SWIMMING FOR THE FATHERLAND: JOURNALISM, PRONATALISM, AND MODERNIZATION IN THE WORLD OF WEIMAR SPORT

by

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ABSTRACT

HALLIE GILLESPIE. Swimming for the Fatherland: Journalism, Pronatalism, and Modernization in the World of Weimar Sport. (Under the direction of DR. HEATHER PERRY)

The perplexities of the interwar era in Germany—the Weimar Republic—continue to spark scholarly intrigue. A tumultuous political atmosphere and an unstable economy coupled with societal reform and cultural advancements in film, arts, and architecture provide endless material for historical research. The successes and failures of Weimar that contributed to rise of Adolf Hitler and Nazism have dominated historical inquiry. More recently, historians have delved into the Weimar years for the sake of Weimar, and not simply as a precursor to the Third Reich. This thesis acts as such, examining sport and physical culture, specifically competitive swimming, within sports journalism. Doing so unveils two underlying currents present within Weimar society: pronatalism and the sheer force of modernization. Scholarly research promotes the idea that sports emancipated women, freeing them from traditional gender roles. This thesis proves that in fact, the opposite is true. Furthermore, instead of liberating the human body from aspects of modernization—the goal of so many life reform and physical culture groups—competitive sport advocated for modern training and technique that transformed the swimming professional athlete into a machine for the nation.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

"Meet Ms. M"

> Mornings, 8:00. Sport-Forum--first gymnastics, sometimes trail-running, gymnastics with equipment, dance training, one hour of jujitsu (voluntary), one hour general physical exercises. Each course is comprised of 10 to 20 female students, male and female students separately. Then theory: anatomy, hygiene, and game rules. All this until 12 or 1 o' clock. In the afternoon, physiology, administration, competition rules, genetics…Ms. M only wants to be a sports instructor. She reads [about] traveling and also [Oswald] Spengler, no political books, poems, or romance. The girls are very companionable among themselves-on the playing field, [they are] something tough. Women's questions do not interest them. The only issue: How do I reach peak performance? Three wishes of a young girl today: break a record, travel to the Olympics, [and own] a small car.[1]

These words appeared in the 1932 article "Married to the Water: The Life of a 100-Meter [Female] Freestyler" in the Weimar Republic general interest magazine *Uhu*. Accompanying the article were photos of a "Ms. M"—an athletic, young, female swimmer—whose athletic training, schedule, and education mentioned above dominated the article. *Uhu* featured photos of Ms. M in her natural habitat—climbing out of the pool, diving off the block, and training with her coach. Furthermore, the article ventured into the personal life of Ms. M, picturing the young athlete in her free-time—however limited—and detailing exactly what a sportswoman of this caliber had in her bedroom (a bed, a small, electronic kettle, books, photographs, a chair). Ms. M appeared strong and

[1] "Mit dem Wasser verheiratet," *Uhu*, May 1932, 50-56, https://www.illustrierte-presse.de/en/the-magazines/werkansicht/dlf/73647/49/1/?tx_dlf%5Bpointer%5D=3&cHash=134e45f905eef8c5b9086ef55ab3ce31.

confident while photographed racing alongside her coach, relaxing with her girlfriends, and posing in her athletic swimsuit with her sleek, *bubikopf,* or bob haircut. According to *Uhu,* this female athlete was a great example of an ideal, young woman in the Weimar Republic: athletic, single, determined, and competitive.[2]

From a distance, this article appears emancipatory and modern concerning female athletes; however, the title of the article itself reveals how liberating Weimar culture was regarding women in sport. Ms. M was not interested in romance literature, being physically constricted by a corset, or being tied to a husband and home, but she was married to something else: her sport. Training to become a professional swimmer required time, discipline, effort, and skill, all culminating in a trip to the Olympics and an attempt to shatter a world record. In the world of Weimar physical culture, female athletes served a larger purpose for the Fatherland. This is evident within sports journalism that catered to, reported on, and featured the sport of swimming. Interwar sports media utilized the bodies of swimmers for several purposes, none of which promoted women's involvement in physical culture simply for pleasure or leisure. Through the sport of swimming, Weimar sport media did not promote the "New Woman" qualities associated with the interwar era—a woman emancipated from traditional gender roles. This journalism propagated traditional notions of feminine beauty with an underlying pronatalist agenda and revealed the ultimate women's duty of the interwar era: motherhood. Furthermore, these magazines and newspapers promoted training regimens that mechanized professional swimmers in the hopes of creating German champions for the world stage, reigniting a competitive fervor within a country ravaged

[2] Ibid.

by the First World War. Women may have been able to compete in sports, join a club team, or wear a more revealing swimsuit, but that was the extent of their emancipation through athletics. The Weimar Republic shaped Machines for Motherhood and Vehicles for Victory out of these female competitors. In this regard, the liberalism so often associated with women during the interwar era, such as Ms. M, comes into question.

Historiography

Many historians and sociologists have researched gender and sport in the interwar era. Scholars have studied athletics and gender and their relationships to the cultural phenomenon of modernity—in this thesis, meaning the existence in a society that rejects tradition while embracing the progression and change associated with an industrialized society. Specifically, there is an abundance of scholarship surrounding the concept of the modern European "New Woman" of the interwar era—androgynous, single, independent, employed—and her emerging presence into the public sphere. Historians have focused on women's relationships with the tumultuous political, social, and cultural atmosphere of the interwar era and women's contribution to the perceived gender crisis of the immediate postwar period.

Regarding the effects of war and pressures of modernity in interwar France, Mary Louise Roberts argued in *Civilization without Sexes* that the French preoccupation with gender roles and changes in female identity defined post World War I society. Out of the tragedies of World War I emerged the woman's polarized identity: either a "destroyer" or a "redeemer," the New Woman or mother. Roberts examined images and print consumer culture arguing that popular literature and magazines masculinized, satirized, and sexualized the New Woman. Roberts argued that this was due to in part to a pronatalist

agenda that reaffirmed and reinforced ideas of traditional motherhood. Concluding her argument, Roberts contended that French society reconstructed a "bourgeois domesticity" associated with traditional gender roles including motherhood, marriage, and homemaking. This had a significant effect on gender as a hierarchical structure in France, thus challenging the assumed emancipation of women in the interwar period. Although Roberts did not focus specifically on athletics, her analysis detailing the complicated relationship between the New Woman, emancipation, and consumer culture informed my inquiry into media depictions of sportswomen in the Weimar Republic. Regarding physical culture specifically in France, Mary Lynn Stewart's *For Health and Beauty* claimed that print media and consumer culture, influenced by science, advised women to "reeducate their bodies."[3] Most of this reeducation, like Robert's arguments, promoted motherhood—not liberation associated with physical culture. Stewart argued that France, in comparison to other European nations, did not arduously promote athletics for women and that print media often depicted female athletes negatively. French doctors were suspicious of competitive sports and their negative influence on women's bodies and only promoted supposed feminine sports, such as tennis.

In her study of Britain, gender, and physical culture, Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska's *Managing the Body* investigated female athletes and their relationship with nationhood and citizenship. Zweiniger-Bargielowska argued that although some women in Britain experienced emancipation from traditional gender roles regarding athletic involvement, ultimately paternal and masculine ideology dominated women's

[3] Mary Lynn Stewart. *For Health and Beauty: Physical Culture for Frenchwomen, 1880s-1930s* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2001), 9.

bodies, similar to the research of Stewart and Roberts. Women's role in physical culture was that of the "race mother," someone involved in healthy activities only to promote the ideal British citizen. British journalists bombarded women with information about their duty to create an ideal body, and not just for themselves but for their families. Society considered women's bodies as objects of the nation and ultimately their main contribution to British society rested in their ability to reproduce.[4] Recent historiography on gender and physical culture and their relationship to modernity in interwar Europe differentiates among varieties of women's presumed liberation.

Regarding the Weimar Republic specifically, many historians have remained primarily concerned with following continuities and rupture regarding state control over women's bodies.[5] Atina Grossmann argued in *Reforming Sex* that female reformers in Germany played a significant role regarding progressive innovations within the realm of women's health. These radical women exemplified the non-traditional New Woman of the interwar era in the height of eugenics, providing a foil to the conservative, Nazi ideal woman of only a few years later.[6] Contrary to this claim, Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz revealed a continuity between the Third Reich and the interwar era. They maintained that due to rampant hostility toward radical women in the public sphere, many women "saw emancipation more often as a threat than a blessing."[7] If domesticity

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[4] Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Managing the Body: Beauty, Health, and Fitness in Britain, 1880-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[5] Scholars have also noted a complete departure of the Third Reich from the Weimar Republic regarding state policy. See Michelle Mouton, *From Nurturing the Nation to Purifying the Volk: Weimar and Nazi Family Policy, 1918-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[6] Atina Grossmann, *Reforming Sex: The German Movement for Birth Control and Abortion Reform, 1920-1950* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

[7] Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz, "Beyond Kinder, Küche, Kirche: Weimar Women in Politics and Work," in *When Biology Became Destiny: Women in Weimar and Nazi Germany* ed. Renate Bridenthal, Atina Grossmann, and Marion Kaplan (New York, NY: Monthly Review Press, 1984), 33.

provided "status," "respectability," and "security," then many women were content to remain in the private sphere.[8] Thus, when Adolf Hitler came to power and exploited fears concerning the modern, New Woman, many Germans listened.[9] Tension in regard to gender, politics, and modernity was emblematic of the larger issue of gender anxiety in the interwar era.

While the consequences of modernity exposed themselves within the perceived gender crisis, facets of modernization, or the rise of Western Civilization, capitalism, and the transition from traditional to modern—had already invaded the daily lives of interwar Europeans.[10] German sociologist Max Weber's 1905 *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* argued that society's obsession with work, time, efficiency and maximum output developed alongside late nineteenth and early twentieth-century modern consumer culture. Processes of modernization, such as rationalization and scientization, mechanized the human body, transforming the men and women who worked on the factory floor into the very machines themselves.[11] Recently, historians have researched modernization's influence on the mechanization of the human body through physical culture in the Weimar Republic. In *The Science of Beauty,* Annelie Ramsbrock traced the development, medicalization, and consumption of cosmetics in Germany. Ramsbrock argued that the normalization of the body through cosmetics was a form of bodily discipline, correction,

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[8] Ibid.
[9] This argument is also evident in Cornelie Usborne's *The Politics of the Body in Weimar Germany: Women's Reproductive Rights and Duties* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1992).
[10] The processes of modernization utilized in this thesis stem from sociologist Max Weber, utilizing Sam Whimster, *The Essential Weber: A Reader* (London: Routledge, 2004).
[11] Max Weber and Stephen Kalberg, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism: With Other Writings on the Rise of the West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

and control, an "opportunity to stage-manage their bodies."[12] Furthermore, Ramsbrock discussed the significance of print media in promoting these ideas of the disciplined, beautiful body in the Weimar Republic. Popular culture did in fact feature the short hair and slim androgynous bodies associated with the liberated New Woman; however, Ramsbrock claimed that this was not liberating. Print media "instructed women that they had to present their bodies in a specific way to gain public acceptance."[13] Ramsbrock investigated various magazines and advertisements that attempted to manage not only women's cosmetics routines, but their weight, nutrition, and caloric intake.[14] According to Ramsbrock, women's physical culture and its representation in media, although inclusive of the New Woman, was in no way emancipatory. Media simply exchanged one form of enslavement for another. Ramsbrock did not specifically utilize athletics in her discussion; however, as this thesis argues, athletics certainly served as a way in which Weimar citizens disciplined and rationalized their bodies.

Regarding physical culture in Germany, Chad Ross argued in *Naked Germany*, that *Nacktkultur*, or nude culture, represented another aspect of Weimar culture that promoted emancipation from the consequences of modern industrial society through withdrawal from the factory into nature. Ross did not claim that nudism in Germany was inherently anti-modern or simply a reaction to modernization, but argued that "nudism was a way to reconcile and harmonize the deep divisions in the German nation, often exacerbated by industry, politics, and religion."[15] Nudists believed that the acquisition of

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[12] Annelie Ramsbrock, *The Science of Beauty: Culture and Cosmetics in Modern Germany, 1750-1930* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 10-11.
[13] Ibid., 112.
[14] Ibid., 124-129.
[15] Chad Ross, *Naked Germany: Health, Race, and the Nation* (Oxford: Berg, 2005), 11.

a healthy, strong, naked body provided a cure to a sick, degenerate, postwar society. Ross emphasized nudists' obsessions with racial purity, the concept of a *Völkskorper,* and those who were responsible for creating and birthing healthy bodies: women. Furthermore, Ross claimed that nudist culture created equality between men and women while promoting female liberation. However, when it came to women, nudists were quite preoccupied and particular about what qualified as a beautiful body. Nudist culture expected women to have tan skin and slim hips among other qualities. Hans Surén, an advocate of *Nacktkultur,* promoted a very unnatural method contradictory to nudist's obsession with the natural—hormone therapy—to improve the shape of women's breasts. Nudists used oils, clay, and sand to perfect skin tone and advocated wearing socks and doing foot exercises to maintain beautiful feet. Although nudists antagonized those who wore perfume and cosmetics to create beautiful bodies, *Nacktkultur* promoted its own normalized, disciplined, and thus beautiful body. Despite these facts, Ross still claimed that *Nacktkultur* was an emancipatory space for women.[16] *Naked Germany* also discussed the Nazi appropriation of *Nacktkultur* and its emphasis on racial purity and motherhood, noting continuities within physical culture between the Weimar and Nazi eras.[17] The female body, even within presumably liberal life reform movements, was a social and cultural battleground for tensions surrounding traditional notions of feminine beauty and motherhood.

Erik N. Jensen's *Body by Weimar,* greatly influenced my research questions concerning the mechanization of the female athlete's body in interwar Germany. While

[16] Ibid., 119-134.
[17] Ibid., 164.

Ross claimed that *Nacktkultur* was an attempt by physical culture enthusiasts to harmonize with the consequences of modernization, Jensen argued that athletes were some of the few in Weimar to embrace modernization—efficiency, competition, mechanization, rationalization—unlike their *Freikörperkultur* or *Nacktkultur* counterparts.[18] Similar to the research of Annelie Ramsbrock's cosmetic disciplining of the body, Jensen claimed that competitive sports represented the "self-madeness" quality inherent in modern Weimar culture. Interwar athletes remade their bodies into slim, muscular, and streamlined symbols of modernity that acted as foils to a war-torn, defeated, and degenerated, society in Germany.[19] Female athletes specifically participated in this act of recreating and forming the athletic, disciplined body. Jensen argued,

> Whereas women in prewar Germany had managed to feign an hourglass shape with the external aid of a corset, women in Weimar society disciplined their bodies from within, via a strict regimen of exercise. The corseted woman may have appeared lean, but her body lacked the speed, agility, and stamina that its form suggested. The postwar body, on the other hand, performed at a level commensurate with its self-presentation.[20]

Jensen portrayed the strong, disciplined, sportswoman's body as an image of emancipation. Unlike Roberts, he did not view this new "postwar body" as simply another societal constraint, but as a body shaped by modern society.[21]

Body by Weimar investigated media reactions to three different types of female athletes: tennis players, boxers, and track and field athletes. Often, Weimar newspapers and magazines idealized famous sportswomen, but not all media depictions of female

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[18] Erik N. Jensen, *Body by Weimar: Athletes, Gender, and German Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) 7-8.
[19] Erik N. Jensen, "Sweat Equity: Sports and the Self-Made German," in *Weimar Culture Revisited* ed. John Alexander Williams (New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011), 185.
[20] Ibid., 186.
[21] Jensen, *Body by Weimar,* 138.

athletes applauded their athletic endeavors. Similar to the research of Stewart and Zweiniger-Bargielowska, Jensen discovered that many Germans considered some sports too masculine or dangerous for women; thus, print media represented these athletes as a harmful threat to traditional gender norms.[22] Katie Sutton advanced this argument to include female sexuality in "The Masculinized Female Athlete in Weimar Germany." Newspapers, cartoons, and magazines attempted to enforce traditional gender roles while dissuading the female athlete from participating in sports. The Weimar sportswoman—with her short hair, androgynous clothing, and athletic ability—aroused fear of homosexuality.[23] Similarly, in *The Cult of Health and Beauty in Germany*, Michael Hau utilized health guides and medical documents from the Weimar Republic, commenting on conflicting perceptions of the female athlete. While media actively encouraged women to participate in sports for their health, medical enthusiasts regarded the emergence of a masculine face shape as a side-effect of their sporting endeavors.[24] Recent historiography on the body and the representation of female athletes in Weimar media reveals a series of complicated relationships between women and physical culture. The bodies of female athletes were simultaneously arenas for ideas surrounding the ideal, beautiful, traditional woman as well as the modern, rationalized, disciplined body.

Recently, historians have researched the relationship between gender, female athletes, and the consequences of modernity in the Weimar Republic. Women's supposed emancipation from societal constraints and continuities in regard to Weimar and the

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[22] Ibid., 67.
[23] Katie Sutton, "The Masculinized Female Athlete in Weimar Germany," *German Politics & Society*, 27, no. 3 (2009) 28-49.
[24] Michael Hau, *The Cult of Health and Beauty: A Social History, 1890-1930* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press), 182.

Third Reich are common threads. Jensen and Ross claimed that athletics and *Nacktkultur* somehow liberated women; however, both of their works alluded to contradictions in regard to women's involvement in physical culture. Jensen argued that sports offered women the opportunity to reshape their bodies to be strong, fit, athletes. Likewise, Ross contended that *Nacktkultur* reinforced gender equality. Physical culture may have *attempted* to appeal to women through emancipatory language, but ultimately media simply reasserted traditional limitations and regulations on women's bodies, especially female athletes. Sports journalism propagated the beautiful, feminine, motherly body alongside the mechanized and modern body promoting constraints equally as liberating as the strings on a corset. Eventually, Nazi physical culture appropriated this interwar era sportswoman as a promotional tool for the ideal, German, master race. Through the lens of the sport of swimming, this thesis suggests that women, especially female athletes, were not freed from societal constraints of traditional gender roles and the consequences of modernization in the Weimar Republic. Weimar sports media utilized competitive swimming and female swimmers to promote ideal beauty standards and the ultimate women's role: motherhood. Furthermore, the "scientization" of swim training created mechanized bodies utilized by the nation to achieve victory on the world stage. When it came to their treatment of female athletes, the Weimar Republic was anything but liberating. Swimmers, such as Ms. M, may have flaunted their singlehood, but her marriage to her sport was no less emancipatory. Weimar sportswomen, charged with the duties of beauty, motherhood, and training to win, were ripe for Nazi appropriation.

Historical Context of Study

Before Ms. M, the First World War, and the increase in popularity of a variety of competitive sports, communal rhythmic gymnastics, or *Turnen*, dominated German physical culture. For many Germans, actively participating in sports was a unique opportunity to foster both a sense of community and German nationalism. In the early nineteenth century, the advent of *Turnen* was a prime example of how powerfully sport could unite a people. The person credited with the implementation of *Turnen*, Friedrich Ludwig Jahn—fondly referred to as *Turnvater* [*Turnen* Father]—saw a need for a physical culture movement that not only created healthy bodies, but fostered a sense of nationalism. After the French victory over the Prussian army at the Battle of Jena in 1806, *Turnen* quickly became a way to regenerate the unhealthy bodies devastated by defeat in war—a movement that would reoccur a century later after the German defeat in World War I.

Only a few years after the Battle of Jena, scores of *Turnen* fields appeared within boys grammar schools, and university students practiced this new form of gymnastics on a regular basis. Prussian King Frederick Wilhelm III even outlawed *Turnen* and jailed *Turnvater* Jahn due to the activity's exponentially growing popularity alongside its nationalist undertones; however, rhythmic gymnastics continued to flourish. In the mid-nineteenth century *Turnen* began to incorporate militaristic exercises due to the methods of Swiss Adolf Speiß, who introduced marching drills, articulate arm and leg movements, and exercises on parallel bars. Participants could easily practice these movements in smaller gymnastics halls, making way for the increasing development of physical

education programs and classes in schools.[25] *Turnen* maintained its association with burgeoning German nationalism; the *Deutsche Turnerschaft* even expelled the German gymnasts who competed in the predominately French organized and first modern 1896 Olympic Games.[26]

These militarist developments and nationalist sentiments within the *Turnen* movement dominated German physical culture until the First World War, when another military defeat would once again cause many Germans to heavily advocate for participation in physical activity.[27] More than thirteen million men served in the German army in World War I, of which two million were killed, and another 4.2 million severely injured. Modern weaponry, trench warfare, and gasses caused unprecedented physical and psychological damages, and these consequences of total war continued long after the signing of the Treaty of Versailles. Shell-shocked soldiers with missing limbs and wounded minds returned home to a suffering and desperate population defeated by starvation, food shortages, and economic decline. Consequences from war reparations, inflation, and occupation caused economic and political turmoil for a hungry, discontented, unstable society. Finally, after five years of revolution, polarized government crises, and hyperinflation, the Dawes Plan, which took effect in 1924, offered a more lenient reparation payment schedule for Germany alongside the withdrawal of occupation forces. Although the Dawes Plan did not negate the extreme consequences of war completely, it significantly helped revive a politically and

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[25] Roland Naul and March Krottee, "German Legacy: From German Gymnastics to Physical Education in Modern Unified Germany," in *Turnen und Sport: Transatlantic Transfers* ed. Annette R. Hoffmann (Münster: Waxmann Verlag, 2004), 69-72

[26]Allen Guttmann, *The Olympics: A History of the Modern Games*, Second Edition (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 19.

[27] Naul and Krottee, "German Legacy," 69-72.

economically destitute nation. From the defeat and hardship of the First World War and the dawn of 1925, came the perceived Golden Years of the Weimar Republic. Economic and political stability paved the way for a society invigorated by the opportunity to participate in modern, consumer culture. Moreover, a society dedicated to consumption produced a surge of print media pertaining to entertainment, fashion, and leisure, including magazines and newspapers dedicated to health and competitive sport.[28]

Competitive sport and sports journalism grew in popularity alongside consumer culture and other facets of modernization. A prevalent aspect of modern society is one which historians call a "medicalization" of society meaning the attempt to explain, reduce, solve, or define issues regarding concepts relating to health and medicine.[29] Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, German men and women turned to health, nature, and medicine to answer questions pertaining not only to the curing and prevention of illness, but also societal ills. The goal of achieving an athletic, toned, strong, and healthy body capable of fighting disease could be attained through sport. Participation within competitive sports grew exponentially during the interwar era, especially given an increase in the societal acceptance of women's involvement in sport. What began as the promotion of the benefits of simple exercises, dance, and gymnastics for women, blossomed into women's increasing participation in competitive sport in the early twentieth century; however, not everyone encouraged these female athletes. Some saw female athleticism and participation in sport simply as another aspect of the interwar New Woman culture which rejected traditional woman's roles such as marriage and

[28] Eric D. Weitz, *Weimar Germany: Promise and Tragedy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 7-144.
[29] Michael Hau, *The Cult of Health and Beauty*, 3.

mothering in favor of singlehood and a career. Furthermore, some viewed competitive sport as something which created masculine women and removed them from their rightful position in the private sphere—in the home with their family.

These anxieties regarding women's involvement in sport aroused concerns, especially regarding population and motherhood—a heavily contentious issue due to the fear of population decline exacerbated by the heavy losses of men in the First World War. However, despite the loss of life due to the war, the population increased steadily throughout the Weimar Republic. The age group including those aged 14-65—those able to work—was larger than any other time in German history in the 1920s. The cause for concern regarding a potentially diminishing Germany did not stem necessarily from a decline in population, but a decline in fertility and the overall birth rate.[30] From the unification of Germany in 1871 until the early 1930s, the fertility rate decreased by 60 percent. Both married and unmarried women were having fewer children and the loss of young men to the war also influenced declining birth rates. However, infant mortality declined by about 70 percent helping to stabilize those falling numbers.[31] The sharp decline in birth rate during and immediately after the war, a surplus of women, and a new society embracing smaller family numbers helped make way for pronatalism, or the promotion of higher birth rates, in the Weimar Republic.[32]

Pronatalism expressed itself in the interwar era within the realm of eugenics, politics, and class. Legislation regarding contraception and abortion remained at the

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[30] Detlev Peukert, *The Weimar Republic: The Crisis of Classical Modernity* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1987), 7-9.
[31] John E. Knodel, *The Decline of Fertility in Germany, 1871-1939* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), 249-258.
[32] Detlev Peukert, *The Weimar Republic,* 88.

forefront of political debate.[33] Many proponents of pronatalism did not advocate simply for an increase in overall fertility, but for the increase in births from a specific group of people. For example, eugenicists encouraged certain groups to procreate more than others.[34] Furthermore, legislation regarding contraception and abortion remained at the forefront of political debate. Therefore, given the mindset that healthy, athletic women would in turn create healthy, future Germans, women's involvement in sport continued to grow during the interwar era. Pronatalism and the fear of a diminishing population, not simply in numbers, but in healthy bodies capable of reproduction, became the ultimate promotion tool for female athleticism, and the focus of my first chapter. However, women were not the only group that experienced growth within sport in the early twentieth century. Alongside modern reforms such as the eight-hour workday, the working class also had the ability to participate in sport and physical culture. This was significant given concerns about the mechanization of the human body by long, tedious, hours spent performing repetitive factory work.

The eight-hour workday, a product of early twentieth-century social reform, was only one consequence of increased awareness of the health problems and fatigue associated with the dangers of the modern worker's lifestyle. As industrialization continued to spread, so did various life reform groups that critiqued the negative effects of the factory floor. Groups that promoted vegetarianism, nude culture, alternative medicine, holistic healing, and other ideas pertaining to a healthier lifestyle hoped to cure the body from the consequences of modernization, including the rationalization and

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[33] Cornelie Usborne, *The Politics of the Body in Weimar Germany*, 1-23.
[34] Michael S. Teitelbaum and Jay M. Winter, *The Fear of Population Decline* (Orlando: Academic Press, Inc., 1985), 47.

mechanization of the human body. These reform groups were in direct opposition to modern developments in the workplace—industrial organization and scientific management—which sought to reorganize the entire workplace into an efficient machine. The modern factory endeavored to promote individualized tasks that would achieve maximum output. These developments in the early twentieth-century German workplace stemmed from nineteenth-century *Arbeitswissenschaft* [science of work] coupled with the American Frederick Winslow Taylor and his theory of workplace management. Taylor's research, based on an analysis of the engineering workspace, reached the shores of Europe just prior to the First World War, during which production of war material brought the processes of Taylorization to fruition. At its core, Taylorism and *Abeitswissenschaft* sought to achieve maximum efficiency with a specialized workforce, wages linked to output, and standardized machines. This resulted in a work setting that functioned under the impression that time was money and therefore not one moment, or one ounce of energy, could be wasted.[35]

Arguments ensued regarding the benefits and consequences of *Arbeitswissenschaft*. While some believed *Arbeitswissenschaft* created effective, less fatigued, and more efficient employees, some predicted that these modern processes would further exploit the average factory worker. Eventually the bodies of these workers—and their schedules—would fall prey to rationalization, just as if laborers were the very factory machines themselves. These anxieties were prevalent within sociology, literature, and film within early twentieth-century Germany, including the work of Max

[35] Anson Rabinbach, *The Human Motor: Energy, Fatigue, and the Origins of Modernity* (New York: Basic Books, 1990), 179-194.

Weber. Weber studied these rationalized, working bodies in reference to capitalism, religion, and the consequences of modernity. Ultimately, Weber concluded, "The working human being will be as carefully calculated as to his 'profitability' as any raw material or coal in terms of its usefulness for the plant, and on this prediction a considerable part of the hope which we might have for the progress of our work rests."[36] Weber focused on the rationalized life of the worker prior to the First World War, but the consequences of *Arbeitswissenschaft* and the modern workplace extended outside the factory and reached far into the lives of workers, especially in regard to physical culture. The scientization of work created rationalized and mechanized human beings, transforming them into nothing more than pawns for the workplace. This is the kind of consequence of modernization that many life reform groups attempted to combat; however, in the 1920s, ironically enough, *Arbeitswissenschaft*, and its residual effects—scientization, rationalization, and professionalization—extended outside of the factory and into physical culture, specifically competitive sport. As my thesis argues, the very repercussions of modernization that advocates of physical culture attempted to subdue eventually invaded the lives of athletes, transforming beautiful, fit, svelte bodies into machines for the nation.

Methodology and Organization of the Study

Competitive swimming is missing from much of the historiography surrounding sport in interwar Germany. This is curious given Germany's nineteenth-century affinity for *Baden* culture—bathing and spas—the belief in the healing aspects of clean water,

[36] Max Weber, quoted in Rabinbach, *The Human Motor*, 202.

and the emergence of many competitive swim clubs in the early twentieth century.[37] For this thesis, I examined Weimar era magazines, journals, and newspapers catering only to the topics of sport and health. Most of these interwar magazines and newspapers, save for those associated with *Turnen* and underneath the national German *Turnerchaft,* were exclusive to the time period of the Weimar Republic. The starting and ending dates of publication of the media I examined fell between the end of the First World War in 1918 and the ascension of Hitler and the Third Reich in 1933. I focused specifically on the articles, photographs, and advertisements within this specific sports journalism—whose main concern was the propagation of a healthy and active lifestyle alongside reporting to the public about sports competitions. Through this research, it is evident just how significant competitive swimming and its relationship to health, beauty, and the ideal German body was in the interwar era. In the world of Weimar sports journalism, swimming dominated articles concerning women's health, athletics and training. Through the lens of competitive swimming, I am revealing two deep currents so prevalent and prominent within Weimar society that they extended well into the realm of physical culture, including competitive sport: pronatalism and certain aspects of modernization.

The first chapter of this thesis, "Machines for Motherhood," examines photographs, advertisements, and articles that specifically discussed or catered to swimming sportswomen. I utilize the lens of swimming and female swimmers to argue that first and foremost, media propagated the importance and significance of achieving the ideal, beautiful figure, and therefore healthy, body—not through the unhealthy

[37] Thomas W. Maretzki, "Cultural Variation in Biomedicine: The Kur in West Germany," *Medical Anthropology Quarterly,* Vol. 3, No. 1 (Mar., 1989), 22-35.

constraints of a corset, but simply through another method—sport. In this way, women's participation in sport was not an aspect of emancipatory New Woman culture, as some historians have suggested, but another way of constraining women within traditional gender roles. Furthermore, through advertisements and articles, sports journalism presented diametrically opposing methods on how to achieve the ideal, feminine body. And most significantly—no matter which method women utilized to obtain the ideal, svelte body—the ultimate goal of achieving these beautiful bodies was to reproduce healthy, beautiful Germans. Sports print media utilized the sport of swimming and swimmers to promote motherhood, the pinnacle of a woman's duty in the Weimar Republic. Sports may have included some aspects of New Woman culture, but ultimately the media representation of these athletes and the sport of swimming reinforced traditional gender roles, revealing that competitive sport was not exempt from reinforcing a pronatalist agenda during the Weimar Republic.

Athletics not only promoted beautiful, birthing bodies, but also mechanized bodies. The second chapter of this thesis unearths how scientized swim training techniques transformed the bodies of professional athletes into "Vehicles for Victory." The forces of modernization—rationalization and professionalization—are evident in sports media's discussion of swim training, and those participants that most represented these facets of modernization—professional athletes. Similar to the effects of *Arbeitswissenschaft* and the Taylorization of the factory in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, sports training transformed athletes into machines for the nation. Interestingly enough, the very forces of modernization that physical culture and life reform movements sought to battle through sport and a healthy lifestyle are incredibly

evident within the discussion of training in sports journalism. The consequences of modernity extended well outside of the walls of the factory floor and into leisure time in the interwar period. Scientized training created mechanized, rationalized, and professionalized athletes ready and willing to prove Germany's status as a European power player in the realm of sport in the interwar era. Ultimately, sports media promoted the idea that these athletes would help Germany rise above its status of a defeated nation after its severe loss in the First World War.

Regarding print media—including the sports journalism I examined for this thesis—prevalent within the Golden Years of the Weimar Republic, it is necessary, and obvious, to mention that to have a consumer culture, consumption must occur. Germans—whether they be mothers, sports enthusiasts, athletes, or coaches—subscribed to or bought—for a small price—these monthly or biweekly sports and health magazines and newspapers published in association with national organizations such as the German *Turnerschaft* or the German Athletics Association. A recovering nation—with defeat and the extreme consequences of war still fresh on their minds—must have found some reprieve or satisfaction in the pronatalism and modernization present within sports journalism. The desire for a repopulated, healthy nation and ultimately one that would eventually prove its worth again on the world stage through competition, must have appealed to many citizens of the Weimar Republic.

CHAPTER TWO: MACHINES FOR MOTHERHOOD

Introduction

> It is self-evident that today's women and girls, who strengthen their muscles through sport, have different figures than the "Ladies" from before, who spent most of their lives resting or sitting on a couch or in a wagon. As long as the woman did not work out her muscles, her cervical bone remained delicate and her neck narrow, the chest muscle was narrow, and her body graceful…If you are doing sports or gymnastics, the chest muscles will expand, the biceps will develop, and the shape of your shoulders will become distinct…It is not necessary for the "modern" woman to recognize this athletic [body] as a beauty ideal, and it is still less necessary for this new body culture to eliminate all the sentimentality and feelings of a woman's mind. Through this beauty standard the woman loses the most precious thing she possesses: femininity.[38]

> Athletic exercises are ideal for the female sex, as they strengthen the lower abdominals and the lower back which girls are forced to use during childbirth…They [girls] must develop their muscles and maintain this development of the muscles in order to exercise the activity of motherhood…I believe that the present generation of girls will be superior in health and strength. Our women have been too pampered.[39]

These two quotations appeared within one month of each other in the German women's sports newspaper *Frauen Turn und Sport Zeitung* in 1922. Both articles tackle the two most often discussed concerns associated with women and sport in the Weimar Republic—beauty and motherhood. Throughout the interwar era in Germany, sports media presented conflicting ideas about female beauty standards while maintaining the idea that a woman's ultimate duty in regard to physical culture was through her contribution to the German *Volk.* According to Weimar sports print media, women played

[38] "Die moderne Frauen-Ideal," *Frauen Turn und Sport Zeitung,* October 1922, 35.
[39] "Athletentum und Muttershaft," *Frauen Turn und Sport Zeitung,* September 1922, 30-31.

multiple roles in the realm of health, sport, and exercise. Weimar women were not only responsible for bearing children and remaining physically active themselves, but expected to train their children to exercise, therefore increasing a population that was severely decimated by the First World War.

This chapter argues that Weimar sports journalism utilized competitive swimming and its relationship to health to promote an ideal, beautiful female body fit for birthing children and prepared for the physically strenuous task of motherhood. Sports media turned to swimming—what they promoted as the ideal women's sport—to accomplish this goal. Far from promoting physical culture to emancipate women from their daily work, household chores, and child rearing, sports media simply reinforced traditional responsibilities to these women. This chapter focuses on three aspects of interwar sports media and their focus on the sport of swimming and its contribution to overall health. The first section discusses the relationship between health and physical beauty and how sports journalism promoted the idea that swimming created the optimal female body. Secondly, sports media propagated the notion that swimming shaped healthy bodies that were not only beautiful, but physically fit, strong, and capable for the grueling process of labor. Lastly, media desired these mothers to use their healthy bodies to shape the healthy lifestyle of their families, including imparting the skill of swimming on their children. Specifically examining the sport of competitive swimming reveals the pronatalist agenda of the Weimar Republic. This agenda was so deeply embedded in German culture that it extended into competitive sport, reflecting societal concerns regarding population decline after the First World War.

Swimming, Health, and the Beautiful Body

> She [the sportswoman] does not need to subject her body to cures from fattening diets or to the best creams, pastes, and ointments supplied by the cosmetics industry. She is also unknown to the physician and pharmacist because sport gives her health, a fresh complexion, and clear eyes, a slim and yet balanced body shape, and brings strength, endurance, flexibility, and stamina.[40]

Evident in the introduction to this thesis, health was a primary concern throughout the Weimar Republic. Sports media promoted the idea that participating in physical activity had the power to transform degenerate, sick bodies into beautiful, healthy bodies. For example, sports print media propagated the idea that swimming for exercise had many benefits, one specifically being the beautification of the female body. When sports media discussed the sport of swimming in relation to female athletes, beauty remained a significant, and often central, theme within articles. One article begged the question, "Which sport should we women practice? Every sport is suitable, but one type stands out: swimming. [Swimming] has all the benefits that we women desire...Through swimming, and beginning swimming at an early age, the body's natural beauty is allowed to unfold."[41] Even magazines not dedicated to health or fitness recognized and promoted that participating in competitive swimming molded beautiful bodies. For example, a 1929 article within the German fashion magazine *Vogue* claimed, "Swimming is the most beneficial sport for the beauty of the female body. Every muscle becomes unified and rhythmically tenses and relaxes, and the result is that balanced harmony that we alone

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[40] Otto P. Krueger, "Vegetieren oder Leben? Ein Kapitel vom Frauensport" in *Sport und Gesundheit* no. 12, 1925, 188.
[41] Ibid.

find beautiful."[42] It would be tempting to assume that women's fashion and beauty magazines, such as *Vogue,* were the only types of media concerned with women and the relationship between sport and physical beauty. However, these concerns were prevalent within the articles of interwar era sports journalism and the advertisements in this media geared toward female athletes. Sports journalism's appeals to female desires to be beautiful were unsurprisingly paradoxical. The beauty standards represented within these publications were not only difficult to achieve, but confusing to understand. Weimar sports publications promoted *two different versions* of the ideal female body—the slim and beautiful body formed by diets, modern fashion, and supplements *and* the naturally toned beautiful body shaped by time spent in the outdoors playing sports and exercising.

Historians have studied these two different beautiful bodies of the interwar period in juxtaposition. Scholars who have studied European women in the interwar era attributed the desire to have a slim body to an early twentieth-century phenomenon associated with women's emancipation from traditional gender roles and a consequence of the First World War.[43] For example, modern interwar A-line fashions associated with the New Woman trumped the traditional, corseted, confined bodies of the past. This was due not only to women's emancipation, however, but the consequences of a war in which material for corsets and fabric for dresses were in short supply.[44] While these fashions may have freed women from the physical constraints of a corset, new fashions and beauty standards simply regulated women's bodies in a different way.[45] Advertisements for

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[42] "Sonne, Luft, und Wasser," *Vogue,* June 1929, 5-7.
[43] This includes historians like Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, and Fiona Skillen.
[44] Bonnie English, "The Democratization of Fashion: Machine Age Aesthetics," in *A Cultural History of Fashion in the 20th and 21st Centuries: From Catwalk to Sidewalk* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2007).
[45] Sabine Hake, "In the Mirror of Fashion," in *Women in the Metropolis: Gender and Modernity in Weimar Culture* ed. Katharina von Ankum (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 188.

unnatural slimming supplements and tools for fat loss in order to fit into these new fashions ran rampant within popular print media in the interwar era, even within publications dedicated to health and sport. When catering to female athletes, advertisements not only focused on sport, but also on the latest fashions and beauty products. These advertisements were completely different from advertisements geared toward male athletes, which focused on items such as exercise equipment. Specifically, for the female swimmer, advertisements forced women to question whether they had the best shampoo, sunscreen, and the latest swim fashions. Advertisements targeting these women frequently featured slimming or fat-loss instruments, medicines, teas and supplements, and whole medical practices dedicated to providing female athletes with the following: fuller busts, either slimmer *or* fuller figures, tanner skin, whiter teeth, less grey hair, and therefore healthier bodies. These advertisements were in direct contrast to life reform movements which existed in response to modern bodies that relied on supplements, pills, cigarettes, alcohol, and caffeine. For example, German nude culture promoted the outdoors—sun, air, and water—and considered exercising in the outdoors as the cure for all ailments and the only supplements needed to achieve an ideal body.[46]

Whereas scholars have studied one beautiful body versus the other—manufactured versus natural, artificial versus organic—Sports media promoted *both* of these models when sculpting their version of the optimal female body. Sports journalism leapt at the opportunity to promote their version of the athletic, trim female body.

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[46] Scholars like Chad Ross and Marion E.P. de Ras have studied nude culture and the *Wandervogel,* respectively. And while these naturalist movements promoted natural remedies, oftentimes these communities enforced their own standards of beauty, relying on a variety of creams and salves to achieve tanner skin and smoother feet and sometimes even promoting hormones so that women could attain ideal breast size.

However, this journalism utilized photographs and articles to advocate for the natural body shaped by physical activity alongside advertisements promoting the opposite. In close proximity to articles advising young German women to mold naturally toned bodies through participating in sport stood a myriad of beauty and fashion products. Articles promoted the organic body shaped by sport while advertisements negated this message. For many sports magazines and newspapers, exercise and the outdoors were not only the perfect cure, but the best beauty regimen. For others, physical activity was not enough. The representation of swimming and female swimmers in sports media was not immune to this irony. Articles specifically promoted swimming not only as a natural sport that helped participants *achieve* naturally beautiful bodies, but as a sport that *required* a specific body type to begin with.

Many publications throughout the Weimar Republic implored women to stay away from unnatural or unfeminine sports such as boxing out of fear it would "masculinize" women's bodies, rendering them incapable of bearing children.[47] However, many sports publications argued that exercise and sport created beautiful bodies; women simply needed to choose an appropriate activity. Sports articles specifically cited swimming, usually alongside activities such as track, tennis, and gymnastics, as activities that produced the ideal feminine body—slender and muscular, but not *too* muscular.[48] Furthermore, swimming fostered not only natural and beautiful bodies but *hygienic* bodies as well given the common belief that water, alongside sun and air, were the key components in shaping a healthy and natural body.[49] Sports magazines

[47] Katie Sutton, "The Masculinized Female Athlete in Weimar Germany," *German Politics and Society* 27, no. 3 (2009), 28-49.
[48] P. Schopf, "Die Frau und der Sport," *Deutsche Turn Zeitung*, November 11, 1926, 804.
[49] "Die Bedeutung des Schwimmsports," *Sport und Gesundheit*, no. 1, 1925, 24.

such as *Sport und Sonne* even challenged people and publications that promoted slimming agents and dieting fads as opposed to natural physical activities such as swimming to achieve the perfect body. However, things were never quite so simple. Alongside a photograph of two smiling swimmers, one article within *Sport und Sonne* claimed,

> From time to time a woman remarks that she is eager to become leaner. Trying to achieve this goal has resulted in many methods, the half hour morning workout, slim-yourself foods, fat-suctioning devices, the brand called Lean From Any Position, the slimming corset, etc…They [these women] crawl into bed hungry in the evening and their growling stomach wakes them in the morning. Many destroy their vitality to achieve an external goal.[50]

This article claimed that certain women who desired to be thinner should not go to such extreme and unnatural lengths to obtain the ideal, contemporary slender body—a nice sentiment. However, as the article continued the central message changed. The article proceeded to idealize "athletic, well-toned bodies" and concluded with a call to the German population to remain physically and mentally "slim." The author argued that achieving this type of body resulted in the ability to "master the lazy impulses of the flesh."[51] This article—placed alongside two smiling female swimmers—called for the mastery of the body through sport to achieve an athletic, toned, beautiful body and a fit mind. Only a few months after the publication of "Der Wille zur Schlankheit," *Sport und Sonne,* a journal which primarily advocated for the natural, toned, athletic body formed through sport reported on which bodies were best for the sport of swimming.

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[50] "Der Wille zur Schlankheit," *Sport und Sonne,* August 15, 1929, 393.
[51] Ibid.

Unsurprisingly, this magazine decided that "slender figures with long legs and arms" were the best fit.[52]

Sport und Sonne understood that not every female reader of their magazine embodied their version of the perfectly fit, athletic, and beautiful swimmer. What could a female swimmer do if her body did not fit the magazine's bill of a slender, long-limbed body, but she also wanted to answer the publication's call to dismiss unnatural slimming agents and diet fads? Swim fashion was this publication's answer. In their summer edition *Sport und Sonne* advertised and reported on the importance of choosing the right swimsuit. One advertisement stated, "Even the best figure can get lost in an ill-fitted swimsuit," and suggested that women who desired a figure associated with "grace and beauty" should choose a swimsuit that fit like a "second skin."[53] Another article within *Sport und Sonne* focused on swim fashion (both for bathing and sport) and stated that a woman had to be "slim and lean if she dared to go out in the sun" in the new, shorter and more form-fitting swimsuits of the postwar era. The claims and tone of this article are in juxtaposition with the previous article imploring women not to go to such great lengths to achieve the perfect figure. According to this piece, the ideal body appears to have been a necessary requirement prior to even beginning to participate in the sport of swimming, or at least before donning the suit.

Weimar sports magazines were consumed with female beauty; however, physical beauty ran only surface deep. Obtaining physical beauty was simply the first step in achieving what mattered most concerning women in the interwar era: a *healthy* body.

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[52] "Hygiene des Schwimmens," *Sport und Sonne*, February/March, 1930. 64-65.
[53] "Gute Figur durch richtigen Badeanzug," *Sport und Sonne*, June/July, 1930, 208.

Sports journalism operated within a framework of understanding that health and beauty ("Gesundheit ist Schönheit!") were essentially interchangeable concepts.[54] An article titled "Sport und Frauenschönheit" which appeared in *Frauen Turn und Sport Zeitung* argued, "For us women, beauty has the same meaning as health."[55] Therefore, the able-bodied, toned, strengthened, and svelte figure of an athlete was idealized; this body signified health. Sports journalism specifically cited these healthy body benefits in reference to the sport of swimming. The authors of these articles considered the sport of swimming to be "the healthiest and most beneficial physical activity." Unlike many other popular sports in the interwar era—such as track and field and *Turnen*—articles within sports media acknowledged that swimming targeted, strengthened, and toned just about every muscle in the body: arms, legs, lungs, core, back, pelvis. Therefore, this made participating in swimming a desirable activity for those looking to achieve not only a svelte, stronger, and more beautiful body, but a *healthier* one—a body free from disease, fully developed, and fit.[56] Furthermore, athletic swimming was different than the German *Kur,* popular in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in which one had to visit a faraway spa to bathe, heal, and rehabilitate in the waters.[57] Swimming competitively—while perhaps taking a bit more physical effort—required less travel and money while providing the same health benefits alongside other advantages associated with participating in competitive sport. For example, one article opened with the statement, "Bathing [in a spa] brings you health, but swimming gives you strength and courage."[58]

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[54] "Gesundheit ist Schönheit," *Kraft und Schönheit,* no. 3, March 1920, 57.
[55] "Sport und Frauenschönheit," *Frauen Turn und Sport Zeitung,* no. August 31, 1922, 27.
[56] "Am, im, auf Wasser, " *Sport und Sonne,,* no. 6, 1925, 48.
[57] Thomas W. Maretzki, "Cultural Variation in Biomedicine: The Kur in West Germany," *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, 3, no. 1 (1989), 22-35.
[58] "Die Bedeutung des Schwimmens für das weibliche Geschlecht," *Frauen Turn und Sport Zeitung* Feb. 1, 1923, 5.

Swimming was not the upper-class, spa retreat of the past, but a prophylactic alongside a myriad of other health benefits.

Furthermore, and different from any other physical activity, sports journalism considered swimming a panacea in the Weimar era. Not only could this activity shape beautiful and healthy bodies and prevent disease; it could also *heal* unhealthy and degenerate bodies. This benefit was necessary for a nation suffering devastating population loss and starvation during and after the First World War. Participation in competitive sport could, as one article contended, "develop a sense of community, work upon the mind, the spirit, and the will, and the improvement of the body," and spur the "inner and outer reconstruction" of a "collapsed" nation in the interwar era.[59] One way sports media promoted the healing benefits of swimming was through the discussion of famous female swimmers. Australian swimming star and stage icon Annette Kellermann was featured in an article detailing the value of women's sports in the Weimar Republic. The article claimed,

> The ideal sport for women in terms of hygiene is swimming…the best swimmer in the world, Annette Kellermann, who is also considered in America the owner of the best figure, was anemic and had sick lungs before she began swimming. Her health and beauty returned solely because of the sport of swimming.[60]

This article utilized Kellermann's experience as both a female and an athlete to highlight the supposed "Value of Today's Women's Sport"—the title of the article. However, this article notes that not only was swimming valuable for achieving a beautiful body, but for the healing of sickness. Placing this idea alongside Kellermann, who was not only

[59] "Sport und Persönlichkeit" *Sport und Gesundheit*, 1925, 131.
[60] "Der Wert unseres heutigen Frauensports," *Kraft und Schönheit*, no. 2, 1923, 18-20.

respected and recognized for her athletic abilities, but for her beauty and career as a film and stage star, is a prime example of sports media's attempt to relay the concept that health did not simply equal a visually pleasing body, but a body free from disease. If a woman wanted to be beautiful, healthy, and healed—like Kellermann—she could simply join her local competitive club swimming team.

Although sports journalism sent contradictory messages with regard to how to achieve the optimal body—whether through exercise, supplements, or beauty products—this media utilized the sport of swimming to propagate its version of the optimal body—feminine yet strong, healthy and therefore beautiful, and untainted by disease. Swimming was king in the world of Weimar sport, but the preeminent goal for swimming's female participants was not to simply be healthy and beautiful. Ultimately, sports media—not in any way different from other aspects of Weimar society—promoted a pronatalist agenda. Female athletes—with their svelte, athletic, and healthy bodies—were tools for regenerating, reproducing, and repopulating a nation severely damaged by war, starvation, and economic and political turmoil.

Swimming, Health, and Birthing Bodies

"For us the measure of sport is the extent to which it makes a man able to fight as a soldier and a woman able to bear children."[61] Carl Diem—vanguard of competitive games, founder of the German College of Sport, and Olympic authority throughout Weimar and Nazi Germany—made this unapologetic claim. Although it appears Weimar Republic sports publications would have been satisfied with a nation teeming with athletic, toned, statuesque female bodies spending their days playing sports, sports media reflected a much more crucial objective and concluding goal of German society. Alongside the concept that health paralleled physical beauty, sports journalists utilized the sport of swimming to promote motherhood and the ultimate woman's duty: contributing healthy children to the German *Volk.* Achieving a beautiful, athletic and toned—yet still feminine—body was Weimar women's first task. Next, through sports such as swimming, women needed to achieve birthing bodies ready and willing to regenerate a population devastated by the First World War. Sports publications utilized swimming to accomplish this mission for motherhood in two ways. First sports and health publications often associated swimming with the development of a specific body type, as shown in the first section of this chapter. Similar to how this media crafted the idea that swimming shaped the ideal, fit female body, articles also informed their female readers that swimming helped women form a body capable of enduring painful and long childbirth.

[61] Carl Diem quoted in Horst Ueberhorst, "The Importance of the Historians' Quarrel and the Problem of Continuity for the German History of Sport," *Journal of Sport History* 17, no. 2 (1990), 238.

Secondly, alongside the concept of reproducing children, articles frequently mentioned swimming in reference to rearing these children. Sports journalism promoted the importance of women's roles in not only birthing babies, but training and educating healthy, strong children for the *Vaterland*, both physically and mentally. According to articles within sports publications, this molding of young minds and the shaping of young bodies was the mother's duty. Placing motherhood alongside the significance of women's critical role in reproducing and regenerating a war torn nation with mentally and physically fit bodies provided women with a charge. Through their discussion of swimming, sports media advanced a pronatalist agenda and the idea that German women had an obligation, a national duty, not only to the advancement of their own body, but also the German people's body or *Volkskörper.*

Frauen Turn und Sport Zeitung, a sports newspaper exclusively for women, often instructed female athletes how to exercise, how women should teach their children about health and exercise, and oftentimes what sports clothing to wear. Within this publication, articles frequently tackled the importance of motherhood in relation to sport, fitness, and health. For example, one 1925 issue featured a poem titled, "Du Deutsche Frau" ["You German Woman"], a poem that both thanked German women and detailed the importance of their involvement in raising healthy children for the Fatherland.[62] Raising healthy children was the ultimate goal, however being physically capable and ready for the act of birthing these children was of concern within sports print media. Articles specifically cited the significant benefits associated with the women's swimming in regard to ensuring a healthy childbirth. An article titled "Die Frau und der

[62] "Du Deutsche Frau," *Frauen Turn und Sport Zeitung,* no. 4, 1925, 13.

Schwimmsport," claimed that women's swimming for exercise "combined in the most ideal manner harmonious muscle activity and bodily movement." Next to this claim, the article reported that swimming shaped bodies fit and ready for motherhood.[63] The article argued that the main benefit of swimming's "harmonious muscle activity" existed "in regard to birth."[64] The sport of swimming not only created fit and toned bodies, but helped prepare and condition the specific muscles utilized during childbirth. Through the development of these certain muscles by choosing swimming for exercise, women could eventually endure the pain associated with their ultimate duty, bearing children. Throughout the interwar era, Weimar sport publications remained specific in detailing the importance of swimming in regard to forming motherly muscles.

Motherly muscles, according to Weimar sports media, included those which directly aided in childbirth including the abdominal and pelvic floor muscles. Sports media considered the development of these muscles through sport absolutely critical for successful reproduction and delivery. Sports publications also reported that *specifically* the sport of swimming help shape muscles ready and willing for this process. An article in *Sport und Sonne* claimed,

> For women, swimming is particularly suitable for strengthening the abdominal, the pelvic, and the pelvic floor muscles. Since extraordinary demands are placed on these muscles for the expectant mother, the strengthening of these muscles is essential. If these muscles are not strengthened enough, they may fail or tear easily and may possibly cause women's diseases.[65]

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[63] "Die Frau und der Schwimmsport," *Frauen Turn und Sport Zeitung,* no. 1, 1922, 3.
[64] Ibid.
[65] "Hygiene des Schwimmens," *Sport und Sonne,* no. 2, 1930, 64-65.

According to this article, women could not only achieve strong muscles suited for motherhood by choosing swimming for exercise, but also prevent diseases associated with complicated childbirth. Preparation of women's bodies for childbirth was not the only aspect of motherhood embedded within sports media during the Weimar era. Articles within sports media often focused on protecting future mothers. Therefore, menstruation and its relationship to women's involvement in physical activity also dominated articles surrounding the sport of swimming.

In the interwar era, preparing the bodies of potential mothers through sport was as equally as important as protecting women's bodies *from* sport during menstruation. Specifically, various sports publications in the Weimar Republic advised women to be mindful and diligent in regard to physical exertion during menstruation. Advising female athletes if, when, and how they could participate in sport during their menstrual cycles remained a prime concern for sports and health publications throughout the interwar era. One article entirely dedicated to women's participation in sport during their menstrual cycle claimed,

> It has been told by one well known swimmer, that she won a swimming championship on her day of indisposition [menstruation]. I believe this is an isolated case and even with the greatest will or effort, women should not perform during the peak of their period. We want to stay healthy and productive and be the strong…mother. We can only do this if we toughen our bodies with deliberate training and protect [our bodies] by not begrudging them peace. So I repeat again: Skillful training in times of wellness—Peace, and at best bedrest, in the first few days of the period, which is the key for women to stay young, healthy, and productive.[66]

[66] "Frauensport und die Tage der Menstruation," *Sport und Sonne,* no. 8/9, 1926, 622-623.

According to this article, creating a beautiful and strong body through physical activity and "deliberate training" was an important aspect of health and wellness. However, what was of greater significance was keeping future mothers from harm. More important than obtaining a championship swimming victory or a beautiful body was protecting future birthing body parts.

Sport und Sonne was not the only publication that advised women on how to participate in sport during their menstrual cycle. Even *Die Athletik*—a sports publication primarily for men that featured articles, photographs, competition announcements, and reports surrounding activities like boxing, track and field, and weightlifting—took it upon itself to dictate to female athletes regarding their participation in athletics during menstruation. One specific example titled "Leibesübungen für die Frau" [Physical Exercises for Women] stood among photos and articles catering to male athletes. The article claimed, "During menstruation female athletes can exercise without injury, but many other women, who know nothing of body care, have to suffer because they are bedridden [during menstruation]."[67] Sports media promoted certain exercises, specifically swimming, as an activity that women should practice in order to mold muscles for motherhood before and after their menstrual cycle. Remaining sedentary during menstruation was not an option, nor was exercising with too much intensity; women had to safeguard their most valuable contribution to society. Equally as important as the maintenance of a strong beautiful body through sport was the security of motherhood during a time when sports media considered female athletes their most delicate. According to these articles, women could not hope to be "young, healthy, and

[67] "Leibesübungen für die Frau," *Die Athletik,* no. 4, 1929, 58.

productive" without protecting their main duty throughout the interwar era—their ability to contribute new bodies to the German *Volk.* After successfully birthing these babies, mothers became athletic coaches for their children, imparting on them beneficial and healthy activities—such as swimming—and raising and educating more ideal bodies.

Swimming, Health, and Motherhood

German championship swimmer and athletic icon Anni Rehborn contributed an article titled "Schwimmen ist ein Sport für die Frau" [Swimming is a Sport for Women] to the Weimar sport and health publication *Sport und Gesundheit*. In this article Rehborn not only contended that "Swimming is the ideal exercise for women," but stated that the sport of swimming was especially significant to her because it was almost a "*kleiner Erbfehler*," or a small hereditary defect, within the immediate Rehborn family. Rehborn mentioned that her father was a swimmer and diver and her whole family participated in water sports as well.[68] For her, competitive swimming was a family affair. For Weimar sports journalism, the person responsible for this family affair was the mother. First and foremost, publications claimed women should maintain beautiful strong bodies and prepare muscles for motherhood. The next major duty for mothers after bearing children was grooming healthy strong bodies for the German *Volk.* To accomplish this, mothers should impart healthy behaviors, such as physical activity, to their children. Sports articles greatly emphasized and promoted this concept through competitive swimming. Alongside articles that reported that swimming molded beautiful bodies stood claims

[68] "Schwimmen ist ein Sport für die Frau," *Sport und Gesundheit,* no. 29, 1930, 450.

about the importance of motherhood for the growth of the German body and the cultivation of the ideal German character.

Weimar sports publications often catered to women by featuring articles on children's health, including topics such as the importance of exercise and sport for the German youth. Female athletes could read these publications to learn how to take care of not only their own bodies, but their children's bodies as well. Swimming, unlike other sports, was not just a competitive sport, but a significant life skill. Frequently, sports media promoted youth swimming to decrease the chance of death by drowning, an obvious incentive for families to get German children to the swimming pool. *Deutsche Schwimmerblatt,* a small publication specifically reporting on the sport of swimming including training techniques, competition announcements and photos, noted that it was "unfortunate that swimming could not be considered the most popular physical activity of the day." There should be more participation within the sport of swimming because it not only shaped ideal bodies that helped Germans "triumph over the natural elements" but actually prevented the loss of precious young lives.[69] Another article in *Deutsche Schwimmerblatt* implored Germans to learn how to swim stating, "The saying 'Every German a swimmer, every swimmer a lifesaver,' strives to make swimming a common good for the German people."[70] Naturally, life-saving and the prevention of drowning were not the only reasons sports magazines and newspapers provided for getting young children to participate in the sport of swimming. Sports media frequently reported that

[69] "Schwimmen in der Deutschen Turnschaft," *Deutsche Schwimmerblatt* no. 16, 1929, 125-126 and "Etwas vom Schwimmen," *Deutsche Schwimmerblatt,* no. 21, 1926, 158.
[70] "Das Schwimmen im Arbeitsplan der D.T," *Deutsche Schwimmerblatt,* no. 23, 1929, 169-170.

sports such as swimming, alongside shaping beautiful bodies and motherly muscles, molded young minds and created good moral character.

An article in *Sport und Gesundheit* argued that sport was essential for shaping the ideal German character and developing essential personality traits. The article contended,

> Because sport is always exercised in community, it is required of sports players to put aside their own interest and develop a sense of community. In short, sport promotes the development of the will and the internal discipline of the people. Once popular sport and physical care in this manner, mind, and spirit work in addition to the physical body, then they contribute crucial training to the people as we need them, people who could save themselves from the moral and physical collapse of the war and postwar period…[71]

According to this article, sport was "not an end itself. Sport is the means to an end."[72] Sport created both strong bodies, strong minds, and strong character.

Per their usual practice, sports publications utilized famous female athletes to promote swimming as a crucial tool for the training of body, mind, and character. Championship German swimmer Erna Murray accompanied an article on the importance of swimming which claimed that no other sport but swimming and diving combatted disease and increased the physical fitness of the people. Sports such as swimming also provided "healthy, natural invigoration and resilience," character building, and team spirit, especially for the German youth.[73] The most favorable character traits—according to German sports media—included qualities such as camaraderie, community spirit, and discipline. Similar to this article featuring Murray, sports publications utilized swimming to reiterate the value of this specific sport for brain and body development. One article

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[71] "Sport und Persönlichkeit," *Sport und Gesundheit,* no. 9, 1925, 131.
[72] Ibid.
[73] "Die Bedeutung des Schwimmsports," *Sport und Gesundheit,* no. 1, 1925, 24.

claimed that by joining the swimming movement, women would promote these character traits, not only because "swimming was in particular a German sport," but because swimming "promoted the German being."[74]

Sports media promoted swimming as a healthy sport for the body and mind and as an activity the entire family should enjoy and participate in, *especially* children. An article in the *Deutsche Schwimmerblatt* argued, "Swimming should not only be learned by young boys, but also by the young girls and nurtured extensively. Then, there will be fewe sick girls, and later, healthier women."[75] Germany needed healthy young girls to grow into strong women and ultimately, German mothers. A war-torn Germany needed these future mothers to not only bear more babies, but to develop the ideal, disciplined German character in them. In the realm of sport, women's responsibilities included shaping not only physically fit bodies, but mentally strong, courageous, and community-oriented minds for the German *Vaterland.*

An article titled "Sport Kinder—Die Mutter als Sportlehrerin ihrer Kinder" [Sport Children—The Mother as the Sports Instructor of their Children] stated, "How much charm and delight can the cohabitation of a mother and child warrant; and yet how much sacrifice and care that it [motherhood] calls for, is never returned?"[76] The article recognized that the duty of motherhood was a difficult, yet rewarding, task. The article also contended that German families could only reach complete happiness when they were working as a unit to develop both strong bodies and strong minds. However, as the article continues, it is quite clear who is responsible for this physical and mental

[74] "Die Frau und der Schwimmsport," *Frauen Turn und Sport Zeitung*, January 5, 1922, 3.
[75] "Etwas vom Schwimmen," *Deutsche Schwimmerblatt,* no. 21, 1926, 158.
[76] "Sport Kinder—Die Mutter als Sportlehrerin ihrer Kinder," *Sport und Sonne,* no. 9, 1930, 301.

development: the mother. The article expresses this idea through a narrative of teaching a young child how to swim.

> After a few years that have, despite all efforts, passed too quickly, you [the mother] can take the little one to swim. At first, [the child] will probably be afraid of the wet element. But, once it [the child] sees how the one who has done him so much good behaves in the water, he will be more trusting, splashing his hands around the water, and after some time, imitating the swimming movements of the one demonstrating.—Every year, every summer, every winter, the child will learn something new under the guidance of his mother.[77]

This article utilized the sport of swimming to represent the bond between mother and child fostered through physical activity. Women needed to exercise, cultivate motherly muscles, and participate in sports like swimming not only for the development of their own bodies, but so that their children could "imitate" their healthy lifestyles, molding ideal bodies of their own. When it came to exercise, especially sports like swimming, sports media presented women as physical educators. The mother was responsible for the cultivation of the minds and bodies of their families so they could enjoy "complete happiness."[78] The article ends arguing,

> One could say, "Would it not be better for a child if it was taught sport by a more capable teacher instead of a mother who could hardly be considered a master?" I believe that it is best when a young person is taught as much as possible by his mother. Whilst teaching her child in physical activities, the child has the best opportunity to explore his inner life.[79]

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[77] Ibid.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Ibid.

In the Weimar Republic, women had multiple duties—crafting beautiful bodies, mothering, and raising citizens, teaching them how to engage in sport and physical exercise. These duties did not even include those mothers whose work not only lay to her family, but also to her boss in the workforce. However, sports media made sure to target these women as well, making claims that sport acted in direct opposition to the harm committed to the body by factory or office life.

An article in *Sport und Sonne* recognized the hard work and difficult duties of employed women in the Weimar Republic. The article featured reports and photographs of a workers sports competition called the International Worker Olympics which took place in Frankfurt am Main. The female swimming competitors at the event smiled for the main photograph accompanying the title page. The article, titled "Die Arbeiterin und der Sport: Ihr Recht auf Gesundheit und Freude" [The Female Worker and Sport: Her Right to Health and Joy] referred to the competing female athletes as "heroines" and "the triple power." *Sport und Sonne* recognized that these women were not only employees and athletes, but also oftentimes had other positions as "housewives" and the "supporters of young lives."[80] The article suggested as to how women workers could confront the exhaustion and thankless job of working during the day while attempting to raise children. Their answer was, "Female workers—take to sport!"[81] This article understood that women of Weimar Germany had an exhaustive list of duties. These women were not only responsible for taking care of themselves and their families by working in the household. These "heroines" and "triple powers" often worked outside of the home to

[80] "Die Arbeiterin und der Sport," *Sport und Sonne,* no. 7, 1925, 47-50.
[81] Ibid.

provide for their family. After the call to "take to sport," the article continued and claimed, "This [sport] must be a solution that is almost as important as the requirement of physical exercise for male workers." Sport provided a solution for female workers in the midst of the fatigue caused by working and mothering. The article stated,

> I see the cruel images of crowded streets, the image of factories and workshops where man power is no longer one and undivided, where the machinery can hardly be beat for accuracy. I see the towering, smoke-spewing smokestacks and the high firewalls that only allow searching eyes a meager segment of blue sky.[82]

Sport was this publication's answer to rejuvenating the tired body. However, once again, Weimar sports publications did not promote women's sport simply for the benefit of women themselves. This article presented women's sport as simply a piece of a larger puzzle, for sports publications never neglected to mention the main responsibility of Weimar women: bearing and rearing healthy children. The article continued, "The children of mothers, whose body does not live on unbalanced labor alone, but is strengthened by reasonable physical activity, will be better off than the poor beings born out of plundered women's bodies."[83] *Sport und Sonne* considered the bodies of many factory women to have been "plundered," defaced, or impaired by hard labor in poor environmental conditions. This publication's answer for overworked, enervated interwar women was proper physical activity, including competitive sport. A friendly worker's swimming competition served as a way in which a sports publication could both prove the significance of women's sport and the significance of women's contribution to the

[82] Ibid.
[83] Ibid.

German *Volk.* Once again, sports print media in Weimar assigned women yet another duty. And in this case as if working mothers did not have enough on their plate, *Sport und Sonne* wanted to make sure these women knew they were needed for more.

Conclusion

In 1932, an article appearing in an edition of the health publication *Gesundheit* hoped to answer the question "Ist Schwimmen für Frauen schädlich?" ["Is Swimming Harmful for Women?]. The article argued,

> Swimming, especially outdoors…is one of the healthiest physical exercises. Namely, women are particularly suitable for it. [One] can no longer speak today over the objections to distance diving, to high diving, to distance swimming, and the swimming records for the vast majority of female swimmers. Swimming itself, and also the front crawl, is for women only beneficial.[84]

As the Weimar Republic began to collapse alongside the rise of fascism in Germany, sports publications continued to field questions concerning women's involvement in certain physical activities. Evidently, some citizens within the Weimar Republic were still skeptical about the rise of women's participation in sport, despite the interwar period's obsession with physical culture and overall health and wellbeing. Some sports—such as boxing—remained questionable in regard to women's participation. However, sports media maintained the idea that one sport in particular remained consistently healthy, beneficial, and almost *necessary* for women throughout the Weimar Republic—women's swimming. Weimar journalism concerned with health and sport promoted the sport of swimming for a variety of physical benefits including outward beauty, the

[84] "Ist Schwimmen für Frauen schädlich?," *Gesundheit,* no. 6, 1932, 82.

prevention of disease, and the actual healing of illness. If women wanted healthy and beautiful bodies, sports journalism encouraged their participation in the sport of swimming.

Ultimately, these beautiful and healthy female bodies had a higher calling: the reproduction of more, healthy German bodies. After the devastating losses of the First World War, Weimar sport media advanced traditional gender roles by charging women to use their beautiful, athletic bodies to help regenerate an unhealthy and deteriorated population ravaged by war. Weimar sports journalism promoted swimming as a tool by which women could obtain motherly muscles, fit, ready, and willing for labor. Moreover, Weimar sports media demanded these new mothers cultivate a strong, beautiful healthy German *Volkskörper*, or National Body. By educating, training, and imparting physical exercise on their children—despite their rigid schedules—sportswomen in the interwar era could help rebuild a healthy, strong, nation. Far from liberating women from traditional gender roles by allowing them to participate in sport, Weimar health and sport journalism reinforced the pronatalist agenda of the interwar era. Examining the sport of swimming illuminates this goal. Similar to this discovery that sport did not necessarily liberate women from traditional gender roles, sport also fell prey to consequences of modernization—the very consequences that physical culture life reform groups sought to combat. Exploring competitive swimming within sports journalism reveals a myriad of scientized training techniques and regimens and the professionalized athlete, mechanized and utilized for competition. These mechanized athletes—similar to athletic mothers—had an ultimate duty. Whereas the Weimar woman was urged to reproduce and cultivate

healthy, future Germans, athletes—through their training—were urged to regenerate a war-torn nation in a different way.

CHAPTER THREE: VEHICLES FOR VICTORY

Introduction

Modern industry and machines spawned the horrors of the First World War; they also defined a capitalist interwar era obsessed with productivity. Alongside economic stabilization and the withdrawal of occupation forces in 1924 came the Golden Years of the Weimar Republic. The modern industrialized workplace and its mechanized employees dispensed endless products to an exponentially growing consumer mass society. The need for workplace efficiency coupled with the desire for maximum output expanded well outside the factory, invading the confines of the home and extending into leisure time. The consequences of a modern society—mechanization and rationalization—driven by industry and consumer culture, dominated the interwar era. Authors, artists, and physical culture reformists cried out against these consequences of modernization, arguing that industrialization and the modern workplace had not only rationalized machinery, but also the men and women responsible for operating those machines. Those disillusioned by the jarring sounds of a mass society questioned how humans could function as individuals when modern society transformed them into nothing but robots for capitalist nations. Such concerns were evident within prominent early twentieth-century German works such as Fritz Lang's acclaimed 1927 film, *Metropolis* and sociologist's Max

Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905). In the modern, capitalist, western world, time was monetized and workers were rationalized.

As mentioned in chapter one, sports journalism, alongside other reform groups promoted healthy lifestyles and physical activity to combat negative aspects of the modern, industrialized society (for example, the call for employed women to participate in sport to rejuvenate their tired bodies). Sports journalism advocated for the fit, toned, bronzed body shaped by physical activity in the outdoors. This was supposed to directly counteract the unhealthy consequences of long hours laboring indoors and economic hardship. Health reformers viewed physical culture as the antithesis to the rationalized body, mechanized by modern society and the social and economic consequences of the First World War. Per some sports print media, the ideal athlete—reminiscent of the classical and beautiful Venus de Milo statue—was in direct opposition to modern trends which stripped mankind of their individuality, creativity, and humanity.

This chapter argues that physical culture and modernization were not diametrically opposed within an industrialized, consumer society such as the Weimar Republic. The repercussions of modernization and the factory floor—specifically scientization, rationalization, and professionalization—extended well into the realm of physical culture. These consequences of a modern society invaded athlete's lives, transforming their bodies into "Vehicles for Victory" for the nation of Germany. This is evident in how Weimar sports journalism discussed and reported on scientized swim training, the rationalized lives of athletes, and professional competitors. Sports print media featured competitive swimming and its relationship to beauty, birthing, and motherhood. It also promoted the sport as one in which athletes should discipline their

bodies to become successful, efficient, and precise competitors. Furthermore, sports journalism utilized famous professional swimmers to propagate these svelte, efficient machines ready and willing not only to model and mother, but also to achieve victory on the world stage for a country recently defeated in the First World War.

This argument draws from Erik N. Jensen's *Body by Weimar: Athletes, Gender, and German Modernity.* Jensen argued that certain aspects of German physical culture—namely certain competitive sports and their participants—embodied the qualities of modernity. Jensen cites male and female Weimar professional athletes, specifically tennis players, boxers, and track and field stars, as catalysts of the rationalization, mechanization, and competition associated with the interwar era. Jensen argues,

> Athletes eagerly embraced modernity in all of its rationalized, individualistic, commercial, competitive, time-oriented and achievement-focused excess…Sportswomen and men thrived in a world of measurement and record keeping, a world that continually pushed them to boost the output of their hearts, lungs, and quadriceps, just as it drove business to expand their production and employees to increase their productivity. Athletes, in other words, embodied precisely the elements of modern life that so many other branches of German physical culture rejected.[85]

The Weimar tennis player, boxer, and track and field athlete were agents of what Jensen considered the "modern body"—a body composed not just of lean muscle mass, but "streamlined efficiency."[86] These athletes allowed themselves to be scrutinized, controlled, and trained by various outside sources to maximize the athletic output of their svelte bodies. Training programs, exercise regimens, diet plans, and scheduled

[85] Erik N. Jensen, *Body by Weimar* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 6.
[86] Ibid.

competition disciplined the bodies of these athletes, creating machines ready and willing to compete and win. Similar to the charting of a factory worker's output during a workday, athletes in the Weimar Republic subjected themselves to the rationalization and mechanization of their bodies; however, these athletes refused to be simple cogs in a machine. Rejecting the "communal spirit" of other life reform organizations, including nudist culture, competitive athletes embraced individuality through competition. The urgency to be the first to cross the finish line created a sense of self-assertion, distinctiveness, and uniqueness—qualities different from the group-think and communal efforts of other physical culture life reform movements, such as *Turnen*, during the Weimar Republic.[87]

Sports media displayed not only beautiful, athletic bodies, but these disciplined bodies as well. Athletically disciplined sportsmen and women dominated the covers and pages of sports print media throughout the Weimar Republic. Michael Hau connects this idea of bodily discipline to the medicalization of society and the development of physical culture in early twentieth-century Germany. Women and men in the interwar era turned to physical culture to discipline their bodies, attempting to exert control over their lives and bodies given the challenges of the industrial workspace, economic uncertainty, and political turmoil within the Weimar Republic.[88] Specific training regimens coupled with efficient athletic bodies created disciplined athletes content to be utilized by the Fatherland. Furthermore, these bodies lent themselves to the scrutiny and surveillance of not only themselves, the state, and their coaches, but the German public.

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[87] Ibid, 135.
[88] Hau, *The Cult of Health and Beauty*, 3.

The sport of swimming and swimmers were not exempt from this trend of bodily objectification, self-surveillance, and discipline through athletic training. The properly trained bodies of swimmers, most obviously famous swimmers, not only represented the model athlete, but also the modern machine. Alongside their tennis, boxing, and track and field counterparts, these swimming athletes represented the ideal driven and disciplined, but simultaneously the individual and modern, German citizen. In the first section of this chapter, I will discuss the scientization of competitive swimming training and how sports journalism remained preoccupied with modern technique that ensured precision and perfection. Secondly, sports journalism also featured the regimented and efficient schedules of those professional swimmers training for competition, touting the need for efficiency associated with the modernized workplace. Lastly, I will discuss how sports journalism depicted professional athletes as specialists within their fields. Professionals' objective regarding training was not simply to shape an athletic body, but to secure a winning performance. It was important to showcase the efforts of trained, professional athletes praising their competitive spirit, hard work and effort, and ultimately their various victories. Sports newspapers and magazines venerated these simultaneously naturally beautiful, athletic, and rationalized bodies—and not simply for purposes of delivering ideas about health and sport. What mattered most within the interwar era was how these mechanized athletes served a greater purpose: victory for the Fatherland on the world stage.

Scientized Training

The scientization of sport—approaching physical activity through scientific study including kinesiology, sports medicine, and exercise physiology—developed alongside other aspects of modernization, such as industrialization and rationalization. Early forms of sport science developed in the mid-nineteenth century as improved microscopes and new technologies helped scientists discover new ways to examine blood vessels, the nervous system, and energy expenditure of the muscles.[89] The first ergometer and motor-driven treadmill, both invented in Europe in the 1880s, contributed to emerging attempts by scientists to understand the human body in motion.[90] In the early twentieth century, the horrors of the First World War and the injuries caused by trench warfare, gasses, and modern weaponry produced—out of necessity—advancements in physical therapy, rehabilitation, hydrotherapy, and kinesiology.[91] After a brief lapse in German sports research due to economic hardship and recovery from war in the early 1920s, sports sciences found their revival in the German Physician Association for the Promotion of Physical Exercise in 1924. Scientists and doctors alike continued to study human metabolism, energy expenditure, rest versus overtraining, and clinical exercise diagnostics.[92]

The scientization of sport and increased interest in bodily mechanics is evident within discussions of athletic training in Weimar Republic sports journalism. Articles on training for competitive swimming exhibit the two primary foci of the study of

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[89] Janet C. Harris and Richard A. Swanson, "History of Physical Activity," in *Introduction to Kinesiology: Studying Physical Activity*, 2nd edition, ed. Shirl J Hoffman (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 2005), 197.
[90] Wildor Hollmann, "Contributions from German Laboratories," in *History of Exercise Physiology*, ed. Charles Tipton (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 2014), 59-61.
[91] Harris and Swanson, "History of Physical Activity," 197.
[92] Hollmann, "Contributions from German Laboratories," 61-62.

kinesiology: the study of both *exercise* and of *skilled movement*. Regarding exercise, evident in chapter one, sports journalism focused on the conditioning of the body and the importance of exercise for overall health and disease prevention. This section focuses on sports journalism's preoccupation with *skilled movement*, or the study of "performances in which accuracy of direction, force, and rhythm or timing is essential to accomplishing predetermined goals."[93] Articles on swim training exhibited a fixation with rhythm and timing within stroke technique, maintaining that perfecting these would create a precise, efficient—and therefore fast—professional swimmer. Ironically, sports journalism promoted physical activity as the very means by which a person could achieve freedom from a modernized, industrialized society made efficient through the scientific study of the workplace, or *Arbeitswissenschaft.* However, participation in sports such as competitive swimming resulted in mechanizing the athlete through scientized training *to win*. Even within publications associated with the *Deutsche Turnerschaft* (DT), the organization dedicated to rhythmic gymnastics, articles utilized rudimentary graphs accompanied with specific instructions to showcase the perfect and most precise diving technique.[94] Modernized training techniques mechanized the professional swimmer, or fine-tuned their stroke, and ultimately their body, into a machine.

The professional swimmer that utilized modern training techniques exemplified aspects of modernization. In Jean Marie Brohm's essay "The Olympic Opiate," he argued, "Like the worker, the athlete is completely alienated to a process over which he has no control and by which he is dominated. Very often he is directly subordinated to his

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[93] Shirl J. Hoffman and Janet C. Harris, "Introduction to Kinesiology and Physical Activity," in *Introduction to Kinesiology: Studying Physical Activity*, 2nd edition, ed. Shirl J Hoffman (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 2005), 12-13.
[94] *Deutsches Schwimmerblatt*, no. 22, 1927, 166.

trainer or manager. He is in their hands…even his body no longer belongs to him: it belongs to science."[95] In the Weimar Republic, training for competitive swimming extended outside of the pool. This did not necessarily entail what today would be considered cross-training—training in multiple sports or exercises to perfect a singular sport. Regarding swimming in Weimar, this involved practicing movements and skills associated specifically for the perfecting swim technique on dry land. Released in 1927, a sport manual titled *Körperschulung für Männer und Frauen: Neue Formen* [*Physical Training for Men and Women: New Forms*] advocated for learning to swim without utilizing a body of water. The text claimed, "Not only in water can one learn how to swim!"[96] Likewise, sports print media promoted *Trockenschwimmen*—the literal translation meaning "dry swimming." *Trockenschwimmen* consisted of preparatory bodily exercises on land that both mimicked swimming in the water and developed proper breathing and arm tempo while perfecting precision and rhythm.

An article written by Paul Kellner—a former German swimming Olympian—appeared within the magazine *Sport und Gesundheit* and detailed the importance of practicing *Trockenschwimmen.* Kellner chronicled *Trockenschwimmen's* rising popularity within *Turnen* and schools in Germany in the early twentieth century, noting its significance within physical education. Furthermore, he reported that due to recent discoveries on the "mechanics of the art of swimming," or the skilled movements associated with the study of kinesiology, Weimar coaches and swimmers could study limbs in motion and proper breathing while incorporating *Trockenschwimmen*. These

[95] Jean-Marie Brohm, "The Olympic Opiate," Sport: A Prison of Measured Time: Essays (Paris: Christian Bougois Editeur), 1976, 107.
[96] Arthur Köchel, *Körperschulung für Männer und Frauen: Neue Formen* (Leipzig: Greithlein, 1927), 136.

discoveries of body mechanics revolving around perfecting rhythm also spurred the development of modern swimming strokes, namely backstroke, freestyle and sidestroke. These modern strokes offered faster—thus, more efficient—ways to reach the end of the pool, therefore perfecting these strokes through training *Trockenschwimmen* was necessary for victory in competition.

Practicing exercises like *Trockenschwimmen* not only reinforced the advanced technique of champion swimmers, but benefited amateur swimmers. *Trockenschwimmen* applied modern swimming technique to assist aspiring swimmers in becoming disciplined experts over their own technique. Beginning his discussion of the *Trockenschwimmen* exercise regimen, Kellner reported, "The usefulness of the exercise [*Trockenschwimmen*] is evident to everyone throughout the nation. The beginner, otherwise always influenced by the coldness of the water, will not be repelled by anything."[97] Swimmers could practice their *Trockenschwimmen* anytime, anywhere, making training immediately accessible for those without access to a pool or limited time. Similar to the promotion of competitive swimming in lieu of a trip to the spa for healing, sports media promoted another option for perfecting swimming technique that did not rely on access to a swimming pool. The article continued,

> Of greater importance is the cultivation of proper breathing. Breathing and swimming must always match rhythmically. In addition to the exercises, you can always perform *Trockenschwimmen* using equipment. [Equipment] is used here, but since it is expensive, it is only suitable for a few. It is cheaper to use stools, benches, and so on. Nevertheless, practicing these exercises will offer an advantage later while swimming horizontally in the pool, but one will also reach goals practicing these exercises standing.[98]

[97] "Trockenschwimmen," *Sport und Gesundheit,* no. 8, 1926, 118.
[98] Ibid.

Kellner reported that once a swimmer could control his or her bodily rhythm in perfect correlation to their breathing pattern, they would not only grow accustomed to swimming in water: Swimmers could evidently "overcome" the water by practicing these exercises on land before swimming competitively. The former Olympian concluded his discussion of *Trockenschwimmen* by asserting, "I hope that by swimming without water, that swimming in the water—the most vital exercise—will be so widespread, that everyone will be a dominator of the water."[99] Swimmers could hope to perfect their stroke technique through the practice of skilled movements evident within *Trockenschwimmen,* an advent of the study of body mechanics, or rudimentary kinesiology. Through these exercises, swimmers could not only overcome the limitations of their own bodies, but even grasp victory over the elements themselves by perfecting their bodily motions and rhythm. Modernized training produced athletes ready, willing, and trained for winning, for domination.

Former Olympians such as Paul Kellner were not the only swimming experts who promoted training for swimming through *Trockenschwimmen.* Publications featured famous swimmers to promote training such as *Trockenschwimmen.* An article titled "One Hundred Meters of Swimming Under One Minute" appeared within the publication *Sport und Sonne* with the subheading "Begin with Dry Exercises!" Speed, efficiency in the pool, and ultimate victory dominated this article. The article began,

> The modern crawlstroke [freestyle] guarantees the greatest speed. The youth thirsts longingly to learn it. The champion swimmer among the Hawaiians, who were especially predestined for swimming, displayed the crawlstroke first at the 1912 Olympics in Stockholm and won the Olympic victory. Since then, the crawlstroke has conquered the world. [Johnny]

[99] Ibid.

> Weißmüller and Arne Borg are the masters of the crawlstroke. You can be your own teacher![100]

The article included demonstration photos to accompany the *Trockenschwimmen* regimen arguing—much like Kellner's article—that these exercises could be practiced at any time without access to water to advance swimming technique. The first exercise this article promoted to mold hundred-meter freestylers involved a wash basin. The article suggested one simply dip their head in and out, in and out, in order to mimic the breathing pattern associated with the crawlstroke. After the swimmer was accustomed to this practice, they should proceed to open their eyes in the washbasin, making sure their eyes grow accustomed to being open and seeing underwater. Finally, pairing sight and breath together, the article suggested the athlete place a coin in the washbasin and attempt grab it with their mouths, practicing their breathing.[101]

The article carefully addressed developmental skills and the duty of each specific body part associated with the crawlstroke. After athletes perfected their breathing, they could proceed to advancing the rest of their bodies' movements, of which could be learned on land. For arm movements, the article suggested utilizing a stool, mimicking the position of swimming horizontally; however, performing circular, freestyle movements was not enough. The article demanded the precision for each part of the arm: fingers shut, hands and forearms in a singular plane, elbow leaned forward in geometric precision. The athlete should repeat until perfection, adding the other arm, always paying close attention to body position and, most importantly, perfect rhythm and tempo.[102] The same exactness applied to the kicking movements associated with freestyle. Like a finely

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[100] "Hundert Meter Schwimmen unter einer Minute," *Sport und Sonne,* no. 5, 1927, 276.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Ibid.

tuned machine, the athlete could not afford one misplaced muscle, one hiccup in rhythm, one mistake. Sports training—and the efficiency associated with it—made its way into the home through *Trockenschwimmen.* Articles suggested using stools, washbasins, and chairs—easily accessible "equipment" found around the house—to perfect their swimming technique on land. Articles concerning *Trockenschwimmen* exercises attempted to propagate the idea that other than a willing and disciplined participant and a bit of time, not much was needed to perfect the athlete's swimming skills.

Trockenschwimmen was not the only aspect of skilled movement associated with competitive swim training; however, most publications remained predominately concerned with the modern crawlstroke, or freestyle. Perfecting this new stroke was the fastest and most efficient way to swim, and ultimately, to win. An article titled "The Training of Swimmers: With Special Consideration of 'Crawl Swimming'" appeared in a 1925 issue of *Sport und Gesundheit.* The article detailed the training of swimmers at the German National Sports Institute in which athletes trained five out of seven days of the week for one hour, taking Tuesdays and Sundays as rest days. The article chronicled exactly what trainees had to do in order to master the crawlstroke. Beginning with arms, swimmers focused on strength, rhythm, speed, and stamina. Swimmers utilized straps, tying their legs together to place emphasis on the arms. After mastering arm movements, the athletes added leg movements and breathing exercises. Coaches were responsible for checking body position and arm and leg movements, correcting and critiquing the swimmer every fifty meters if need be. According to this article, much like *Trockenschwimmen,* training for swimming extended outside of the swimming pool. This article promoted gymnastics and balancing exercises alongside swim training to keep the

muscles "elastic and fresh."[103] The article dictated in reference to this cross training, "These gymnastic [movements], done every morning for twenty minutes, wearing a swimsuit, with the windows open, but best outdoors, conducted intensively, cheer up even the sleepiest [athlete] and makes him ready for the day's work."[104] Scientized modern training focused on skilled movement, rhythm, development, and technique perfected the professional athlete. This training not only made its outside of the pool, but also invaded the private sphere and personal lives and schedules of competitive athletes.

Rationalized Schedules

In Anson Rabinbach's *The Human Motor,* he argued that the science of work in Europe, *Arbeitswissenschaft* in Germany, was the product of the "discovery" of human fatigue caused by life in modern industrialized nations. Rabinbach argued that increased worker's fatigue led to "a widespread fear that the energy of mind and body was dissipating under the strain of modernity; that the will, the imagination, and especially the health of the nation was being squandered in wanton disregard of the body's physiological limits."[105] Modern lifestyles revealed the physical limits of the human body, resulting in a deeply rooted concern for a society completely dependent on human labor power and consumption. To remedy this fatigue, doctors, scientists, and life reformers studied the workplace and its workers, attempting to mold an efficient working class. Central to this science of work was a preoccupation with unnecessary energy expenditure. For example, in his science of work study on energy expenditure, German

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[103] "Das Training des Schwimmers: Unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Krawlschwimmens," *Sport und Gesundheit,* no.22, 1925, 344.
[104] Ibid.
[105] Rabinbach, *The Human Motor,* 6.

psychiatrist Emil Kraepelin even regulated the diets and alcohol consumption of his worker subjects. If the human body, the motor of the workplace, wasted energy on the unnecessary—such as drinking alcohol—an efficient, effective, and ultimately productive workplace could not exist.[106] This early twentieth-century preoccupation with energy expenditure extended to competitive sports in the Weimar Republic. Modern swimming technique focused on developing proper rhythm and technique which created precise strokes and perfected athletes. Furthermore, the regimented schedules of professional swimmers featured in sports journalism rationalized the bodies of these efficient athletes. The daily agendas of professional competitors ensured that not one ounce of energy that could be devoted to training was wasted on anything else.

Like the popular magazine *Uhu*'s article featuring competitive swimmer Ms. M in the introduction to this thesis, sports journalism featured the disciplined personal lives of other professional swimmers. Articles reported on athletes regimented schedules—and in their limited leisure time--who they spent time with, and similar to the experiments of Emil Kraepelin, even what athletes ate. Jean-Marie Brohm argued, "In the race after maximum productivity anything goes. The champion's lifestyle is drastically rationalized: no drink, no sexual relations, special diets…All unnecessary gestures are avoided…"[107] In the Weimar Republic, the body of the athlete remained under scrutiny even outside of allotted practice time, subjecting itself to daily calculations, rules, and regulations. An article on the training of swimmers at the German National Sports Institute—the same institution founded by Carl Diem—reported,

> Every morning and evening, the swimmer will weigh themselves…in the morning before breakfast and in the evening before bedtime. They will

[106] Ibid.
[107] Brohm, "The Olympic Opiate," 107.

> find that their weight, which in the evening is about 1.5 pounds more than in the morning, remains constant with the intensive training, and therefore the dreaded super-training becomes a Utopia…The following accompaniments are also to be mentioned: At least a nine hour sleeping period and regular meals, complete renunciation of nicotine and alcohol, abstinence from sexual enjoyment while traveling, and similar "Renunciations" which are prerequisites for success and from the outset are included in the training regulations.[108]

Training technique coupled with the regulation of the athlete's diet, weight, and entire schedule regimented the lives of professional athletes. Like discoveries regarding fatigue leading to *Arbeitswissenschaft,* the significance of energy conservation is apparent within this professional athlete's schedule. Whatever could potentially harm, waste, or cost an athlete their training, such as drinking, irregular sleep and eating, and smoking, had to be avoided. This article even referred to strict training and exhaustive schedule of swimmers at the German National Sports Institute as "super-training." Regimented schedules such as the one above were not for the amateur, but the professional. This article prided itself on the Institute's invasion, dictation, and discipline of its students and competitors. The disintegration of the swimmer's private sphere was the opportunity cost for achieving optimum output and ensuring productivity. The efficiency and discipline required to develop the skills deemed necessary for executing the perfect stroke required surplus training, invading every aspect of the swimmer's life—from meals, sleep, and sexual activity, down to the very first twenty minutes of a swimmer's morning. Preparing the body for swimming competition dominated a great deal of an athlete's daily agenda. These schedules required not only the sacrifice of an athlete's time for training sessions, but determined every food morsel consumed, bodily muscle contracted, and daily moment spent. Preparation for victory required great

[108] Ibid.

effort—or "super-training"—and this type of training schedule was thought pertinent enough to place within sports journalism. Proper energy expenditure, in the case of the professional athlete meaning spending their energies on training alone, remained the focal point of this article. The report concluded "Bodily exercises, when practiced in the correct manner and to the right extent, create a safe, accessible, and otherwise irreplaceable tool for the highest possible degree of health, efficiency, work capacity, and complete vitality and enjoyment of life."[109] Similar to Weber's research on the work ethic revolving around the negative consequences of *Arbeitswissenschaft*, sports media utilized professional swimmers, scientized training, and rationalized schedules to promote the importance of "work capacity" and "efficiency."[110]

Scientized training emphasized modern and faster strokes alongside regimented schedules that sought to develop the duties of every body part associated with swimming. Each muscle—whether that be the lungs, legs, or arms—had its individual job. Proper and efficient training schedules not only created a beautiful, svelte body, but a body in proper rhythm with each part working together, thus creating an efficient, streamlined machine. This bodily machine was consistently on duty, dictated by intense training regimens which influenced various aspects of athlete's lives. This rationalized not only their bodies, but their time. Articles even determined at what age boys and girls should begin training, which strokes and body parts to train first, and how many meters to train to become proficient competitors capable of swimming long distances.[111] Articles on *Trockenschwimmen* also tended to trace the history of the sport. These publications

[109] Ibid.
[110] Ibid.
[111] "Der Wert des Brustschwimmens," *Sport und Gesundheit*, no. 15/16, 1923, 114-115.

showed how Weimar swim training reached deep into the past, while simultaneously encouraging future competitive athletes to engage with modern regimens to improve their swimming technique. Ultimately, this would result in stronger, better, and faster athletes.[112] Articles featuring the sport of swimming viewed young German girls and boys as these future athletes, imploring schools, clubs, and parents to teach their children proper swimming form. One of Paul Kellner's articles concluded, "The new German youth are passionate about sports, [they] show delight and courage even in the most difficult of sporting exercises. With swimming, they are most pleased when they can tackle the crawlstroke, as the latest advances in sport reveal. Therefore, the pre-exercises shown here should make their way into the school."[113] German youth would have been pleased to execute the perfect crawlstroke, as breaststroke was considered a beginner's stroke and the crawlstroke a modern, faster, and more efficient, advanced swim style.[114] Kellner was adamant about including proper swimming training in the day to day education of the German youth. Another article featuring swimming history and training by Paul Kellner claimed,

> Athletic upbringing and sports education finds a place of cultivation, evident in the Olympic Games, where the German swimmers were always feared opponents. Each time they went home with numerous Olympic honors and showed the world that German swimming and diving were ranked first. But there are still thousands who have not yet embraced the noble [sport of] swimming. Even in the field of athletes, and those that want to become them, one finds non-swimmers…Every athlete must make it their duty, to use at least one or two swimming pools at least once a week, and if he does not already know how to swim, to use all their energy to learn how. Joy fills the heart when strong arms divide the tides and the

[112] "Die technische Weiterentwicklung des Schwimmens" *Sport und Gesundheit* no. 45, 1925, 713.
[113] Ibid.
[114] Arthur Köchel, *Körperschulung für Männer und Frauen*, 136.

> [water] element is mastered…. There must be no German youth who cannot swim![115]

Sports publications wanted to be sure they were consistently manufacturing products for competitive swimming, future vehicles for victory. They did so by utilizing Olympians themselves—such as Paul Kellner—to discuss the significance of scientized training. Weimar sports publications promoted modern training and regimented schedules to create a swarm of self-disciplined and athletic, efficient bodies. Furthermore, sports journalism heavily featured famous professional athletes, providing them with a charge to use their perfected streamlined bodies for the Fatherland on the world stage.

Professionalized Athletes

The names Anni Rehborn, Hilde Schrader, and Erna Murray may not be household names in twenty-first century Germany, but in the sports world of the Weimar Republic, publications revered these three female champion swimmers. Professional swimmers not only embraced modern training, but the spirit of competition alongside the development of professionalization associated with Weber's rationalized, capitalist, consumer society. The development of modern capitalist societies encouraged competition, thus spurring a rise in industry professionalization, or the possession of advanced skills which earned separation, individuality, or social recognition.[116] The same development occurred within competitive sport in the interwar era. Weimar Republic sports journalism relied heavily on the influence of their renowned professional

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[115] Paul Kellner, "Kein Deutscher Mann, der nicht Schwimmen kann!" *Sport und Gesundheit*, no.20, 1925, 312-313.
[116] Magali Sarfatti Larson, *The Rise of Professionalism: A Sociological Analysis* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1977), 136-137.

athletes—their celebrities—to promote their conception of the ideal, ambitious, and ultimately victorious, German professional athlete. This is evident within representations of famous female swimmers during the interwar era. Renowned sports women embodied not only health, beauty and athleticism, but their duty to the nation. These athletes represented the significance of professionalization in the modern era, the necessity of competition and winning, and individuality recognized through victory. Despite various life reform organizations and their promotion of community, competitive sports encouraged competition, professionalization, and individuality through their champions.

One way sports media represented professional female athletes as prominent individuals was in how they pictured them in comparison to other female swimmers, or amateur sportswomen, across Germany. Sports publications often featured coverage of various sports clubs—most often municipal clubs, i.e. Poseidon Leipzig or Hellas Magdeburg—and their participants. When featuring club members and various athletic teams, publications featured participants in groups. Although swimming is primarily an individual sport, publications pictured club swimming teams within publications together as a unit. These teams donned matching swimsuits, caps, and apparel proudly sporting their club, and ultimately their city. Photos featured anywhere from three to over a dozen team members smiling while articles discussed competition coverage. The difference between these photos and those of professional sportswomen can be seen in the number of smiling faces. Seldom did recognized, champion swimmers—such as these two women—appear alongside anyone else. Ultimately the team of professional swimmers was not Poseidon Leipzig or Hellas Magdeburg—like their more amateur counterparts—but the Fatherland itself. Sports journalism represented these swimmers as such—

professionalized athletes, trained from a young age to achieve victory for Germany. This was true especially in the prime of the ultimate sports competition, the months immediately prior to and after the 1928 Olympic Games.

The First World War and the economic, political, and social consequences of Germany's defeat that followed extended into physical culture, especially competition among nations. In the immediate aftermath of total war, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) decided that Antwerp—given the significance of the German invasion of neutral Belgium which led to Great Britain's entrance into war—was a consequential city in which to host the first postwar Olympic Games in 1920. Members of the IOC—predominately from countries which fought against Germany in WWI—decided not to invite German athletes to participate.[117] German sportsmen and women resorted to competing in their own national sporting events in lieu of competing in Belgium. The IOC compelled Belgian Olympic organizers to not invite other countries the IOC deemed responsible for aggravating and prolonging the First World War: Hungary, Bulgaria, Austria, and the Ottoman Empire. However, Germany's ban from competition extended to include the 1924 summer Olympic Games held in Paris after the IOC encouraged the French organizers to exclude the nation of Germany.[118] This obviously did not please German sports enthusiasts and athletes eager to prove themselves on the world stage, and sports publications utilized famous athletes, including swimmers, to exhibit their dismay. In 1925, a year after the Paris games and immediately following the first Olympic congress in Prague, an article titled "Famous Male and Female Swimmers" appeared

[117]Allen Guttmann, *The Olympics: A History of the Modern Games,* Second Edition (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 37-38.
[118] Ibid, 38.

within *Sport im Bild.* The magazine spread featured four large drawings of the busts of popular swimming competitors—three men and Erna Murray, and reported,

> For the first time the representatives of the German Sports Federation have once again participated in the Olympic Congress which serves to counsel questions pertaining to sport and was held in Prague. The ban of Germany from international sport is only a dark image from the past…Without Germany, a real competition of the best of the world is not possible.[119]

The article maintained that as long as Germany remained absent from the Olympic competition, there could be no true competition. *Sport im Bild* utilized the sport of swimming and famous swimmers to state their case. This magazine listed the accomplishments their German professional athletes, proving they were ready to compete on the world stage. The article continued, "Specifically our swimmers have always enjoyed an international reputation and held supremacy at the prewar Olympic Games."[120] This statement was true of German male swimmers who had a history of high performance at the modern Games, but also German female swimmers, who had only been allowed by the IOC to compete in swimming for the first time in the 1912 Stockholm Summer Olympics.[121] The article continued to chronicle previous victories of Erna Murray and Anni Rehborn from both German club competitions and larger European meets, concluding that both of these women had displayed their skills at home and abroad, a remark which showed their desire to place their professional athletes on the world stage.[122]

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[119] "Bekannte Schwimmer und Schwimmerinnen" *Sport im Bild,* no. 11, 1925, 706-707.
[120] Ibid.
[121] "Stockholm 1912 Swimming," *Olympics,* accessed March 1, 2017, https://www.olympic.org/stockholm-1912/swimming.
[122] "Bekannte Schwimmer und Schwimmerinnen" *Sport im Bild,* no. 11, 1925, 706-707.

As the 1928 Olympic Games approached and the ban on Germany's participation in the Games lifted, sports publications turned to their professional athletes to garner excitement for the Fatherland's return to competition. These articles discussed athletes training schedules and regimens, their stroke specialty, previous victories, and prospects at the Olympics. However, not only was sports journalism consumed with questions concerning professional athletes, but the actual Olympic Games themselves. Olympic historian Allen Guttmann noted a difference between the 1924 Paris Games and the 1928 Amsterdam Games. Not only were countries that were previously denied participation in the games invited back, but the games themselves began to embody aspects of modernization, such as professionalization. Guttmann argued, "Between the games in Paris and those in Amsterdam four years later, the bureaucratic tendency to regularize and standardize accelerated."[123] The IOC organized Olympic congress held in Prague mentioned in the above article discussed differences between amateurism and professional athletes, compensation, and eligibility. Founder of the IOC, Baron de Coubertin, contended, "An amateur is one who devotes himself to sport for sport's sake without deriving from it, directly or indirectly, the means of existence. A professional is one who derives the means of existence entirely or partly from sport."[124] In short, professionalism became significant, especially in regard to competitive sport.

Articles appeared in Weimar magazines and journals prior to the Games discussing prospects, opponents, and predicting outcomes. After sixteen years of not competing on the world stage, it was time for Germany to return to reclaim its dominance in the world of sports, specifically swimming. Print media saw these swimming

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[123] Guttmann, *The Olympics,* 44.
[124] Baron de Coubertin, quoted in Guttmann, *The Olympics,* 44.

champions as beacons of hope, depicting them as the ideal German, embodying the character traits that swimming for sport provided: discipline, efficiency, and ultimately victory. These Weimar Republic articles were reminiscent of another country's attempt to showcase their athleticism—thus proving their worth and national status. In Matthew McIntire's "National Status, the 1908 Olympic Games, and the English Press," he argues that Edwardian media detailing the 1908 Olympic Games reflected the tensions between a friendly sports competition and the real national rivalries within Europe at the time.[125] McIntire argued that "Britain's claim as the leading power in the world would be reaffirmed or discredited in the arena of competition."[126] As the Olympic Games became heavily infused with nationalist undertones in the early twentieth century, Edwardian media propagated the idea that the stakes were high. Likewise, Weimar sports media promoted the same idea prior to the 1928 Amsterdam games, focusing on records, predictions, opponents, and the significance of their professional champion athletes. The First World War may have ended; but the extreme nationalism and twinge of defeat associated with Germany's loss extended to international sports competition.

An article titled "What We Swimmers Hope for in 1928 in Amsterdam" appeared in *Sport und Sonne* a year before the Olympic Games fielding questions regarding these concerns such as "What are our prospects?" and referencing which races German swimmers could expect to win or lose. The article seemed fairly positive about the German men's team and potential victory; however, when it came to famous female swimmers, the article claimed, "The women's [swimming] contests, however, look less

[125] Matthew McIntire, "National Status, the 1908 Olympic Games, and the English Press," *Media History,* vol. 15 no. 3, 2009.
[126] McIntire, "National Status," 275.

bright than the men's contests. Even though the progress we have made in ladies' swimming in the last few years is very pleasing, there will probably not be victory in competition."[127] According to this article, this "less bright" prospect concerning women's swimming was not due to lack of hard work and efficient training. The article continued, "If one draws a comparison with the achievements of the Americans, one will find a preponderance on the other side. It is also no wonder that when you read how much free time the American women have for their physical activities, one would come to the conclusion that America must do better in regard to women's swimming."[128] Lack of scientized training, rationalized schedules, and determination would not be the downfall of German female swimmers at the 1928 Olympics. According to this article, the simple "fact" that American women had more time to devote to sport could result in a loss for the Germans; however, that did not mean that it would. The article argued that the dedication and physical stamina of professional female swimmers, such as Lotte Lehmann and Erna Huneus, could bring about victory for the nation of Germany at the Olympics. Furthermore, German women had more chances to win when it came to breaststroke events, a stroke which, alongside freestyle—garnered plenty of attention in the realm of modern training.

The article concluded,

> A full year remains until the final judgements are made, and each country still has twelve months in which to prepare for the greatest of all competitions, so it is perhaps not the greatest idea to say with certainty that this country will win the 100-meter freestyle and that country the water polo. All countries are active in preparation, and from all sides one hears of peak performance…. It is the main concern to be at peak performance in the right moment to achieve the highest sporting achievement: the title of a world championship. The select few of the

[127] "Was wir Schwimmer 1928 in Amsterdam erhoffen," *Sport und Sonne,* August, 1927, pp. 530-533.
[128] Ibid.

> German national team will do everything in their power to recapture our beloved Fatherland's place in the sun that belongs to it.[129]

This article gave the German Olympic swimming team quite the call to arms. After their defeat in the First World War and the economic and political consequences that followed—including an Olympic ban—sports media looked to their professionals, specifically swimmers, to not only once again compete, but bring home a world title. Victory meant more to the nation than a series of gold medals. The sport of swimming at the 1928 Olympics would be the ultimate comeback story for a defeated nation, returning their "beloved Fatherland" to their "place in the sun."[130]

Closer to the 1928 Olympics, an article written by Paul Kellner—by then an official trainer of German swim competitors—appeared in *Sport und Sonne,* arguing that the hope for gold medals in the Olympic games rested on breaststrokers—a stroke in which Germans had a history of victory. The article—similar to those on freestyle training and *Trockenschwimmen*—detailed how swimmers should train for this particular stroke. The article featured female German Olympic hopefuls—Lotte Mühe and Hilde Schrader—and how to train in order to be successful in breaststroke events, focusing on larger aspects of the stroke—breathing and body position—all the way down to minute details for success—head position and finger position. The article stated, "Dry exercises [*Trockenschwimmen*] combined with supplementary gymnastic movements will always be of use and help the beginner as well as the master…. I would like to urge every swimmer to be sure of the safe, mechanical, and mental mastery of the dry exercises and swimming pace."[131] Germany's professional swimmers—those the public already viewed

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[129] Ibid.
[130] Ibid.
[131] "Brustschwimmen: Training and Technik," *Sport und Sonne,* June 1928, 348-351.

as specialists in their field, individuals, and vehicles for victory—utilized modern training. There was too much at stake for the nation's first world competition in over a decade. As the Olympics approached, the names and photos of those "select" few—those responsible for bringing home Olympic gold and redemption after a fourteen-year Olympic absence—appeared within *Sport und Sonne:* Rehborn, Schrader, Lehmann, Mühe.[132] At a championship meet held in Berlin to determine the fastest swimmers, records shattered. For the first time since before the First World War, the German Swimming Olympic team was ready to compete for their nation.

The German swimmers represented their nation well at the 1928 Amsterdam Olympics, namely in the breaststroke events, and publications featured them heavily in months immediately after the games.[133] One article stated, "The German sport of swimming had a tradition to defend in Amsterdam. Since the turn of the century, almost since the founding of the modern Olympic Games, the German swimmers have always played an outstanding role in this great, peaceful contest of nations."[134] Similar to articles on swimming technique, this article emphasized the victorious past of German swimming, various championships from previous years, and the tradition of this sport for the nation. However, the article quickly turned to the present. It contended,

> This glorious Olympic tradition had to be reestablished for the German sport of swimming after a mandatory break of sixteen years. It is no wonder that we were expecting special deeds from Germany's swimming athletes! And yet the situation had also changed in the world of swimming since the prewar years. The war and the economic hardships of the postwar years had not set back the sport of swimming in Germany, but it had been a hindrance to the pace of development. New nations, still young

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[132] "Deutsche Meisterschaften im Schwimmen," *Sport und Sonne,* August 1928, pp. 498-499.
[133] "Amsterdam 1928 Swimming." *Olympics*. Accessed May 1, 2017. https://www.olympic.org/amsterdam-1928/swimming. Out of only ten swimming events, the German athletes left the Amsterdam games with a gold, silver, and bronze medal, with German female swimmers outperforming their male counterparts.
[134] "Olympia Schwimmen," *Sport und Sonne,* November 1928.

> in sport, had appeared on the scene and entered the competition with fresh and hopeful forces, which this time presented a difficult task for Germany's swimmers. The German Swimming Association was, of course, well aware of this…The German Swimming Association had given special preparatory work…success was to be expected, above all in breaststroke…[135]

According to sports journalism, the modern training of these select professional athletes appeared to have paid off. Even though Great Britain and the United States took home the most swimming medals, Weimar sports journalism idealized their celebrity swimmers and new world champions.[136] These athletes had done their duty for the nation, despite rejection from previous Olympic games and the hardship of the immediate postwar years. The previous article pictured a smiling Hilde Schrader—the German, 200-meter Breaststroke Olympic champion—and a myriad of records, times, names, and other photos in a five-page spread about the aquatic events in Amsterdam. Names such as Schrader and Mühe remained in the limelight well after the Olympic Games. One article detailed the upcoming major swim competitions for the following year and what names and events to anticipate. Although competitions with other European nations and club teams within Germany itself remained significant, the article ended with a new focus. After chronicling the next cycle of major swimming events for 1929, the article concluded, "If we successfully pass through these great and difficult competitions, then we have done work in which the effects will go beyond the success of the hour: We have worked for the next Olympic Games—for Los Angeles—for 1932."[137]

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[135] Ibid.
[136] "Amsterdam 1928 Swimming." *Olympics*. Accessed May 1, 2017. https://www.olympic.org/amsterdam-1928/swimming.
[137] "Das Programm des Deutschen Schwimmsports für das Jahr," *Sport und Sonne,* 1929, pp. 135-136.

Conclusion

Professional swimmers such as Anni Rehborn, Hilde Schrader, and Erna Murray graced the pages of sports magazines and accompanied articles on training and competitions throughout the Weimar Republic. These women utilized the scientized training and rationalized schedules associated with competitive sport in interwar Germany to become experts in their field, specialists in their strokes, and professionals in their sport. Endless hours of training in and outside the pool, *Trockenschwimmen*, gymnastics, rationalized regimens dictating meals, sleep, and leisure time created svelte bodies and efficient athletes ready to compete for the Fatherland. Similar to Jensen's track and field athletes, swimmers subjected their bodies to exact measurements, constant critique from their coaches, and scrutiny from the German public and sports print media. Similar to the factory floor in the interwar era, the scientized training of specific muscles—whether that be the arms, legs, or diaphragm—gave each body part a specific duty in order to reach maximum capacity and achieve maximum output, or efficient ways in which to complete a lap the fastest. In the realm of sport in the closing years of the Weimar Republic, maximum output amounted to victory in competition, more specifically on the world stage at the Olympic games. Sixteen years of not competing in Olympic games coupled with sixteen years of modernized athletic training provided German professional athletes with a charge. Sports journalism considered famous athletes vehicles for victory, serving a larger purpose to place a war-torn nation back in their rightful position—first place. Sports journalism depicted these professionals as the ideal athlete. Moreover, these athletes' beautiful, toned, and healthy bodies coupled with their

competitive drive and professionalization served as prime examples of the ideal *German*. Scientized training and rationalized schedules created machines for medals, but victory and professionalism created and promoted the individuality associated with Weber's modern, capitalist society. Despite the communal ideology surrounding many aspects of physical culture throughout the interwar period, competitive swimming embraced bodily discipline, the thrill and necessity of competition, and the individuality associated with claiming first prize.

EPILOGUE

The 1928 Summer Olympics and the immediate celebration of Germany's stellar professional athletes occurred within the perceived Golden Years of the Weimar Republic.[138] By the beginning of the Amsterdam opening ceremonies, Germany was finally healing from the economic and social consequences of the world's first total war. And although Adolf Hitler and Nazism was on the rise, extremist political parties had little actual support from citizens.[139] However, with the stock market crash in October 1929, the Weimar Republic—which historian Peter Gay famously claimed to resemble a "dance on the edge of a volcano"—suddenly began to lose what stability it had.[140] Lack of loans from the United States and depleted capital and resources landed Germany in a complete economic depression, featuring incredibly high unemployment rates as factories and other businesses shut their doors.[141] Athletic participation in the 1932 Olympic Games—for which Germany seemed so prepared—suffered due to its distant location in Los Angeles and the exorbitant costs to attend; half as many athletes participated in comparison to the 1928 games.[142] Regarding competitive swimming, and contrary to the champion performances in Amsterdam, Germany left Los Angeles without any swimming medals, having sent only two male competitors and no female competitors.[143]

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[138] Weitz, *Weimar Germany*, 349.
[139] Ibid.
[140] Peter Gay, *Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1968), xiv.
[141] Eric D. Weitz, *Weimar Germany*, 350.
[142] "Los Angeles 1932," *Olympics*, accessed March 22, 2017, https://www.olympic.org/los-angeles-1932.
[143] "Los Angeles 1932 Swimming," *Olympics*, accessed March 23, 2017, https://www.olympic.org/los-angeles-1932/swimming.

A lack of popular support for the Nazis did not halt the appointment of Adolf Hitler to the position of Chancellor in January 1933, ushering in a new era of totalitarianism in Germany just months after the Los Angeles games. Hitler focused on social reform, reducing unemployment by mandating a series of public works projects, including the ambitious construction of a series of highways, the *Autobahn.* Rearmament, economic stability, and social programs for German women and youth also accompanied the ascension of Adolf Hitler.[144] Furthermore, the IOC made the decision to host the 1936 summer Olympic Games in Berlin in 1931, prior to the ascension of Hitler and the complete exposure of Nazi racist social ideology on the world stage. Unfortunately for the IOC, Nazi ideology appeared to reject the celebration of the modern athlete and a peaceful competition between nations, preferring traditional German *Turnen* to competitive sports.[145] However, and fortunately for the Third Reich, the Olympic Games served as the perfect opportunity to showcase the Fatherland's newfound economic success, pride, and athleticism, in—what Allen Guttmann referred to as— "the full reintegration of Germany within the world of international sports."[146]

If Berlin was the site of the 1936 games under the scrutiny of Hitler, then it would be quite a spectacle, and after an investment of more than 20,000,000 Reichsmarks and years of construction, the Berlin Olympic facilities were the epitome of grandeur.[147] Furthermore, and indirectly funded by the Nazi party, infamous filmmaker Leni Riefenstahl captured the Berlin sports spectacle on film. Her ambitious film project

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[144] Dietrich Orlow, *A History of Modern Germany*, sixth edition (Upper Saddle River: Pearson, 2008), 175-179.
[145] Michael Mackenzie, "From Athens to Berlin: The 1936 Olympic Games and Leni Riefenstahl's *Olympia*," *Critical Inquiry* 29, no. 2 (2003), 302-336.
[146] Guttmann, *The Olympics*, 53.
[147] Ibid, 55.

featuring coverage of the entire games, *Olympia*, spanned a total of three and a half hours. Riefenstahl showcased the svelte bodies of the 1936 Olympic athletes, including those of water sports participants. She featured the precise and graceful flips of divers, the fast and rhythmic arms of freestylers, and the exact movements of rowing teams. The film included the victories and performances of not only Germans, but competitors from all nations.

Michael Mackenzie argued that defining the political aim of *Olympia* or discerning its Nazi imagery should not be the ultimate ambition of scholars. For Mackenzie, the 1938 release of *Olympia* not only acted as a form of Nazi propaganda, but also simultaneously a celebration of the beautiful athlete in reconciliation with the practice that created them: mechanization. In summation, at the 1936 Olympic games, Riefenstahl captured both—perhaps opposing—qualities of the ideal competitor: the beautiful, traditional athletic body which mirrored ancient Greek athletes coupled with the modern, streamlined efficient athlete of the interwar era.[148] Weimar sports journalism and its representation and discussion of the sport of swimming and famous swimmers did the same. Examining competitive swimming within Weimar Republic sports journalism reveals the German athlete's duty to the Fatherland. Regarding women, sports journalism reveled in swimming's ability to create not only beautiful bodies, but healthy and healed bodies, ready and willing to undergo women's ultimate duties: birthing, mothering, and repopulating a war-torn nation. In this respect, sports media did not promote women's emancipation from traditional gender roles through sport, but reinforced the pronatalist agenda deeply embedded within interwar Europe. Furthermore, these athletic bodies

[148] Mackenzie, "From Athens to Berlin," 314.

served as tools for victory on the world stage. Modern training techniques coupled with rationalized schedules and professionalized athletes mechanized the sportsmen and sportswomen of the Weimar Republic, acting as catalysts for aspects of modernization. In 1936, at Hitler's Nazi Olympics, these trends continued to play out. Athletes, and swimmers specifically, were primed for their ultimate duty: the utilization and contribution of their beautiful, mechanized bodies for the advancement of the Fatherland.

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