

Gender as an underlying principle of inclusion and exclusion in education

This article wants to highlight some aspects of the history and current developments of the German educational system from a gender's perspective. It will also be shown that the pupil's gender was, in the past, and still is looked at as a criterion of exclusion. Starting with the German educational system at the end of the 19th century I will show how and why gender segregation was put into practice on the students' level. This will be exemplified at the long-lasting exclusion of secondary education on the one hand, and of primary education on the other hand. After gender segregation was abolished on both levels in the 20th century, there are some educationalists today who advocate gender segregation again, at least on a pupils' level. The motives for gender segregation have, however, changed considerably. Whereas in the 19th century gender segregation used to be an instrument of maintaining traditional gender roles and restricting educational efforts of girls, it is now discussed as a means of realization of equal educational chances.

1. The educational system at the end of the 19th century

Similar to the present situation there was no uniformity within the educational system in Germany. However, there were common characteristics: These included gender segregation, but also social segregation and in the lower school sector strict confessional segregation. All three criteria of segregation were applied to the pupils' level and teachers' level. In order to illustrate this we will have to have a look at the structure of the German educational system at the end of the 19th century. I will show this at the example of the South West. Unlike the Baden-Württemberg school system today, which is divided into three levels, the school system in the 19th century was composed of only two levels. On the one hand there was the so-called lower school system; on the other hand there was the higher school system.

The lower school system consisted of Volksschulen only. They used to have 8 forms generally. In Württemberg however, since 1858 School attendance used to be compulsory for 7 years only (Schmid 1933, S. 6). Apart from this, in the second half of the 19th century "extended Volksschulen" developed, which were called "Bürgerschulen" (bourgeois schools) in Baden and middle schools in Württemberg (Godel-Gaßner 2004, S. 418).

The higher school system consisted mainly of 3 types of schools, which differed basically in the foreign languages they taught and if they were entitled to issue university qualifications. The Gymnasium (Latin, Old Greek or Hebrew), Realgymnasium (Latin, French), and Oberrealschule (French and English). The Realschule, with 6 forms, a right to issue medium qualifications (one-years'-testimony) and attendance up to the age of 16, was part of the higher school system. For girls not only in Baden but also in Württemberg, the first state-acknowledged "higher girls' schools" were founded in 1877. Their educational offer and course of education was similar to these of the six-year Realschulen, in spite of a girls' specific focus. The sharp line of division of pupils in terms of their gender becomes already clear here. We will now have a closer look.

2. Gender segregation on the levels of pupils and teachers in the school system of the 19th century.

a) Gender segregation on the pupils' level

Whereas in Volksschulen of the lower school system girls and boys were usually taught together and extended Volksschulen accepted girls, the higher school system used to be a boys' school system. Girls, however, were not totally excluded, at least in the Southwest, from higher schools, the educational concepts of Gymnasium, Realgymnasium, Oberrealschule and Realschule were still clearly designed for boys.

Acceptance of girls at these schools was only possible if parents and communities had officially applied and if these applications were approved of by the main school authority. In Prussia, which was the most dominant and

biggest federal state within Germany at that time, even this procedure of granting individual permissions was rejected. For this reason the liberal reaction to the girls' demands for educational equality prevalent mainly in Baden, was closely watched in Germany. The experiences made in Baden played an important role in the first discussions of coeducation which seriously started in Germany at the beginning of the 20th century. Coeducation was not only common in the United States, but it had also been introduced in some European countries such as Sweden (1876), Finland (1880), Denmark (1883) and England (1899) (Lexikon der Pädagogik 1970, S. 455).

The positive experiences with the acceptance of girls at higher boys' schools in the Southwest strengthened the arguments of the advocates of coeducation. However, they could not yet win their case. Institutional gender segregation in the higher school system was still greatly favoured in the Southwest. Accepting girls was only considered justified in case where there was no higher girls' school in the community, or if the girls wanted a university qualification. Girls' schools which provided a really higher education were established only at the end of the 19th century. These schools were private schools at first, not public schools and could therefore only prepare their pupils for taking the Abitur. They themselves were not entitled to hold these exams. The first girls' Gymnasium was opened in 1893 in Karlsruhe (Großherzogtum Baden). It was founded by a progressive womens' association which had been looking for a suitable location for carrying out such a girls' project. They finally met with goodwill in liberal Baden. The second girls' Gymnasium was founded in 1898 in Stuttgart (Königreich Württemberg) by a committed lady whose living room used to be the classroom at the beginning.

b) Gender segregation on the teachers' level

Female teachers could until late in the 19th century only teach at schools belonging to the private girls' school system and in the acknowledged schools of the Higher Girls' school system, which had been established in 1877. They were excluded from service at public Volksschulen in Württemberg until 1858 and in Baden until 1880. Even when these schools were opened for female teachers the profession of the teacher at Volksschulen remained a male domain. Female teachers were excluded from service at higher boys' schools even until the second half of the 20th century. Although women got access to the qualification courses for teachers after a long fight for opening universities for women (in Baden since 1900, in Württemberg since 1904), they were only used in the higher girls' school system. Only during the 1st World War female teachers were occasionally used in Württemberg – not in Baden – at boy schools.

c) Reasons and motives of gender segregation

Segregation on the students' level as well as long exclusion of women from service at state schools was justified by an ideal of female education based on bourgeois theories of the 18th century. These theories defined female education rather restrictively, the objective being the preparation of girls for their role as housewife, mother and wife. Girls were not to be educated for their own sake but in order to serve others. The following quotation by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, a supporter of the influential mainstream bourgeois theories, illustrates this idea:

"The overall education of girls has to be geared to the man's needs. To please them and to be useful to them, to be loved and respected by them, to bring them up in their youth and take care of them in old age, to advise them, to comfort them and sweeten their lives: these are the woman's duties at all times, this is what they have to learn from an early age." (Rousseau 1984, p. 394)

Rousseau assumed, just like other advocates of a bourgeois approach to womanhood, opposing characters of the two sexes. This opposition was the basis of a subordination intended and justified by nature and resulting in general dependency of men. The thesis of a "mental and physical inferiority of women" which was developed and refined in the debate about girls' education made a case for the fight against women in teaching positions in state schools (Enzelberger 2001, S. 90). At the same time it served as a means to maintain the status quo

within society, which could only function because of traditional gender roles. Women who broke out of their assigned gender role constituted a danger for the bourgeois self-concept.

The debate about coeducation and the entry of women into teaching positions at primary state schools illustrates this case.

Convinced opponents of coeducation did not only refer to the theory of physical and mental inferiority of women, they emphasized at the same time the importance of maintaining gender differences. However, the fact that they considered the possibility of levelling gender differences by coeducation shows, that they weren't quite convinced of the ingrained difference between the sexes. The article of Charles L. Henning, published in 1913 in the magazine "The German School" is an impressive example of the reasoning of opponents of coeducation. Henning, who boasted of having studied the American school system for 15 years and referred to the theory of Granville Stanley Hall, an American educationalist and psychologist, insistently warned of introducing coeducation in Germany (Henning 1913, S. 775). He states that the "German youth has a higher mental and moral standard than the American youth. If the state was interested in promoting the degeneration of the youth, well then coeducation should be introduced, the rest will then happen by itself." (ibid., S. 780). Henning pointed out that High schools were, not without reason, called matchmaking agencies and hatchery of immorality. (ibid.) Coeducation supposedly was responsible for establishing intimate contacts between boys and girls which would later on culminate in immoral relationships. (ibid.) Apart from moral doubts Henning lists other disadvantages according to Hall, which would result from the natural difference of the girls. Among these are the differences due to the development, which become apparent mainly in the critical period of the youths, when sexual life starts to develop. During this phase girls were said to be generally more mature than boys of the same age; therefore, girls get ahead of the boys naturally which would lead to a feeling of inferiority among the boys, when they realize, that girls do better. (ibid., p. 778)

Other opponents of coeducation were afraid of a downing of educational standards because of the girls. These doubts illustrate at the same time the contradictory line of argumentation of the opponents of coeducation. Henning also gives the argument of levelling the gender differences: During the phase of puberty coeducation would impede the development of certain female characteristics among the girls and some of the markedly male qualities among the boys. (ibid., S. 781). Furthermore, excessive demand was listed as a negative consequence especially for the girls. Therefore, one had to protect the girls for their own sake against this danger by protecting them from entry to boys' education.

This aspect of overburdening was also put forward in the debate about women's entry into teaching positions at public general schools. Young women who were striving for a teaching position at general public schools had to be protected against this exhausting and demanding work to their own good. They are said to "mistake" their true destination. Another worry was that the "value and importance of the public general school" was being diminished by the employment of women teachers (Danz 1992, S. 54). The debate about women in teaching positions at general public schools got more explosive because of the fact that these schools were not only attended by girls, but were mainly run, for economic reasons, especially in rural areas, as co-educative institutions. The opponents of female teachers warned of the dangers of effeminacy of the boys by female influences. This argument was prevalent until the beginning of the 20th century. Charles Henning, for example, pointed out the negative effects of female teachers at American schools by over-feminization of the school system: he claimed that over-feminization would lead to "effeminacy of the character, unauthentic behaviour, impudent behaviour of boys and girls, demoralization in and outside the home" (Henning 193, P. 781). In Germany, too, opponents of female teachers claimed that they were not qualified for encouraging a militant nationalism and therefore represented a danger for the social structure of the German Empire. In the schools there was no need for female qualities, but for male qualities, such as courage, decidedness, utter consequence, increased intelligence (cf. Stodolsky 1993, p. 175).

This harsh opposition against employing female teachers at public general schools, which was particularly demonstrated by male teachers, becomes understandable when considering the different social backgrounds of male and female teachers. Stodolsky points out, that the “conflict between the sexes” at school resembled the conflict between the classes (ibid., p. 172). While young women striving for a teaching position usually belonged to the middle class or educated bourgeoisie, male teachers mainly came from poor social circumstances, as teachers were not respected by society very much. This was not only a consequence of poor pay but also of disadvantageous conditions of this profession. Teachers at general schools were subordinate to the priests – mainly in Württemberg – until the late 19th century. This becomes evident in a complaint of the teachers’ association of Baden Württemberg: Here it says that the public position of teachers was not of such a quality as to especially attract people to choose this job. This is not primarily because of low pay and little chances of promotion but above all because of the teachers’ obligation to carry out menial sacristan jobs (Schmid 1993, p. 379). These included ringing of the bells at various times of the day, winding up and cleaning the church clock, cleaning the church buildings and their surroundings as well as going on office errands for the priest (ibid., p. 408). Only in 1899 the duty to carry out these sacristan jobs was abolished by law (ibid., p. 688), but local school authority remained in the hands of the local clergy (Godel-Gassner 2004, p. 232). The situation of teachers in Baden was different due to the fact that as a result of the cultural conflict in 1864 the churches had lost their dominance of the schools. The immediate local authority for schools was no longer the priest. They had been replaced by a new panel, the local school board.

Another sign of the low status of teachers at general public schools are the educational requirements. Having completed a general school was the only requirement for training for a teacher at general schools. It was not necessary to have a higher education. Therefore, this profession was not acceptable for the young men of the higher middle class and the educated bourgeoisie. For the sons of the lower middle class, however, the profession of a teacher at general schools was in a way attractive, because it was one of the few professions which allowed social rise – albeit in the second generation only (Stodolsky 1993, p. 178). Teaching therefore was characterized as a springboard profession, i.e. as a transitory profession to a different social class (Recum 1995, p. 574.) Therefore it is not surprising that among teachers at general schools female teachers were fought as disagreeable competition.

3. Overcoming gender segregation on teachers’- and pupils’ level

a) Overcoming gender segregation on teachers’ level

In the second half of the 20th century the female teacher at general schools became an equal colleague of the male teacher. Reaching this point can be seen as a long process of overcoming gender specific regulations of admission, education and examinations. The following steps can be isolated:

Acknowledging the possibility of life-time employment	Women were denied the right of lifetime employment until 1899, employment of women was subject to revocation
Harmonization of pay	Women were paid considerably worse than their male colleagues, even during the Weimar Republic (Female civil servants only got half the local bonus)
Abolishment of restricted service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women were only allowed to teach in lower grades of co-educative general schools • Women teachers in Baden were not allowed at all to teach boys classes, in Baden Württemberg they were only allowed to teach the lower grades. • Abolishment only in the second half of the 20th century
Abolishment of female teacher quotes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since 1899 only 8% of teaching positions could be filled by women in Württemberg • In Baden a quote for female teachers of 5% was

	introduced in 1880, from 1892 the quote was 10%; it was abolished in 1906
Abolishment of female teachers celibacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Württemberg since 1861, female teachers at general schools were not allowed to get married, regardless of their status of employment • In Baden, only female teachers who had a life-time employment were denied the right to get married • Abolishment in 1950
Abolishment of separate institutions for training and harmonization of examination criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Württemberg training times were adapted, female teachers, however, were still trained in separate institutions. Exams were also different, for female teachers at general public schools needlework was an obligatory subject in the first examination. • In Baden, regulations for first examinations were identical from 1918. For the second examination there were still minor differences in music in 1912, women did not have to play the organ. • Absolute harmonization only in the second half of the 20th century.
Introduction of part-time jobs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction in 1969, this increased attractiveness of teaching positions for women as they could fulfil the role of housewife and mother at the same time.

In the meantime the former job as general public school teacher has developed into a women's domain. At the Pädagogische Hochschule of Ludwigsburg, for instance, in March 2007 85% of the students in the department of pedagogy were female.

b) Overcoming gender segregation on the pupils' level

Gender segregation on pupils' level had gradually been done away with since the 1960s. Coeducation however was not introduced officially by the school office or a special preparation of teachers. In 1967 only 43,6 % of all Gymnasiums in the Federal Republic had mono-educative classes (Zinnecker 1978, S. 67). By the abolishment of gender segregation in particular, girls' participation in higher education was meant to be promoted. Especially because studies showed that a person's gender was a major factor in determining chances of education, apart from the social, religious and geographical backgrounds. Thus, girls were considerably under-represented at Gymnasiums. Today, we can look back on a period of several decades of co-education at Gymnasiums and Realschulen.

4. Gender segregation in the context of current pedagogical discussions

No sooner than co-education spread the first criticism was voiced and this has never really fallen silent since. The reasons are under-representation of women generally in male domains as well as on higher levels of the hierarchies in administration and business. On the other hand, learning deficits of boys at schools have been noticed for some years now. Boys have been overtaken by girls in terms of educational success at schools. Boys, for example, are under-represented at Gymnasiums, whereas they are overrepresented at Hauptschulen and schools for children with special needs. They also have to repeat a year more often than girls. While only a few critics of co-education demand a complete return to general gender segregation as the solution to this problem, temporary gender segregation is quite often recommended. Temporary separation is not only recommended as a means to encourage girls in male connoted subjects but it is also being supported by some educators in the context of the current discussion of encouragement of boys at school (e.g. Böhmman 2003, p. 34). It is pointed out that in gender-homogenous groups boys did not have to win the girls' favour. A possible

reason for boys' underachievement at school is seen in the female dominance at elementary schools which results in a style of teaching strongly influenced by female interests, attitudes and opinions (e.g. Merz-Grötsch, p. 83). Moreover, due to the lack of male teachers at elementary schools boys have no male role-models to identify with and come to grips with (Horstkemper 1999, p. 33).

We have to bear in mind that boys mainly fail on secondary schools, i.e. they drop out of Gymnasium more often than girls (Preuss-Lausitz 2005). However, there are more male teachers than female teachers. The educationalist Claudia Crotti therefore rightly claims that these approaches do not explain the problem in all its complexity (Crotti 2006, p. 372).

As to gender segregation, there lies the danger of disregarding heterogeneity of a gender group on the one hand and tearing open gaps, that had long since seemed overcome, on the other hand. Whenever we reach the limits with internal differentiating measures I would deem temporary separation according to performance, talent or interest more reasonable. One has to reject reestablishment of institutional segregation at school for the same reasons. This, however, does not mean that individual mono-educative schools should be abolished. We have to distinguish between solutions for the school system in general and individual schools. Girls' schools, for example represent enrichment for the school system as well as any school with a special focus on a particular subject or skill, such as schools specialised in musical education. Girls' schools offer a learning environment for the girls without boys for whatever reasons they might want this. Gender segregation, however, is not the solution for all schools, in the same way that not all schools should offer special musical programmes.

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