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Struggling for girls' education: coalition strategies of Norwegian and German women's rights activists in comparative-historical perspective

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores how girls' education developed in Norway and Prussia (and later North Rhine-Westphalia, NRW) during the first and second wave of women's political mobilisation. It analyses how organisations and activists of the women's movement were included in different cross-interest coalitions in education politics. The cases are interpreted in light of Rokkanian cleavage theory. In Germany, the women's movement was split along class lines but also along denominational lines. The Catholic women's movement became a part of the Catholic and later the Christian democratic political alliance. In Norway, influential sections of the women's movement were linked first to the liberal movement and later to the social democratic movement. In both cases, women's rights activists left a mark on education policy, but Norwegian women's rights activists enjoyed successes earlier and more consistently. This is a result of the Norwegian women's movement's comparatively greater unity and related to the different cleavage structures.

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Introduction

This paper explores the development of girls' education in Norway and Prussia (and later North Rhine-Westphalia, NRW) during the first and second wave of women's political mobilisation. The main research question is what kind of cross-interest coalitions different sections of the women's movement were included in in education politics. The case studies below examine the most significant developments in the policy field of girls' education: the opening of secondary and tertiary education and teacher seminaries to girls and women, the introduction of coeducation and the development of homemaking as a subject (see [Table 1](#)). The paper focuses on the role played by organisations of the women's movement, especially by organisations of female teachers, and by women's rights activists within political parties. The women's movement is here defined broadly as *organisations composed mainly of and led by women, based on their shared identity as women*. This definition includes but is not limited to explicitly

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Table 1. Girls' access to upper-secondary and university education, women's access to teaching and teacher training, introduction of coeducation, and the development of the subject of homemaking in Norway and Prussia/later NRW*.

	Norway	Prussia/NRW
Academically oriented upper-secondary and university education opened to girls	1882	1908 1923 without any restrictions
Representation of female teachers in the early primary school	1890: 62% of teachers in urban primary schools are female 1895: 21% of teachers in the rural primary schools are female	1905: 16% of Prussian teachers are female
Male primary school teacher seminaries opened to women	1890	1926 (but some public seminaries remain for men only)
Introduction of coeducation	1950–1960s in urban areas (usual in rural areas since late nineteenth century), binding since 1974	Late 1960s–1980s, still some monoeducational Catholic schools today
Subject of homemaking becomes co-educational	1959, obligatory for all students until the present day	In some school types since 1970s, mostly turned into an elective subject chosen almost exclusively by girls

*Ilse Gahlings and Elle Moehring, *Die Volksschullehrerin. Sozialgeschichte und Gegenwartsfrage* (Heidelberg: Quelle & Meyer, 1961), 27, 101; and Mediås, *Skolehistoriske holdepunkt*, 32; own work.

feminist organisations and recognises that women's identities are context-dependent.¹ Based on this definition, the organisation of German Catholic female teachers can for example be seen as belonging to the (Catholic) women's movement.

The main contribution of this paper is to shed light on the politics of girls' education by examining, from a comparative perspective, how women's rights activists were included in different cross-interest coalitions. The paper concludes that liberal women's rights activists of the first wave and social democratic women's rights activists of the second wave were somewhat more successful in Norway than in Prussia and later NRW, while Catholic women were included in a Christian democratic alliance in the German case during both waves. The paper argues that these different outcomes are related to the cleavage structure in the Rokkanian sense. By doing so, the paper demonstrates the usefulness of a gendered version of Rokkanian cleavage theory, which recognises that women's organisations have had an impact on the development of welfare and education regimes.

The paper is a comparative-historical, macro-sociological contribution to the interdisciplinary comparative literature on the politics of education. Much of this literature has focused on vocational or higher education.² There is less comparative work on the

¹Karen Beckwith, "The Comparative Study of Women's Movements", in *The Oxford Handbook of Gender and Politics*, ed. Georgina Waylen, Karen Celis, Johanna Kantola, and S. Laurel Weldon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 1–28. This definition is broader than the one applied in much feminist history, which has focused to a greater extent on organisations struggling explicitly for women's rights. From a Rokkanian perspective, it makes sense to consider conservative or Catholic women's organisations, which can be based on gender, class, and state-church cleavages. For political sociologists interested in the intersections of gender and other cleavages, it is not uncommon to conceptualise the women's movement in such broad terms.

²See for example Marius R. Busemeyer, *Skills and Inequality. Partisan Politics and the Political Economy of Education Reforms in Western Welfare States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Julian L. Garritzmann, *The Political Economy of Higher Education Finance. The Politics of Tuition Fees and Subsidies in OECD Countries, 1945–2015* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016); Svein Michelsen and Marja-Leena Stenström, *Vocational Education in the Nordic Countries. The Historical Evolution* (New York: Routledge, 2018); and Kathleen A. Thelen, *How Institutions Evolve: The Political Economy of Skills in Germany, Britain, the United States, and Japan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

politics of primary and lower secondary education,³ and even less on the politics of girls' education. Considering the massive changes which have taken place in girls' educational participation and achievements in the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in European and other Western countries, it is curious how little comparative-historical research has been devoted to understanding the political processes behind this development. Historians of education have covered the topic and have produced fascinating case studies, but not necessarily with a focus on political coalition-making.⁴ Also, most comparative contributions have not focused on the Scandinavian countries in much detail.⁵

The paper also relates to the field of comparative welfare state research. As has often been underlined, education, despite being a research field of its own, is also an important element of public welfare and should be included in comparative-historical research on welfare and education regimes.⁶ Within this field, Rokkanian cleavage theory is recognised as a classic approach. It provides a nuanced understanding of how cross-interest coalitions between different social groups and classes can come about.⁷ Recently, we have argued elsewhere that Rokkanian cleavage theory can be developed further to include an understanding of gender as a separate cleavage with old roots.⁸

Macro-sociological comparisons like the one conducted here are sometimes seen critically by historians, who wish to stay closer to their cases.⁹ Political scientists, on the other hand, tend to compare larger numbers of cases, often with quantitative methods, and aim primarily at theoretical generalisations. Comparative-historical sociology occupies a middle ground with regard to the tension between idiographic and nomothetic approaches. This paper tries to develop our theoretical

³But see Terry M. Moe and Susanne Wiborg, eds., *The Comparative Politics of Education. Teachers Unions and Education Systems around the World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Susanne Wiborg, *Education and Social Integration: Comprehensive Schooling in Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); and Susanne Wiborg, "Neo-Liberalism and Universal State Education: The Cases of Denmark, Norway and Sweden 1980–2011", *Comparative Education* 49, no. 4 (2013): 407–423.

⁴See, for an overview of the development of girls' education in the West, James C. Albisetti, Joyce Goodman, and Rebecca Rogers, *Girls' Secondary Education in the Western World: From the 18th to the 20th Century* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); and Juliane Jacobi, *Mädchen- und Frauenbildung in Europa. Von 1500 bis zur Gegenwart* (Frankfurt/New York: Campus Verlag, 2013). For an overview of historical research on female teachers, see Mineke van Essen and Rebecca Rogers, "Zur Geschichte der Lehrerinnen: Historiographische Herausforderungen und internationale Perspektiven", *Zeitschrift für Pädagogik* 52, no. 3 (2006): 319–337.

⁵But see Agneta Linné, "Lutheranism and Democracy: Scandinavia", in *Girls' Secondary Education in the Western World: From the 18th to the 20th Century*, ed. James C. Albisetti, Joyce Goodman, and Rebecca Rogers (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 133–148.

⁶Torben Iversen and John Stephens, "Partisan Politics, the Welfare State, and Three Worlds of Human Capital Formation", *Comparative Political Studies* 41, no. 4–5 (2008): 600–637; Anne West and Rita Nikolai, "Welfare Regimes and Education Regimes: Equality of Opportunity and Expenditure in the EU (and US)", *Journal of Social Policy* 42, no. 3 (2013): 469–493; and Katharina Sass, "Understanding Comprehensive School Reforms: Insights from Comparative-Historical Sociology and Power Resources Theory", *European Educational Research Journal* 14, no. 3–4 (2015): 240–256.

⁷Philip Manow and Kees van Kersbergen, eds., *Religion, Class Coalitions, and Welfare State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Lars Mjøset, "Stein Rokkan's Thick Comparisons", *Acta Sociologica* 43 (2000): 381–397; Katharina Sass, "Cleavage Structures and School Politics: A Rokkanian Comparative-Historical Analysis", *History of Education* 49, no. 5 (2020): 636–660; and Katharina Sass, *The Politics of Comprehensive School Reforms: Cleavages and Coalitions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022).

⁸Katharina Sass and Stein Kuhnle, "The Gender Cleavage: Updating Rokkanian Theory for the Twenty-First Century", *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1093/sp/jxac003>.

⁹Heinz-Gerhard Haupt and Jürgen Kocka, "Comparison and Beyond: Traditions, Scope, and Perspectives of Comparative History", in *Comparative and Transnational History. Central European Approaches and New Perspectives*, ed. Heinz-Gerhard Haupt and Jürgen Kocka (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009), 1–30.

understanding of the politics of girls' education, based on thorough case studies, which, however, cannot go into the same amount of detail as a historical single-case study would.

The paper proceeds as follows. The next section gives an overview of the Rokkanian framework used to interpret the case studies. In the next step, the methodological orientation and empirical base of the paper are discussed. The two cases are then analysed in turn, followed by some comparative and concluding remarks.

Rokkanian cleavage theory

A cleavage, in the Rokkanian sense, is a “fundamental opposition within a territorial population” characterised by comparable importance and durability.¹⁰ Cleavages have structural, cultural, and organisational dimensions. In Bartolini's words, they are composed of different “social constituencies”, “cultural distinctiveness” and “organizational networks”.¹¹ They come to expression in politics over time and thereby link action and structure.

Cleavages can mutually reinforce, superpose, or cut across each other. They can vary in intensity, so that some become salient, while others remain latent. Even though current social movements, parties, and organisations are ideologically linked to their forerunners, it is up to each new generation to define political interests and thus the content of cleavages in new terms, in line with changing economic and social conditions. In other words, the salience of a cleavage and its material and cultural expressions might change over time. Cleavages should not be analysed on their own since territorial areas are characterised by a set of interdependencies between cleavages.¹² Rokkan uses the term “cleavage structure” to describe a combination of cleavages characterising an area's social structure and political system.¹³ He identifies several critical historical junctures which have resulted in cleavages.¹⁴

Cleavages can be politically articulated by parties, which can be based on one or several cleavages to varying degrees. Besides the electoral channel, Rokkan points to the corporatist channel of decision-making as another form of political articulation of cleavages. Cleavage theory should not be considered a theory pertaining to the party system only.¹⁵

The oldest cleavages are the centre-periphery and the state-church cleavage. The centre-periphery cleavage was especially salient in the Protestant North. In Norway, it led to the establishment of the Liberal Party, which was a broad movement of opposition

¹⁰Peter Flora, “Einführung und Interpretation”, in *Staat, Nation und Demokratie in Europa. Die Theorie Stein Rokkans aus seinen gesammelten Werken rekonstruiert und eingeleitet von Peter Flora*, ed. Peter Flora (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2000), 10.

¹¹Stefano Bartolini, *The Political Mobilization of the European Left 1860–1960. The Class Cleavage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 25; and Stefano Bartolini and Peter Mair, *Identity, Competition, and Electoral Availability. The Stabilization of European Electorates 1885–1985* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 212–249.

¹²Stein Rokkan, *State Formation, Nation-Building and Mass Politics in Europe. The Theory of Stein Rokkan*. Edited by Peter Flora (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 309; Seymour M. Lipset and Stein Rokkan, “Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments: An Introduction”, in *Party Systems and Voter Alignment*, ed. Seymour M. Lipset and Stein Rokkan (New York: Free Press, 1967), 1–64.

¹³Flora, “Einführung und Interpretation”, 20, 53–54.

¹⁴Rokkan, *State Formation*, 303–319.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 261–273.

of farmers, peripheral ethnic groups, and urban outsiders to urban elites, who organised in the Conservative Party.¹⁶ The state-church cleavage was less salient, because Protestant state churches were integrated into nation-building processes. In 1933, a small Christian democratic party (the Christian Democrats) was founded in Norway, and from this point on the state-church cleavage became more salient there. In the religiously mixed areas on the continent, the state-church cleavage became highly salient. In Germany, the ultra-montane Centre Party was founded in 1870 to defend Catholic influence, especially on education. It developed into a mass party supported by many Catholic workers. After the Second World War, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), while aiming at uniting Catholics and Protestants, nevertheless followed in the Centre Party's footsteps as the main representative of Catholic interests in Germany.

In addition, in Europe's Protestant North, a rural-urban cleavage developed, dividing producers of primary goods and the middle classes in the cities. In Norway, the agrarian Centre Party broke out of the periphery-coalition within the Liberal Party in 1920.¹⁷ In economies dominated by large-scale landed property, such as Prussia or the United Kingdom, agrarian interests were integrated into conservative alliances.¹⁸ In religiously mixed areas, Catholic mass parties organised Catholic farmers and aggregated agrarian interests. Political Catholicism tended to superpose the centre-periphery and later the rural-urban cleavage.¹⁹

Furthermore, the class cleavage between workers and business owners came to expression in the formation of labour parties, bringing European party systems closer to each other.²⁰

Much research has corroborated Rokkan's multidimensional analysis of European political development. Conservative welfare states like Germany were formed to a significant extent by the dominant state-church cleavage. Christian democratic parties forged broad alliances including the rural population. Scandinavian welfare states, on the other hand, were characterised by rural-urban and centre-periphery cleavages, which urged social democrats to build alliances with farmers and urban outsiders.²¹

While gender relations have been much discussed in related traditions within welfare state analysis,²² political conflicts based on gender were ignored in Rokkan's work, as well as in later Rokkan-inspired analyses of welfare state development. As gender is a politically divisive issue of significant importance and durability, which has structural, cultural, and organisational dimensions, it should be included in a modernised theory and analysis of cleavage structures.

¹⁶Ibid., 375; and Stein Rokkan, "Norway: Numerical Democracy and Corporate Pluralism", in *Political Oppositions in Western Democracies*, ed. R. A. Dahl (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966).

¹⁷Rokkan, *State Formation*, 375.

¹⁸Flora, "Einführung und Interpretation", 62–63.

¹⁹Rokkan, *State Formation*, 309.

²⁰Ibid., 209.

²¹Gösta Esping-Andersen, *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990); Manow and van Kersbergen, *Religion, Class Coalitions, and Welfare State*; and Philip Manow, "Electoral Rules, Class Coalitions and Welfare State Regimes, or How to Explain Esping-Andersen with Stein Rokkan", *Socio-Economic Review* 7 (2009): 101–121.

²²Gösta Esping-Andersen, *The Incomplete Revolution: Adapting to Women's New Roles* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009); Marie Laperrière and Ann S. Orloff, "Learning from Feminist Scholarship on the Welfare State", in *Globalizing Welfare. An Evolving Asian-European Dialogue*, ed. Stein Kuhnle, Per Selle, and Sven E.O. Hort (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2019), 269–285; Jane Lewis, "Gender and the Development of Welfare Regimes", *Journal of European Social Policy* 2, no. 3 (1992); and Sevil Sümer, *European Gender Regimes and Policies: Comparative Perspectives* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009).

As argued in more detail elsewhere, the gender cleavage was and remains to some extent structurally based on women's legal, political, social, and economic subjugation.²³ It finds its cultural expression in narratives legitimising this subjugation, and in the development of counter-identities and demands by women of the women's movement and their male sympathisers. It has been politically articulated by the organisations of the women's movement. During the first wave of women's political mobilisation, which feminist scholars date to approximately the 1880s to the 1920s, many women's organisations were founded in Norway and Germany, some of which still exist (for example, the Norwegian Association for Women's Rights [Norsk Kvinnesaksforening, NKF], the Norwegian Women's Public Health Association [Norske Kvinners Sanitetsforening, NKS], or the Catholic German Women's Union [Katholischer deutscher Frauenbund, *KDFB*]). In the present paper, special attention will be paid to organisations of female teachers.

During the economic crisis of the 1920s and 1930s, the period of Nazi rule and the reconstruction period following the Second World War, traditional gender roles were re-stabilised in Norway and Germany alike. New social rights were organised around the male wage earner, implying disadvantages for women.²⁴ First during the second wave of women's mobilisation, setting in during the late 1950s in Norway and somewhat later in Germany, and culminating in both cases during the late 1960s and 1970s, "the women's question" received renewed attention. New organisations sprung up, many of them connected to the political left, and some of the older, less radical women's organisations continued to play a role. The opponents of the women's movement were often conservatives, but could historically be found among liberals, social democrats, or unionists, illustrating the crosscutting nature of this cleavage.

The gender cleavage was not among the most salient cleavages in Europe, yet comparatively more salient in the Protestant North. As Therborn points out, "[t]he further south and east one ventured from northwest Europe, including within Europe itself, the more rigid were the patriarchal rules one would find".²⁵ In Scandinavia, women's rights were enforced earlier than in the rest of Europe and women's movements were comparatively more influential. The Protestant state churches in Scandinavia accepted the state's right to regulate family matters, which was not the case with the Catholic Church on the continent.²⁶ Nevertheless, women's rights were gradually expanded in both cases in this paper, especially during the waves of increased political activity by women. For this reason, the case studies below focus on these critical periods. As demonstrated, the women's movements' impact on girls' education was mediated by the entire cleavage structure.

Methodological approach and empirical data

The cases presented in this paper are taken from a broader historical-sociological study of the politics of primary and lower-secondary education in Germany and

²³Sass and Kuhnle, "The Gender Cleavage".

²⁴Anne-Hilde Nagel, "Kjønnskiller i sosiale rettigheter", in *Kjønn og velferdsstat*, ed. Anne-Hilde Nagel (Bergen: Alma Mater, 1998), 320–363.

²⁵Göran Therborn, *Between Sex and Power. Family in the World, 1900–2000* (London: Routledge, 2004), 71–72.

²⁶*Ibid.*, 79–82.

Norway.²⁷ The applied methodology is that of case-oriented comparison. This is an explorative research strategy aiming at a dialogue between theory and evidence, rather than at theory-testing.²⁸ The two cases of Norway and Prussia/NRW were chosen, because they were of intrinsic interest and because the comparison provided a fruitful contrast. In Norway, the central government makes decisions on school structure, while in Germany the federal states have long had the authority to design their school systems. For this reason, the study compares the Norwegian national development with the development in the dominant German federal state Prussia and, for the period after the Second World War, the federal state of NRW (which comprises most of the former Prussian provinces of Rhineland and Westphalia). Around a third of West German students went to school in NRW in the post-war decades. The area of NRW has also long been one of the most denominationally mixed areas within Germany, mirroring the denominationally mixed character of the German nation.

The cases were studied in depth and with an open mind. In this process, Rokkanian cleavage theory was discovered to be a useful provider of analytic frames, as it resonated with the historical material. In comparison with theories that focus mostly on the class cleavage, Rokkanian cleavage theory seemed more suited to make sense of the findings.

For the overarching research project, which inspired this article, all Norwegian, North Rhine-Westphalian, and national German party manifestos and all parliamentary debates on important education reforms of the period from around 1950 to 1980 were analysed.²⁹ Yearly reports and other publications of teachers' organisations were also collected. Twenty-five experts (or time-witnesses) were interviewed, who had been active in education politics during this period, including six women who were female pioneers within teachers' organisations and parties. The present article quotes some of these sources, but also draws on a variety of secondary sources such as single-case studies, especially for the analysis of the first wave. The reliance of macro-sociological comparisons on secondary sources is often seen critically by historians. It can indeed entail a danger of reproducing a biased view of the processes under consideration. In the present work, triangulation of different sources and a critical approach towards the sources have hopefully helped to mitigate this problem.

The women's movement in Norwegian education politics

In Norway, industrialisation set in from around 1860. The dominant centre-periphery cleavage manifested itself in the opposition between the old, urban regime of civil servants and the developing liberal movement, which opposed the union with Sweden. The first organised women's movement in Norway was closely connected to the liberal movement.³⁰ From the 1860s onwards, liberal women's rights activists founded "housewife schools" (*husmorskoler*), where girls were trained to become housewives and teachers of homemaking.³¹ The aim of this movement was to achieve ideological

²⁷Sass, *The Politics of Comprehensive School Reforms*.

²⁸Charles C. Ragin, *The Comparative Method: Moving Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 35.

²⁹Sass, *The Politics of Comprehensive School Reforms*.

³⁰Therborn, *Between Sex and Power*, 82.

³¹Gerd Fuglerud, *Husstellkolenes historie i Norge* (Oslo: Grøndahl & Søn Forlag, 1980).

recognition of the contribution women were making in society, but also material recognition, in the sense of equal wages for female teachers, equal representation in the teachers' organisations, or rights to holidays for housewives. The movement thus combined ideas of complementarity and equality of the genders.

Many of the first women's rights activists were middle- or upper-class women and teachers with urban backgrounds in civil service or business families.³² They struggled for equal access to the education system, which was achieved at an early date compared to many other Western countries. From 1878, girls' access to the middle school exam was regularised. From 1882, girls could take the upper-secondary school exam, *examen artium*, and attend university. Male teacher seminaries were opened to women in 1889/90, and female teachers could now be employed as regular teachers in primary school (*folkeskole*). From 1884 and 1896 respectively, coeducation in middle and upper-secondary schools became possible.³³ Coeducation was usual in rural primary schools. In the more often monoeducational urban primary schools, female teachers became a majority already in the late nineteenth century.³⁴

The opening of the education system to girls and women took place within the context of a broader process of democratisation and nation-building. From the start, women's rights activists attempted to carve out their own place in the Norwegian nation, which was still being defined. In 1883, five of the first female university students started the discussion club *Skuld*, which in 1884 led to the establishment of the Norwegian Association for Women's Rights (Norsk Kvinnesaksforening, NKF).³⁵ This took place around the same time as the foundation of the Liberal Party, which remained dominant in Norwegian politics until well into the twentieth century.³⁶ The Liberal Party was known as "the teachers' party", because male and female primary school teachers played such an important role in the movement. The liberals had won a majority in parliament in the elections of 1882, and in 1884 the Liberal Party formed a government for the first time. This year therefore marks the introduction of parliamentarism in Norway. A year later, the Association for Women's Vote (Kvinnestemmerettsforeningen, KSF) was founded.

In 1901, the Women's Union of the Labour Party (Arbeiderpartiets Kvindeforbund) was founded, and it chose not to join the women's movement's umbrella organisation, the Norwegian Women's National Council (Norske Kvinners Nasjonalråd), founded in 1904. Behind this were disagreements about housemaids' working conditions, which split the Norwegian women's movement along class divides. Despite such internal splits, the Norwegian women's movement demonstrated its impressive capacity to organise in 1905, when the Norwegian parliament decided to hold a referendum about the union with Sweden but refused to let women take part. In response, women's rights activists collected around 280,000 signatures in support of Norwegian independence, which

³²Olav Rovde, "Lærerne. I kamp for skulen og standen", in *Profesjonshistorier*, ed. Rune Slagstad and Jan Messel (Oslo: Pax Forlag, 2014), 351; and Liv Kari B. Tønnessen, *Norsk utdanningshistorie. En innføring med fokus på grunnskolens utvikling* (Bergen: Fagbokforlaget, 2011), 36.

³³Odd Asbjørn Mediås, *Skolehistoriske holdepunkt. Norsk og nordisk skolehistorie i årstall* (Oslo: Didakta Norsk Forlag, 2010), 32–33; and Gro Hagemann, "De stummes leir? 1800–1900", in *Med kjønnsperspektiv på norsk historie. Fra vikingtid til 2000-års skiftet*, ed. Ida Blom and Sølvi Sogner (Oslo: Cappelen Akademisk, 1999), 189.

³⁴Gro Hagemann, *Skolefolk. Lærernes historie i Norge* (Oslo: Ad notam Gyldendal, 1992), 67, 71.

³⁵Marta Breen, *Kvinnekamp. Foreningen Skuld: Norges første bøllekurs* (Oslo: Nasjonalbiblioteket, 2018).

³⁶Hilde Danielsen, Eirinn Larsen, and Ingeborg W. Ovesen, *Norsk Likestillingshistorie 1814–2013* (Bergen: Fagbokforlaget, 2013), 111–158, 178–182.

amounted to over half of the adult female population. The national cause gave a boost to the Norwegian women's movement, as it united women across class and territorial boundaries.³⁷

Norway became independent from Sweden in 1905. In 1912, women achieved legal access to most public careers, and in 1913 women achieved the right to vote. Female primary school teachers continued to play an important role in the first women's movement, and, in 1912, founded the Female Teachers' Association (Norges Lærerinneforbund). From 1892, they had organised together with male teachers in the Norwegian Teachers' Association (Norges Lærerlag) but felt that they did not receive sufficient support from male colleagues in their struggle for equal wages and career opportunities.³⁸ The first head of the Female Teachers' Association, Anna Rogstad, was also the first woman in the Norwegian parliament from 1911, where she represented a small liberal party (Frisinnende Venstre). In 1917, she joined the Labour Party. This was a rather unusual choice for the time, as most female teachers did not stand this far to the left.

The female teachers cared about the living conditions of the population, which they wanted to improve with health education, mothering education, and lessons in homemaking for girls in primary and secondary schools. They also supported educational expansion and a prolongation of compulsory schooling. Many of them saw great value in a secondary school type which had developed around the turn of the century: the continuation school (*framhaldsskole*). These schools were often for girls only or included homemaking tracks for girls and were important workplaces for female teachers.³⁹

During the economic crisis of the 1920s, the political momentum of the first wave died down. The labour movement now opposed working women, especially if they were married. During the 1920s and 1930s, several married female teachers lost their jobs, to the dismay of the Female Teachers' Association.⁴⁰ The period from around 1900 to 1960 became known as the "epoque of the housewife".⁴¹ Housewife schools were expanded. When the Labour Party came to power for the first time in 1935 in a coalition government with the Farmers' Party, several educational reforms were passed. The leader of the Female Teachers' Association from 1919 to 1938, Anna Sethne, was closely involved in the development of a new curriculum based on *Arbeitsschule* ideals, including an emphasis on homemaking education for girls. In terms of gender norms, the laws of the 1930s did not lead to any great changes. With the German occupation, the educational reforms came to a halt. "Housewife ideology" remained strong until the 1950s, also within the labour movement.⁴²

³⁷Danielsen, Larsen, and Owesen, *Norsk Likestillingshistorie 1814–2013*, 197–200; and Kari Melby, "Kvinner som politiske aktører før og etter stemmeretten", in *Svekket kvinnemakt? De frivillige organisasjonene og velferdsstaten* (Oslo: Gyldendal akademisk, 2001), 38–63.

³⁸Gro Hagemann, *Skolefolk. Lærernes historie i Norge* (Oslo: Ad notam Gyldendal, 1992), 135–156.

³⁹*Ibid.*, 270–276.

⁴⁰Danielsen, Larsen, and Owesen, *Norsk Likestillingshistorie 1814–2013*, 259–261.

⁴¹Danielsen, Larsen, and Owesen, *Norsk Likestillingshistorie 1814–2013*, 221; and Kari Melby, "Husmorens epoke. 1900–1950", in *Med kjønnsperspektiv på norsk historie – fra vikingtid til 2000-års-skiftet*, ed. Ida Blom, Sølve Sogner, and Gro Hagemann (Oslo: Cappelen Akademisk, 1999), 227–298.

⁴²Fuglerud, *Husstellskolens historie i Norge*, 84–85; Jorunn Pedersen, "Rakel Seweriin", in *Arbeiderpartiets kvinnebevegelse gjennom 100 år. Perioder og ledere. Utdrag av Arbeiderhistorie 2001*, ed. Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek (Fargernes: Valdres Trykkeri, 2001), 22; and Danielsen, Larsen, and Owesen, *Norsk Likestillingshistorie 1814–2013*, 270.

During the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, as the second wave of women's mobilisation set in, a remarkable change took place. Housewife ideology lost ground and gender roles were questioned more fundamentally. The Female Teachers' Association lost influence and in 1966 chose to reunite with its male counterpart, the Norwegian Teachers' Association, which was a firm ally of the Labour Party regarding educational expansion and reform.⁴³ New radical and leftist women's organisations were founded, such as the Women's Front (Kvinnefronten). The new organisations had fewer members than the women's organisations of the first wave but made an impact with new methods of action and had many sympathisers.⁴⁴ Older organisations like the Norwegian Association for Women's Rights continued to play a role. A radicalised women's movement now demanded equal representation of women in all areas of public life, including education, and opposed monoeducational schools and different curricula for girls and boys. In comparison with the first wave, the new activists emphasised equality of the genders to a greater extent. Educating girls' primarily for the role of housewife no longer seemed sufficient.

The Labour Party increasingly emphasised women's rights in its post-war manifestos, and the Women's Union of the Labour Party (now called Kvinnesekretariatet) gained influence.⁴⁵ The Labour Party now supported girls' educational expansion through coeducation and equal curricula for girls and boys. With the introduction of the comprehensive lower-secondary school (ungdomsskolen) during the 1950 and 1960s, separate continuation schools or tracks for girls were abolished. In 1957, the Labour Party Ministry of Education suggested that homemaking should become an obligatory subject for all students independent of gender.⁴⁶ The Labour Party politician Rakel Seweriin, leader of the Women's Union of the Labour Party from 1953 to 1963, member of parliament from 1945 to 1969, and one of the few influential female politicians at the time, supported this idea in a parliamentary debate in 1959:

It is a new thought which never before has been presented to parliament that both sexes are to learn to work together and have responsibility together for the home and one should expect this to be greeted with happiness and satisfaction, at least by the majority of women in this country. But the bourgeois parties emphasize in their remarks the old difference. They say that when it comes to practical education, meaning cooking lessons, the boys must be held back, even if experiences show that the boys have at least as much interest in and benefit from this education.⁴⁷

This remark angered several of the male opposition politicians, who emphasised that they wanted to prioritise girls as long as financial resources for cooking lessons were scarce.⁴⁸ Against the opposition of the Conservative Party, the Liberal Party, the Centre Party, and the Christian Democrats, the primary school law of 1959 turned homemaking into an obligatory, co-educational subject. The content of the subject was enlarged, and the experimental curricula of 1960 and 1964 contained topics such as "a democratic family life", family finances, housing and furniture, nutritional knowledge or childcare and care for the elderly.⁴⁹

⁴³Hagemann, *Skolefolk*, 274–276, 292–300.

⁴⁴Danielsen, Larsen, and Owesen, *Norsk Likestillingshistorie 1814–2013*, 282.

⁴⁵Sass, *The Politics of Comprehensive School Reforms*, 213–224.

⁴⁶Stortinget, "St. meld. nr. 61, 1957, Om heimkunnskap og husstell", 9.

⁴⁷Stortinget, "Forhandlinger i Stortinget. Heimkunnskap og husstell. 20 January 1959", 95.

⁴⁸Ibid., 98–100.

⁴⁹Forsøksrådet for skoleverket, *Læreplan for forsøk med 9-årig skole* (Oslo: Aschehoug, 1964).

When the fate of the housewife schools, now called homemaking schools, was debated in parliament in 1966, it became clear that many Labour Party representatives, especially female ones, wanted a break with the housewife ideal. For example, the female Labour Party representative Gundvor Eker remarked:

The homemaking schools should be a part of an ensemble, in a way that they are attended by both boys and girls. [...] It is talked here of the housewife and the girls all the time. I think we should get away from that. Everywhere, we have shared classes. Boys and girls go to school together from primary school on. We can see how young husbands to an ever-higher degree take their share of the housework and they probably have as great a need to acquire a good base. The married couple together build up a home and raise their children. I cannot see that this is something which depends only on the mother or the housewife. Something has happened also on this front recently and I hope that it can be continued so that there will be equality in this area too.⁵⁰

Representatives of the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party now agreed that homemaking schools should be open to girls and boys alike and should deliver a vocational education, though their remarks were not as far-reaching. Representatives of the Centre Party and the Christian Democrats exhibited a more traditional view, emphasising that the approximately 24,000 women who got married each year needed to be prepared for “the most important of all occupations”, that of the housewife.⁵¹ One must assume that especially the Christian Democrats expressed the views of a significant minority of women, as they continuously had more women than men among their religious and rural voters.⁵² However, the housewife ideal no longer had much political sway. During the 1970s, the homemaking schools ended up as one of many tracks in the reformed upper-secondary school.

The educational reforms of the 1960s and 1970s were based on the labour movement’s aims of reducing class inequality, but also geographical and gender inequalities. Increasing numbers of girls stayed on for longer in the education system. In the early 1970s, a new general curriculum was heavily debated. Organisations of the women’s movement, such as the Norwegian Association for Women’s Rights, demanded that the curriculum should explicitly criticise gender inequality.⁵³ In the final version of the curriculum of 1974 nothing was left of housewife ideology. The curriculum made coeducation in all subjects officially binding. It stated that economic independence of the genders was a precondition for equality and that one needed to combat gender-traditional educational choices.⁵⁴ Since then, coeducation has been an important cornerstone of the Norwegian education system.

To conclude, while conceptions of gender roles changed over time, women’s rights activists of the first and second wave shared the aim of giving girls and women access to education. The success of the Norwegian women’s movement in influencing education policy has to do with its coalition-making, which is related to the cleavage structure. The dominant sections of the Norwegian women’s movement first cooperated with the

⁵⁰Stortinget, “Forhandlinger i Stortinget. Yrkeskoler i husstell. 10 March 1966”, 2314.

⁵¹Ibid., 2303.

⁵²Lars Svåsand, “Die Konservative Partei und die Christliche Volkspartei Norwegens: Unbequeme Nachbarn im bürgerlichen Lager”, in *Christlich-demokratische und konservative Parteien in Westeuropa, Band 4.*, ed. H. J. Veen (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schönigh, 1994), 223–224.

⁵³Danielsen, Larsen, and Owesen, *Norsk Likestillingshistorie 1814–2013*.

⁵⁴Kirke- og undervisningsdepartementet, *Mønsterplan for grunnskolen* (Oslo: Aschehoug, 1974), 23–24.

Liberal Party and later with the Labour Party. Both the early and the later movement were included in cross-interest coalitions for educational expansion, not least for girls. In the early phase, the centre-periphery cleavage was dominant and overlapped to a certain extent with the gender cleavage, as women's rights activists were often among the urban outsiders who supported the Liberal Party. Later, the class cleavage became more dominant, and the labour movement's women and their more radical conception of equality became more influential. The Christian Democrats and the Centre Party were the clearest antagonists of the women's movements' demands during the second wave, while the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party more often consented to reforms of girls' education. This split among the non-socialist parties strengthened the Labour Party and its alliance with women's organisations. Finally, the state-church cleavage split Norwegian women to a certain extent, as illustrated by the Christian Democrats' success among female voters. However, this cleavage has not been salient enough to undermine the influence of the liberal and radical women's movement on the development of the education system.

The women's movement in Prussian and North Rhine-Westphalian education politics

Also in Prussia, the second half of the nineteenth century was a period of industrialisation and nation-building but shaped by conservative forces to a greater degree than in Norway. In 1871, the German Reich was founded. The 1870s and 1880s were characterised by two major struggles, headed, on the side of the new state, by Reich Chancellor Bismarck: the first was the cultural struggle against the Catholic church, which was an expression of the state-church cleavage and related to the question of whether the state or the Church should control the education system. The second was the struggle against the labour movement, which was a manifestation of the class cleavage, and which led to the repression of social democracy from 1878 until 1890. The first organised German women's movement gave expression to the gender cleavage, but was also shaped by these other, more dominant cleavages. As in Norway, the movement was divided along class, into social democratic, liberal, and conservative currents.⁵⁵ In addition, the German women's movement was split along denomination.

As in Norway, many liberal women's rights activists of the first wave supported traditional gender roles to some extent, arguing that girls should receive an education which befitted their destiny as mothers and housewives, and which would improve the status of these roles. In the social democratic women's movement, ideas of the special "character" of women were also adhered to, even though working-class women more often depended on income from labour.⁵⁶

In 1865, the first long-lasting, liberal German women's rights organisation, The General German Women's Association (*Allgemeiner Deutscher Frauenverein*) was founded in Leipzig. It consisted entirely of women and had access to education as one of its primary aims.

⁵⁵Florence Hervé, ed., *Geschichte der deutschen Frauenbewegung* (Köln: PapyRossa, 1990), 12–40.

⁵⁶Gerda Tornieporth, *Studien zur Frauenbildung. Ein Beitrag zur historischen Analyse lebensweltorientierter Bildungskonzeptionen* (Weinheim/Basel: Beltz Verlag, 1977), 221.

Opportunities for girls and women to obtain education beyond the primary level, including teacher education in seminaries, increased in Prussia in the course of the nineteenth century. In comparison with Norway, however, the first wave movement's progress in achieving access to *public* secondary and tertiary education for girls and women in Prussia was slow. By 1879, women were explicitly barred from university studies in all German states.⁵⁷

In 1874, because of the cultural struggle, Catholic female teachers who were members of religious orders lost the right to teach in Catholic primary schools. Seminars for female teachers and secondary girls' schools run by the Catholic Church were closed and were first able to open again when the law of 1874 was repealed in 1889. To make up for this development, several public secondary girls' schools and female teacher seminars were founded in the Rhineland. Female teachers' exams were regulated in a bit more detail between 1874 and 1892 but female teachers' education was not equal to male teachers' education.⁵⁸

In 1894, the Union of German Women's Associations (Bund deutscher Frauenvereine, BdF) was founded. It united liberal and conservative currents of the women's movement but did not include social democratic and Catholic women's organisations, such as the Catholic German Women's Union (Katholischer deutscher Frauenbund, KDFB).⁵⁹ Membership of the BdF would have been irreconcilable with the rootedness of the Catholic women activists in the Catholic milieu, which had developed in the course of the cultural struggle.⁶⁰

Besides the KDFB, the Catholic women's movement comprised organisations such as the Association of Catholic German Female Teachers (Verein katholischer deutscher Lehrerinnen, VkDL), founded in 1885, which still exists today. This association had its strongholds in the Rhineland and Westphalia, where there were much higher numbers of female teachers than in the Protestant areas of Prussia. In 1886, there were 4233 Catholic and 2551 Protestant female primary school teachers in Prussia.⁶¹ The reason was that coeducation was rarer in Catholic areas, which meant greater opportunities for female teachers in Catholic girls' schools.⁶² Furthermore, in Catholic areas of Germany, Catholic female orders had stood for the development of girls' education and had filled the vacuum left by the state.⁶³ Also for Catholic laywomen, becoming a teacher was one of the few options besides marriage, and celibacy was a requirement.⁶⁴ The Catholic women's movement was strongly affiliated with the Centre Party.

Liberal, Protestant, middle- and upper-class female teachers of all school types organised in the General German Female Teachers' association (Allgemeiner Deutscher Lehrerinnenverein, ADLV), founded in 1890. The head of this organisation from 1890

⁵⁷Albisetti, *Schooling German Girls*, 129, 302.

⁵⁸Jacobi, *Mädchen- und Frauenbildung*, 295–230.

⁵⁹Renate Wurms, "Kein einzig Volk von Schwestern: Frauenbewegung 1889–1914", in *Geschichte der deutschen Frauenbewegung*, ed. Florence Hervé (Köln: PapyRossa, 1990), 41–83.

⁶⁰Birgit Sack, *Zwischen religiöser Bindung und moderner Gesellschaft. Katholische Frauenbewegung und politische Kultur in der Weimarer Republik (1918/19–1933)* (Münster: Waxmann, 1998).

⁶¹Pauline Herber, *Das Lehrerinnenwesen in Deutschland* (Kempten and Munich, 1906), 40.

⁶²Sack, *Zwischen religiöser Bindung*, 115.

⁶³*Ibid.*, 30.

⁶⁴Regina Illemann, *Katholische Frauenbewegung in Deutschland 1945–1962. Politik, Geschlecht und Religiösität im Katholischen Deutschen Frauenbund* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2016), 180; and Sack, *Zwischen religiöser Bindung*, 128.

to 1921, Helene Lange, was among the founders of the social liberal German Democratic Party (DDP) in 1918. Her life partner was the influential women's rights activist and chairwomen of the Union of German Women's Associations from 1910 to 1919, Gertrud Bäumer, who represented the German Democratic Party in parliament from 1919 to 1932. From the 1880s onwards, women like Lange or Bäumer pushed for girls' access to education, defended women's right to work as and to be educated as teachers and contributed to the debates on reform pedagogy.⁶⁵

As the Prussian Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs was not willing to give women access to public secondary schooling leading to the Abitur exam and to university studies, the women's movement took matters into its own hands.⁶⁶ From the late 1880s until 1908, more than 30 educational institutions were founded by women's rights activists in the German Reich to prepare girls for the Abitur exam as external examinees.⁶⁷ In Baden, women were allowed to matriculate at universities from 1900, in Bavaria from 1903, and in Württemberg from 1904.⁶⁸ In Prussia, women finally achieved the right to matriculate at universities in 1908. At the same time, a regulated public school path to the Abitur was created for girls. The Prussian ten-year girls' school, the Lyzeum, prepared girls either for a female teachers' education, for "women's education" at a women's school (Frauenschool) or for a three-year preparatory course for the Abitur exam. However, schools could only offer this Abitur track if they offered a women's school track at the same time. In consequence, only 3.6% of the students at the Lyzeum were taken up in the tracks which prepared for Abitur and university in 1912.⁶⁹

With the German revolution and the formation of the first democratic German state, the Weimar Republic, in 1918, the first women's movement saw some of its most important aims realised, such as universal suffrage for women. In 1923, the Oberlyzeum, which led directly to the Abitur, replaced most forms of upper-secondary girls' education in Prussia. The restrictions of the law of 1908 were removed, and by 1931, one-fourth of the Prussian Abitur graduates were female.⁷⁰ In 1926, some, but not all, of the newly founded Prussian Pedagogical Academies for primary school teachers became co-educational, but access for women remained somewhat restricted.⁷¹ Female teachers remained a minority in primary schools until the 1960s.⁷²

During the Nazi dictatorship, the women's movement experienced serious setbacks. For example, in 1933, a law was passed which limited women's share of university

⁶⁵Gahlings and Moehring, *Die Volksschullehrerin*, 24–94; Albisetti, *Schooling German Girls*, 136–273; Juliane Jacobi, "Modernization Through Feminization? On the History of Women in the Teaching Profession", *European Education* 32, no. 4 (2001): 55–78; and Dietlind Fischer, Juliane Jacobi, and Barbara Koch-Priewe, eds., *Schulentwicklung geht von Frauen aus. Zur Beteiligung von Lehrerinnen an Schulreformen aus professionsgeschichtlicher, biographischer, religionspädagogischer und fortbildungsdidaktischer Perspektive* (Weinheim: Deutscher Studien Verlag, 1996).

⁶⁶Albisetti, *Schooling German Girls*, 204–237.

⁶⁷Hans-Georg Herrlitz, Wulf Hopf, and Hartmut Titze, *Deutsche Schulgeschichte von 1800 bis zur Gegenwart. Eine Einführung* (Weinheim/München: Juventa, 2009), 83–102.

⁶⁸Albisetti, *Schooling German Girls*, 242–244.

⁶⁹Margret Kraul, "Höhere Mädchenschulen", in *Handbuch der deutschen Bildungsgeschichte. Band IV, 1870–1918*, ed. Christa Berg (München: C.H. Beck, 1991), 289; and Jacobi, *Mädchen- und Frauenbildung*, 303–304.

⁷⁰Bernd Zymek, "Schulen", in Dieter Langewische and Heinz-Elmar Tenorth, eds., *Handbuch der deutschen Bildungsgeschichte. Band V 1918–1945* (München: C.H. Beck), 172.

⁷¹Gahlings and Moehring, *Die Volksschullehrerin*, 100–102.

⁷²Rainer Bölling, *Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Lehrer* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983), 10.

entrants to 10%.⁷³ During the first post-war decades, no great changes took place regarding gender norms and girls' education. A new umbrella organisation, the Information Service for Women's Questions (Informationsdienst für Frauenfragen; since 1969 Deutscher Frauenrat, German Women's Council), was founded in 1951. The Catholic women's movement was now included, but the denominational divide remained a problem.⁷⁴

In NRW, a special secondary school type for girls, the women's secondary school (Frauenoberschule) was reintroduced after the war.⁷⁵ This school type did not offer a full-value Abitur, but only qualified for access to a Pedagogical Academy, for university education as secondary school teacher in specific subjects, or for some administrative state careers, for example in libraries. In NRW, it directed over a fifth of female secondary school students away from the general upper-secondary schools during the 1960s (Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs of NRW 1965, Tables 6 and 7, own calculation).

NRW was among the federal states with the highest percentage of monoeducational schools. In 1967, a total of 70.8% of all secondary schools were mono-educational. This was a result of the Catholic Church's influence on education in the region. In addition, coeducation was less necessary in NRW's many densely populated areas.⁷⁶ Curricula for boys and girls differed substantially. While girls were taught "life-practical education", homemaking and needlework, boys received lessons in mathematics, physics, chemistry, and biology.⁷⁷

During the 1960s, the idea of equality of opportunity gained ground in education debates, and the second wave of the women's movement slowly gathered momentum. One spoke increasingly of a "double role" of women as housewives and employees. More women's rights activists supported coeducation – the further to the left they stood, the more they argued for coeducation in principle, not merely as a workaround.⁷⁸ The organisational landscape changed. During the Weimar Republic, most of the Protestant female teachers had already joined their male colleagues in the German Teachers' Association. The ADLV was not re-established after the Second World War.⁷⁹ The social democratic Education and Science Workers' Union (GEW), founded in 1947, organised mostly Protestant male and female teachers, but female teachers were highly under-represented, especially among union officials.⁸⁰ After 1968, new, radical women's organisations mushroomed. Yet, the influence of the radical women's movement on party politics remained low. Even though social democrats more explicitly spoke about

⁷³Zymek, "Schulen", 188–189.

⁷⁴Illemann, *Katholische Frauenbewegung*, 112ff.

⁷⁵Klaus-Peter Eich, *Schulpolitik in Nordrhein-Westfalen 1945–1954* (Düsseldorf: Schwann, 1987), 166; Jürgen Zinnecker, *Emanzipation der Frau und Schulausbildung. Zur schulischen Sozialisation und gesellschaftlichen Position der Frau* (Weinheim/Basel: Beltz Verlag, 1972), 72.

⁷⁶Zinnecker, *Emanzipation der Frau*, 67–68.

⁷⁷Theresia Hagenmaier, "Mädchenbildung in den Bildungsplänen der Bundesrepublik", in *Zurück zur Mädchenschule? Beiträge zur Koedukation*, ed. Gertrud Pfister (Pfaffenweiler: Centaurus-Verlagsgesellschaft, 1988), 250.

⁷⁸Gertrud Pfister, ed., *Zurück zur Mädchenschule? Beiträge zur Koedukation* (Pfaffenweiler: Centaurus-Verlagsgesellschaft, 1988), 35.

⁷⁹Bölling, *Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Lehrer*, 38–39.

⁸⁰Wolfgang Kopitsch, *Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaft (GEW) 1947–1975. Grundzüge ihrer Geschichte* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1983), 141.

women's rights in their manifestos than the other parties, their understanding of gender roles remained rather traditional.⁸¹

Coeducation was gradually introduced from the late 1960s on, not so much because of purposeful political decision-making, but because most parents now preferred to send their children to co-educational schools. When this development was debated in the North Rhine-Westphalian parliament in 1968, the Social Democratic Party's Minister of Education of NRW, Fritz Holthoff, emphasised that he supported coeducation in principle, because boys and girls should be made capable of realising "the political-legal equality of the sexes". However, "separate education within the bounds of possibility" should be given in subjects "especially characteristic – of girls' education for example". While it would be useful for boys to learn how to cook, their participation in home-making lessons should not be obligatory. Furthermore, one had to make sure that the number of female teachers was sufficiently high, and that the principal and the vice-principal of the school were, if possible, a man and a woman.⁸² Holthoff also stated:

My perception is that especially the school operators, parents and teachers are going in for coeducation to an increasing degree. I have received numerous applications which I will examine. So far, I have not found a reason to refuse any application. [...] I openly declare my sympathy for such a development but without imposing any obligations by decree.⁸³

From the 1970s on, subjects that included homemaking elements were turned into elective subjects in most school types and continued to be chosen almost exclusively by girls.⁸⁴ The women's secondary school (Frauenoberschule) was finally abolished in 1972 with the reform of the Gymnasium.

The Catholic women's movement continued to oppose coeducation and clung to the idea that the freedom of women consisted in the choice between marriage and motherhood or maidenhood and career.⁸⁵ In NRW, the Catholic Church was still an important provider of secondary education for girls.⁸⁶ The VkdL's support of separate education for girls had its roots both in pedagogical convictions and in vested interests. Catholic female teachers feared that they would not receive equally good conditions of professional

⁸¹Lottemi Doormann, "Die neue Frauenbewegung: Zur Entwicklung seit 1968", in *Geschichte der deutschen Frauenbewegung*, ed. Florence Hervé (Köln: PapyRossa, 1990), 272–289; and Sass, *The Politics of Comprehensive School Reforms*, 224–234.

⁸²Landtag NRW, "Plenarprotokoll 06/41, 6. Wahlperiode, 41. Sitzung am 22. Oktober 1968, Fragestunde, Frage 76 des Abg. Bargmann (SPD), Koedukation an Realschulen und Gymnasien", 1593–1595.

⁸³Land NRW, "Koedukation", 1595.

⁸⁴Silke Bartsch and Barbara Methfessel, "Haushaltslehre – Vom Emanzipations- zum Kompetenzdiskurs", in *Handbuch Geschlechterforschung und Fachdidaktik*, ed. Marita Kampshoff and Claudia Wiepcke (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2012), 203; and Gabriele Neghabian, *Frauenschule und Frauenberufe. Ein Beitrag zur Bildungs- und Sozialgeschichte Preußens (1908–1945) und Nordrhein-Westfalens (1945–1974)* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1993).

⁸⁵Illemann, *Katholische Frauenbewegung*, 179; and Ingeborg Schultheis, *Zur Problematik der eigenständigen Mädchenbildung. Stellungnahmen des Vereins katholischer deutscher Lehrerinnen in der Zeit von 1885–1985* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1994), 200, 54.

⁸⁶In NRW, there were 96 public upper-secondary schools (*Gymnasien*) for girls, 155 public upper-secondary schools for boys and 112 public upper-secondary schools for both genders in 1953. Among the private upper-secondary schools, 50 were for girls, 19 for boys and 10 for both genders. Most private schools were Christian, some Protestant, but most Catholic. See Statistisches Landesamt Nordrhein-Westfalen, *Statistisches Jahrbuch Nordrhein-Westfalen*, 1954, Düsseldorf, 80ff. Today, almost all the remaining 168 monoeducational schools in Germany are Catholic girls' schools. See *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, "Mädchen sind an reinen Mädchenschulen besser aufgehoben", 29 January 2016, <https://www.sueddeutsche.de/bildung/studie-maedchen-sind-an-gleichgeschlechtlichen-schulen-besser-aufgehoben-1.2840089> (accessed 6 July 2022).

advancement in co-educational schools.⁸⁷ They also supported private schooling and denominational schooling, that is, separate Catholic and Protestant primary schools, and opposed comprehensive school reforms. They were thus included in anti-reform alliances with the CDU on all major school-political issues of the time.⁸⁸

To sum up, the West German women's movement was weakened by its division along class lines, but more importantly along denomination. The dominant state-church and class cleavages superposed the gender cleavage to such a degree that coalition-making across these lines became difficult for women's rights activists. The Catholic women's movement was in an alliance with the Catholic Centre Party, and later with the CDU. Catholic female teachers opposed social democratic and liberal reform attempts, which would have undermined their position in Catholic girls' schools. Even though the Catholic women's movement also aimed at a form of women's emancipation, it did so within the confines of Catholic gender ideology, implying that full equality of the genders never was the aim. Liberals and social democrats also cooperated with sections of the women's movement but were not as modern with respect to gender roles as the Norwegian left and did not manage to build similarly successful alliances. Overall, West German education politics were dominated by a Christian democratic cross-interest coalition, including the Catholic women's movement. This contributed to the development of a comparatively more conservative welfare and education regime.

Comparison

Clearly, women's rights activists of different political colouring were integrated into different kinds of cross-interest coalitions in education politics, with consequences for the development of girls' education in the two cases (see [Tables 1 and 2](#)). In both cases, organisations of the women's movement struggled for access to education and achieved progress over time. However, girls' and women's access to public secondary and tertiary education and coeducation was introduced earlier and more consistently in Norway than in Prussia/NRW. This is a result of the different political contexts, which were shaped by different cleavage structures.

In both cases, many women's rights activists of the first wave were female teachers and cooperated with the liberal movements of the time. In Norway, the strength of the liberals and the good connections between the women's movement and the Liberal Party contributed to the comparatively early opening of the education system to girls. The feminisation of the teaching profession started earlier in Norway than in Germany, and female teachers dominated in urban primary schools from the late nineteenth century.

In Prussia, there was less leeway for reforms, because the state was dominated by conservative interests to a greater degree, and social liberals were less influential. The denominational split stood in the way of alliances between Catholic, liberal, and social democratic school reformers and female teachers. The German Catholic women's movement was represented not least by Catholic female teachers and became part of a stable

⁸⁷Sack, *Zwischen religiöser Bindung*, 133; James C. Albisetti, "Catholics and Coeducation: Rhetoric and Reality in Europe before *Divini Illius Magistri*", *Paedagogica Historica* 35, no. 3 (1999): 673.

⁸⁸Sass, *The Politics of Comprehensive School Reforms*, 224–234.

Table 2. Female teachers' organisations and their coalition strategies in Norway and Prussia/NRW.

	Norway	Prussia/NRW
Organisations of female teachers	Female Teachers' Association (Norges Lærerinnforbund) (1912–1966)	Association of Catholic German Female Teachers (Verband katholischer deutscher Lehrerinnen, VkdL) (1885–today) General German Female Teachers' Association (Allgemeiner Deutscher Lehrerinnenverein, ADLV) (1890–1933)
Main coalition strategies of female teachers during the first wave	Female teachers from urban middle- and upper-class backgrounds cooperate with the Liberal Party	Catholic female teachers cooperate with the Catholic Centre Party Protestant female teachers cooperate with liberal parties
Main coalition strategies of female teachers during the second wave	Female teachers merge with male teachers in the Norwegian Teachers' Association (Norsk Lærerlag) in 1966; this association cooperates with the Labour Party	Catholic female teachers cooperate with CDU Social democratic, Protestant female teachers organise with male colleagues in the Education and Science Workers' Union (GEW) founded in 1947 and cooperate with SPD

alliance with the Catholic Centre Party. This movement has no comparable counterpart in the Norwegian case.

During the second wave, organisations of female teachers lost influence in both cases and female teachers for the most part organised together with men. At the same time, social democratic and radical sections of the women's movements grew. These sections of the movement were again more influential in Norway than in NRW. In Norway, the Labour Party took over the role of state-bearing party from the liberals, and, during the post-war decades, managed to integrate radical feminist demands. In Germany, comparatively conservative ideas about gender remained influential for longer, also within social democracy, and the leftist parts of the women's movement were less well represented in party politics. In addition, the Catholic women's organisations remained relevant political players and were integrated in the cross-interest coalition headed by the CDU.

Conclusion

To sum up, the comparison shows that a gendered version of Rokkanian cleavage theory can be a useful tool for the analysis of coalition-making in education politics. Rokkanian cleavage theory encourages political sociologists and political scientists to employ a comparative-historical, long-term perspective in their studies. This is important, because political conflicts and institutions of today can only be understood in light of their historical roots and development. At the same time, cleavage theory is based on a multidimensional understanding of politics, which entails looking beyond class-based oppositions and considering political processes as being formed by a complex web of actors, representing a broad range of ideologies and interests.

As discussed in more detail elsewhere, Norwegian and West German education politics were shaped by different cleavage structures.⁸⁹ In West Germany, the dominant

⁸⁹Sass, "Cleavage Structures and School Politics", and *The Politics of Comprehensive School Reforms*.

state-church cleavage led to the development of a Christian democratic alliance, including the rural population. In the present paper, it becomes clear that the Catholic women's movement belonged to this cross-interest alliance. Catholic women's rights activists found a way to struggle for their conception of women's interests within the Christian democratic project. The liberal and social democratic parts of the women's movement also built alliances with parties, and achieved changes over time, but were somewhat less successful in shaping education politics than their Norwegian counterparts. Overall, the West German women's movement was highly split. The gender cleavage remained less salient and overshadowed by other cleavages.

In Norway, the most dominant cleavages besides the class cleavage were the rural-urban and centre-periphery cleavages. In the early phase, this contributed to the success of the liberal movement, in which liberal middle- and upper-class women were well-represented. Later, this cleavage structure allowed social democracy to build a stable cross-interest alliance including the rural population and urban outsiders. This alliance also included radical and social democratic women's rights activists. The state-church cleavage was not completely irrelevant. However, Protestant women represented for example by the Christian Democrats did not play the same political role and were not as influential as the German Catholic women's movement. Overall, the women's movement was less split than in Germany. Even though the gender cleavage was not among the most salient cleavages in Norway either, it became comparatively more salient there, contributing to the development of what radical feminist scholars consider a more "women-friendly" welfare and education regime.⁹⁰

Finally, the paper demonstrates that studies focusing on the historical development of welfare and education regimes can benefit from considering the role of women's organisations as political actors. Even though the relationship between welfare regimes and gender relations has received much attention,⁹¹ the impact of women's rights activists and their organisations on the *historical formation* of welfare and education regimes remains under-studied within comparative-historical sociology and political economy more generally.⁹² Organisations of female teachers were one important early form of women's organisation, as the teaching profession was one of the first professions opened to women. Even though only a few of these organisations still exist, they have left their mark on the development of girls' education and on the shape of education systems today. It would be a worthwhile enterprise not only for historians, but also for political

⁹⁰Helga Hernes, *Welfare State and Woman Power: Essays in State Feminism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

⁹¹Esping-Andersen, *The Incomplete Revolution*; Laperrière and Orloff, "Learning from Feminist Scholarship"; Lewis, "Gender and the Development of Welfare Regimes"; and Orloff, "Gendering the Comparative Analysis of Welfare States".

⁹²But see for notable exceptions Nina Berven and Per Selle, "Kvinner, organiser, makt", in *Svekjet kvinnemakt? De frivillige organisasjonene og velferdsstaten*, ed. Nina Berven and Per Selle (Oslo: Gyldendal akademisk, 2001); Diane Sainsbury, "Gender and the Making of Welfare States: Norway and Sweden", *Social Politics* 8, no. 1 (2001): 113–143; Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers. The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States* (Cambridge, MA/London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1992). Historians have covered these issues to a greater extent; see Gisela Bock and Pat Thane, eds., *Maternity & Gender Policies. Women and the Rise of the European Welfare States 1880s – 1950s* (London: Routledge, 1991); Seth Koven and Sonya Michel, eds., *Mothers of a New World. Maternalist Politics and the Origins of Welfare States* (London: Routledge, 1993); on Germany, Iris Schröder, *Arbeiten für eine bessere Welt: Frauenbewegung und Sozialreform 1890–1914* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2001); Ann Taylor Allen, *Feminism and Motherhood in Germany, 1800–1914* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1991); Christina Klausmann, *Politik und Kultur der Frauenbewegung im Kaiserreich: Das Beispiel Frankfurt am Main* (Frankfurt: Campus, 1997); and on Norway, Nagel, ed., *Kjønn og velferdsstat* (Bergen: Alma Mater, 1998).

sociologists and political scientists, to study the activities, strategies, and policy aims of these and other women's organisations in more detail, comparatively and historically.

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