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Women in the economy of Croatia and Hungary from a European perspective at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries*

This article examines the structure of women employment in Croatia between 1880 and 1910 in the framework of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Furthermore, it places the question in the international context by introducing data from Germany and France in order to prove that modernization and the employment of women in the modern sectors are connected. The more industrialized a country was at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, the more women worked in the modern sectors. However, although modernization was more rapidly developing in Hungary than in Croatia, the differences found in female labour are not significant, except for the agricultural sector.

Keywords: female labour, modernization, census, structure of employment, economic development

Female labour¹ cannot be regarded as a modern phenomenon. International theoretical literature dealing with women's work indicated that not only the structure and the main characteristic features but also the dimensions of female employment were altered during the decades of industrialization. Before the beginning of industrialization, the majority of females worked in their own family economy or within the scope of a foreign household, as a domestic servant. However, during the industrial revolution, the household and the workplace gradually separated from each other. A growing number of females had to find jobs outside their homes e.g. in factories, department stores and offices. This made the situation of wives and mothers more difficult because

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1 Female labour is not widely nor deeply studied, however feminist movements, women's suffrage or women's role in politics have been popular topics of gender studies. Since the 1980s the Eight International Economic Congress (1982), where the focus was directed to the female labour before, during and after the industrial revolution, has drawn more attention to the question. However, it still lacks the interest of historians.

they had little time to spend with their family's affairs. This resulted in more and more married women having to give up their jobs and stay at home. In Western Europe, the employment rate of married women decreased after 1880. These factors contributed to the decrease of the employment rate of women in Great Britain, Belgium and in certain Scandinavian countries.

We presume that modernization and the employment of women in the modern sectors are connected, as it is indicated in Chart 1, showing the countries from west to east including some of the northern countries in Europe. In developed and industrialized countries, modernization and structural transformation of female employment made considerable progress at the beginning of the 20th century. In the United Kingdom, Switzerland and Belgium, three-quarter of the wage-earner women worked in the modern sector in 1910. This ratio proved to be similar in the transatlantic countries i.e. in the United States of America, in Canada, as well as in Australia. In France, half of the female labourers worked in the modern sector of the economy, while in Germany, the Netherlands, Norway and Italy more than one quarter of the female population did so. This ratio was about 20% in Hungary and in Austria, while in Croatia it was only 6-7%.

This paper examines the dimension of women's employment rate and its structural transformation in the countries of the Austro-Hungarian Empire – Hungary, Croatia and Austria – by processing and analysing contemporary census data. In order to place this topic in an international context, we have processed the data of two well-developed European countries, France and Germany.

As a starting point, we chose the data of the census which was completed between 1880 and 1882. The reason for this is that international studies consider these years to be a dividing line in the history of female labour. On the one hand, "traditional" forms of female work – e.g. agricultural work, domestic industry – gradually fell into the background and the number of servants and day labourers decreased. On the other hand, "modern" sectors of wage-earning activities came into prominence. More and more women were employed in the field of industry, commerce and transport. The number of those females, who worked in white-collar jobs started to grow as well.²

Methodologically we examined tendencies connected to certain lines of occupations, the distribution of occupational groups. Furthermore, we analysed the proportion of male and female workers in certain jobs. An even more comprehensive picture can be gained about this topic, if we compare the number of female workers to the whole female population – more precisely to those who are older than 15. This means that we calculate the number of female workers projected to 1000 females as well as to 1000 females who are older than 15. Principally, we pay attention to the "modern" sectors of wage-earning activities carried by females.

2 In certain cases, day labourers also belong to this cluster.

How should we interpret the decrease of female employment, which has been emphasized in international studies? In the five countries which are examined in this paper, the number of female wage-earners was increasing between 1880 and 1910. Female employment was increasing, by 42% in France, by 37% in Germany and by 56% in Austria, compared to the whole female population of the given countries. Conversely, in Croatia and in Hungary the rate of increase proves to be only 5-10%, indicating that the employment compared to the whole female population started to decrease. (Table 1) However, this is only prevalent in the last decade, as the number of female workers per 1000 women was increasing between 1880 and 1900 in Croatia and Hungary as well.³

Among the traditional fields of female labour, we can rely on large amount of statistical data in the case of domestic servants. The number of domestic servants in France decreased by 50% over the period of 30 years. The decrease was significant in Austria as well. In Germany, the absolute number did not decrease, but the ratio compared to the whole female population started to decline. While the number of domestic servants began to diminish towards the end of the 19th century in Hungary, it started to increase again after the centenary. (Table 1)

According to the official statistics of the European countries, one quarter of the female population was registered as active wage-earners, while this ratio exceeded three-quarter of the male population. In the well-developed, industrialized countries, the ratio of female wage-earners was between 20 and 30%. It surpassed 30% only in France and Germany. (Table 2) The only exception is Austria, where half of the female population and three-quarter of those females who has turned 15 were active wage-earners. The divergence is significant between Austria and Hungary in this way: in Hungary, only 20% of the whole female population was registered as active workers in 1910 and their ratio did not surpass 25% during the previous decades. In Croatia, however, the high percentage of total wage-earner women existed due to the women employed in agriculture and forestry, while the percentage of women out of total earners in the modern sector was not much lower than in Hungary.

Interestingly enough, the number of wage-earning women in Austria, Hungary and Croatia differed considerably in 1910: per thousand women, 96 worked in modern sectors of economy in Austria, 39 in Hungary, and 19 in Croatia. While the number of females employed in the modern sectors has grown by 250% in Hungary during three decades, this growth rate proved to be only 159% in Croatia.

To sum up these results, we can state that the number of females working in the modern sectors depends on the countries' state of development. The structural transformation of female employment started to accelerate in 1880. In 1910, 15 out of 1000 women worked in the modern sectors in Hungary and 10 women did so in Croatia.

3 Nevertheless, this decrease is not a real change, only the method of statistical data-survey altered. Statistics experts were well aware of this fact at the turn of the 19th and 20th century. According to them, this phenomenon could be easily explained with a different surveying aspects used during the census.

(Table 3) If we look at the international comparison, it displays the following tendency: among 1000 women, more than 100 worked in the modern sectors in the industrialized and well-developed countries.

Comparing the ratio of males and females in certain occupational sectors in Croatia brings out some interesting details. (Table 4-5) The growth of the number female workers in the modern sectors was as high as 159%. It increased significantly in the trade and transportation sectors (235 %), and among the civil servants (185 %). As a result, 12 % of the active earners in trade and transport, and 18% in the civil sector, were women in 1910. The latter one was mainly due to the growth of women in public health from 10,7 % to 49,5 %. (Chart 3) At the same time, the ratio of women working in the public health sector decreased in Hungary. Even so, the percentage of women working in public health in Hungary was still higher than in Croatia. (Chart 2 and 3) The largest difference concerning the civil servants between the two countries was the church service. In Croatia, the ratio of women employed in church service was 25,4 in 1910, while in Hungary it was only 14,9. Which public sector employed most of the earning women in Croatia? 50,7 % of all women worked in education, 21,2 % in public health, 16,3 % in church service and 6,8 % in public administration and justice. The public administration and justice did not employ women in 1880 at all. (Chart 4) In Hungary the tendency was similar except for public health (31,5 %) and church service (7,2 %). What we can see among the employed women in the modern sectors (trade, transportation, public sector) is the emergence of new specifically female jobs e.g. secretary, office clerk, post assistant, teacher, nurse etc. Offices were starting to get filled with women during the 1890s, after the spread of typewriters.

To get a clearer picture of the real situation, we studied and compared the educational level of working males and females in both countries. (Chart 6, 7) In 1869, two-thirds of the working population was still illiterate: only 40,8% of the males and 25% of the females could read and write in Hungary. In 1890, 61,2% of the male and female population (ages six and up) was literate. However, in the field of agriculture the number of literate females proved to be rather low. Up to 1910, 68,5% of the people who were six or older were literate. In which sectors were there the least illiterate male and female workers? In both countries for female workers it was in transportation that literacy reached the highest percentage. In Croatia, it was 98,2 %, while in Hungary only 94,5 %. For male workers in both countries it was the civil sector, and their percentage was alike. The second most literate sector among women in both countries were the civil sector; however, Hungarian female workers fell behind their Croatian counterparts. As far as male workers are concerned in both countries their percentage of literacy was similar in trade. In 1910 the census documented the schooling of the population. (Table 6) According to the census, 5,7 % out of total male-earners had completed 4 grades of secondary school in Hungary, while in Croatia it was only 2,9 %. What about women? In Croatia, 1,9 %, and in Hungary 4,0 % out of total female-earners had completed 4 grades. The difference between Croatian and Hungarian women

in this aspect is smaller than that of male-earners of the two countries. The numbers (68,9 % in Hungary and 71,3 % in Croatia) make it evident that in both countries women worked in a higher position, namely, they were officers and clerks in the transportation sector, than man, who generally worked as unskilled labourers.

It is important to observe the marital status of working women. Austrian women got married at a much older age than their Hungarian and Croatian counterparts. Furthermore, the number of unmarried women proved to be much higher in Austria. Because of this, we could suppose that the ratio of unmarried girls was higher among the working women than in Hungary and in Croatia. But, in the modern sectors of the economy, the situation was similar to the Austrian circumstances. Our data indicate that the ratio of working unmarried women was higher in the modern sectors in Hungary and in Croatia (493 and 439 thousand) than in Austria (417 thousand). If we examine certain branches of the economy, this picture changes: with the exception of industry, our presumption seems to be correct. In the field of trade, transportation and in the public service, the number of unmarried women was much higher in Austria than in the Lands of the Hungarian Crown. Apart from this, the large-scale employment of widows was remarkable in Hungary.

As pointed out above, in certain cases there were similar tendencies in Croatia and in Hungary concerning modernization and its connection with the emergence of female workers in the economy, especially in the modern sectors. They were much more alike to each other, than to the western part of the Empire, Austria. Although modernization was more rapidly growing in Hungary than in Croatia, the differences in female labour are not significant, with the exception of the agricultural sector.

The sources of data presented in the tables and charts are from Bairoch, Paul: *The Working Population and Its Structure*. Universite Libre de Bruxelles, 1968. and edited/numbered so that they could serve to compare with that of the Hungarian and Croatian ones from the Hungarian Statistical publications.

Chart 1: Bairoch, Paul (chart edited by Nagy, M.)

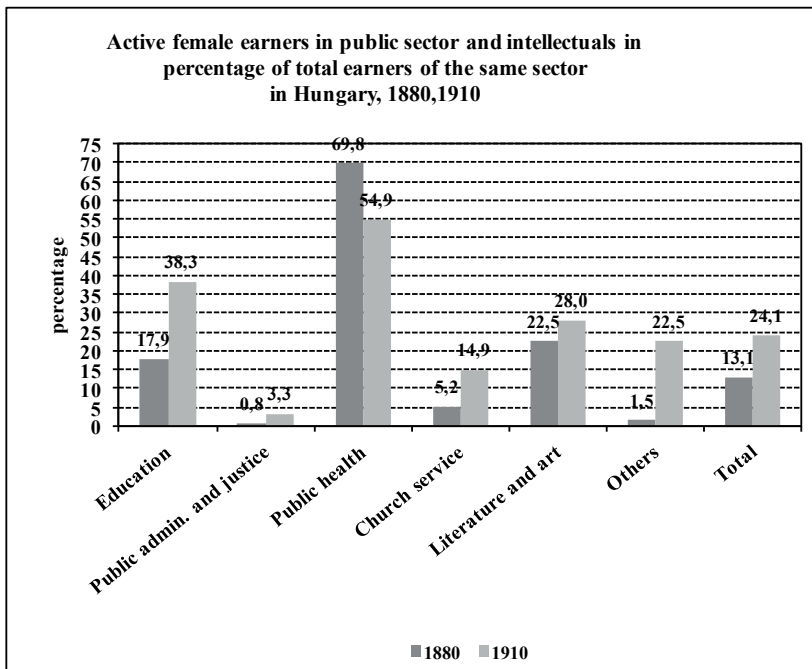
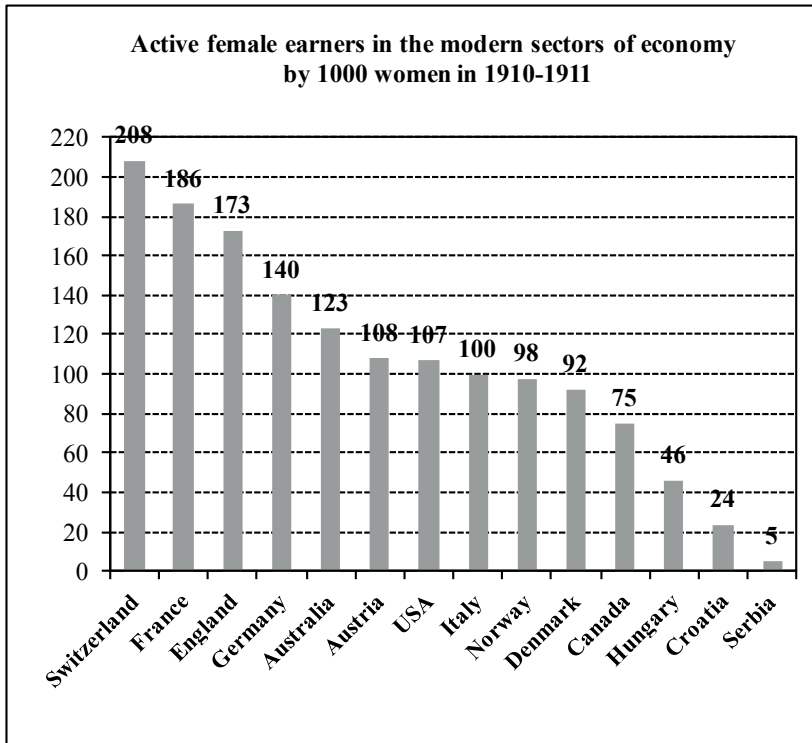
Chart 2-3-4-5-6-7 Results of the 1881 census in Hungary. Budapest, 1882., Hungarian statistical publ. new series 64. Budapest, 1925., Charts are edited by Nagy, M.

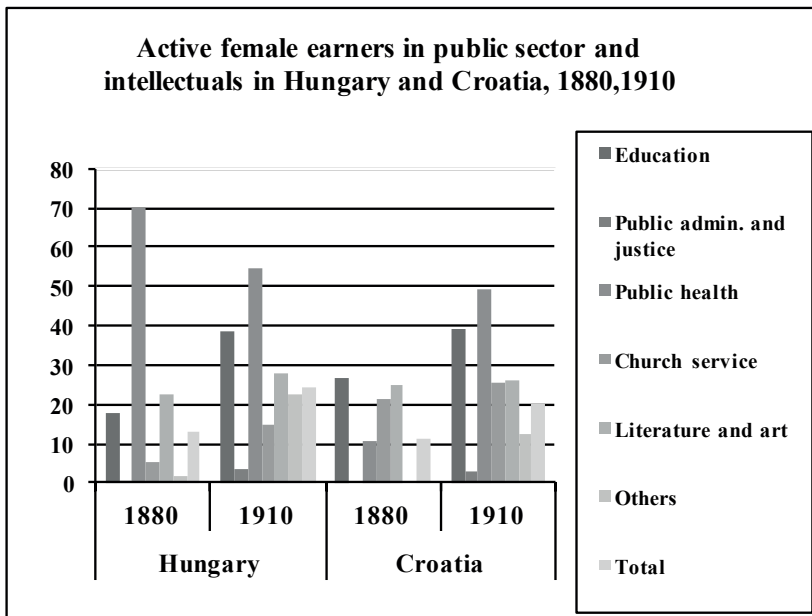
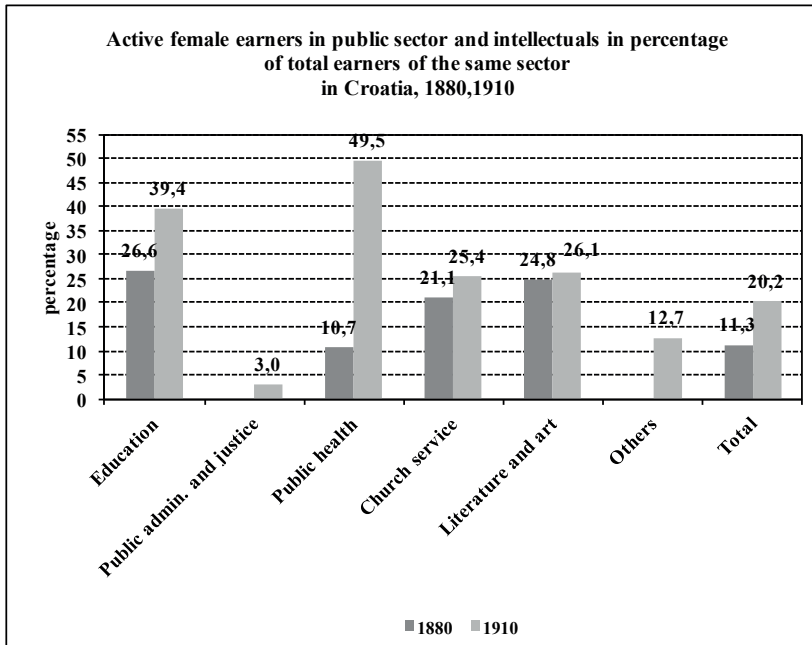
Table 1-2-3: Bairoch, Paul and Hungarian Statistical publ. new series 64., Tables are edited by Nagy, M.

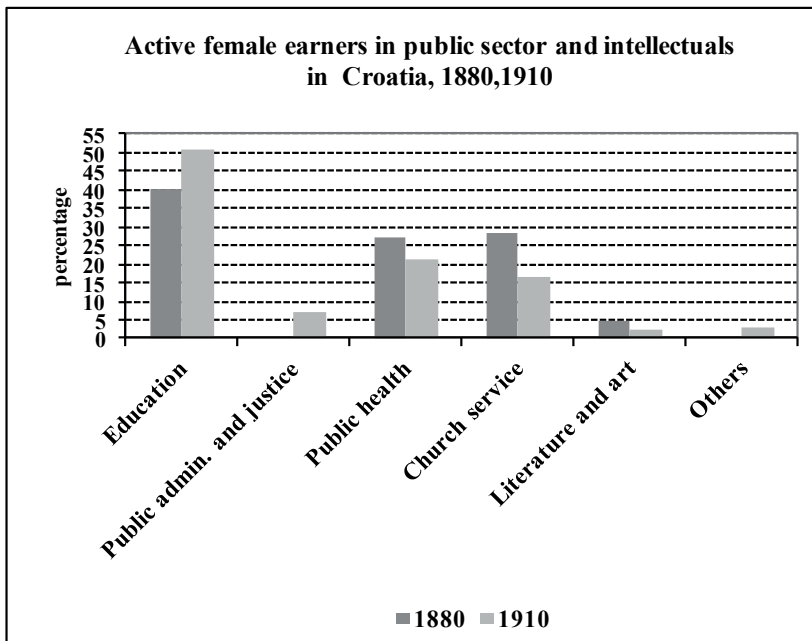
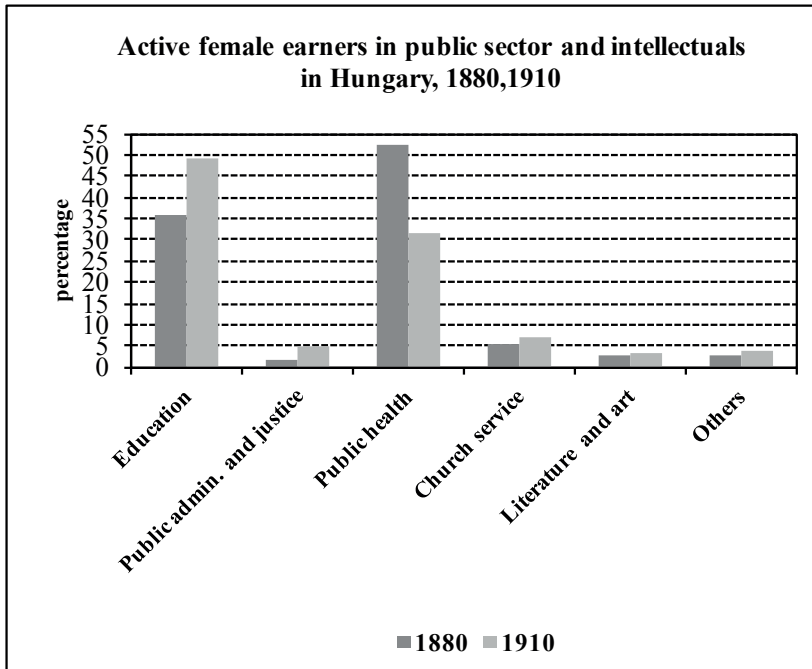
Table 4: Results of the 1881 census in Hungary. Budapest, 1882.; Hungarian Statistical publication, new stream 2. Budapest, 1893.; Hungarian Statistical publication, new series 9. Budapest, 1905.; Hungarian Statistical publ. new series 64. Budapest, 1925., Table is edited by Nagy, M.

Table 5: Results of the 1881 census in Hungary. Budapest, 1882.; Hungarian Statistical publ. new series 64. Budapest, 1925., Table is edited by Nagy, M.

Table 6: Hungarian Statistical publ. new series 64. Budapest, 1925., Table is edited by Nagy, M.







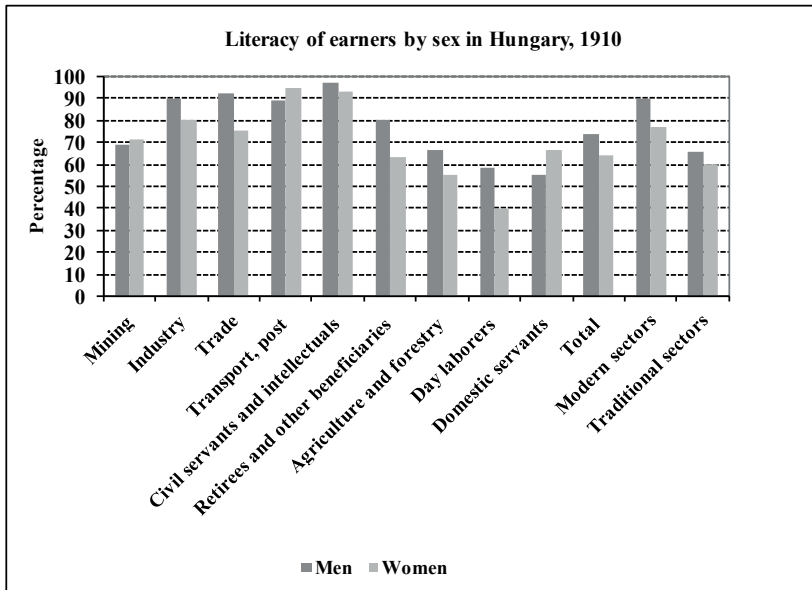
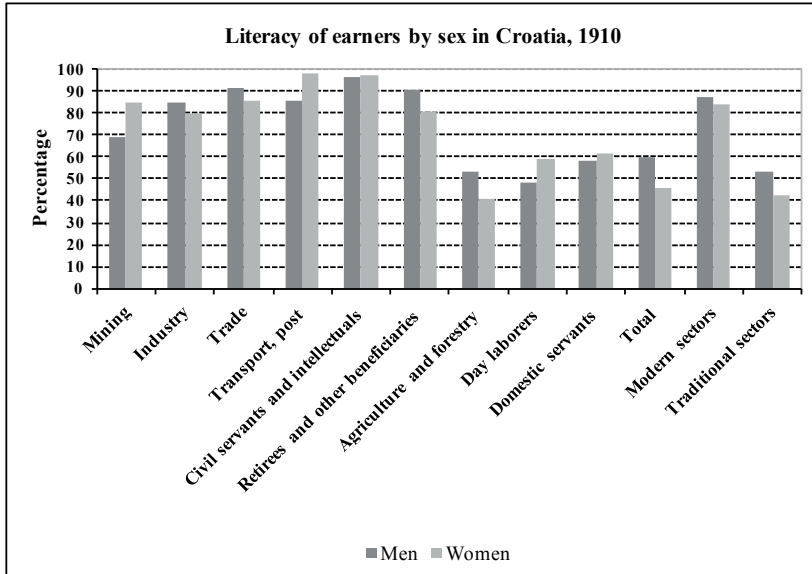


Table 1. Indices of wage-earning women in five European countries (starting year = 100)

	France	Germany	Austria	Hungary		Croatia
	1881–1911	1882–1907	1880–1910	1880–1910		1880–1910
				a	b	
<i>Total earning women</i>	142	137	156	105		110
Industry, Trade, Transport	151	204	205	351		255
Civil servants, intellectuals	182	259	294	345		285
<i>Modern sector total</i>	152	207	211	350		259
Agriculture and forestry	191	117	157	145	91	103
Day laborers			39	14	59	120
Domestic servants	51	102	70	94		120

a original data from census *b* corrected data

Table 2. Women out of total earners (men & women together) in five European countries, percentage

Country	Year	Total earning women	Industry, Trade, Transport	Civil servants, intellectuals	Modern sector Total	Agriculture & forestry	Domestic servants
France	1881	32,9	30,0	26,8	29,8	26,3	58,9
	1911	38,2	35,7	27,5	35,5	38,0	82,9
Germany	1882	36,8	22,3	18,0	22,0	40,7	94,1
	1907	35,7	23,6	24,4	23,6	46,5	90,4
Austria	1880	41,2	22,8	18,8	22,5	44,3	72,4
	1910	44,5	25,6	25,4	25,6	50,5	96,5
Hungary	1880	26,7	9,5	10,9	9,7	17,3	90,4
	1910	23,6	16,0	21,8	16,7	19,8	93,2
Croatia	1880	37,4	9,0	10,9	9,2	39,6	70,2
	1910	34,2	13,5	18,0	14,1	36,7	89,7

Table 3. Number of women out of 1000 earning women in five European countries

Country	Year	Total earning women	Industry, Trade, Transport	Civil servants, intellectuals	Modern sector Total	Agriculture & forestry	Domestic servants
France	1881	290	109	10	119	91	80
	1911	387	154	17	170	162	39
Germany	1882	307	74	5	79	169	60
	1907	362	129	11	140	169	53
Austria	1880	408	55	4	59	241	57
	1910	497	87	9	96	295	31
Hungary	1880	237	12	2	15	91	52
	1910	199	33	6	39	100	37
Croatia	1880	397	9	2	10	355	19
	1910	308	15	3	19	259	16

Table 4. Wage-earning women in Croatia by main occupational groups

	1880	1890	1900	1910	<i>Index</i> 1880-1910
1 Agriculture and forestry	336 953	347 559	470 040	347 014	103
2 Day-laborers	6 367	4 121	4 204	7 661	120
3 Domestic servants	18 213	15 008	18 419	21 934	120
4 Industry, mining	6 829	12 057	11 691	16 349	239
5 Trade		2 514	3 355	3 619	
6 Transportation		206	375	703	
<i>Trade and transportation</i>	<i>1 293</i>	<i>2 720</i>	<i>3 730</i>	<i>4 322</i>	<i>334</i>
7 Civil servants					
	1 501	2 040	3 056	4 273	285
8 Retired	3 407	4 766	5 778	6 943	204
9 Unknown and others	1 660	759	3 725	3 702	223
<i>Total</i>	<i>376 223</i>	<i>389 030</i>	<i>519 643</i>	<i>412 198</i>	<i>110</i>
1-3 Traditional sector	361 533	366 688	492 663	376 609	104
4-7 Modern sector	9 623	16 817	17 477	24 944	259

Table 5. Wage-earning women in Croatia by main occupational groups

	<i>Earning Women by total earners in percentage</i>		<i>Earning women out of 1000 women</i>		<i>Earning women by 1000 women aged 15 and over</i>	
	1880	1910	1880	1910	1880	1910
1 Agriculture, forestry	39.6	36.7	355	259	549	406
2 Day-laborers	48.4	34.3	7	6	10	9
3 Domestic servants	70.2	89.7	19	16	30	26
4 Industry	10.0	14.2	7	12	11	19
5 Trade		16.0		3		4
6 Transportation		4.8		1		1
<i>Trade and transportation</i>	<i>6.0</i>	<i>11.6</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>5</i>
7 Civil servants						
	10.9	18.0	2	3	2	5
8 Retired	30.9	68.3	4	5	6	8
9 Unknown and others	55.7	53.9	2	3	3	4
<i>Total</i>	<i>37.4</i>	<i>34.7</i>	<i>397</i>	<i>308</i>	<i>613</i>	<i>482</i>
1-3 Traditional sector	40.6	37.0	381	281	589	440
4-7 Modern sector	9.2	14.1	10	19	16	29

Table 6. Active earners who at least 4 classes of secondary school completed, 1910

	<i>Hungary</i>		<i>Croatia</i>	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
	%	%	%	%
Mining	3,1	4,0	4,5	7,5
Industry	5,3	4,4	3,0	4,1
Trade	25,7	18,3	20,1	20,1
Transportation, post	18,0	68,9	15,9	71,3
Civil servants and intellectuals	67,3	52,3	53,0	54,2
Retired	24,9	11,6	31,4	19,7
<i>Total</i>	<i>5,7</i>	<i>4,0</i>	<i>2,9</i>	<i>1,6</i>
Modern sectors	16,4	14,5	13,4	17,5
Traditional sectors	0,7	0,3	0,3	0,3

Active earners who at least 4 classes of secondary school completed in Croatia in 1910 (%)

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SAŽETAK

Žene u gospodarstvima Hrvatske i Mađarske iz europske perspektive na prijelazu iz 19. u 20. stoljeće

Tema ovog rada je struktura zaposlenosti žena u Hrvatskoj od 1880. do 1910. u okviru Austro-Ugarske monarhije. Pretpostavka autorice je da su modernizacija i zaposlenost žena u modernim sektorima povezani, na način da je u industrijaliziranim zemljama više žena bilo zaposleno u modernim sektorima. Kako bi se ovaj predmet istraživanja stavio u širi kontekst, provedena je analiza podataka iz Francuske i Njemačke koje su tada bile iznimno razvijene. Od 1880, promjene u strukturi zaposlenosti žena počinju se ubrzavati. 1910, na 1000 žena u Mađarskoj 15 ih je bilo zaposleno u modernim sektorima, dok ih je u Hrvatskoj bilo 10. Pri usporedbi s drugim državama, vidi se velika razlika. U razvijenijim i industrijaliziranim državama od 1000 žena preko 100 ih je bilo zaposleno u modernim sektorima. Uz sektore trgovine i prometa, u civilnom sektoru došlo je do najznačajnijeg porasta, kako u Hrvatskoj, tako i u Mađarskoj. Najviše žena u Hrvatskoj bilo je zaposleno u obrazovanju (50,7% od svih žena) kojeg su slijedili javno zdravstvo (21,2%), crkvena služba (16,3%) te javna uprava i pravosuđe (6,8%). Situacija je bila slična i u Mađarskoj, osim na poljima javnog zdravstva (31,5%) i crkvene službe (7,2%). Po istraživanju stupnja obrazovanja žena koje su bile zaposlene u modernim sektorima, autorica je došla do zaključka da su najobrazovanije žene bile zaposlene u prometnom sektoru u obje zemlje. Prometni sektor slijedi civilni sektor, iako je ovdje Mađarska zaostajala za Hrvatskom po pismenosti. U prometnom sektoru dobiveni rezultati povezani su s činjenicom da su žene bile na višim pozicijama od muškaraca. Žene su većinom bile službenice, dok su muškarci bili neobučena radna snaga. Zanimljivo je da Hrvatska i Mađarska međusobno imaju puno više sličnosti u udjelu žena zaposlenih u modernim sektorima, nego što ijedna od tih zemalja ima s Austrijom. Iako se u Mađarskoj modernizacija brže razvijala nego u Hrvatskoj, jedini sektor u kojem su postojale značajne razlike u radu žena je poljoprivreda.

Keywords: zaposlenost žena, modernizacija, cenzus, struktura zaposlenosti, gospodarski razvoj