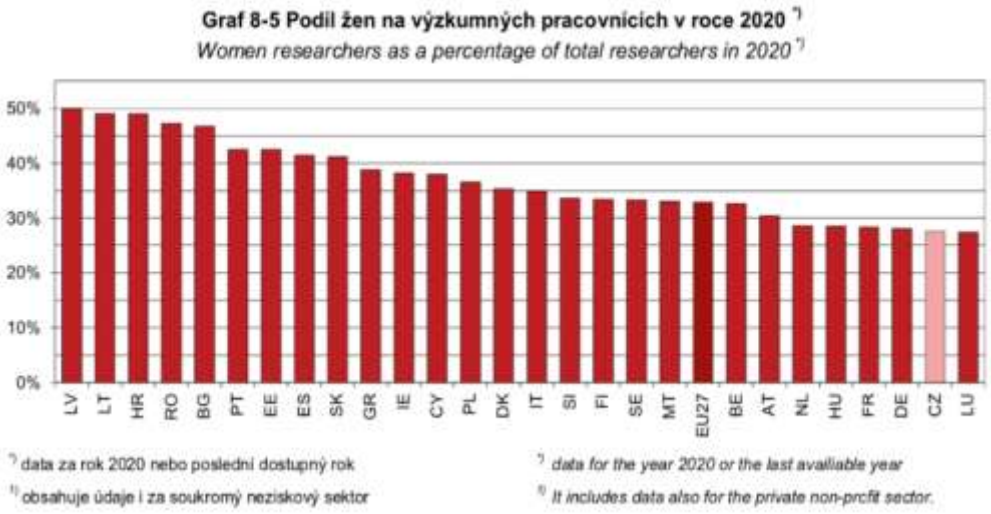

Figure 12. Women Researchers as a Percentage of Total Researchers in 2020

Figure 13 [13] presents a comprehensive overview of job positions held by both men and women. In 2021, the number of employed women in the labor force was 2.2 million, while the number of employed men was 2.9 million. This gap of approximately 700,000 indirectly affects the country's economic growth and loss of potential by not employing more women. A detail analysis would need to be performed but unfortunately falls out of the scope of this article. Women do work mostly in jobs connected to Education, Health and social care and other service activities. This is also in line with the education women received analyzed in section 3.1.

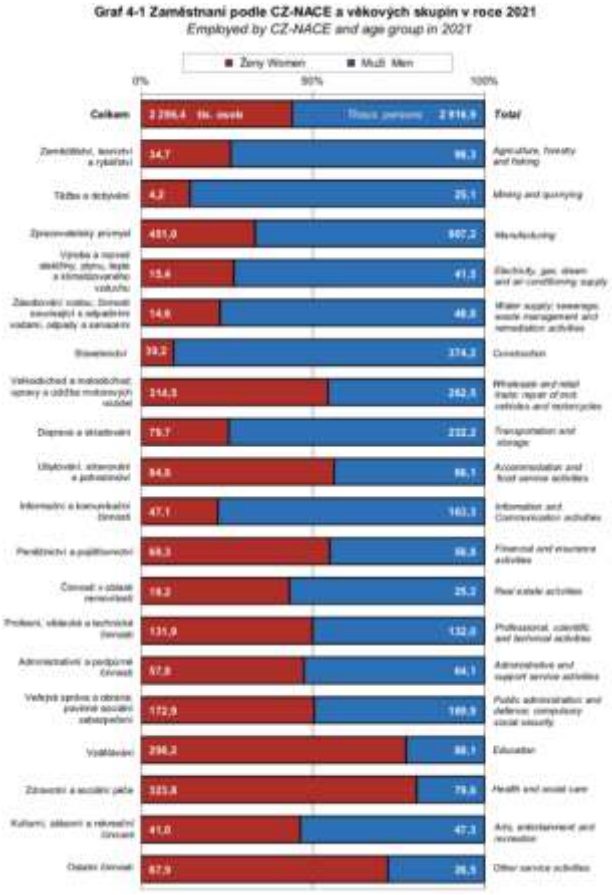

Figure 13. Employed by CZ-NACE and Age Group in 2021

Overall, as discussed in the previous section on education, women in the Czech Republic invest more time in studying, yet they are consistently underrepresented in decision-making roles. They have limited presence in various domains, such as politics, economics, science, media, and even sports. A need for an increased gender representation and equal opportunities for women in leadership positions across these sectors needs to be promoted [20]. Women also often experience career breaks due to motherhood. In Czech Republic, women can benefit from family-care policies that allows them to take up to three years of paid family leave. However, due to limited amount of child-care facilities and limited options for flexible work arrangements, women are often forced to stay at home for extended periods of time. They may face a career break of up to four years until a child is eligible to join kindergarten [21]. This long absence from workforce results in fewer opportunities for career advancement, lower wages, and restricted access to promotions and leadership roles. And as a result, these factors contribute to the widening gender wage gap.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To address gender disparity, the Czech Republic government has developed a Gender Equality Strategy for the period of 2021-2030 (Strategy 2021+). There was an increased pressured from other international organizations, including European Union towards the Czech government to take stronger measures to promote gender equality in the country. The strategy aims to address issues such as the gender pay gap and the underrepresentation of women in decision-making bodies. The country has faced criticism for the enduring inequalities observed in the job market and the limited availability of care services for children under the age of three [22].

Previously there were already strategies promoting gender Equality in the Czech Republic such as previously adopted Government Strategy for Equality of Women and Men in the Czech Republic 2014-2020 [20] as well as Action Plan for the Prevention of Domestic and Gender-based violence for 2019-2022 [23]. The Strategy 2021+ encompasses eight key chapters, each serving a strategic objective. In the chapter dedicated to Work and Care, the primary aim is to address gender disparity in caregiving responsibilities. The strategy focuses on reducing disparities in the job market, narrowing the gender pay gap, and lowering the risk of poverty among women. In terms of decision-making, the strategy targets the enhancement of women's representation in decision-making positions across various sectors, including politics [24]. The overarching goal is to foster greater gender equality and inclusivity in both work and governance [22]. The insufficient capacity of childcare services for children under three years of age, lack of flexible forms of work, and unequal distribution of care responsibilities need to be addressed in order to promote gender equality, support women's workforce participation, and enable a more equitable work-life balance for both men and women [25].

Practically in a short-term a career guidance reforms should be introduced to actively promote science, technology, engineering and mathematics but also technical fields to girl. A need to form a stronger collaboration between schools and employers is also seen as an important milestone. And also, a transparent pay structures would enable equal pay and help reduce unexplained wage gaps.

5. CONCLUSION

Gender disparities in education and economic participation are deeply rooted in societal norms, occupational segregation, wage inequality, and structural barriers that limit women's opportunities. The level of education of women is constantly increasing. Because of persistent ideas about women's roles, they often gravitate toward careers considered more "suitable" for women as "non-technical"—such as nursing, preschool and after-school teaching, social work, and educational sciences. These career paths often tend to be less paid then those in other fields. These fields do not often offer high-skilled position neither leadership positions which in fact leads to women being highly educated but underrepresented in leaders' positions. This early segregation of field of study reinforced by social expectations has impact on women's career opportunities and future economic independence. Additionally, the burden of caregiving

responsibilities (motherhood), inflexible work policies, and limited access to childcare services contribute to women experiencing career interruptions. This further complicates professional advancement.

Addressing these disparities requires a complex approach involving government initiatives, cultural shifts, and institutional changes. The Gender Equality Strategy initiated by the Czech government for 2021-2030 represents a step in the right direction. The strategy focuses on reducing pay disparities, increasing female representation in leadership, and improving work-life balance through childcare and flexible work arrangements. The society needs to go through a deep transformation as well, so that girls can freely without prejudice choose their preferred field of study. Encouraging your girls to pursue career paths in science and technology. Additionally, businesses and organizations must promote transparent pay structures, and family-friendly workplace policies to create a more equal professional environment. Ultimately, achieving gender equality in education and economic participation is not only a matter of fairness but also a key driver of economic growth and social development.

Acknowledgement

There is only one author contributing to this work.

Author Contributions Statement

Name of Author	C	M	So	Va	Fo	I	R	D	O	E	Vi	Su	P	Fu
Nicole Engelbrechtova	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		

Informed Consent

No participants in this research.

Ethical Approval

No need for ethical approval as no participants in the research.

Funding Information

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The author states no conflict of interest.

Data Availability

Data availability is not applicable to this paper as no new data were created or analyzed in this study.

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