



Breakers of glass ceilings: the professional careers of women in Finland and the graduates of three girls' upper secondary schools (1890s–1910s)

Marjo Nieminen

To cite this article: Marjo Nieminen (2022): Breakers of glass ceilings: the professional careers of women in Finland and the graduates of three girls' upper secondary schools (1890s–1910s), *Paedagogica Historica*, DOI: [10.1080/00309230.2022.2077118](https://doi.org/10.1080/00309230.2022.2077118)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00309230.2022.2077118>



© 2022 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.



Published online: 30 May 2022.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 252



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

ARTICLE



Breakers of glass ceilings: the professional careers of women in Finland and the graduates of three girls' upper secondary schools (1890s–1910s)

Marjo Nieminen

Department of Education, University of Turku, Turku, Finland

ABSTRACT

This article focuses on the occupational emancipation of women in Finland and examines the professional careers of women who graduated with a matriculation examination from three upper secondary girls' schools during the period of the 1890s to the 1910s. One of the schools was for Finnish-speaking girls, and two of the schools were for Swedish-speaking girls. This article asks what kinds of educational paths and professional careers these upper secondary girls' school graduates had during their lives after graduation. Attention is paid to both the typical professional careers and to those careers that could be characterised as exceptional and atypical. The source material consists of student registers that offered an opportunity to create a prosopography (i.e. set biography). In this article, the prosopography and individual biographies of women with exceptional careers shed light on the horizon of possibilities for Finnish women at the end of the nineteenth century and in the early twentieth century, specifically, their horizon of possibilities to gain education and degrees, as well as posts in the labour market.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 28 October 2021

Accepted 10 May 2022

KEYWORDS

History of education;
women's history;
professional careers; gender;
labour market

Introduction

Every national education system has its own history, and social, cultural, religious, and political contexts provide unique characteristics for the development of girls' and women's education. Nevertheless, circulating educational and feminist ideas and previous studies point out that while the main narrative of women's education in the Western world features the widening opportunities for women in education and the labour market in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the process was not straightforward and uncomplicated.¹ Ruth

CONTACT Marjo Nieminen  marjo.nieminen@utu.fi  Department of Education, University of Turku, Assistentinkatu 5, Turku 20014, Finland

¹See e.g. James C. Albisetti, Joyce Goodman and Rebecca Rogers, "Girls' Secondary Education in the Western World: A Historical Introduction," 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), 1–8; Julia Bush, "Special Strengths for Their Own Special Duties: Women, Higher Education and Gender Conservatism in Late Victorian Britain," *History of Education* 34, no. 4 (2005): 387–405; Judith Harford, "The Movement for the Higher Education of Women in Ireland: Gender Equality or Denominational Rivalry?" *History of Education* 34, no. 5 (2005): 497–516; Ruth Watts, "Society, Education and the State: Gender Perspectives on an Old Debate," *Paedagogica Historica* 49, no. 1 (2013): 17–33; E. Lisa Panayotidis and Paul Stortz, "Introduction," in *Women in Higher Education, 1850–1970: International Perspectives*, ed. E. Lisa Panayotidis and Paul Stortz (London: Routledge, 2016), 1–33; Antonio Fco. Canales, "Women, University and Science in Twentieth Century Spain," *History of Education* 47, no. 1 (2018): 36–53; Simonetta Polenghi and Tanya Fitzgerald, "Breaking Boundaries: Women in Higher Education," *Paedagogica Historica* 56, no. 6 (2020): 724–8; and Joyce Goodman, "Afterword: Histories of Women's Higher Education, Time, and Temporalities," *Paedagogica Historica* 56, no. 6 (2020): 847–56. On women in the labour market before 1850, see e.g. Johanna Ilmakunnas, Marjatta Rahikainen and Kirsi Vainio-Korhonen, eds., *Early Professional Women in Northern Europe, c. 1650–1850* (New York: Routledge, 2017).

Watts noted that the perceived maternal role of women was to prove to be both a stepping stone to formal education and a limit on how far women were allowed to proceed.² The history of women has cast light on the endeavours of women towards visibility, acceptance, and authority over their own educational and academic opportunities, along with their professional careers. Women's entry professions and attainment of economic independence and prestige tore apart a social framework that had kept women in a subordinate position.³

The aim of this article is to examine the educational paths and professional careers of women who graduated from three upper secondary girls' schools of Turku during the period from the 1890s to the 1910s. One of the schools was for Finnish-speaking girls (*Turun suomalainen jatko-opisto*),⁴ and two of the schools were for Swedish-speaking girls (*Svenska fruntimmerskolan i Åbo – Försättningsklasserna and Heurlinska skolan i Åbo*).⁵ The girls' schools featured in this article were among the first upper secondary schools for girls in Finland. The first Swedish-speaking girls' school graduates in Finland got their matriculation exam degrees⁶ from Heurlinska skolan i Åbo in 1894 and the first Finnish-speaking from *Turun suomalainen jatko-opisto* in 1899.⁷ In the 1890s, Turku was the only Finnish city outside the capital city with upper secondary girls' schools for both Finnish-speaking and Swedish-speaking girls.⁸ The girls' schools in Turku also provided an opportunity for education for girls from nearby areas in the south-west of Finland, including the archipelago.⁹ Being the second-largest city and the former capital city, Turku had a wide-ranging economy concentrating on

²Watts, "Society, Education and the State."

³For example, Albisetti, Goodman and Rogers, *Girls' Secondary Education in the Western World*; Panayotidis and Stortz, *Women in Higher Education*; Ilmakunnas, Rahikainen, and Vainio-Korhonen, *Early Professional Women*; and Mervi Kaarninen, "Gifted Girls: The Values, Attitudes, and Experiences of the First Generation of Finnish Female Students in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," in *Families, Values, and the Transfer of Knowledge in Northern Societies, 1500–2000*, ed. Ulla Aatsinki, Johanna Annola and Mervi Kaarninen (New York: Routledge, 2019), 206–30; and Goodman, "Afterword."

⁴The first upper secondary girls' school for Finnish-speaking girls was *Turun suomalainen jatko-opisto* (Upper Secondary School for Finnish-Speaking Girls in Turku), which was established in 1895. The upper secondary level of girls' school provided the opportunity for students to further their studies and prepared them for the matriculation examination and university studies. The upper secondary school had three grades and, together with the girls' school's five grades, they corresponded to eight-grade lyceums.

⁵Similar to the Upper Secondary School for Finnish-Speaking girls in Turku, the final breakthrough was the Swedish-speaking girls' schools' upper secondary levels, which were organised in the 1890s in order to prepare students for the matriculation examination. The School of Heurlin got the upper secondary level in 1891, and the Girls' School for Swedish-Speaking Girls in Turku established one the next year, 1892. The Senate gave a right to the matriculation examination for the Girls' School for Swedish-Speaking Girls in Turku only for a very short time period, during the years 1899–1904. Otherwise, the students had to take the matriculation examination at either the School of Heurlin or the co-educational school of Turku.

⁶Access to the university was achieved through matriculation examination, and the examination was organised at the national, state-controlled level in upper secondary schools at the end of the students' senior year. The examination was held partly at secondary schools and partly at the university. The upper secondary school certificate, the matriculation examination, was equivalent to the French baccalaureate, the German Abitur, and the Swedish studentexamen.

⁷In addition to Turku, the first girls' school graduates got their matriculation exam degrees from Tampereen Suomalaisen Tyttökoulun Jatkolokat in 1899.

⁸Liisa Ketonen, *Suomen tyttöoppikoulut autonomian aikakaudella* [Finnish Secondary Schools for Girls during the Era of Autonomy], Helsingin yliopiston kasvatustieteen laitoksen tutkimuksia 53 (Helsinki: Helsingin yliopisto, 1977), 74–5, 87–9.

⁹*Turun suomalainen jatko-opisto 1895–1920, Oppilasmatrikkeli* [Upper Secondary School for Finnish-Speaking Girls in Turku 1895–1920, Student Register], 85–171; *Svenska fruntimmerskolan, Svenska flickskolan i Åbo 1844–1955, Elevmatrikel* [Girls' School for Swedish-Speaking Girls in Turku 1844–1955, Student Register], 39–304; and *Heurlinska skolan i Åbo 1861–1955, Elevmatrikel* [The School of Heurlin 1861–1955, Student Register], 127–332.

the branches of domestic and foreign trade and shipping (the second-highest number of tariff receipts and the second-highest number of tradespeople) and industry (the second-highest number of industrial plants when comparing cities). Administrative professions were also well represented amongst the branches of the economy.¹⁰ In Turku, Finnish-speaking population was around 60% and Swedish-speaking around 40% in 1890.¹¹

This article focuses on the graduates of three upper secondary girls' schools in Turku and asks what kinds of educational paths and professional careers the upper secondary girls' school graduates had during their lives after graduation. The focus of the article is on the paths of those women graduates who passed the matriculation examination, and attention is paid to both the typical professional careers of these women and to these women's careers that could be characterised as exceptional and remarkable. The typical professional careers could be defined as careers that focused on occupations available to upper-middle-class and middle-class women at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: for example, teaching, healthcare, clerical work in administrative fields, banking, insurance, and postal, telephone, and telegraph services. The exceptional and atypical careers could be defined as careers in fields in which women were seldom represented, and/or as careers in which women actively took part in societal decision-making processes, for example, as a member of parliament.

The source material of this article includes the student registers of the above-mentioned schools. The school registers¹² are part of the printed chronicles of the schools,¹³ and the registers enable one to examine students and their life paths more closely, including their educational and professional careers. The registers consist of detailed information about the students, including, for example, the date of birth, the date of beginning schooling, information about the parents, and the date of the matriculation examination. In addition, there are short descriptions of each woman's life path after upper secondary school. The short – about 10 lines – reports describe, for example, when women graduated and passed their matriculation examination, where they studied, and what occupations and professions they held. In addition, the marital statuses of the women were included in these registers. These register sources are used in creating portrayals of the typical careers of these women, as well as in giving examples of women whose careers could be described as exceptional. The source material for this article covers all girls' school graduates who passed the matriculation examination between 1890 and 1919.

¹⁰*Suomenmaan tilastollinen vuosikirja 1893* [Annual Statistics of Finland] (Helsinki: Tilastollinen päätoimisto, 1893), 58, 61, 9; and Eino Jutikkala, *Turun kaupungin historia I 1856–1917* [History of Turku] (Turku: Turun kaupunki, 1957), 410–17.

¹¹*Suomenmaan tilastollinen vuosikirja 1893*, 5.

¹²These printed registers are equivalent to the student registers of these schools, which are archived in the National Archive of Finland. There are a few distinctions between them. First, the archived registers rarely include information about graduates' lives and occupations after graduation and passing the matriculation examination. Second, if the student did not graduate, the archived registers have information about why the student abandoned her studies during her school years. These students are not included in the source material.

¹³*Turun suomalainen jatko-opisto 1895–1920, Oppilasmatrikkeli* [Upper Secondary School for Finnish-Speaking Girls in Turku 1895–1920, Student Register], 85–171; *Svenska fruntimmerskolan, Svenska flickskolan i Åbo 1844–1955, Elevmatrikel* [Girls' School for Swedish-Speaking Girls in Turku 1844–1955, Student Register], 39–304; and *Heurlinska skolan i Åbo 1861–1955, Elevmatrikel* [The School of Heurlin 1861–1955, Student Register], 127–332.

The starting point for this kind of source material could be characterised as prosopography, which refers to the description of a person's social connections and career or a collection of such descriptions. Mervi Kaarninen utilised the concept of collective biography,¹⁴ while Heini Hakosalo used the concept of a set biography instead of the prosopography. In set biographies, a researcher defines one or more properties that function as the selective principles for the research set. According to Hakosalo, one of the benefits of set biographies is that the approach sheds light on various life and career patterns, showing which patterns were common and typical and which were, in turn, uncommon and atypical.¹⁵ In this article, by combining individual descriptions of the pupil registers of three upper secondary girls' schools, one can create the prosopography (set biography), meaning the portrayals of the typical careers of these women who studied at the same schools during their youth in the same defined time frame. The focus is on the women's life paths after graduation, not during their upper secondary school years. In addition, the women who had exceptional careers are analysed more closely, and examples of them are presented in short individual biographies that rely on information noted in the chronicles of the girls' schools and the published biographies of these women. The individual biographies of exceptional women open up the viewpoint of agency, which outlines their fields of interest and activeness in the labour market and society in general.

In her article about the first Finnish women doctors (physicians), Hakosalo employs the concept of "the horizon of possibilities". The notion refers to the range of possibilities that an actor has, *de jure* and *de facto*, at a specific point in time.¹⁶ In Finland, as in other modern societies, formal degreed education has been one way that people have consciously tried to expand their horizon of possibilities. In this article, the prosopography and individual biographies shed light on the horizon of possibilities for women at the end of the nineteenth century and in the early twentieth century, specifically their horizon of possibilities for gaining education and degrees, as well as for attaining posts in the labour market.

In order to better contextualise the outcomes of the analyses of the source material, the next section provides a general view of the education of women in Finland and women's opportunities to enter the labour market during the examined time period.

Finnish women's widening opportunities in education and the labour market

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, the ideas of egalitarianism strengthened, and educational policy demands for the expansion of women's opportunities for education intensified in Finland. Aura Korppi-Tommola called the period from the 1860s to the

¹⁴See e.g. Marjo Nieminen, "Tyttöoppikoulusta ammattiin – Turun suomalaisessa jatko-opistossa 1800–1900-lukujen taitteessa opiskelleiden urapolut" [Education and Career Paths of Graduates from the Upper Secondary School for Girls in Turku during 1890–1910], *Kasvatus & Aika* [Education & Time] 6, no. 3 (2012): 5–24; and Kaarninen, "Gifted Girls," 206–30.

¹⁵Heini Hakosalo, "Coming Together: Early Finnish Medical Women and the Multiple Levels of Historical Biography," in *Gender and History: Nordic Perspectives*, ed. Erla Hulda Halldórsdóttir, Tiina Kinnunen, Maarit Leskelä-Kärki and Birgitte Possing (Turku: University of Turku, 2017), 209–30. Hakosalo defines distinctions between the concepts of set biography (prosopography), collective biography, group biography, and individual biography.

¹⁶*Ibid.*

1920s the period of diversification of opportunities for women. Discussions of women's education and schooling gained impetus from both ideological and societal changes. The idea of egalitarianism, which gained ground after the French Revolution, was manifested in, among others, John Stuart Mill's work *The Subjection of Women*, in which, in accordance with his liberal thinking, Mill demanded the same rights and opportunities for women as for men. In Finland, for example, the women's movement was organised in order to promote women's rights and equal opportunities for education, as their counterparts did throughout the Western world in the latter part of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Different societal factors also contributed to equality efforts as a result of urbanisation and industrialisation. Increasing wage labouring and other changes in working life across Finland led to, among other things, the fact that, in the general government sector and in the private sector, new jobs and professions opened up for which new professional workers were needed.¹⁷

The pioneer of women's education is considered Switzerland – women have had the opportunity for university studies at the University of Zürich since 1864. In addition to Switzerland, women were admitted to universities in the 1860s and 1870s in France, England, Sweden, Denmark, and Italy. Finland followed the example of Europe, and the medical faculty at the University of Helsinki granted women the “right to take advantage of teaching in the faculty” in 1871. The first Finnish woman graduated with a bachelor of medicine degree under the protection of this right in 1873, and she earned a licentiate degree five years later. At the beginning of the next decade, another pioneer woman earned a master of arts degree in philosophy and general history.¹⁸

Although university studies have gradually opened up to Finnish women since the 1870s, a female student in the late 1800s was still the exception at the university, and women had to, for example, apply for dispensation in order to gain the right to study.¹⁹ Mervi Kaarninen characterised the first female students as “oddities in the world of men”.²⁰ The opportunities for girls to pursue university studies improved after a decree was issued in November 1890 that confirmed women's admission to the university in practice. The decree provided that the vice chancellor of the university was given the authority to decide on the right of girls to study. Liberal Vice Chancellor G. Rein advocated, without exception, for girls' applications since the dispensation. However, Heini Hakosalo points out that the special authorisation procedure was a form of exercise of power that created uncertainty amongst female students and did not concern male students. The obligation to apply for dispensation ended in 1901.²¹

¹⁷Aura Korppi-Tommola, “Naisten kasvatuksen ja koulutuksen tutkimus” [Research on Women's Upbringing and Education], in *Naiskuvista todellisuuteen. Tutkimusnäkökulmia naishistoriaan* [From Representations of Women to Reality: Perspectives of Women's History] (Helsinki: Gaudeamus, 1984), 136–51; Aura Korppi-Tommola, “Naisten koulunkäyntimahdollisuuksien laajeneminen vuoden 1860 jälkeen” [Women's Widening Opportunities for Education after 1860], in *Nainen historiassa* [Woman in History], ed. Auvo Kostiainen (Turku: Turun yliopiston historian laitos, 1985), 148–67; and Kaarina Vattula, “Palvelustyöstä konttoristiin – naisten työhönohallistuminen 1880–1940” [From House Maid to Clerk – Women's Participation in Labour Market 1880–1940], in *Kun yhteiskunta muuttuu* [Change in Finnish Society], ed. Yrjö Kaukiainen, Per Schybergson, Hannu Soikkanen and Tapani Mauranen (Helsinki: SHS, 1981), 63–88.

¹⁸Ketonen, *Suomen tyttöoppikoulu autonoman aikakaudella*, 60.

¹⁹Heini Hakosalo, “Kivuton murros? Naisten oikeus akateemisiin opintoihin 1800- ja 1900-luvun taitteen Suomessa” [The Painless Revolution? Women's Right to Academic Studies in late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Finland]. *Historiallinen Aikauskirja* [Historical Journal] 104, no. 4 (2006): 397–407; and Ketonen, *Suomen tyttöoppikoulu autonoman aikakaudella*, 60–2.

²⁰Mervi Kaarninen and Pekka Kaarninen, *Sivistyksen portti. Ylioppilastutkinnon historia*. [The Gate to Education: The History of Matriculation Examination] (Otava: Helsinki, 2002), 87–8.

²¹Hakosalo, “Kivuton murros?” 397–407.

In addition to educational opportunities at the end of the nineteenth century, more and more professions were becoming available to women, and unmarried middle-class women gradually began to move from homes into the labour market. Industrialisation created merit opportunities of a kind that had not previously existed. Teaching; healthcare; banking; insurance; postal, telephone, and telegraph services; and railway offices hired women for new job positions. An increase in the number of administrative positions and clerical work in both industry and public administration made it possible for particularly middle- and upper-middle-class women to have new careers befitting their status.²² For example, the vast majority of the first female seminarians to graduate from the teacher training seminary of Jyväskylä were gentlewomen who had studied in girls' schools before the seminary.²³

Despite the new career opportunities available for Finnish women, there were still structural and legislative hindrances that complicated women's professional careers. For example, women did not have the same rights to government posts as men did at the turn of the nineteenth century into the twentieth century. Women could be appointed to lower posts that did not include any jurisdictional power (public authority), but upper posts in the administration of the state were available for women only through the granting of a dispensation. The posts of judges were excluded entirely. For example, in the 1910s, a little less than 10% of the staff of the state (around 1,500 people) were women, of which around 1/3 were teachers. In central administration, the proportion of women was even lower. In 1920, there were 423 civil servants, 34 of whom were women, in the central administration of the state. The situation began to change in 1926, when the law²⁴ of women's right to government posts was legislated. Nevertheless, it has been pointed out somewhat cynically that, before the new legislation, women had to write countless dispensation pleas, but after the new legislation, they had to write countless appeals about appointments to office.²⁵

Even though these examples provide a picture of how young women, little by little, continued their studies and entered into new occupational areas, home and family housewifery remained the primary alternative for many women at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that it was not uncommon in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries for women to transfer from paid work and the public sphere to the home and private sphere after marriage.²⁶ The constructs of femininity at that time included the thought

²²Vattula, "Palvelustyöstä konttoristiin," 63–88. See also Kaarina, "Gifted Girls," 206–30.

²³Vattula, "Palvelustyöstä konttoristiin," 63–88. See also Risto Rinne, *Mistä opettajat tulevat? Suomalaisen kansanopettajiston yhteiskunnallinen tausta sekä kulttuurinen ja sosiaalinen pääoma 1800-luvun puolivälistä 1980-luvun lopulle* [Where do Teachers Come from? Series A:135 (Turku: University of Turku. Faculty of Education, 1989)] and Jukka Rantala, "Kansakoulunopettajat" [Primary School Teachers], in *Valistus ja koulunpenkki. Kasvatus ja koulutus Suomessa 1860-luvulta 1960-luvulle* [Enlightenment and School Bench. Upbringing and Education in Finland from the 1860s to the 1960s], ed. Anja Heikkinen and Pirkko Leino-Kaukiainen (Helsinki: SKS, 2011), 266–99.

²⁴When the new law was enacted, it was said that it was a law that repealed an unwritten law.

²⁵Anneli Winter-Mäkinen, *Naisjuristien 1. vuosisata. Poimintoja naisjuristien historiasta* [The First Decade of Women Lawyers] (Helsinki: Lakimiesliiton kustannus, 1995), 62–5; and Vattula, "Palvelustyöstä konttoristiin," 63–88.

²⁶Korppi-Tommola, "Naisten koulunkäyntimahdollisuuksien laajeneminen vuoden 1860 jälkeen," 148–67; Irma Sulkinen, "Naisten järjestäytyminen ja kaksijakoinen kansalaisuus" [Women's Movement and Dichotomous Citizenship], in *Kansa liikkeessä* [The People's Movement], ed. Risto Alapuro et al. (Helsinki: Kirjayhtymä, 1987), 157–72.

that family housewifery was a vocation for women.²⁷ However, upper- and middle-class women and supporters of the women's movement, in particular, considered it important that girls also had a formal education for some profession. On the one hand, girls were encouraged to study, and occupational opportunities for women increased, but on the other hand, women were fastened to home and family.²⁸ The concept of social motherhood links these two aspects and illustrates women's pathways from the private sphere into the public sphere. This concept states that women's work at home was extended to certain fields of society – for example, nursing and teaching – which formed into the “ideal” professions for women, befitting their gender and class.²⁹

The next section elaborates on the issue by describing the outcomes of the analyses of source material for this article, and the professional career paths of three upper secondary girls' school graduates are then examined in more detail.

The career paths of the graduates

Careers in teaching, administration, or healthcare

The girls' school graduates' phases of life open the opportunity to examine women's educational and professional emancipation in more detail. Although the possibilities and choices were unique for each girl, their educational and professional paths can be studied on a more general level and even permit a comparison of Finnish-speaking and Swedish-speaking graduates. Table A1 (in the Appendix) summarises the data on the careers of graduates from the three girls' schools of Turku starting at the beginning of the 1890s through to the end of the 1910s.³⁰ During that time, there were a total of 392 graduates whose lives and career paths could be traced in the registers of the schools. Those were the graduates whose register information included mentions of their occupations and careers after graduation.³¹

²⁷Deborah James has noted that at the same time, in Wales, there was a discourse that firmly located women's primary functions at home, as wives and mothers. She argued that there was a tension between the discourse and the aims of the supporters of increased educational opportunities for girls. The tension was sidestepped by promoting a model of Welsh femininity that stressed Welsh women being well-educated, responsible, moral citizens whose role was to raise the tone of Welsh family life: Deborah James, “Teaching Girls: Intermediate Schools and Career Opportunities for Girls in the East Glamorgan Valleys of Wales, 1896–1914,” *History of Education* 30, no. 6 (2001): 513–26. See also Watts, “Society, Education and the State,” 17–33.

²⁸Other researchers have found similar results from different national contexts. Agneta Linné, for example, notes that in Sweden, the tension between schooling girls for the home and educating them for professions and the labour market continued at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: Agneta Linné, “Lutheranism and Democracy: Scandinavia,” in Albisetti, Goodman and Rogers, *Girls' Secondary Education in the Western World*, 133–47.

²⁹Mervi Kaarninen, *Nykyajan tytöt. Koulutus, luokka ja sukupuoli 1920- ja 1930-luvun Suomessa*, Bibliotheca historica 5 (Helsinki: SHS, 1995); Korppi-Tommola, “Naisten koulunkäyntimahdollisuuksien laajeneminen”, 148–67; and Sulkunen, “Naisten järjestäytyminen ja kaksijakoinen kansalaisuus,” 157–72. See also Joyce Goodman and Jane Martin, “Breaking Boundaries: Gender, Politics, and the Experience of Education,” *History of Education* 29, no. 5 (2000): 838–88.

³⁰Table A1 can be found at the end of this article.

³¹The Provincial Archive of Turku, The student register of Upper Secondary School for the Finnish-Speaking Girls in Turku 1895–1924, Bb:11; *Turun suomalainen jatko-opisto 1895–1920, Oppilasmatrikkeli* [Upper Secondary School for Finnish-Speaking Girls in Turku 1895–1920, Student Register], 85–171; *Heurlinska skolan i Åbo 1861–1955, Elevmatrikel* [School of Heurlin 1861–1955, Student Register], 127–332; and *Svenska fruntimmersskolan Svenska flickskolan i Åbo 1844–1955, Elevmatrikel* [Girls' School for Swedish-Speaking Girls in Turku 1844–1955, Student Register], 39–304.

Nearly half of the Finnish-speaking girls' school graduates (about 46%) continued their studies at university. The most popular study fields were the historical–linguistic department in the philosophic faculty, the judicial faculty's lower administration degree, pedagogical studies, and medicine. The young women were also interested in the physics–mathematical department in the philosophic faculty. Some women's education paths deviated from the mainstream: they studied theology, agriculture and forestry, and architecture, or completed their studies elsewhere, for example, abroad. By 1918, a total of 77 former students of the Finnish-speaking girls' school had graduated from university.³²

As shown in Table A1, the most preferred career field of the former students of girls' schools of Turku during the examined period was teaching. If a graduate wanted to become a primary school teacher, her education path went towards teacher training seminars.³³

During that period, upper secondary school graduates with a matriculation examination had shorter studies than other students in seminaries. In particular, working-class girls sought their way to the teacher training seminaries. However, teacher training was also very popular among women from higher social classes. In general, in Finland, the teaching profession was highly rated, and at the end of the 1800s and at the beginning of the 1900s, primary teachers came from upper- and middle-class families.³⁴

If a graduate's choice was to be a secondary school teacher, she had a couple of options. In secondary girls' schools, there were two different teacher positions: the post of colleague and the post of schoolteacher. The post of colleague required an academic degree, and in addition, female applicants had to apply for an exemption to be appointed as a qualified colleague. The post of schoolteacher required a school-leaving certificate from a girls' school upper secondary level. Furthermore, there were two girls' schools in Helsinki that had a special teacher training programme in their senior levels, which meant that after the senior classes of the upper secondary schools, graduates were permitted to teach in girls' schools and co-educational secondary schools.³⁵ In lyceums and co-educational secondary schools, there were the posts of lecturer and colleague. The permanent teaching staff of these schools were male dominated, but among part-time teachers, the distribution by gender was nearly equal. The male dominance in teaching staff gradually changed, first in primary schools and, later, during the 1920s and 1930s, in secondary schools; therefore, the school system offered more and more new posts for women.³⁶

³²The Provincial Archive of Turku, The student register of Upper Secondary School for Finnish-Speaking Girls in Turku 1895–1924, Bb:11; *Turun suomalainen jatko-opisto 1895–1920, Oppilasmatrikkeli* [Upper Secondary School for Finnish-Speaking Girls in Turku 1895–1920, Student Register], 85–171.

The registers of the Swedish girls' schools seldom included information about the educational path of the graduates. Because of this incomplete register information, the educational paths of Swedish-speaking graduates could not always be traced and compared statistically with Finnish-speaking graduates.

³³Table A1.

³⁴See also Rinne, *Mistä opettajat tulevat?*; Rantala, "Kansakoulunopettajat," 266–99.

³⁵Ketonen, *Suomen tyttöoppikoulut autonomian aikakaudella*, 67, 113–14.

³⁶Jari Salminen, "Yksityiset oppikoulut autonomian aikana" [Private Secondary Schools in the Era of Autonomy], in *Yksityisoppikoulujen historia 1872–1977* [The History of Private Secondary Schools 1872–1977], ed. Jari Salminen, Jukka-Pekka Pietiäinen, and Jouko Teperi (Helsinki: Painatuskeskus, 1995), 58–9; Kyösti Kiuasmaa, *Oppikoulu 1880–1980* (Oulu: Kustannusyhtiö Pohjoinen, 1982), 89–91. See also Marjo Nieminen, "Women Teachers and the Feminisation of the Teaching Profession in a Finnish Journal for Primary School Teachers (The Teacher), 1915–1920," *Paedagogica Historica* 58, no. 1 (2020): 139–53.

As reflected in Table A1, a total of over 37% of former students of girls' schools of Turku worked as teachers during their careers. Although the profession of teacher was a common choice amongst all graduates, Finnish-speaking graduates favoured it more often than the Swedish-speaking graduates, especially during the 1890s and the early years of the twentieth century. During that time, the number of Finnish-speaking primary and secondary schools increased, which led to the demand for qualified teachers in both types of schools. Graduates of the three girls' schools ended up becoming a teacher in various ways, and most of them worked as either primary school teachers (61 graduates) or secondary school teachers (70 graduates). Only a few worked as a governess in private homes or in other teaching posts. There was also a difference between Finnish-speaking and Swedish-speaking graduates; the Finnish-speaking ones more often chose the teacher training seminary and the post of primary school teacher,³⁷ while the Swedish-speaking ones who qualified worked more frequently as secondary school teachers.³⁸

The second most preferred career field among the graduates of girls' schools of Turku was a profession in the civil service, including careers in other administrative work fields. Among both the Finnish-speaking and Swedish-speaking graduates, a little over 30% worked in this field. The professions varied from lower office and administrative occupations, such as copy typists, office assistants, and other lower clerical and secretarial positions, to senior and managerial professions, like lawyers, senior accountants, and auditors. The posts depended on the educational background of the woman, meaning whether the woman was educated in university, a school of commercial training, or merely upper secondary girls' school. It is noteworthy that the preconditions for entrance to professions, even the lower administrative work, were fairly rigorous. A young woman who attempted to be a telegrapher, for example, had to speak English, German, French, or Russian well. Therefore, even the upper secondary education of girls' schools provided the skills demanded in the labour market during the latter part of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. After university studies (for example, the lower degree of administration or of laws) or commercial studies, some of the graduates advanced to prominent positions.³⁹

As shown in Table A1, there was a difference between Finnish-speaking and Swedish-speaking graduates regarding the third most-favoured career field. Around 17% of the Swedish-speaking graduates worked in this field of banking and insurance, whereas the proportion was only 6% among the Finnish-speaking graduates. Banking and insurance companies needed skilled staff who had graduated from girls' schools or, in addition, a school of commercial training. Beyond an adequate education, the required qualifications included excellent language skills in Swedish, especially in the south-west areas of Finland, where the number of Swedish-speaking people was high.⁴⁰

³⁷Forty-four Finnish-speaking graduates became primary school teachers, whereas out of the Swedish-speaking graduates, only 17 worked as a teacher in a primary school.

³⁸Twenty-eight Finnish-speaking and 42 Swedish-speaking graduates worked in secondary schools (either in girls' schools or in co-educational schools).

³⁹Table A1.

⁴⁰Table A1. Regarding the required qualifications in the field of banking and insurance, see also Vattula, "Palvelustyöstä konttoristiin," 63–88.

Healthcare had developed into an ideal women's profession alongside teaching and clerical occupations,⁴¹ and the girls' school graduates who were interested in that field had two career options: either study medicine at the university or go to nurse training. Nurse training was initiated in Finland in 1889, and during the studied time period, it varied depending on where training was given. Nurse education was given in hospitals in special courses, and training at the Surgical and Marian Hospitals lasted 1–3 years (1891 was a year long; 1905, a year and a half long; 1912, two years; and 1919, three years). The training provided by county hospitals was shorter.⁴² The path to become a certified doctor (physician) was long, with 8–10 years of studying, and after earning the licentiate degree, one had to apply for a dispensation. During 1895–1917, less than a hundred women were qualified in the field of medicine or odontology in Finland. Odontology was more popular than medicine probably because the required studies were shorter and cheaper and the work was easier to combine with family life.⁴³

Among these first female generations in healthcare professions were graduates of girls' upper secondary schools of Turku who had found their professional careers in this field. As reflected in Table A1, around 15% of them worked in a healthcare profession: 29 were doctors (physicians), 20 were nurses, and 8 worked elsewhere in healthcare. There was a minor difference in the numbers of Finnish-speaking and Swedish-speaking doctors: Swedish-speaking ones were mainly doctors of medicine (10 out of 14), whereas Finnish-speaking had chosen odontology (11 out of 15). The educational choices and professional careers of Finnish-speaking graduates resembled the careers of all female doctors at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Finland.

Exceptional life paths and careers

The graduates of the girls' upper secondary schools already established an exceptional group because they were – especially during the early years of the schools – among the first women to pass the matriculation examination and continue their studies. However, the life paths of some of these women were even more exceptional.⁴⁴ Among other things, they studied in atypical fields and/or were placed in atypical occupational positions. Their examples opened new horizons of possibilities for women in the field of education as well as in working life. From the point of view of occupational and professional emancipation, they both extended the professional areas that were possible for women and raised the potential positions available to women within an occupational hierarchy.⁴⁵

⁴¹Vattula, "Palvelustyöstä konttoristiin," 63–88.

⁴²Maria Sarkio, *Sairaanhoitajaksi kasvattaminen. Sairaanhoitajakoulutus ja siinä käytetyt oppikirjat Suomessa vuoteen 1967 saakka* [The Historical Development of Finnish Nursing Textbooks from the Late 1880s to 1967 – The Training of Nurses], Helsingin yliopiston kasvatustieteidenlaitoksen tutkimuksia 208 (Helsinki: Helsingin yliopisto, 2007), 72–86.

⁴³Hakosalo, "Kivuton murros?" 397–407.

⁴⁴The women introduced in these short individual biographies were not the only ones who deserved to be mentioned but this article did not provide an opportunity to describe them all in detail.

⁴⁵The Provincial Archive of Turku, The student register of Upper Secondary School for Finnish-Speaking Girls in Turku 1895–1924, Bb:11; *Turun suomalaisen jatko-opisto 1895–1920, Oppilasmatrikkeli* [Upper Secondary School for Finnish-Speaking Girls in Turku 1895–1920, Student Register], 85–171; *Heurlinska skolan i Åbo 1861–1955, Elevmatrikel* [School of Heurlin 1861–1955, Student Register], 127–332; and *Svenska fruntimmerskolan Svenska flickskolan i Åbo 1844–1955, Elevmatrikel* [Girls' School for Swedish-Speaking Girls in Turku 1844–1955, Student Register], 39–304.

One of the women whose life path and career were extraordinarily remarkable was Hedvig Gebhard (née Silén). She graduated from Svenska fruntimmerskolan i Åbo (Girls' School for Swedish-Speaking Girls in Turku) after six years of studies, in 1883.⁴⁶ Because the girls' school did not have the upper secondary level at that time, the directress of the school advised her to continue her studies in the girls' lyceum in Stockholm (Lyceum för flickor), where it was possible to pass a matriculation examination. The directress of the girls' school even organised accommodations for her with the family of the local parson in Stockholm. After the matriculation examination, she studied at both the University of Stockholm and the University of Helsinki. During her student years in Helsinki, she made the acquaintance of her husband-to-be, Hannes Gebhard, with whom she shared an interest in societal issues. Later, they became the founders and leaders of the Finnish cooperative movement, and both were involved in politics and elected as members of parliament in 1907. Hedvig Gebhard was amongst the first female members of parliament (19) elected in Finland and in the world, and she and her husband were the first married couple in parliament. During her years in parliament, Hedvig Gebhard worked tirelessly on promoting women's issues, for example, developing an education in home economics, improving women's juridical position in marriage, and improving women's health by increasing the availability of midwives in rural areas and advocating for the building of a women's health clinic. She worked closely with the other female members, whom she had known since her student years at the University of Helsinki when they had established a student club for women (De kvinnliga). Some of the female members of parliament were also acquaintances from the organisation of the women's movement. In addition, Hedvig Gebhard was a member of the editorial staff at the largest Finnish women's magazine (Kotiliesi) for nearly four decades, beginning in 1922. Her active role in societal and women's issue was concretized in her work in parliament, in numerous committees, in cooperative movement and in the women's movement.⁴⁷

In addition to a parliamentary career, studies at the judicial faculty and the professions of the judicial field gradually opened up to women, and the equality between men and women increased within the field. At the beginning of the twentieth century, educated women began to get posts and other occupational positions, initially with exemptions.⁴⁸ Three graduates from the girls' schools in Turku – Agnes Lundell, Hilma Jahnsson (née Hägg), and Inkeri Harmaja (née Vaarila) – had exceptional careers within the juridical field.⁴⁹

⁴⁶*Svenska fruntimmerskolan Svenska flickskolan i Åbo 1844–1955, Elevmatrikel*, [Girls' School for Swedish-Speaking Girls in Turku 1844–1955, Student Register], 86.

⁴⁷Elin Ringbom. "Hedvig Gebhard", in *Svenska fruntimmerskolan Svenska flickskolan i Åbo 1844–1944, Minnesskrift* [Girls' School for Swedish-Speaking Girls in Turku 1844–1944, Reminiscence Writings] (Turku: Svenska flickskolan i Åbo, 1944), 172–3; and Riitta Mäkinen, "Talousneuvos Hedvig Gebhard. Opiskelijavaimosta osuustoiminnan äidiksi" in *Naisten aika. Valkoinen varis ja muita oppineita naisia* [Women's Era. White Crow and Other Educated Women] ed. Riitta Mäkinen and Marja Engman (Helsinki: Gaudeamus, 2015), 243–59.

⁴⁸Winter-Mäkinen, *Naisjuristien 1*. Regarding the first women lawyers in Europe, see also J.C. Albisetti, "Portia Ante Portas: Women and the Legal Profession in Europe, ca. 1870–1925," *Journal of Social History* 33, no. 4 (2000): 825–57; and Pat Thane, "Afterword: Challenging Women in the British Professions," *Women's History Review* 29, no. 4 (2020): 748–58.

⁴⁹*Svenska fruntimmerskolan Svenska flickskolan i Åbo 1844–1955, Elevmatrikel* [Girls' School for Swedish-Speaking Girls in Turku 1844–1955, Student Register], 117; *Turun suomalainen jatko-opisto 1895–1920. Oppilasmatrikeli* [Upper Secondary School for Finnish-Speaking Girls in Turku 1895–1920, Student Register], 108, 165.

Agnes Lundell, who graduated from Svenska fruntimmerskolan i Åbo (The Girls' School for Swedish-Speaking Girls in Turku) in 1899, was the first woman in Finland to earn an associate in laws degree. Her student days were not easy; coming from a family of moderate means, she worked as a teacher during her studies at the university. The difficulties did not end when she graduated from the university, and she had to conquer many obstacles before she was granted the exemption to become the first female lawyer in Finland, in 1911. She was also the first Finnish woman to undergo juridical training at the Court of Appeal. Although she applied for an exemption to become a justice on the Court of Appeal, her application was rejected. When acting as a lawyer, Agnes Lundell used only the initial of her first name, which hid her gender, and because her juridical training in court did not lead to the degree, her title was the Court Trainee of the Court of Appeal.⁵⁰

Inkeri Harmaja (née Vaarila) is another representative example of the women who created a new educational and professional path within the field of jurisprudence. After graduating from the Upper Secondary School for Finnish-Speaking Girls in Turku in 1917, she studied at the juridical faculty at the University of Helsinki. She took the associate in laws degree in 1921. At a time when studying at the master's level was still not very common for women, Inkeri Vaarila took the upper degree in 1922. Inkeri Vaarila was the first woman whose career can be characterised as a proper professional career within the court system. Like Agnes Lundell, she had to overcome many obstacles during her career. She earned the degree of master of laws, was the first woman in Finland to train on the bench,⁵¹ in 1930, and even proceeded to become a justice on the Court of Appeal, in 1954.⁵²

The third mentioned graduate was Hilma Jahnsson (née Hägg), who graduated from the Upper Secondary School for Finnish-Speaking Girls in Turku in 1900. Like Agnes Lundell, she came from a family with limited means, and even during her girls' school studies, she had difficulty financing her tuition. It is likely that she got the position of non-paying student in the girls' school. Before university studies, she gathered means by teaching for private families. Her university studies led to a bachelor's degree in the field of humanities in 1904 and to an associate in laws degree in 1917. During her university studies, she met her future husband, Yrjö Valdemar Jahnsson, who worked as a professor of national economy during his professional career. Although Hilma Jahnsson opened a law firm after her law studies, she mainly had influence, together with her husband, in the fields of societal and national economies. They shared the same interests in societal matters, and they both had distinguished careers and lives outside of work. For example, they established a co-educational school in Helsinki and set up a foundation that even today finances medical and economic research.⁵³

⁵⁰*Svenska fruntimmerskolan Svenska flickskolan i Åbo 1844–1955, Elevmatrikel* [Girls' School for Swedish-Speaking Girls in Turku 1844–1955, Student Register], 117; Selma Fröberg. "Finland första kvinnliga advokat", in *Svenska fruntimmerskolan Svenska flickskolan i Åbo 1844–1944, Minnesskrift* [Girls' School for Swedish-Speaking Girls in Turku 1844–1944, Reminiscence Writings] (Turku: Svenska flickskolan i Åbo, 1944), 178–9.

⁵¹The degree of master of laws trained on the bench (*varatuomari* in Finnish) means that a person who has received a master of laws degree has also completed the court training period after university.

⁵²*Turun suomalainen jatko-opisto 1895–1920, Oppilasmatrikkeli* [Upper Secondary School for Finnish-Speaking Girls in Turku 1895–1920, Student Register], 165; and Winter-Mäkinen, *Naisjuristien 1. vuosisata*, 49–56.

⁵³*Turun suomalainen jatko-opisto 1895–1920, Oppilasmatrikkeli* [Upper Secondary School for Finnish-Speaking Girls in Turku 1895–1920, Student Register], 108; and Winter-Mäkinen, *Naisjuristien 1*, 35–41.

In addition to administrative and jurisdictional work, women gained ground in other professions. During the period of the 1890s to the 1920s, there were a few graduates from the girls' schools in Turku who went on to careers in the field of architecture.⁵⁴ Previous studies of professionalism have pointed out that professions controlled by the state or universities opened to women more readily, while those controlled by their members remained closed to women. The male-dominated field of architecture slowly opened its education and training for women during the 1880s. The entrance requirement for the Polytechnic Institute was the matriculation examination, and therefore, only 23 women were granted the rights of regular students⁵⁵ between 1896 and 1908.⁵⁶

One of these students was Elsa Richardtson (née Hindström). She graduated from the Girls' School for Swedish-Speaking Girls in Turku in 1904, and she enrolled in architecture at the Polytechnic Institute in 1905. She was amongst the first women in Finland to study architecture and was the only woman in her class.⁵⁷ Their entry into working life reflected the importance of education and training for all female architect students. Elsa Richardtson was married to famous architect Albert Richard Richardtson, who designed public buildings, especially around and in Turku. She assisted her husband in his architect's office, and like other female architects of that time who married architects, she continued in tasks that corresponded to her training. In addition, all of them had to decide how to combine their careers with family life.⁵⁸

Another woman, Elsi Naemi Borg, studied architecture in the Department of Architecture at the University of Technology, as well as the Department of Industrial Art, after graduating from the Finnish girls' school in 1912. She was qualified as an architect seven years later.⁵⁹ Both Elsi Borg's field of study and the profession were exceptional because, even as late as the end of the 1930s, females were still under-represented amongst Finnish architects. From 1908 to 1917, only 34 women studied at the Department of Architecture, and 25 graduated as architects.⁶⁰ Elsi Borg was one of them, and she studied at the same time as two other famous women architects, Salme Setälä⁶¹ and Aino Marsio-Aalto. She was also a member of the unofficial student club that was founded in 1919 by the women students of technology, and many of the club's members continued to meet informally, including Elsi Borg. Later, in the 1940s, she was one of the architects on whose initiative the association for women architects, The Architecta, was established. In addition, she was amongst the few women architects who had their own architect's office with assisting architects. Elsi Borg was the first

⁵⁴*Turun suomalainen jatko-opisto 1895–1920* [Upper Secondary School for Finnish-Speaking Girls in Turku], 85–171; *Heurlinska skolan i Åbo 1861–1955, Elevmatrikel*, [School of Heurlin 1861–1955, Student Register], 127–332; and *Svenska fruntimmerskolan Svenska flickskolan i Åbo 1844–1955, Elevmatrikel* [Girls' School for Swedish-Speaking Girls in Turku 1844–1955, Student Register], 39–304.

⁵⁵Between 1887 and 1894, six women enrolled to study architecture, but because they had not completed the matriculation examination, they were not entitled to become regular students.

⁵⁶Renja Suominen-Kokkonen, *The Fringe of a Profession: Women as Architects in Finland from the 1890s to the 1950s*, Suomen muinaismuistoyhdistyksen aikakauskirja 98 (Helsinki: Suomen muinaismuistoyhdistys, 1992), 29–40.

⁵⁷Between 1887 and 1908, 29 women studied at the Department of Architecture. Eighteen of them graduated, and 11 dropped out of their studies.

⁵⁸*Svenska fruntimmerskolan Svenska flickskolan i Åbo 1844–1955, Elevmatrikel* [Girls' School for Swedish-Speaking Girls in Turku 1844–1955, Student Register], 128; and Suominen-Kokkonen, *The Fringe of a Profession*, 30–3, 97.

⁵⁹*Turun suomalainen jatko-opisto 1895–1920, Oppilasmatrikkeli* [Upper Secondary School for Finnish-Speaking Girls in Turku 1895–1920, Student Register], 93; and Suominen-Kokkonen, *The Fringe of a Profession*, 29–33, 100–10.

⁶⁰Suominen-Kokkonen, *The Fringe of a Profession*.

⁶¹Salme Setälä was also a writer. Her book *Very Ordinary Female Civil Servants* won a prize for literature in 1937. She published a total of 18 books during the 1930s–1960s.

Finnish female architect who, amongst other things, won the church design competition in 1934 and designed a hospital for children (Lastenlinna)⁶² with her two male colleagues in the 1940s. She was married to artist Anton Lindfors, with whom she shared an interest in the arts.⁶³

Conclusion

This study brings additional insight into the history of women's occupational and professional emancipation at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The results also clarify the picture created by previous studies about women's educational and professional histories. For example, in her research, Mervi Kaarninen studied the women graduates between 1885 and 1900. She pointed out that the female students shared a common experience which caused a strong spirit of solidarity amongst them. She also concluded that the first graduates paved the way for others, and the first women university students created a new female category: academically educated women.⁶⁴ The results of this study indicate that the same features continued during the subsequent decades of the 1900s and 1910s. Compared to Mervi Kaarninen's results, on the one hand, the graduates of the girls' schools made careers and strengthened their positions in the same fields of occupation as women had during the previous decades. On the other hand, these graduates gained prestige in new fields and widened the occupational opportunities in, for example, the high positions of jurisprudence. Unlike Mervi Kaarninen's study, this article also focused in more detail on the similarities and differences of the Finnish- and Swedish-speaking women. From the macro-level perspective, these results bring out the sameness of the occupational and professional career choices which women had and which they also made rather than focusing on major differences.

It is possible to outline, on the basis of this article's source material, the most typical educational and occupational paths after graduating from the upper secondary girls' schools during the period of the 1890s to the 1910s. Women who continued their studies at the university after becoming an upper secondary school graduate, later worked as teachers, doctors (physicians), in the field of jurisprudence or in other administrative positions.⁶⁵ The second typical path taken by these women was through teacher training colleges to work as a primary school teacher.⁶⁶ Some of these women chose another college-level education – for example, nurse training or commercial school. Others did not continue their studies after obtaining the matriculation examination and transferred directly after school to office work or administrative occupations.

⁶²Lastenlinna was a hospital specially designed for and targeted to children. It was under the control of the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare until 1968. It functioned until 2018, when its activity was transferred to the new hospital for children.

⁶³*Turun suomalainen jatko-opisto 1895–1920, Oppilasmatrikkeli* [Upper Secondary School for Finnish-Speaking Girls in Turku 1895–1920, Student Register], 93; and Suominen-Kokkonen, *The Fringe of a Profession*, 29–33, 100–10.

⁶⁴Kaarninen, "Gifted Girls," 206–30

⁶⁵See also Hakosalo, "Kivuton murros?" 397–407; Kaarninen, *Nykyajan tytöt. Koulutus, luokka ja sukupuoli 1920- ja 1930-luvun Suomessa*; Kaarninen, "Gifted Girls," 206–30; Korppi-Tommola, "Naisten koulunkäyntimahdollisuuksien laajeneminen," 148–67; and Vattula, "Palvelustytöstä konttoristiin," 79.

⁶⁶See also Rinne, *Mistä opettajat tulevat?*; Rantala, "Kansakoulunopettajat," 266–99.

In addition, the source material casts light on the very atypical professional paths where women created considerable careers and broke barriers in the gender-segregated labour market. These women had exceptionally successful careers – for example, as an architect or judge – and they created equality between women and men in education as well as in working life.

It can be pointed out that a few features were similar for most of the women with exceptionally successful careers. First, they all utilised new opportunities within the education system, and some of them even influenced girls' and women's options for education when they participated in the education sector themselves as a teacher or principal or gave financial support to schools. Second, many of them were active members of networks that they joined during their studies or that they established in order to get their societal goals promoted and to gain peer support for their careers. Their nexus of social relations was a vehicle for fostering women's occupational and professional emancipation. In addition, for some of them, marriage created the space to put forward emancipatory aims, and together with their spouses, they were married couples who influenced societal questions or shaped and transformed the professional field that they shared. Marriage did not bind these women to the private sphere of the home and gender-segregated roles of women.

The paid work and professional careers brought financial independence and more equal positions for women in society. It meant a new way of life for women.⁶⁷ From the point of view of occupational and professional emancipation, these women both extended the professional areas possible for women and raised the number of potential positions for women in an occupational hierarchy. If the concept of the horizon of possibilities is used, they expanded the possibilities for women and changed the mechanism of power that had hindered and limited women's occupational emancipation. The change was not rapid or sudden, but the barriers and structural mechanisms started to alter in the educational sector, as well as in the labour market, creating more equality between men and women⁶⁸

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Notes on contributor

Dr Marjo Nieminen, is a senior university lecturer in the Department of Education, University of Turku, Finland, and she has worked earlier as a researcher at the Centre for Research on Lifelong Learning and Education (CELE). Her recent empirical studies have covered the history of education from primary schooling to the upper secondary and university levels, and they have included methodological reflections on various historical sources, such as archives, written narratives and visual sources. Her special interests are the issues of women's history.

⁶⁷ According to Anne Ollila, the constructed femininity of that time expressed women's new roles where duties combined with calling, self-sacrifice and conscientiousness (Anne Ollila, *Jalo velvollisuus. Virkanaisena 1800-luvun lopun Suomessa* [Noble Duty. As a Career Woman at the End of the 1800s in Finland] (Helsinki: SKS, 1989).

⁶⁸ The student register of the Upper Secondary School for the Finnish-Speaking Girls in Turku 1895–1924, Bb:11 in The Provincial Archive of Turku; *Turun suomalaisen jatko-opisto 1895–1920, Oppilasmatrikkeli* [The Upper Secondary School for the Finnish-Speaking Girls in Turku 1895–1920, Student Register], 85–171; *Heurlinska skolan i Åbo 1861–1955, Elevmatrikel*, [The School of Heurlin 1861–1955, Student Register], 127–332; and *Svenska fruntimmerskolan, Svenska flickskolan i Åbo 1844–1955, Elevmatrikel*, [The Girls' School for Swedish-Speaking Girls in Turku 1844–1955, Student Register], 39–304.

Appendix Table A1. The professional careers of women who graduated from the upper secondary girls' schools of Turku 1890–1919.

Careers	Students	% total	1890 –1894	1895 –1899	1900 –1904	1905 –1909	1910 –1914	1915 –1919
Finnish-speaking school								
Teaching	79	43%	–	63%	53%	35%	45%	26%
Civil service and administrative work	55	30%	–	11%	32%	35%	22%	44%
Health care	30	16%	–	21%	6%	15%	24%	12%
Banking and insurance	12	6%	–	–	3%	8%	7%	12%
Others	9	5%	–	5%	6%	8%	2%	6%
Total Finnish-speaking	185	100%	–	19	34	40	58	34
Swedish-speaking schools								
Teaching	67	32%	75%	40%	48%	33%	15%	26%
Civil service and administrative work	65	31%	–	36%	21%	34%	43%	23%
Health care	27	13%	25%	8%	5%	19%	9%	23%
Banking and insurance	36	17%	–	16%	21%	12%	23%	16%
Others	12	6%	–	–	5%	2%	11%	13%
Total Swedish-speaking	207	100%	4	25	42	58	47	31
Finnish- and Swedish-speaking schools								
Teaching	146	37%	75%	50%	50%	34%	31%	26%
Civil service and administrative work	120	31%	–	25%	26%	35%	31%	34%
Health care	57	15%	25%	14%	5%	17%	17%	17%
Banking and insurance	48	12%	–	9%	13%	10%	14%	14%
Others	21	5%	–	2%	5%	4%	6%	9%
Total Finnish- and Swedish-speaking	392	100%	4	44	76	98	105	65