

The Directions of Changes in the Secondary Comprehensive School System for Girls within the Polish Territories During the Partitions Period and the II Republic of Poland

Katarzyna Dormus / e-mail: kdormus@op.pl
Pedagogical University of Krakow, Poland

Dormus, K. (2020). The Directions of Changes in the Secondary Comprehensive School System for Girls within the Polish Territories During the Partitions Period and the II Republic of Poland. *Czech-Polish Historical and Pedagogical Journal*, 12/1, 167–177. <https://doi.org/10.5817/cphpj-2020-015>

The manner in which secondary school education for girls was transforming within the Polish territories during the partitions period and under the II Republic of Poland is a complex issue which, on the one hand, inscribes into the educational policy executed by the partitioning states and later on by Polish authorities, while, on the other hand into a broad scope of changes regarding the social position of women. For a long time, girls were perceived, first and foremost, as future wives, mothers, and housekeepers. As a result, the need to create female grammar schools, that is, comprehensive schools that would prepare them for university studies, was disregarded. However, various post-primary schools were established with the aim to prepare girls for their future roles or, alternatively, provide qualifications enabling them to become school teachers. These schools could also be attended by those girls who wished to expand and supplement their general education. Not until the II Republic of Poland was the male and female school system standardised at the secondary level. Yet, girls continued to struggle to complete the secondary level of education due to a smaller number of state grammar schools addressed at female students.

Key words: secondary education; girls; Polish territories in the 19th century; II Republic of Poland

The manner in which secondary school education for girls was transforming within the Polish territories during the partitions period and under the II Republic of Poland is a complex issue which, on the one hand, inscribes into the educational policy executed by the partitioning states and later on by Polish authorities, while, on the other hand into a broad scope of changes regarding the social position of women.

Until Poland was reinstated as an independent country, secondary school education for girls and boys had constituted two separate educational systems. The task of describing secondary education for girls during the partitions period poses a number of difficulties, which result from heterogeneity of the existing system

and diversity of girls' schools. If we understand the term "secondary school" as a school ending with a final exam entitling a graduate to enrol in a university as a regular student, the first such school within the female educational system was a privately-owned female classical grammar established in 1896 as a counterpart of a boys' grammar school. Thus, such a type of school emerged relatively late and only within the Galicia region. However, there had been a number of other types of schools which might be considered as secondary schools, such as finishing schools executing the teaching curricula of grammar schools to a various degree, state-run girls' grammar schools within the Russian partition, or secondary schools in Galicia. Some of them enabled young women to take final exams which, however, did not qualify them to enrol at universities as regular students. All of these institutions played an enormous role within the process of female education in the 19th century. Thus, all post-primary schools for girls existing in the 19th century within the Polish territories might be considered as secondary schools.

Any attempts at introducing new types of all-girl schools or reforming the female educational system at levels higher than elementary undertaken at that period aroused numerous debates that exceeded the strictly educational field and step into the social and moral sphere. The decisions regarding female education, in particular in the late 19th century and the first half of the 19th century, were strongly influenced by a strong belief that girls should be better educated at home by their mothers.¹ The changing political, economic, and social situation affected this approach. The modernization processed in effect in the 19th century, the development of industry, economic persecution following the uprisings (the January uprising in particular), forced women to seek employment, which in turn required them to gain new qualifications or improve the ones they had already possessed. The involvement of women in patriotic activity within the circumstances of national captivity, the establishment of numerous social and political societies, and, last but not least, the emergence of the female movement, resulted in the fact that women began to enter the public life with more and more confidence. All of the above-mentioned factors caused their educational aspirations to grow. On the other hand, educational policy regarding women executed by the partitioning states acted as an inhibiting factor because the authorities' decisions within this sphere were affected by belief and a conservative approach towards "the female issue".

At the elementary education level, within the period from the late 18th century until the beginning of World War I, the situation of girls and boys was quite similar. Girls were admitted to parish schools with equal rights as boys, although some

¹ Bartnicka, K. (2004). Pensja żeńska jako substytut wychowania domowego. In K. Jakubiak, A. Winiarz (Eds.), *Nauczanie domowe dzieci polskich od XVIII do XX wieku*. Bydgoszcz: Wydawnictwo Akademii Bydgoskiej im. Kazimierza Wielkiego, p. 168.

differences in the teaching curricula were introduced due to the fact that their future roles of wives, mothers, and housekeepers differed from the ones assigned to boys and the educational ideal was being modified in accordance with these roles.

Entering the issue of female education into a wide programme of the educational policy must be credited to the Commission of National Education. In the mid-1770s, the Commission made efforts to put in some sort of order the situation at finishing schools, that is boarding schools for girls aged 6 to 16 years from more well-off classes. The Commission determined, among others, the teaching curricula for both boys' and girls' finishing schools. They were identical with one exception: Latin was replaced by geography in girls' curriculum. Throughout the 19th century, the lack of Latin in teaching curricula in female educational institutions was established as a general rule, which turned out to be a fateful circumstance – one that prevented young women to enrol at universities. A huge emphasis was put on citizen and patriotic education.² An attempt to modernize finishing schools was a cutting-edge undertaking across Europe. However, not all of the assumptions were put into practice, for example, state educational authority failed to include finishing schools in complete supervision. At the turn of the 19th century, there were few finishing schools at a poor level.³ The main premises of the Commission's policy with regard to female education were executed under the Duchy of Warsaw (1807–1815).⁴

During the partitions period, the educational system was developing within the legal systems of individual partitioning states. What is more, the development of female education was affected by the approach of state authorities to the issue of female education. The Prussian authorities exhibited the most conservative approach amplified by their anti-Polish attitude. Almost until the outbreak of World War I, Prussian educational law had not governed the issues of female education at the secondary school level. Key decisions were made by private individuals or religious institutions and, during the Kulturkampf period, a lot of women's schools were closed down. The overall level of female education within the Prussian partition was poor.⁵

² Przepisy od Komisji Edukacji Narodowej pensjo mistrzom i pensjo mistrzyniom dane (1925). In J. Lewicki (Ed.) *Ustawodawstwo szkolne za czasów Komisji Edukacji Narodowej. Rozporządzenia, ustawy pedagogiczne i organizacyjne (1773–1793)*. Kraków, Warszawa: M. Arct, pp. 69–75.

³ Ender, J. (1972). Sprawa kształcenia kobiet w dobie Komisji Edukacyjnej. *Przegląd Historyczno-Oświatowy* 3, 476–477, 481; Bartnicka, K. (2004). Op. cit., p. 169.

⁴ Winiarz, A. (2002). *Szkolnictwo Księstwa Warszawskiego i Królestwa Polskiego (1807–1831)*. Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, pp. 318–321; Hulewicz, J. (1939). *Sprawa wyższego wykształcenia kobiet w Polsce w wieku XIX*. Kraków: Polska Akademia Umiejętności, pp. 12–13.

⁵ Walasek, S. (1996). Szkolnictwo średnie ogólnokształcące na ziemiach polskich w latach 1914–1923. *Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis* no 184, Prace Pedagogiczne no 112, Wrocław: PWN, p. 22.

The policy of the Russian authorities differed in that respect. They favoured the establishment of women's secondary schools but on the condition that these were state-run schools which aided the Russification of Polish girls. Noticing these evident political tendencies, Polish society was reluctant towards state-run schools and preferred public schools. There was also no school graduation from which would enable girls to enrol at Russian or Galician universities as regular students.

Under the Congress Poland (1815–1831), efforts were made to improve the level of female finishing schools. An important initiative took place in 1826 in Warsaw – the foundation of the Governess School, renamed at the end of 1826 as the State Institute for Education of the Female Sex. It aimed to prepare female tutors to fill in the void on the labour market. It was thus a vocational school, yet it was attended by girls as well who wished to supplement their education. In this sense, it also played the role of a comprehensive school. Girls over the age of 14 years – graduates of finishing schools or three-grade schools – were admitted. It was the highest educational institution for women at that time, the first such institution run by state authorities within the former Polish territory, and a very popular one.⁶

In the period from the November Uprising until the January Uprising (1832–1863), the policy towards female education changed. Two trends began dominating: Russification and restriction of women's access to education. In the years 1840–1841, Emperor Nicholas I signed a number of acts and regulations aimed at conforming the way the educational system in the Kingdom of Poland functioned to the Russian model. It was decided that the teaching curriculum in female schools cannot exceed the limitations of the curriculum adopted for male district schools. State Institute for Education of the Female Sex was renamed as the Institute for Education of Maidens. From that moment onwards, it was supposed to be a six-grade school for the daughters of army officers and state officials and a certain number of girls training to become governesses. The students were taught in a spirit of devotion to the Russian monarchy. Two years later, the Institute was relocated to Puławy and for the next dozen years or so there was no state-run secondary school for girls in Warsaw.⁷

⁶ Hulewicz J. (1939). Op. cit., pp. 16–19; Winiarz, A. (1992). Kształcenie i wychowanie dziewcząt w Księstwie Warszawskim i Królestwie Polskim (1807–1905). In A. Żarnowska, A. Szwarz (Eds.) *Kobieta i edukacja na ziemiach polskich w XIX i XX w.* Zbiór studiów. Vol. II, part 2, Warszawa: Instytut Historyczny Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, pp. 10–13; Winiarz A., (2002). Op. cit., pp. 328–335; Dąbrowska, J. (2010). Początki szkolnictwa żeńskiego – Instytut Guwernantek. In K. Jakubiak, T. Maliszewski (Eds.) *Z dziejów polskiej kultury i oświaty od średniowiecza do początku XX wieku.* Kraków: Oficyna Wydawnicza „Impuls”, pp. 122–123, pp. 126–127.

⁷ Aleksandryjski Instytut Wychowania Panien (2019). In K. Poznański (Ed.) *Ustawodawstwo szkolne w Królestwie Polskim w latach autonomii administracyjnej 1815–1867. Materiały i źródła do historii wychowania, vol.2: 1840–1867.* Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Akademii

In the mid-19th century, Russian authorities began to realise that women were increasingly striving for higher education. To meet these expectations, a decision was made to expand the state-run educational system for women. It was supposed to serve the purposes of Russification policy regarding Polish girls. In 1856, permission was given for creating female schools whose teaching curricula resembled those of boys' grammar schools. In 1857, a prestigious State Finishing School, also known as Mary's School, was founded. Its graduates could obtain qualifications of a junior governess. In 1859, the State Higher Female School was launched as a six-grade institution with quite a broad teaching curriculum, which admitted candidates regardless of their social origin or religion. The graduates were granted qualifications of a senior governess. The entire female school system was entrusted to Empress Maria Alexandrovna on whose behalf it was supervised by the intendant.⁸

The policy of development of the state-run school system for girls was continued in the 1860s. In 1864, six-grade grammar schools were established as well as three- to four-grade female junior grammars, whose teaching curriculum was similar to that of boys' classical grammar school reduced by Latin and Greek. Traditionally, needlework was taught instead. A grammar school graduate could seek employment as a private tutor.⁹ The act of 1870 divided the existing female schools into three-grade junior grammars and seven-grade grammar school. The latter ones could include the eighth form with a teaching major.¹⁰

The actions of the Russian authorities did not bring the assumed results. The political goals governing the establishment of state-run girls' schools were too apparent for Polish society. Therefore, within the Kingdom of Poland, six- or seven-grade public girls' schools dominated. Only after a motion was passed by Imperial Duma in 1912, eight-grade schools could be created.¹¹

Pedagogiki Specjalnej, 37–39; Ustawa dla instytutów naukowych prywatnych, guwernerów i nauczycieli domowych w Królestwie Polskim (2019). In ibidem, pp. 92–106; Hulewicz, J. (1939). Op. cit., 53, pp. 63–64; Winiarz, A. (1992). Op. cit., pp. 14–17.

⁸ Ustawa dla pensji. Żeńskiej Rządowej w Warszawie (2019). In K. Poznański (Ed.) Op. cit., pp. 277–287; Projekt Ustawy dla Wyższych Naukowych Zakładów Rządowych Żeńskich w Warszawie (2019) In K. Poznański (Ed.) Op. cit., pp. 287–294; Doniesienie o otwarciu pięciu Szkół Żeńskich w Królestwie i Oddziału 4-klasowego; Projekt ustawy dla Szkół Wyższych Żeńskich Rządowych w Królestwie Polskim (2019) In ibidem, pp. 359–366; Hulewicz, J. (1939). Op. cit., pp. 65–66; Winiarz, A. (1992). Op. cit., pp. 15–16; Poznański, K. (1968). *Reforma szkolna w Królestwie Polskim w 1862 roku*. Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, Wydawnictwo PAN, pp. 250–252.

⁹ Hulewicz, J. (1939). Op. cit., pp. 68–69; Winiarz, A. (1992). Op. cit., pp. 18–19.

¹⁰ Miąso, J. (1995). Reformy oświatowe w Prusach, Austrii i Rosji i ich wpływ na szkolnictwo na ziemiach polskich w drugiej połowie XIX wieku, *Kwartalnik Pedagogiczny* 3., p. 133, p. 135.

¹¹ S. Walasek, op. cit, p.19.

During World War I, teachers' circles supported the establishment of identical boys' and girls' grammar schools which enabled both sexes to enrol at a university. Within the Kingdom of Poland, the debate was accompanied by a process of transformation of finishing schools into seven- or eight-grade grammar schools, whose teaching curriculum was expanded by a new obligatory course, Latin, as well as mathematics and physics at equal levels as in boys' grammar schools. These changes afforded girls the opportunity to prepare properly for their final examinations. These schools became highly popular when the University of Warsaw opened up for female students.¹²

The approach of Austrian authorities towards secondary school education of girls differed from both the Prussian and Russian ones. The Austrians undertook half-way actions, on the one hand, wishing to improve the level of secondary schools without interfering with the traditional aim of female education on the other. Great emphasis was put on the physical and psychological distinct features of the female sex and their future social roles: of the wife, mother, and housekeeper. For a very long time, there had been no counterpart of boys' secondary school which could prepare girls for University studies. The state refused persistently resisted attempts to establish state-run female grammar schools and no such school was opened until World War I, although, since 1896 girls were allowed to take extramural final exams in four selected boys' grammar schools and in 1897 women began to be admitted to the University of Kraków and the University of Lviv. This reluctance was justified, first and foremost, by the fear of overproduction of intelligentsia and potential competition from women on the labour market.¹³

From the 1870s onwards, district schools operated within Galicia. Initially, they were a subtype of people's schools established in towns and cities. In some locations, these schools underwent reforms and their teaching curriculum was expanded into a more comprehensive one, yet women's chores, such as needlework, remained a part of the curriculum as well. Thus, in 1871, an eight-grade district girls' school launched in Kraków with the aim of providing secondary school education to women "with consideration for arts useful to this sex".¹⁴ This school, however, never reached the level of boys' grammar schools; neither did the six-grade higher district schools launched in 1895. They were not particularly popular either.¹⁵

¹² Miąso, J. (1992). Kształcenie dziewcząt w Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej. In A. Żarnowska, A. Szwarc (Eds.) *Kobieta i edukacja na ziemiach polskich w XIX i XX w. Zbiór studiów*, vol. II, part. 2, Warszawa: Instytut Historyczny Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, p. 74.

¹³ Dutkova, R. (1995). *Żeńskie gimnazja Krakowa w procesie emancypacji kobiet (1896–1918)*. Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka, 7, p. 23.

¹⁴ Ibidem, pp. 8–9.

¹⁵ Ibidem, p. 12.

As one of the elements of reform in people's educational system executed throughout the empire at the turn of the 1860s and the 1870s, first teacher training colleges were launched in 1871. Although they provided only vocational secondary education, they are worth mentioning as a highly successful and popular type of schools attended both by girls who wished to pursue a teaching career at people's schools as well as those who desired a teacher seminar diploma (which did not enable them to enrol at a university).¹⁶

Both higher district schools and teacher training colleges were state-run schools, while all the other types of girls' schools operating within Galicia were public ones. The procedure for launching new public schools was governed by state law of 1869 and thanks to the liberal character of its provisions,¹⁷ a public female education developed quickly in the late 19th century. Thanks to the legal regulations, it was possible to establish the first classical female grammar school as a counterpart of a boys' grammar school. The school was launched in Kraków in 1896. Soon afterwards, new grammar schools followed, not only in Kraków and Lvov, but also upcountry. Such a type of schools met the girls' expectations and graduation brought measurable effects, such as the opportunity to take secondary school finals and enrol at a university. Grammar schools emerging as a result of an upstream social initiative turned out to be a successful and lasting creation.¹⁸

The situation was different for yet another type of a comprehensive secondary school established in 1900 – a six-grade high school created by the minister of Religious Denominations and Enlightenment, Wilhelm von Hartel. He followed the example of similar schools that had been founded in Austria for almost thirty years. Hartel meant to create schools adjusted to women's "special" needs. A huge emphasis was put on modern languages, history, and aesthetic studies. Courses in pedagogy, psychology, and hygiene were also introduced. But these schools lacked Latin, the curriculum in science and mathematics was reduced. High school ended with final exams which did not enable graduates to enrol at a university as regular students. As such, they did not meet the expectations of girls aspiring to pursue university education and, as a result, they did not last long.¹⁹

In 1908, the Ministry of Education issued a regulation regarding the creation of eight-grade real grammar schools and the transformation of high schools into reformed real grammar. In the latter type of schools, French was taught instead of

¹⁶ Ibidem, p. 7.

¹⁷ Any person able to secure a school's operation in financial, academic, and didactic terms could open one.

¹⁸ Ibidem, p. 28; Dormus, K. (2002). *Kazimiera Bujwidowa (1867–1932). Życie i działalność społeczno-oświatowa*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo i Drukarnia „Secesja”, pp. 74–75.

¹⁹ Dutkova, R. (1995). Op. cit., 8, 12–14; Czajacka, B. (1990). „*Z domu w szeroki świat*”: droga kobiet do niezależności w zaborze austriackim w latach 1890–1914. Kraków: „Universitatis”, pp. 100–101.

Greek and the teaching curriculum of the sciences was expanded. In terms of their status, these schools were equal to classical grammar schools. Until World War I, in Galicia, there had been 30 public girls' grammar schools: 11 classical ones and 19 real ones, as well as 13 high schools.²⁰ In terms of the number of grammar schools and the number of female students attending these institutions, Galicia outrivalled other countries of the crown.²¹

The situation within secondary comprehensive education for girls changed significantly after World War I, when Poland was reinstated as an independent country. The basis for the restructuration of secondary education in the independent Poland was formed by the "Program naukowy szkoły średniej" [Academic Programme for the Secondary School] issued in 1919. It announced the establishment of a uniform comprehensive secondary school with identical teaching of curricula for boys, girls, and coeducational schools. Thus, girls' schools would be officially granted equal rights for the first time in history. It was even more important since universities were opening up for female students simultaneously.

The "Academic Programme" signalled liquidation of the existing classical grammars, grammar schools, and real schools, as well as female high schools. All of the above were to be replaced with a uniform eight-grade comprehensive school. Grades one through three, constituting a junior grammar school, were supposed to have uniform teaching programmes, while grades four through eight, that is the senior grammar school, were to differ in that respect. Three teaching profiles were assumed: mathematics and natural science; humanities and Latin; and classical arts. The guidelines of the "Academic Programme for the Secondary School" were compulsory for state-run schools, but were adopted by numerous public schools as well.²²

New teaching curricula were first introduced within the Kingdom of Poland, where a majority of female schools were transformed into grammar schools, and only a few of the lower level were transformed into general or vocational schools. Within the borders of the other two former partitions – in Galicia, the Poznań region, and Pomerania – these transformations completed as late as in 1926.²³ The remodelling process in the Galician educational system commenced at the beginning of the academic year 1920/1921. The existing real schools, real grammars, and most female high schools were renamed as mathematics and natural science-oriented grammar schools, while classical grammars to humanities grammars or new-type classical grammars. Until the reform of 1932,

²⁰ Miąso, J. *Reformy oświatowe*, p. 129.

²¹ Dutkova, R. (1995). *Op. cit.*, p. 38.

²² Miąso, J. (1992). *Op. cit.*, pp. 73–74.

²³ *Ibidem*, pp. 74–75.

fifteen classical grammars of the old type operated within Galicia. These grammars, along with several female high schools which had not undergone transformation, constituted the only difference between the secondary educational system in Galicia and the Kingdom of Poland.²⁴

Further transformations of the secondary school system resulted from the act on the educational system of 11 March, 1932. The secondary school system was standardised. State-run and public schools were to adopt identical educational goals. The secondary school turned into a six-grade school comprised of a four-grade grammar school and a two-grade high school. Both schools comprising of grammar and high school as well as separate grammars and separate high schools were allowed. Grammar schools were to meet the social expectations of the popularization of secondary education, while the high school was to prepare young adults for university studies. High schools were divided into four main types – mathematics and physics-oriented; natural science-oriented, humanities-oriented; and the classical type. Their didactic premises differed.²⁵

The position of girls in secondary schools in the interwar period was more difficult than that of male students. A great majority of female secondary schools were public ones. The authorities were more eager to launch and support male grammar schools. Thus, at the dawn of the Second Republic of Poland, there were 81 public female secondary schools in Warsaw. In 1918, the first one was nationalised – Jadwiga Sikorska finishing school, which from that moment onwards was known as Queen Jadwiga's. Over the next few years, five more public female schools were nationalised and two additional state-run schools were launched.²⁶ In the Kraków province, on the other hand, in the academic year 1921/1922, there was only one state-run female school, while there were twelve public ones.²⁷ Before the outbreak of the war, the city and province of Kraków had 33 female grammar and high schools, out of which as many as 29 were public ones.²⁸

Within the entire territory of the Republic of Poland, in the academic year 1922/1923, there were 260 state-run secondary schools in total, with only 34

²⁴ Araszkiewicz, F. (1972). *Szkoła średnia ogólnokształcąca w Polsce w latach 1918–1932*. Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich. Wydawnictwo PAN, 47, pp. 49–50.

²⁵ Ustawa z dnia 11 marca 1932 r. o ustroju szkolnictwa – art. 19; art. 20 ust. 1, 2, art. 21 ust1; art. 22 ust. 1. <http://prawo.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/download.xsp/WDU19320380389/O/D19320389.pdf> [21. 11. 2019]

²⁶ Miąso, J. (1992). Op. cit., p. 75.

²⁷ Kotowski, R. (2013). *Dziewczęta w mundurkach. Młodzież żeńska szkół średnich w Polsce w latach 1918–1939*. Kielce: Muzeum Narodowe w Kielcach, p. 60.

²⁸ Ruta, Z. (1990). *Prywatne szkolnictwo Prywatne szkolnictwo średnie ogólnokształcące w Krakowie i województwie krakowskim w latach 1932–1939*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe WSP, p. 13.

female schools (that is 19% of all state-run schools). Girls comprised 19.4 % of all students in state-run schools, while in public schools 56.4% of all students were females.²⁹ In the academic year 1937/1938, there were 307 state-run secondary schools, out of which only 49 were female schools (that is 16% of all state-run schools).³⁰ However, until the mid-1930s, the percentage of female students in state-run schools had been increasing, while the percentage of female schools in public schools had gradually been decreasing.

Most female secondary schools, state-run in particular, were humanities-oriented, not only because it was still believed that excellence in the humanities was perceived as a sign of prestige, but also because the cost of operation of humanities-oriented schools was far lower than in the case of mathematics and science-oriented schools.³¹

Since there were very few state-run female secondary schools, girls were usually forced to attend public institutions which made their education more expensive than that of boys, all the more that annual tuition fees in public grammar schools were high.

The social and moral aspect of the operation of female grammar schools in the interwar period is also worth some attention because attendance to grammar schools affected the girls' lifestyles. Their school life resembled more and more that of their male peers with regard to, for example, involvement in activities of youth organizations, scouting, after-school clubs, or student body. Their liberties expanded. Also, more care and attention was given to their health, hygienic lifestyle, and providing proper healthcare.³²

Until the first classical grammar was established in Kraków by the end of the 19th century, the female secondary school system had taken a long way. The evolution process of the female education school system was affected by traditional social beliefs and the educational policy of the partitioning states, which, to a large extent, reflected these views. Girls were perceived, first and foremost, as future wives, mothers, and housekeepers, due to which fact the need to create female grammar schools that could prepare girls for university studies, was disregarded. After all, colleges and universities were out of their reach for a long time. However, various types of post-primary schools were established to prepare girls for their future roles or, alternatively, equipped them in qualifications in the teaching profession. A number of these schools had thus a twofold character: on the one hand, they were more of vocational schools preparing girls

²⁹ Miąso, J. (1992). Op. cit., p. 75.

³⁰ Samsel, A. (2004). Koedukacja w szkole średniej w Polsce i na świecie w latach 1918–1939, świadomy wybór czy zło konieczne. *Przegląd Historyczno-Oświatowy* 3–4, pp. 84–85.

³¹ Miąso, J. (1992). Op. cit., pp. 77–78.

³² *Ibidem*, p. 78.

to become school teachers; on the other hand, they played the role of comprehensive school, because they enabled those girls who did not wish to seek employment as teachers to expand and supplement their general education. Not until the II Republic of Poland, was the male and female school system standardised at the secondary level. However, for girls, graduation from a secondary school still constituted a goal more difficult to reach due to a smaller number of state-run schools they could attend. Most girls were forced to choose public schools and the financial barrier must have restricted their educational opportunities.