

The Changing Role of Women from the mid-19th Century to the Present Day: an Analysis of German History Textbooks from a Gender Perspective¹

Denisa Labischová / e-mail: denisa.labischova@osu.cz
Faculty of Education, University of Ostrava, Ostrava, Czech Republic

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The article presents the findings of a study that conducted a content analysis of German history textbooks for upper secondary schools, investigating gender aspects of the educational content. The analysis focused primarily on the presentation of the historical evolution of women's roles from the mid-19th century to the present day. The study draws on previous research of history teaching materials comparing the content of history textbooks in Austria, Britain, France, Germany and Switzerland. The methodology is anchored in recent literature, and includes a qualitative analysis based on a set of predetermined criteria. The findings of the analysis indicate that German textbooks devote substantial coverage to the history of women's emancipation; the textbooks contain separate chapters focusing on the gender dimension, including the struggle for women's suffrage, women's war efforts during the two world wars, the status of women in the Weimar Republic, Nazi Germany and post-1945, and questions of everyday life. The didactic elements of the texts are also well-elaborated (methodological passages, the use of didactic media, interpretation of historical sources, project-based teaching).

Key words: *History didactics; German history textbooks; gender dimension; content analysis*

Introduction—the gender dimension of education with a focus on school history teaching

The gender dimension of education currently represents an important area of pedagogical theory and research. It is a complex interdisciplinary phenomenon encompassing elements from cultural anthropology, sociology, history, psychology and

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pedagogy.² Scholars have analyzed various aspects of the relationship between gender and schools, including the process of gender socialization and the formation of gender identity, gender-sensitive pedagogical communication and pedagogical evaluation, the negative consequences of the predominance of women among teaching staff, and gender correctness in educational media (mainly textbooks). In view of the nature of school subjects belonging to the humanities and social sciences (history, civic studies, basic aspects of social sciences, mother-tongue and foreign-language teaching, social geography), it is these subjects above all whose concept and content are affected by gender issues; the study presented in this article therefore focused on the gender dimension of history textbooks.

The concept of women's history as viewed by history didactics has evolved over the course of time in conjunction with developments in historiography and the historical sciences as a whole. At the end of the 1960s the dominant approach involved the "additive" concept, which attempted to break free from the traditional view of history as a primarily male domain, expanding the coverage of major historical events to include the actions of famous women who made important contributions to the development of society. Two decades later, historiography had shifted its focus to historical sources that had previously been viewed as relatively marginal (such as diaries, autobiographies and photographs), and besides exploring political events historians also conducted thorough investigations of individual social phenomena and processes. It was not until later that modern feminist historiography in the true sense of the word emerged; in this approach, scholars conduct qualitative and quantitative research into a broad spectrum of gender-related topics.³

Overall, it is possible to state that the emergence of the gender dimension as a major concern in history didactics—and in research focusing on gender issues in history teaching—has been a relatively slow and gradual process, which has unfolded over almost five decades. This development began with the expansion of textbooks' coverage to include information about famous women, and it then continued with the modification of previous schematic interpretations, ultimately evolving into today's approach which presents topics related to women's history in a comprehensive and systematic manner. The roots of this modern approach reach back to the mid-1970s, when scholars pointed out the striking absence of factual data on women's history, the reinforcement in history teaching of stereotypical presentations of women's roles (e.g. as mothers or housewives), and the largely negative depiction of

2 Krebs, U. – Forster, J. (eds.) (2007). „*Sie und Er*“ interdisziplinär. Aktuelle Themen interdisziplinär. Bd 1, Berlin: LIT Verlag Berlin.

3 Kohser-Spohn, Ch. (2005). Die Kategorie Geschlecht in der Geschichtswissenschaft und in der Geschichtsdidaktik in Deutschland. Rückblick und Ausblick. *Internationale Schulbuchforschung*, Heft 2, pp. 157–158.

women who did not conform with these traditional gender roles – who were shown as traitors to their country, dissolute individuals, or mere substitutes for brave men at decisive historical moments.⁴

Nowadays, didactics (especially outside the Czech Republic) is characterized by a strong focus on the gender dimension of school history teaching. This reflects the fact that the previous narrow and one-sided view of history has now become obsolete, as well as the increased emphasis on the history of everyday life, the history of marginalized groups, intercultural education in the broadest sense (which also encompasses gender emancipation), and the history of the family.⁵

1. Research of textbooks from the gender perspective and its methodology

Recent years have seen an upsurge of scholarly interest in the normative aspects of gender in textbooks, i.e. the issue of gender correctness. When the Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports grants approval for the use of a textbook (or prolongs an existing approval), the factors taken into consideration during the evaluation process include gender correctness, which is assessed according to a set of evaluative criteria. The approval process is universally applied to all textbooks regardless of their subject matter, so the evaluative criteria are applied to textbooks from various subjects. The key criteria are these:⁶

1. selection of teaching content,
2. depiction of men and women in the teaching material,
3. accompanying illustrations,
4. explanatory examples and learning tasks,
5. how male and female students are addressed,
6. linguistic description.

The principles for updating and implementing the methodology for textbook assessment are set out in the Ministry's *Gender Equality Support Plan for the Period 2021–2024*.⁷

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- 4 Borries, B. (1975). Frauen in Schulgeschichtsbüchern – zum Problem der Benachteiligung von Mädchen im Unterricht. *Westermanns Pädagogische Beiträge*, Heft 11, p. 603.
 - 5 Popp, S. (2007). Frauen als Spezialfall der Geschichte? Geschichtsdidaktische Probleme der Gestaltung von Frauengeschichte in aktuellen Schulbüchern. In „*Sie und Er*“ *interdisziplinär. Aktuelle Themen interdisziplinär*. op. cit., pp. 239–271.
 - 6 Valdrová, J. – Smetáčková-Moravcová, I. – Knotková-Čapková, B. (2004). *Příručka pro posuzování genderové korektnosti učebnic*. Praha: MŠMT, pp. 27–28.
 - 7 *Plán podpory rovnosti mužů a žen Ministerstva školství, mládeže tělovýchovy na léta 2021–2024*. Accessible at: <https://www.msmt.cz/ministerstvo/plan-podpory-rovnosti-zen-a-muzu-msmt-2021-2024> [retrieved 20 April 2021].

The currently applicable assessment criteria have been expanded and used as a basis for investigation by several empirical studies. For example, Eva Niklesová and (later) Sandra Bonková applied the principles to German language and civic studies textbooks, adding a further eight criteria that are specific to these particular subjects. These new criteria include the image of women's and men's professional lives, family life and household duties, depictions of partnership, the occurrence of generalizing statements about the sexes, descriptions of women's and men's appearance, characteristic qualities attributed to women and men, the presentation of leisure activities, and the depiction of famous people from various fields of activity.⁸

Analyses of textbook texts from the Czech Republic have so far appeared primarily in university graduation theses. They have focused mainly on Czech-language⁹ and foreign-language¹⁰ textbooks designed for various levels in the education system.

The first research on gender aspects of history textbooks was conducted in Germany. For example, Alexandra Bauer analyzed both quantitative and qualitative aspects of teaching texts, focusing on the presence and inclusion of chapters on the history of women, dominant social roles of women and men, the absence (or inaccurate presentation) of information related to the gender dimension, the predominant depiction of the characteristics and behaviour of women in history, the depiction of preferred family models, the inclusion of learning tasks encouraging discussion and thinking about personal experience, the dominant concept of history as the history of men and their actions, possibilities for self-identification by girls and boys, continuity and discontinuity in gender roles, and linguistic distinctions concerning men and women.¹¹

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- 8 Bonková, S. (2014). *Komparativní analýza současných učebnic občanské výchovy z genderového hlediska*. Master's thesis (supervisor Labischová, D.). Ostrava: Pedagogická fakulta Ostravské univerzity; Niklesová, E. (2007). *Edukační materiály a korektnost (genderové hledisko)*. In Bína, D. – Niklesová, E. *Hledání nových cest v didaktice slohu a literární výchovy*. České Budějovice, pp. 52–59.
 - 9 Rázlová, P. (2018). *Gender v učebnicích českého jazyka pro první stupeň základních škol*. Bachelor thesis (supervisor B. Junková). České Budějovice: Filozofická fakulta Jihočeské univerzity v Českých Budějovicích; Vyroubal, P. (2011). *Gender v jazyce a učebnici*. Bachelor thesis (supervisor K. Ondrášková). Masarykova univerzita: Pedagogická fakulta.
 - 10 Ječmínková, A. (2014). *Evaluační vybraných jazykových učebnic z pohledu genderu a mizení příkladů podporujících konzervativní hodnoty*. Master's thesis (supervisor R. Švaříček). Masarykova univerzita: Filozofická fakulta; Klimentová, A. (2007). *Obraz genderu ve vybraných učebnicích němčiny na základní škole*. Master's thesis (supervisor J. Valdová). České Budějovice: Pedagogická fakulta Jihočeské univerzity v Českých Budějovicích.
 - 11 Bauer, A. (2005). *Frauen und Mädchen in Geschichtsschulbüchern für Hauptschulen aus den letzten Jahren. Eine empirische Untersuchung*. Diplomarbeit (Prüfer B. Borries), Hamburg: Universität Hamburg, pp. 30–33.

Blažena Gracová has focused on Czech history textbooks. She has conducted a chronological analysis of textbooks covering different periods of history from the Middle Ages to the present day, focusing on the passages related to the life stories, actions and/or artistic achievements of famous women, the overall conception of selected topics, and the interpretative level of the texts.¹²

The criteria first presented by Alexandra Bauer have been further modified and applied in qualitative analyses of history textbooks from Austria, Britain, France and Switzerland, exploring the occurrence of separate chapters devoted to gender issues, the depiction of gender roles, the selection of examples, the presentation of the lives and work of important female figures, the presentation of historical continuity and change (the conception of the development of women's emancipation as a process in the broad sense), and the quality of the didactic presentation of gender issues (comparative approaches, problem-based teaching, research-based activities).¹³

The study presented here draws on previous empirical research. Its aim was to identify the main gender-related features of German history textbooks, to determine the predominant forms in which women's history is presented, and to compare German textbooks with their counterparts from other countries (Austria, Britain, France, Switzerland).

The analysis focused on 19 separate textbooks¹⁴ from 12 series of publications designated for use at upper secondary level (*allgemeinbildende höhere Schule*),

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- 12 Gracová, B. (2015). Nowe ujęcie tematyki genderowej w najnowszych czeskich podręcznikach historii. In *Kobieta i mężczyzna – dwa światy, jedna przestrzeń*. Warszawa: DiG, pp. 631–639; Gracová, B. (2010). Ženská tematika na stránkách nejnovějších českých učebnic dějepisu. In *Žena jako subjekt a objekt dějepisného vyučování*. Ústí nad Labem: Univerzita Jana Evangelisty Purkyně, pp. 27–38; Gracová, B. (2006). Ženská tematika v současných českých dějepisných učebnicích. In Vaculík, J. – Němec, J. (eds.) *Problematika sociálních skupin ve výuce společenských věd*. Brno: Masarykova univerzita, pp. 144–151.
- 13 Labischová, D. (2015). Analiza genderowa brytyjskich i niemieckich podręczników historii. In *Kobieta i mężczyzna – dwa światy, jedna przestrzeń*. Warszawa: DiG, pp. 641–650; Labischová, D. (2015). Dějiny ženské emancipace v rakouských učebnicích dějepisu. *CIVILIA: Odborná revue pro didaktiku společenských věd*. 6/2, pp. 4–20; Labischová, D. (2015). Genderová dimenze zahraničních učebnic dějepisu: obsahová analýza edukačního média. *Sborník prací Pedagogické fakulty Masarykovy univerzity, řada společenských věd*, 29/1, pp. 95–110.
- 14 Andrae, U. (2013). *Entdecken und Verstehen 2. Differenzierende Ausgabe*. Berlin: Cornelsen; Berger, v. d. Heide, T. (2014). *Entdecken und Verstehen 3. Differenzierende Ausgabe*. Berlin: Cornelsen; Brokemper, P. – Köster, E. – Potente, D. (2013). *Geschichte Real 3*. Berlin: Cornelsen; Brückner, D. – Focke, H. (2011). *Das waren Zeiten 3. Deutschland, Europa und die Welt von 1871 bis zur Gegenwart*. Bamberg: C. C. Bruckners Verlag; Brückner, D. – Focke, H. (2010). *Das waren Zeiten 4. Deutschland, Europa und die Welt von 1871 bis zur Gegenwart*. Bamberg: C. C. Bruckners Verlag; Christoffer, S. (2013). *Zeitreise 3*. Stuttgart – Leipzig: Ernst Klett Verlag; Christoffer, S. (2013). *Zeitreise 4*. Stuttgart – Leipzig: Ernst Klett Verlag; Egner, A.

which were published to reflect the different education systems in the German federal states. The selected textbooks covered the period from the end of the 19th century up to the present day.¹⁵

The study is structured chronologically, comprising separate subsections each covering a different period of history: the period up to 1918, the 1920s, the Nazi era, and the period from 1945 to the present day. The methodological basis for the study was qualitative content analysis,¹⁶ guided by a set of eight predetermined criteria:

1. selection of gender-related topics,
2. presentation of the lives and works of important female figures,
3. presentation of the everyday lives and social status of women,
4. emphasis on personal stories,
5. work with textual and iconographic sources,
6. elements facilitating learning (learning tasks),
7. didactic methods for activation (dialogic methods, dramatization, problem-based learning, creative activities, inquiry-based learning, project-based learning),
8. presentation of historical topics from a present-day perspective.

2. Gender dimensions of present-day German history textbooks for upper secondary level

2.1 The period up to 1918

In terms of content, three topics are of central importance for this period of history. The first is the relatively lengthy process by which women strove to achieve equality,

(2011). *Zeit für Geschichte 12. Vom Europa der Nachkriegszeit zur Welt des 21. Jahrhunderts*. Braunschweig: Schroedel; Funken, W. – Koltrowitz, B. (2006). *Geschichte plus 8. Gymnasium. Ausgabe Sachsen*. Berlin: Cornelsen; Funken, W. – Koltrowitz, B. (2009). *Geschichte plus 9. Gymnasium. Ausgabe Sachsen*. Berlin: Cornelsen; Funken, W. – Koltrowitz, B. (2009). *Geschichte plus 10. Gymnasium. Ausgabe Sachsen*. Berlin: Cornelsen; Geus, E. (2011). *Horizonte 9. Geschichte Realschule Bayern*. Braunschweig: Westermann; Lenzian, H. J. (2010). *Zeiten und Menschen 1*. Paderborn: Schöningh Verlag; Osburg, F. – Klose, D. (2006). *Expedition Geschichte 4, Klasse 8*. Berlin: Diesterweg; Osburg, F. (2007). *Expedition Geschichte 5, Klasse 9*. Berlin: Diesterweg; Osburg, F. (2008). *Expedition Geschichte 6, Klasse 10*. Berlin: Diesterweg; Rauh, R. – Jäger, W. (2011). *Grundwissen Geschichte. Sekundarstufe II*. Berlin: Cornelsen; Regenhart, H.-O. (2014). *Forum Geschichte 9. Vom Imperialismus bis zur Gegenwart*. Berlin: Cornelsen; Simianer, N. (2011). *Von...bis. Band 3*. Paderborn: Schöningh Verlag.

15 The selection of books was determined by their availability in the collections of the Georg-Eckert-Institut/Leibniz-Institut für internationale Schulbuchforschung in Braunschweig, Germany.

16 Gavora, P. (2000). *Úvod do pedagogického výzkumu*. Brno: Paido, p. 117.

symbolized particularly by the struggle for women's suffrage. The second is the social status of women at the turn of the 20th century and their changing gender roles. The third topic concerns the lives of women who were involved in the war effort during the First World War.

The liberal concept of civil liberties for women is accentuated in the chapters of the textbooks covering the period from the March 1848 revolution onwards. In the textbook *Zeiten und Menschen* 1, students have at their disposal excerpts from six written sources presenting a multi-perspective view of women's emancipation. Their task is to engage in group work in order to evaluate which ideas about women's political and social role emerged during the 1848 revolution and to assess the extent to which these ideas reflect the limits of emancipation that were determined by the society of the time.

The activities of feminists and suffragettes are presented e.g. in the publication *Von...bis* 3. Here students are led to understand these emancipatory efforts via stories of three "brave" female figures belonging to the bourgeois or proletarian movements – Luise Otto-Peters, Helene Lange and Clara Zetkin. The students are tasked with identifying the similarities and differences between these women's political goals, explaining the relevance of the topic for present-day society, and studying current German legislation to assess whether these goals have been achieved.¹⁷ Some of the other textbooks also present these three figures in the form of brief biographical accounts (usually accompanied by portrait photographs).¹⁸

Most of the analyzed textbooks also present a timeline of the political steps which culminated in the legalization of women's suffrage. They mention the gradual emergence of an organized movement (the establishment of various women's associations from the 1880s onwards), its split into conservative and socialist wings, the admission of women to full secondary education (1892) and to higher education (after 1900), the legalization of women's suffrage (1918), and the constitutional codification of women's equality with men in the constitution of the Weimar Republic (1919). The authors also mention the demands made as part of International Women's Day, noting that in many respects these demands still remain relevant today. To illustrate women's struggle for emancipation, the textbooks use iconographic sources such as political posters.¹⁹

Most of the textbooks devote considerable attention to the critical evaluation of events, encouraging students to form their open opinions via learning tasks with

17 Simianer, N. (2011). *Von...bis. Band 3*, op. cit., p. 167.

18 Brückner, D. – Focke, H. (2011). *Das waren Zeiten* 3, op. cit., p. 28; Brückner, D. – Focke, H. (2010). *Das waren Zeiten* 4, op. cit., p. 26; Funken, W. – Koltrowitz, B. (2006). *Geschichte plus* 8, op. cit., pp. 70–71; Christoffer, S. (2013). *Zeitreise* 3, op. cit., p. 122.

19 Ibidem.

varying degrees of cognitive difficulty, interpreting historical sources demonstrating the strong opposition to the emancipation movement in the society of the era, evaluating the irrational arguments that were raised against emancipation and women's suffrage, and formulating counter-arguments against stereotypical generalizations and clichés. Both iconographic and textual sources are used for didactic purposes; these include caricatures mocking women's "ridiculous dreams" of their future social status, quotes from the 1900 Civil Code, or the opinions of contemporary authority figures (such as scientists or doctors) concerning women's allegedly lower intelligence, emotional instability, and predetermined traditional role as housewives.²⁰

The social status of women during the era of industrialization around the turn of the 20th century is characterized in terms of gender-determined roles in the family and in everyday life, as well as in terms of women's access to education, their professional position and working conditions. Changes in family life are explained with regard to urbanization, migration to cities, and the housing conditions endured by the lower strata of society (who lived in small, unhygienic, unventilated and damp rooms without running water or sewers, typically inhabited by a large family together with lodgers). Working-class living conditions are documented in the form of photographs and contemporary descriptions (e.g. by doctors).²¹ Here the textbooks tend to take a comparative approach, contrasting the workers' cramped and squalid living conditions with the spacious, clean and well-equipped homes of the bourgeoisie.²²

When presenting the lives of working-class families from the poorer strata of society, the textbooks generally state that women were forced to work in factories in order to provide for their families, as well as noting the lack of gender equality inherent in the fact that women received substantially lower wages than men for the same work, meaning that widows in particular frequently lived below the poverty line. The authors also describe the harsh working conditions and long working hours, which ranged between 11 and 16 hours per day – in addition to which married women also had to take care of their children and run the household. This situation is presented using source material, such as contemporary news reports, statistical data showing the proportion of women working in various industries, the different wages paid to men and women, and caricatures depicting women's double burden (both employment and the household) or showing the working day from a woman's perspective. The textbooks also point out that a person's profession was strongly determined by their social origins, as well as explaining how practices at

20 Osburg, F. – Klose, D. (2006). *Expedition Geschichte* 4, op. cit., p. 16; Brückner, D. – Focke, H. (2011). *Das waren Zeiten* 3, op. cit., p. 29.

21 Rauh, R. – Jäger, W. (2011). *Grundwissen Geschichte*, p. 102; Andrae, U. (2013). *Entdecken und Verstehen* 2, p. 112.

22 Ibidem, p. 113.

the time different from present-day practices – part-time work was unknown, and bourgeois women usually gave up their jobs once they were married. A key element here is the presentation of historical topics from a present-day perspective, including references to the wage inequality between women and men which persists to this day.²³

Almost all the German textbooks include two-page subchapters devoted to the patriotic attitudes of women during the First World War. They emphasize the changes brought by the war, especially in the domain of work; women had to replace men in industries that had previously been male preserves (munitions factories, engineering and agriculture). The textbooks also emphasize women's war efforts "on the home front", as they bravely coped alone with the demands of both employment and their families while their husbands were away fighting at the front. The authors point out certain positive consequences of this role, as women gained access to professions that had previously been off-limits to them, received higher wages than previously (as attested by statistical data), and gained greater acceptance as active participants in political life (having been granted suffrage) as well as greater self-confidence. Iconographic sources include photographs and historical postcards. Students are encouraged to take a comparative approach (contrasting wartime life at the front and at home), to develop empathy for the everyday anxieties that women had to cope with, and to critically evaluate the influence of the war on women's emancipation.²⁴

2.2 The 1920s

The social changes that occurred during the 1920s and their influence on conceptions of gender roles are dealt with by the analyzed textbooks mainly in separate chapters – either focusing on the "golden twenties" (*die goldene Zwanziger*) or on the emergence of "the modern woman" (*die neue Frau*) in inter-war society.

The period of economic growth experienced by the Weimar Republic up until the beginning of the Great Depression in 1929 is presented as an era that brought huge progress in the fields of civil rights, social security, culture (theatre, magazines, gramophone records, radio, cinema), housing, sport, and leisure activities. The investigated textbooks primarily trace how these social changes affected women and men alike (the emergence of a culture of gardening at urban allotments, hiking

23 Christoffer, S. (2013). *Zeitreise 3*, op. cit., p. 122–123; Simianer, N. (2011). *Von...bis. Band 3*, op. cit., p. 136–137.

24 Brokemper, P. – Köster, E. – Potente, D. (2013). *Geschichte Real 3*, op. cit., p. 23; Brückner, D. – Focke, H. (2011). *Das waren Zeiten 3*, op. cit., p. 68; Osburg, F. – Klose, D. (2006). *Expedition Geschichte 4*, op. cit., p. 37; Regenhardt, H.-O. (2014). *Forum Geschichte 9*, op. cit., p. 28–29; Simianer, N. (2011). *Von...bis. Band 3*, op. cit., p. 197; Funken, W. – Koltrowitz, B. (2006). *Geschichte plus 8*, op. cit., p. 117.

and scouting-type activities, the proliferation of weekend cottages, the popularity of theatres e.g. in Berlin,²⁵ though they also indicate changes that affected women in particular, especially via photographs (women on motorcycles or at campsites).²⁶

Women's emancipation during the inter-war period is explained as a natural consequence of the First World War, when women proved that they were able to function fully and effectively in professions that had previously been considered typically male domains. The authors of the textbook *Horizonte 9* state that in 1925, one-third of all employees were women, who were relatively self-sufficient at least until they married. However, it is also emphasized that the new lifestyle only affected a minority of women (mainly those living in large cities), and that most of these women could not afford to be financially self-sufficient – although they did attempt to embrace elements of the new lifestyle as far as they were able. The authors' main focus is on everyday life. Women wanted to look like film stars, and they spent their leisure time playing sports, going to bars and cafés, smoking cigarettes and drinking alcohol, preferring modern short-cut hairstyles such as the bob (*Bubikopf*) and wearing short skirts, trousers and suits. They enjoyed going out in the evenings, wearing plenty of makeup as well as headbands and several necklaces. The authors point out that 1920s fashion remains iconic among stylists even today, but that the conservative elements of contemporary society were shocked by its provocative nature and rejection of conventional norms.²⁷

Among the typical female professions mentioned in the textbooks are administrative positions in factories or offices. The authors also note how the emergence of new household appliances such as vacuum cleaners, refrigerators and washing machines helped to ease the burden of household chores in more prosperous families, as well as pointing out that only a small minority of men were willing to help with the housework.²⁸

The textbooks also trace women's contribution to culture – especially cinema and literature. Well-known figures featured in the texts include the actress Marlene Dietrich, the Expressionist writer Vicki Baum, the avant-garde filmmaker Leni Riefenstahl, and the poet Else Lasker-Schüler.²⁹

A wide range of historical sources are used to illustrate the new social status of women during the 1920s. Among the textual sources are descriptions of modern women by the social scientist Erich Fromm or accounts by contemporary women

25 Andrae, U. (2013). *Entdecken und Verstehen 2*, op. cit., p. 229.

26 Brokemper, P. – Köster, E. – Potente, D. (2013). *Geschichte Real 3*, op. cit., p. 56.

27 Geus, E. (2011). *Horizonte 9*, op. cit., p. 109; Funken, W. – Koltrowitz, B. (2009). *Geschichte plus 9*, op. cit., p. 65.

28 Brokemper, P. – Köster, E. – Potente, D. (2013). *Geschichte Real 3*, op. cit., p. 56.

29 Funken, W. – Koltrowitz, B. (2009). *Geschichte plus 9*, op. cit., p. 66.

describing a normal working day (in an office or a factory) or evaluating what they had gained from their secondary education (the knowledge that women had been significant participants in history).³⁰

The textbooks also present a substantial selection of iconographic sources (mainly photographs and posters) documenting 1920 s fashion and women's new-found self-confidence, as well as the most frequent female professions (telephone operators, typists) and well-known works of art (the film *The Blue Angel*).³¹ Occasionally the texts include tables of statistical data presenting the proportion of women employed in various industries over the course of time, from the second half of the 19th century up to the present day.³²

The learning tasks in the textbooks focus mainly on comparing various contemporary photographs and posters,³³ creative activities such as making posters depicting women's and men's fashions or giving presentations on the changing role of women in the Weimar Republic,³⁴ as well as tasks requiring deeper thought, such as identifying which taboos were broken in the famous film *The Blue Angel* starring Marlene Dietrich.³⁵

2.3 The Nazi era

The era of the Third Reich is one of the central topics covered by German textbooks of modern history, which devote very substantial attention to it. The texts not only trace the political developments of the time, detailing Hitler's gradual rise to power, but they also focus on various aspects of society, including everyday life under the Nazis. Separate chapters are devoted to the state's ideological control over education and youth activities, as well as Nazi propaganda promoting the regime's fundamental concept of the family—which emphasized the traditional role of women (mothers) managing the household.

30 Brokemper, P. – Köster, E. – Potente, D. (2013). *Geschichte Real 3*, op. cit., p. 56; Osburg, F. – Klose, D. (2006). *Expedition Geschichte 4*, op. cit., p. 85; Regenhardt, H.-O. (2014). *Forum Geschichte 9*, op. cit., p. 77.

31 Geus, E. (2011). *Horizonte 9*, op. cit., p. 109; Andrae, U. (2013). *Entdecken und Verstehen 2*, op. cit., p. 229; Brokemper, P. – Köster, E. – Potente, D. (2013). *Geschichte Real 3*, op. cit., p. 56; Christoffer, S. (2013). *Zeitreise 4*, op. cit., p. 31; Andrae, U. (2013). *Entdecken und Verstehen 2*, op. cit., p. 217.

32 Regenhardt, H.-O. (2014). *Forum Geschichte 9*, op. cit., p. 77; Funken, W. – Koltrowitz, B. (2009). *Geschichte plus 9*, op. cit., p. 65.

33 Funken, W. – Koltrowitz, B. (2009). *Geschichte plus 9*, op. cit., p. 65.

34 Geus, E. (2011). *Horizonte 9*, op. cit., p. 109; Brokemper, P. – Köster, E. – Potente, D. (2013). *Geschichte Real 3*, op. cit., p. 56.

35 Christoffer, S. (2013). *Zeitreise 4*, op. cit., p. 66.

The Nazi state's close control over youth activities from an early age, and the model roles it envisioned for women, is presented e.g. in a diagram clearly depicting the progression from membership of the *Jungvolk* (age 10–14) to the *Bund Deutscher Mädel* (Union of German Girls, age 14–18), the Women's Labour Service (age 18–21), women's role as housewives and mothers (age 21–35) and as maintainers of the German people (age 35–45), and their membership in the *Frauenschaft* (the National Socialist Women's League, from age 45). Students are tasked with explaining how the Nazis maintained control over the entire nation from early childhood onwards.³⁶

Particular attention is paid to the education system in Nazi Germany, and historical sources are also used. One textbook cites a ministerial order issued in 1933 which defines the main tasks of schools, i.e. instilling in their students humility, patriotism, loyalty, strong will and determination, respect for authority ("individuals are nothing, the state is everything");³⁷ other sources include a citation from one of Hitler's political speeches concerning the need to teach schoolchildren the German way of thinking and acting, or authentic memoirs by former members of the *Bund Deutscher Mädel* speaking both about the enjoyable times they spent with their friends and also about their role as "implementers of orders". The state's manipulation of schoolchildren is exemplified with examples of physical attacks on Jewish classmates or pressure exerted by students on a teacher who refused to give the Nazi salute.³⁸ The predetermined future roles that were assigned to girls are illustrated with a list of compulsory school subjects, which included household duties, hand-crafts, infant care, and racial biology; before being admitted to the next level of the education system, girls had to pass an examination in household duties, and only 10% of girls were allowed to continue their studies in higher education.³⁹

The iconographic sources depicting education and youth activities in the Third Reich mainly include photographs and posters, such as a propaganda poster bearing the slogan *Auch du gehörst dem Führer* ("You Too Belong to the Führer", 1936) or a photograph of members of the *Bund Deutscher Mädel* celebrating Hitler's birthday.⁴⁰

The Nazi ideal of women occupies a central place in the textbooks' presentation of this era. The textbooks list the attributes that women were expected to embody. For example, there is a citation from the historian Ursula Böhm, who in 1986 wrote that women under the Nazis were expected to be blonde and blue-eyed, non-smokers, wearing no makeup, interested in cooking, baking and knitting, attending courses on

36 Osburg, F. – Klose, D. (2006). *Expedition Geschichte 4*, op. cit., p. 96.

37 Brokemper, P. – Köster, E. – Potente, D. (2013). *Geschichte Real 3*, op. cit., p. 84.

38 Ibidem, pp. 83–84; Osburg, F. – Klose, D. (2006). *Expedition Geschichte 4*, op. cit., p. 130.

39 Berger, v. d. Heide, T. (2014). *Entdecken und Verstehen 3*, op. cit., p. 31.

40 Brokemper, P. – Köster, E. – Potente, D. (2013). *Geschichte Real 3*, op. cit., pp. 83–84; Osburg, F. – Klose, D. (2006). *Expedition Geschichte 4*, op. cit., p. 130.

folk dancing and infant care, members of the official women's organizations, boosting the morale of their husbands at the front by regularly sending them letters, and understanding that their children would die in battle for their fatherland.⁴¹ Other attributes that the Nazis considered typical of women were a willingness to give up their jobs in order to focus on managing the household, frugality, and childbearing (women were awarded the *Ehrenkreuz*—"Cross of Honour"—if they bore four or more children).⁴² It is also pointed out that large families were entitled to receive state-backed loans at competitive rates of interest.⁴³

Using historical sources, students are tasked with identifying "ideal women" from matrimonial advertisements in newspapers, developing their empathy by interpreting personal memoirs, comparing photographs and posters depicting typical women of the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich, and explaining the role of women based on photographs of mothers with prams and women with multiple children.⁴⁴

The textbooks also incorporate various learning tasks. Students are asked to explain why Mothers' Day or the Cross of Honour (*Ehrenkreuz*) were introduced,⁴⁵ to decide and argue whether women under the Nazi regime were more victims or active participants,⁴⁶ to compare the image of women under the Nazis and in the present day, to write an article for the school magazine about the role of women in the Third Reich,⁴⁷ or to explain why the *Bund Deutscher Mädel* was popularly nicknamed *Bald Deutsche Mutter* ("soon [to be] German mothers").⁴⁸

Some of the textbooks also give details about the bravery of women who helped to hide Jews from the Nazi authorities—including the heroic deeds of two women from Göttingen, Meta Kamp-Steinmann and Hedwig Gehrke, who in 2005 were awarded the title "Righteous Among the Nations" by Israel.⁴⁹

2.4 From 1945 to the present day

The authors of German history textbooks consider it important to address the different paths of historical development taken in both parts of the divided Germany up to the fall of the Berlin Wall. Students are encouraged to compare the situation

41 Brokemper, P. – Köster, E. – Potente, D. (2013). *Geschichte Real 3*, op. cit., p. 83–84.

42 Ibidem, p. 85.

43 Berger, v. d. Heide, T. (2014). *Entdecken und Verstehen 3*, op. cit., p. 30.

44 Regenhardt, H.-O. (2014). *Forum Geschichte 9*, op. cit., pp. 114–115; Christoffer, S. (2013). *Zeitreise 4*, op. cit., p. 64.

45 Ibidem.

46 Regenhardt, H.-O. (2014). *Forum Geschichte 9*, op. cit., p. 115.

47 Berger, v. d. Heide, T. (2014). *Entdecken und Verstehen 3*, op. cit., p. 30.

48 Osburg, F. – Klose, D. (2006). *Expedition Geschichte 4*, op. cit., p. 131.

49 Berger, v. d. Heide, T. (2014). *Entdecken und Verstehen 3*, op. cit., pp. 62–63.

of women in West Germany and East Germany and to identify similarities and differences.

The years in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War are characterized as a period of rebuilding a shattered country. Women who (for a minimal wage and food stamps) cleared the rubble from Germany's bombed cities were known as *Trümmerfrauen*. The textbooks accentuate the personal stories and memoirs of women who lived through this time. They also make use of photographs, for example as part of learning tasks that encourage students to empathize with these heroic women (e.g. by writing diary entries describing the thoughts and emotions of the women in the photographs). The textbooks also note that the *Graue Panther* political party fought for the rights of the *Trümmerfrauen*, and that in 1987 legislation was passed to pay these women a lifetime pension.⁵⁰

All the analyzed textbooks state that equality between women and men was legally guaranteed in both West and East Germany, but that the reality was in fact somewhat different, and that women found it difficult to combine employment with their household duties, child care and caring for elderly relatives. West German society is characterized as more traditional from a gender perspective—especially in the 1950s and the first half of the 1960s, when married women generally remained at home, had relatively large numbers of children, were subordinate to their husbands, and could only be employed with their husbands' consent. However, the civil unrest of 1968 sparked the development of a feminist movement in West Germany, where the emancipation process reached its full intensity from the 1970s. Women campaigned for the legalization of abortion (until 1974 abortion carried a sentence of imprisonment under West German criminal law); from 1977 onwards it became legally possible for children to have their mother's surname; and in the 1980s quotas were introduced mandating that West German political parties, associations and public organizations should prioritize a woman over a man if both had the same qualifications.⁵¹

The textbooks inform students that the East German regime considered employment among women to be a core tenet of society, and that especially in the 1950s this emphasis was closely bound up with efforts to revitalize the country's war-ravaged economy. The authors describe the state's social policies: women were paid for a year after the birth of a child (the so-called *Babyjahr*); interest-free loans were offered to young families to help furnish their homes; and there was a network of preschools for the youngest children. Examples of women's disadvantaged position in society include their lower wages (by 25–30 percent), men's unwillingness to help

50 Osburg, F. (2007). *Expedition Geschichte 5*, op. cit., pp. 14–15.

51 Ibidem; Funken, W. – Koltrowitz, B. (2009). *Geschichte plus 10*, op. cit., pp. 84–85; Brückner, D. – Focke, H. (2011). *Das waren Zeiten 3*, op. cit., pp. 300–301.

with housework, and the under-representation of women in politics (for example, in 1988 the GDR had only one woman serving in the cabinet—Margot Honecker, the education minister).⁵²

The comparison of life in East and West Germany also encompasses topics of youth and sexuality. Students learn that young people in the GDR married at an earlier age, and that between the 1950s and the 1980s the divorce rate rose from 15% to 50%.⁵³ Attitudes to sexuality were more liberal in the GDR than in West Germany. In the East, sexuality was viewed as a natural matter: there was no legal distinction between the children of married and unmarried parents, nudism was widely practiced, but pornography and prostitution were illegal. By contrast, West German advertising was more sexualized. Homosexuality was viewed as problematic in both East and West Germany, but in the GDR Section 175 of the Criminal Code (outlawing homosexuality) was repealed at the end of the 1950s, whereas in West Germany homosexuality remained criminalized until 1994.⁵⁴

The historical sources in the textbooks make considerable use of statistical data, presented in graphs and tables. Students analyze the proportion of employed women in East and West Germany between 1950 and 1986, compare the proportion of women in selected professions during the 1970s (university professors, school directors, members of corporate management boards, judges—the proportion was 20% higher in West Germany than in the East), compare the proportion of women among parliamentary deputies in both states,⁵⁵ and compare the numbers of children in creches, preschools and after-school groups (75% higher in the GDR than in West Germany).⁵⁶

Iconographic sources include primarily photographs of manual workers, joyful “builders of socialism” in East Germany, children in creches, on posters and on magazine covers (one image that recurs in several textbooks is a cover of the West German magazine *Stern* from 1971, showing women who had terminated their pregnancies).⁵⁷

The learning tasks are based mainly on comparison; students are asked to compare photographs or statistical data, and historical topics are often viewed from a present-day perspective—for example, students have to find information on the current proportion of women in federal and state-level assemblies,⁵⁸ discuss the

52 Ibidem.

53 Brokemper, P. – Köster, E. – Potente, D. (2013). *Geschichte Real 3*, op. cit., p. 163.

54 Osburg, F. (2007). *Expedition Geschichte 5*, op. cit., p. 21.

55 The *Bundestag* in the Federal Republic of Germany and the *Volkskammer* in the German Democratic Republic.

56 Ibidem; Funken, W. – Koltrowitz, B. (2009). *Geschichte plus 10*, op. cit., p. 84.

57 Ibidem; Brückner, D. – Focke, H. (2011). *Das waren Zeiten 3*, op. cit., p. 300.

58 Ibidem.

advantages and disadvantages of quotas, find information about the regulation of abortions in the GDR,⁵⁹ or summarize how women's position in society has changed during the past four decades.⁶⁰

3 Conclusion: Comparison with the gender dimension in textbooks from other countries

A comparison of the German history textbooks with findings from previous studies of textbooks in four other countries (Austria, Britain, France, Switzerland) focusing on the gender dimension of history teaching materials⁶¹ reveals that textbooks in all five countries devote substantial attention to the topic of women in history. Textbooks from all the countries incorporate separate chapters (each consisting of between one and three pages of text) to the role of women in various historical eras. The authors are motivated by an attempt to break out of the traditional concepts of history teaching which were based solely on presenting chronological series of political events, mainly determined by the actions of powerful men. There is an emphasis on cross-cutting themes incorporating key aspects of social history and the history of the family, young people, education, employment, leisure, fashion and lifestyle.

Textbooks from each country accentuate specific historical topics that form an important part of that country's historical tradition, which are presented in a national context. The British textbooks thus devote considerable attention to the protests and other activities of the suffragettes, who strove to legalize suffrage for women in the early 20th century, as well as focusing on the feminist movement in the 1960s and 1970s as part of a global phenomenon which also incorporated other emancipation movements (such as the civil rights movement in the USA and its struggle against racial segregation). The French textbooks contain much information on mass civil disobedience and demonstrations supporting women's rights, and probably more than the texts from any other country they focus on the activities of important female figures from various areas of life (scientists, politicians, doctors, artists, sportswomen). The Swiss textbooks reflect the specific features of Switzerland's history; women were granted the vote at different times in different cantons, and this development arrived relatively late (in the second half of the 20th century). The textbooks from neighbouring Austria are probably closest in their conception to the German textbooks; a prominent feature of them is their presentation of gender

59 Funken, W. – Koltrowitz, B. (2009). *Geschichte plus 10*, op. cit., p. 85.

60 Osburg, F. (2007). *Expedition Geschichte 5*, op. cit., p. 21.

61 Labischová, D. (2015). *Dějiny ženské emancipace v rakouských učebnicích dějepisu*, op. cit.; Labischová, D. (2015). *Genderová dimenze zahraničních učebnic dějepisu*, op. cit.

aspects of historical topics from a present-day perspective. This is a consequence of one specific feature of Austria's education system, the integrated school subject *Geschichte und Sozialkunde/Politische Bildung*, which incorporates history and civic studies into a single entity. The German textbooks devote considerable attention to the role played by women (mothers) in the Third Reich, as well as to a comparison of the different development of gender roles in both states of the divided Germany after the Second World War.

The key themes in all the analyzed textbooks are the struggle for women's suffrage, the presentation of major figures from the feminist movement who were active in the individual countries, everyday life in the First World War (when women had to replace men in typically male professions), changes in lifestyle during the 1920s, and changes in the family after 1945 (e.g. the crisis of the family that was reflected in rising divorce rates, the legalization of abortion, the rising numbers of women studying in higher education, the double burden of women who had to combine employment with household duties, etc.).

In terms of the didactic presentation of gender-related topics, there is an emphasis on personal stories revealing aspects of everyday life and developing empathy with women who lived during a particular historical period. The authors of the analyzed textbooks place considerable emphasis on research-based tasks and work with various historical sources. Particularly the British textbooks incorporate a well-elaborated didactic apparatus which provides a structured framework for the analysis and interpretation of sources as part of various learning tasks. Work with sources receives the least emphasis in the Swiss textbooks. The German textbooks contain textual and iconographic sources which are integrated into questions and learning tasks, but in comparison with the British textbooks the potential of these sources is less thoroughly exploited.