



Measuring women's economic independence beyond the household

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Abstract

This paper aims to take the notion of women's economic independence out of the study of income inequalities within couples. The objective is to propose a new definition of women's economic independence based on their ability to support themselves through their own income. Therefore, the Women's Economic Independence Index (WEII) was created and it is based on a methodology that aims to go beyond the household to study the economic position of women.

Two methodological contributions are made. First, women's economic independence is measured in comparison to the poverty line (60% of median income). Secondly, the indicator is based on a method of income individualization that differs from those present in the literature. Here, the assumption of equal distribution between spouses of income from capital, private transfers and some social benefits received at household level is not retained. Instead, information on capital income and private transfers is assumed to be missing while social benefits are approximated by available data on single women's households.

The results of this indicator show that married or cohabited women are the least economically independent, which confirms the importance of going beyond the household to account for the economic situation of women.

keywords: Women's economic independence, Intra-household inequalities, Women poverty, Individualized income, Feminist Economics



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