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## **THE CATEGORY OF FORCE**

Abstract

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In my PhD dissertation, I focused on the phantasms which define the traditional models of masculinity present in Poland. I was especially interested in the factors responsible for the radicalisation of beliefs and attitudes rooted in nationalist ideas, which are most commonly expressed by Polish men.

I formulated my thesis on the basis of feminist concepts, as well as their subdisciplines which concern the study of masculinities. I also referred to analyses from the sphere of cultural studies which referred to the history of Poland, as well as texts commenting current affairs and socio-political transformations.

For my research, I used texts, articles and photographs published on the official websites of nationalist groups. I also interviewed football supporters (ultras), sportsmen and supporters of nationalist ideas.

The theoretical part of my PhD dissertation is divided into two chapters. The first one focuses on discussing the issues I raised in my artistic work which belongs to the field of visual arts. It is a film collage of footage from sports shows, military training and police demonstrations juxtaposed with my own recordings. Figurative representations of a uniformed military force and society as a mob were intended to highlight the political meanings assigned to the body – especially the male body.

The second chapter of my dissertation consists of an analysis of my research topic, in which I elaborated on several basic issues raised in the video installation. The main purpose of the analysis was to reflect on the contemporary models of hegemonic masculinity in the context of the rebirth of nationalist sentiment, which we have been observing in Poland over the past few years.

I devoted most attention to the military model of masculinity. This model accumulates the most radical social and civic attitudes, in which traditional, patriarchal values are intertwined with a strong bond with the Catholic faith and an aversion towards all types of minorities and othernesses, often expressed in the form of physical and verbal aggression.

I also analysed several topics present in current public discourse: the migration crisis, the issues of sexual minorities, abortion and EU politics. On this basis, I was able to outline a male-centric narrative within which the demands of nationalist groups are formulated. I focused



on the messages referring to traditional cultural or religious values which propagate attitudes and beliefs that legitimise patriarchy. Based on my considerations, I concluded that the examples I described are related to various forms of male socialisation present in education, sports, culture and media. In the summary of my dissertation, I referred to Michael Kimmel's *Angry White Men. American Masculinity at the End of an Era* (published in 2013), a sociological study on masculinity in the American society. Inspired by Kimmel's considerations in this field, I tried to explain certain phenomena related to the radicalisation of masculinity in Poland. I noticed that the social transformations which took place in Poland after 1989 have had a negative impact mainly on men.

My research proves that the radicalisation of attitudes and beliefs rooted in nationalist-Catholic traditions have become an alternative for those men who are convinced that the current system limits or completely deprives them of certain privileges. The fight for „lost rights” leads them to participate in an emotional, historical and political social drama, in which the responsibility for the unfavourable situation is pushed to the so-called "enemies of the homeland".

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