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Sportswomen as a Subconcept of the Ideal Modern Woman, on the Example of the First Czechoslovak Republic

Sport, as a social construct, took its modern form in Europe during the long 19th century and became firmly embedded in society through institutionalization and internationalization. However, after the First World War, sport acquired new social functions and was increasingly perceived as a tool for physical and moral regeneration. In this context, participation in sport expanded beyond specific social groups and gradually became accessible to broader segments of society, including women. The acceptance of women as 'equal' members of society created opportunities for their integration into the sports movement at both national and international levels. Institutionalization of women's sports and the categorization of sports disciplines strengthened the role of women in the development of sports and postwar society.

In my future research, I will focus on the image of women in sports, particularly female athletes or sportswomen, understood through the hegemonic idea of the ideal modern woman in the First Czechoslovak Republic. This concept represented a modern feminine identity: a working woman capable of managing the household while also devoting her free time to leisure activities and self-development. The image of the ideal modern woman was largely constructed through contemporary press discourse, especially in lifestyle-orientated media, which defined the boundaries of socially acceptable behavior.

Within this framework, the representation of women participating in sport raises several questions. How were women in sport defined? What discourse was produced in the press regarding women's sport? Which sports were considered acceptable for women, and which were not? And can women in sport be understood as a specific subconcept within the broader idea of the ideal modern woman?

The aim of my future research is to analyze discourse in Czech and Slovak newspapers of the interwar period (mainly sports and lifestyle newspapers). The research is based on a discursive analysis of representation of women as athletes, understood as a specific subconcept constructed through the image of the ideal modern woman in the Czechoslovak context. This subconcept includes two types of women in sports: competitive sportswomen whose lifestyle was shaped by training and performance, and women who engaged in sport as a leisure activity for health and personal benefit. The research is limited by the years 1918 - 1938 and its aim is not to present events before World War I and events after October 1938.

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