

## The Power of Propaganda: Chronicling gender role change in *Hitler Youth* 1928-1949

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"You, my youth, are our nation's most  
precious guarantee for a great future [...]  
never forget that one day you will  
rule the world"  
Adolf Hitler (Nuremberg 1938)

## Introduction

- My project explores how the processes of propaganda and enculturation fueled different and changing roles within the group most widely known as *Hitler Youth* between 1928 -1949
- For the purposes of this project, the key concepts have been defined as follows:
  - Propaganda: "Expression of opinion or action by individuals or groups deliberately designed to influence opinions or actions of other individuals or groups with reference to predetermined ends" (Cantril, Hadley)
  - Enculturation: "the process by which an individual adopts the behavior patterns of the culture in which he or she is immersed" (princeton.edu)

## Methods

- Types of Data:
  - A). Primary and Secondary textual sources
  - B). Original visual material produced and circulated between 1928-1949
- Key variables to be analyzed are as follows:
  - A). Gender Roles throughout time
  - B). Degree of structure
  - C). Expectations for participation
  - D). Mechanisms used to spread propaganda
- Three distinct time periods emerge from the analysis:
  - A). 1928-1933
  - B). 1934-1945
  - C). 1946-1949

## Overall Trends 1928-1933 Pre-establishment of the "Nazi Party"

- Roles are less defined and more in line with Western global ideas
- Group itself is less organized
- Expectations for group participation are at a high

## Men's Vs. Women's Roles

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In common:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Good fathers</li> <li>– Provide for family</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Unique to Germany:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Train to be members of Nazi military</li> <li>– Become party members</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In common:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Good mothers.</li> <li>– Their work is in the home.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Unique to Germany:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Expected to vote</li> <li>– Participate in group activities and rallies</li> <li>– Women are expected to be educated</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
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*1933 Hitler is appointed Chancellor of Germany, and establishes a new law prohibiting women from work.*

This is a political poster circa 1932 encouraging women to vote. It translates as "We women vote for List 2: National Socialists"



## Overall Trends 1934-1945 The War years

- Roles become defined as law
- "Hitler Youth" and the "Nazi Party" are established organizations
- Participation within each individual group is expected, but participation in the war comes to the forefront

## Men's Vs. Women's Roles

- Be members of Nazi Youth
- Train to become soldiers
- Late war years: participate in military campaign
- Be members of the League of German girls
- Contribute to party needs
- "Kirche, Kueche, Kinder" (Church, Kitchen, Children)
- 1939 Women work law repealed
- Work men's jobs

1936 law passed that makes Hitler Youth membership mandatory for all German children.

*Der Pimpf* translates as "The boy" or "Little Rascal". This particular issue was circulated throughout Germany in December of 1942. "Most internal material in this issue concerns the military in some way. The lead article is titled "I choose my weapon".



"Das Deutsche Model" was the Nazi Party's illustrated magazine for girls. At ten, girls joined the *Deutsche Model*, the League of German Girls, a part of the Hitler Youth organization. This article from the summer of 1943 tells girls that they too have duties to Germany



## Overall Trends 1946-1949 Post- World War II

- Demilitarization of men's roles
- Women's status reinstated
- Organization is non-existent

## Men's Vs. Women's Roles

- Demilitarized, now factory workers
- Union members
- Women expected to be educated
- Work is in the home

*1949 Law enacted women are considered equal to men under German law. (Can now possess property)*

Picture of a Freed German Youth rally in 1947.



## Conclusion

- Temporal changes include:
  - A). Degree of Structure
  - B). Common private roles
  - C). Public roles consistently changing
- Overall both men and women's roles within "Hitler Youth" are ideal and not always a reality.

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Questions?