

TRANSITION AS A MENACE?

Women in the Arts and Media in Croatia²³²

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1. Background

During the transitional changes which took place in Croatia around the early 1990s, issues of gender equality, the (changing) role of women, and her obstacles to freedom were absent from research and public policy making agendas. This mirrors the situation in other East and Central European countries during their transition to democracy.

Prior to 1990, there were several different kinds of research or documentation activities on the role of women in society. For example, since the 70s, several sociological bibliographies have been published which included references to gender (although perhaps focussing more on global paradigms such as feminist theory than on empirical studies or micro-level approaches to equality issues). In the latter half of the 90s, similar work was taken up again, this time using the new technologies²³⁴ to publish articles and bibliographies about women. More recently, the Ministry of Science has funded a research project on the legal, economic and social position of women in Croatia.

Today, it is difficult to find readily available aggregate data or indicators to assess women's role in society overall, not to speak of the culture or media sectors in particular. Statistical information on women collected by the State Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Croatia remains unprocessed and unpublished. The data which is presented in this article, while fragmented, is the first attempt to begin collecting information on the position of women in the arts, culture and media fields. Skirting official sources, the data comes from manual calculations of information obtain from the cultural institutions themselves.²³⁵ This result shows that there is a need to engage in a comprehensive gathering of data, insights, and best practice models of the professional status of women in the arts and media in Croatia.

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²³⁴ On-line data base of the Ministry of Science of the Republic of Croatia (<http://bib.irb.hr/cgi-bin/chf.pl/search-simple.html?chset=WIN-CE>).

²³⁵ Another source of data and information, especially on the position of women in the media and in politics, is the recent book by Smiljanja Lainert Novosel *Žene na pragu 21 stoljeća*, TOD & EDAC, Zagreb, 1999.

2. Women in the Shadows?

The general working position of women in Croatia is quite precarious. They make up 48.8% of those illegally employed (working without a contract) and are considered to represent over 50% of those working in a shadow or grey economy. In all cases, women's income is quite low and they earn less than men as "unpaid family workers". According to Crnković, "women have bore a disproportionate weight of the transition in comparison to men, especially when we examine the high numbers of unemployed women and consider the fact that those areas in which their employment was high have become endangered (eg. textile industry)".²³⁶

In comparison, women fair better in the arts and media sectors (despite the fact that they are generally less paid and work in low status sectors) than in the overall labour market. *Table 1-3* reveal the presence of women in some fields of the arts and media. They will show that Croatian women are heavily employed in fields such as libraries, museums and archives, in the film industry (especially in distribution), as television editors as well as in administrative positions. Such a picture is not unlike that of the status of women in other European countries.

Table 1 *Share of women in the arts, culture and media sectors, 1998*

Field	Total	% Women
Film and video	762	43
Production	311	38
Distribution	165	57
Showing	286	40
Radio and television (public and private)	4331	34
Other entertainment ²³⁷	2629	48
Visual and performing arts	2446	48
Press offices	62	37
Libraries, archives, museums	4120	66
Libraries	1448	84
Archives	339	62
Museums and heritage protection	1249	60

Source: State Bureau of Statistics, unpublished data, 2000.

Table 2: *Share of women in radio and television, 1997*

	Total employees	% Women employees	% Women producers
HTV	1570	30	21
Local TV stations (8 altogether)	142	28	17

Source: State Bureau of Statistics 1065/1999, *Kultura i umjetnost u 1997*.

²³⁶ Crnković-Pozaić, Sanja. Combating Unemployment in a Segmented Labour Market. in the *Proceedings of the Conference Women's Entrepreneurship East-West Co-operation*, pp. 283-298, IMO/CESE, Zagreb, 2000.

²³⁷ Including activities of concert halls, agencies for ticket sales and recording studios.

Table 3: Share of women employed in professional theatres, 1998

Position	% Women
Actors	44
Directors	9
Conductors	8
Costume designers	100
Orchestra	25
Other artists	37
Technical	34
Administrative staff	67

Source: KU-2, Central bureau of statistics, 1998.

Statistics about women employed in orchestras in 1998 show that 28% of the artistic personnel are women, while women make 73% of the administrative personnel. According to one research project, which analyzed a one day television program on HTV, 62% of the journalists who appeared that day were women; 2,7% of the film technicians; 50% of editors of the shows were women, while only 6% of women were editors of program blocks.²³⁸

3. Women at School: Students and Professors

Table 4 demonstrates a clear discrepancy in the numbers of female students to female professors, or "role models". In 1996/7, overall education statistics demonstrated that women made up ca. 50% of all university students: 68% in medicine, 62% in social sciences, 61% in natural sciences, 55% in arts and 24% in technical faculties. In higher degrees, however, only 36% of the Ph.D. and 48% of the masters degrees were awarded to women. In comparison only 14% of the deans at faculties of the University of Zagreb were women.²³⁹ Interestingly, two of them are found in the arts faculties.

Table 4: Share of female university teachers and associates by faculty and status, 1998/9

University of Zagreb	% Professor with Ph.D.	% Lecturers	% Assistants	% Female students (in 1997 *)
Faculty of architecture, design	3	31	35	60
Faculty of architecture	15	44	29	66
Faculty of political science (includes journalism)	13	n/a	35	57
Faculty of arts and letters	28	n/a	50	79
Academy of visual arts	20	n/a	27	56
Music academy	17	83	38	59
Drama and film academy	13	50	33	52

Source: State Bureau of Statistics, unpublished Table of results 5 and 5A, 1998/99.

N/A: not available.

* Figures obtained from the Visoko obrazovanje u 1997. State Bureau of Statistics. Državni zavod za statistiku, Zagreb, 1999.

²³⁸ Lainert Novosel, Smiljanja (1999) Žene na pragu 21 stoljeća, TOD & EDAC, Zagreb.

²³⁹ Ibid, page 35.

4. Cultural Awards: Recognising Women's Achievements

In all categories of cultural awards, the share of female recipients is quite low. Despite the high participation of women in certain fields of the arts and culture sectors, women do not receive relative recognition for their work. For example, although 50,5% of the members of the Croatian Architects Association are women, in the last 10 years only 3,6% of the awards of the association were given to women. The Ministry of Culture *Vladimir Nazor Award* in the field of architecture was given to only 12,5 % women.

The *Vladimir Nazor Award* is distributed in two forms: as a life-time achievement prize in certain fields and as a yearly award for excellence in a specific sector. Between 1962 and 1997, only 1 woman was given this award for life work in literature and since 1959, only 4 women were awarded the yearly prize.

Since 1991, the *Marin Držić* award for theater was given to 3 women, two of which were 1st prizes. Throughout the period 1990-99, the share of women who received the award for best prose *Ksaver Šandor Gjalski* was 47% and for poetry 15% (the *Tin Ujević* award).

On the other side of the coin, women are a minority in award selection committees. On average they make up between 10 to 20% of the members.

Table 5: Share of Vladimir Nazor Award given to women

Nature of award	Total recipients	% Women
Life work in literature (1962-1997)	34	3
Yearly literature (1959-1997)	43	9
Life work in film (1967-1997)	27	11
Yearly film (1961-1997)	33	0
Life work in theater (1964-1997)	36	22
Yearly theater (1959-1997)	49	22
Life work in music (1960-1997)	35	23
Yearly music (1961-1997)	51	12
Life work in architecture (1965-1997)	34	6
Yearly architecture (1965-1997)	45	11
Life work in visual arts (1961-1997)	43	12
Yearly visual arts (1959-1997)	46	9

Source: Croatian Ministry of Culture (unpublished source).

5. Professional or Political Strategies

The advocacy of affirmative action in political representation of women has been strongly put forward during the Spring of 1999 by the *Ad-hoc women's coalition*, a group consisting of different NGO's, political parties and female politicians. This renewed activity was linked to the (then) upcoming parliamentary elections in Croatia. The Ad-hoc coalition was asking for a minimum 30% quota of women on the party tickets for this election and for women be placed on the list in such a way to ensure that they would in fact enter the parliament if they should be supported. In 1998, female MP's from all the parties in Parliament banded together to create a women's lobby against discrimination of women in politics.

There is no legislation which gives preferential treatment to women at this time. There are no monitoring devices nor policies to ensure equal representation of women in the arts, in culture or in the media.

Civil Society Initiatives

A number of women's groups and networks are active in Croatia. The aims of their respective activities have different foci: labor position, political participation, war related trauma healing, arts and creativity. In 1998, the B.a.B.e. woman's group was one of the three NGO's in Croatia to receive the US-EU democracy and civil society award. In addition to an analysis of the portrayal of women in the news and media in general, they are preparing a study about women in textbooks.

Several women are prominent in the attempt to influence the media and cultural policy in Croatia including lawyers, journalists, researchers, etc. Their overall impact at this moment is however limited.

6. Fragments of a Conclusion

The data we were able to collect and the statements from female professionals in the field seem to support the thesis that women are only able to significantly enter into those professions which are either losing (or have not yet attained) high social status (like journalism), offer much less in terms of financial remuneration (arts and culture in general), and lack power (a small number of women are active politics).

Empirical research into the opinions of the population about the position of women in the 90's shows that the transition process has worsened the position of women in society in general. Perceptions of typical male/female professions still place women predominantly in education and primary care, administrative jobs, while politics and business are perceived as male professions. In arts and entertainment women are perceived as equally talented, as in medicine, while in science professions the opinions are divided between equality and the preference for men.²⁴⁰

²⁴⁰ Lainet Novosel, Smiljanja (1999) *Žene na pragu 21 stoljeća*, TOD & EDAC, Zagreb.