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Changes in the Educational Structure of the Female Population in Croatia from 1961 to 2006

From 1961 to 2006 there have been many positive changes in the educational structure of the female population. Although at the beginning of this period the share of the female population in the total number of illiterates was 75%, compared to 81.8% in 2001, a more detailed analysis by age group shows that women over 50 constitute a majority of 73.5% in the total number of the illiterate population. The differential birth rate and death rate, infant mortality and migration have created an imbalance in the gender structure of the population. The proportion of elderly women is greater than the share of men. Differences between men and women regarding the level of education are most evident in primary and secondary education. Also, differences in gender can be seen within the structure of tertiary education. Over a period of 40 years, there has been a conformation in the structure of gender in tertiary education and, according to the 2001 census, the difference between women and men was only 1.6 percentage points. Changes in the educational structure of the female population have been affected by cultural capital, cultural deprivation, the patriarchal structure of the family, early socialisation of girls and many other factors.

The imbalance in the gender structure, a relatively higher proportion of older women in the total population, will determine the educational structure of women and the population as a whole in Croatia for many years. Therefore, we can conclude that the global trend of better educational attainment of women has left consequences on Croatian society. But increasingly the question is whether these are the better achievements of women, or poorer achievements of men. The answer could only be provided by additional research.

Key words: education, changes in education, educational structure, the impact on women's education, cultural deprivation, cultural capital, marriage