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**Abstract of the doctoral dissertation “From stigmatisation to mass extermination.
Persecution of homosexuals in the Third Reich in the memories of the victims”**

The aim of this doctoral dissertation is to reconstruct the persecution of homosexual men during the Third Reich, from stigmatisation at the symbolic and cultural level through gradual isolation to physical extermination. The analysis covers the mechanisms of creating deviation and social categorisation with the indication of the particular stages of a moral panic preceding direct extermination. Moreover, the aim of the research is to reconstruct how homosexual men functioned in a homophobic society. According to the main thesis of the dissertation, the stigmatisation of non-heteronormative men, both at the level of discursive practices and at the level of institutionalised actions of the state apparatus, was a manifestation of a moral panic. According to the supporting thesis, stigmatisation in the field of public discourse contributed to the gradual formation of the genocidal intention and, consequently, to physical extermination.

To verify the above theses and organise the study area, the following research questions have been formulated: what was the specificity of social reaction caused by the created threat? What characteristics of this reaction allow it to be classified as a moral panic? What discursive strategies in the area of biopolitics and techniques of governing were used to rationalise and legitimise violence against homosexuals? What narrative strategies did the homosexuals use to describe their experiences? In what contexts did identity dimensions such as psychosexual orientation, nationality and masculinity interfere in the light of the heterosexist regime? How did the biopolitical visions of a healthy body manifesting in the hegemonic variant of masculinity affect the symbolic status of non-heterosexual men? Which elements of the extermination project against non-heteronormative men were genocidal?

The study follows the tradition of research on the literature of personal documents, introducing an integrative approach to the biographical method supplemented with sociologically oriented perspectives. In the framework of the empirical analysis, the material consisting of 4 autobiographies, 2 collections of autobiographical texts, 1 biography including testimonies of the main character and 1 collection of case files related to paragraph 175 from a court in Berlin was analysed. The methodology of the research included literary theory-related concepts, e.g. the autobiographical triangle, the autobiographical pact, heterotopias, figural

realism in witness literature, as well as tools related to sociology, especially to interactionism and constructivism, e.g. labelling theory, social control and culture industry. They have been described in the theoretical part of the work. The interdisciplinary perspective was used both at the stage of identifying the research problem and for the description and explanation of the examined phenomena. This approach made it possible to read the autobiographical texts as a record of an individual typization method shaped on the basis of the knowledge accumulated on life to date, and secondly, as a documentation of the political and social reality. The moral panic model provided the basis for analysing the discursive formation of homophobic attitudes and the gradual rationalisation of genocidal intentions. The following chapters of the empirical section bring closer the specificity of the particular phases of the panic around homosexuality. They systematise both institutional and non-institutional aspects of persecution, such as stigmatisation and social exclusion, tightening up the paragraph of the criminal code penalising homosexuality, denunciation by civilians, police raids, castration, sterilisation, stricter rigour in concentration camps, including isolation, forced labour, statutory and extra-statutory punishments as well as harassment and violence by fellow prisoners. Apart from that, the hierarchy based on the complex network of power and interdependence organising the social world in camps was analysed.

The research showed that the social reaction to the artificially created threat had symptoms of a moral panic, such as social nervousness, hostility towards the stigmatised group, the disproportionate representation of the threat in the public discourse as well as the preventive actions taken, numerous expert predictions and diagnoses, the unpredictability of the panic trajectory, consensus on the seriousness of the problem and the necessity to combat it. According to the main conclusions of the empirical analysis, the persecution of homosexuals was processual and multidimensional, and direct extermination was preceded by actions on the ideological and biopolitical level, which legitimised homophobia and violence, and led to the formation of a genocidal intention directed against “enemies of morality and the nation”.

Keywords: homosexuality, the Third Reich, stigmatisation, moral panic, ideological discourse, literature of the personal document

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