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## Public against their will. The production of subjects in the archives of 'Hiacynt Action'

### Publications

A longer article (in English) for the *Interalia Journal* (2018, submitted in 2016):

<https://interalia.queerstudies.pl/13-2018/majewska/>

A short article (in English) at the HAU Hebel am Ufer website (2019):

<https://www.hebbel-am-ufer.de/en/hau3000/oeffentlich-gegen-unseren-willen>

### Interviews

Feminizm w stanie wyjątkowym: operacja „Hiacynt”, troska i „czułe oczy Lewiatana” - profesorka Ewa Majewska w rozmowie z Pauliną Małochleb. *Krytyka polityczna*, 8 Feb 2025

<https://krytykapolityczna.pl/kultura/historia/operacja-hiacynt-ewa-majewska/> (in Polish)

<https://krytykapolityczna.pl/kultura/historia/operacja-hiacynt-ewa-majewska/?trpl=tr> (in Turkish)

Podcast (in Polish) - Tok.fm radio audition of Kasia Szustoff, 2024:

<https://audycje.tokfm.pl/podcast/164763,Dziewczyny-bez-szafy-36-Ewa-Majewska-kulturoznawczyni-i-filozofka>

### About

The research project *Public against their will? The production of subjects in the archives of "Hiacynt Operation"* conducted by dr hab. Ewa Majewska, associate professor at the SWPS University in Warsaw, Poland, in the years 2022-2025 (grant nr NCN2021/43/B/HS2/00579) investigates the production of minoritarian subjects in the archives of the police operations codename "Hiacynt", targeting gay men in the late 1980s in Poland in order to better control their population, perceived by the state functionaries as potentially dangerous, but also endangered by crime, interesting from the point of view of possible enforced collaboration and underresearched. The course of events resulting of these operations reveals various degrees of institutional ignorance, but also a plethora of biopolitical tools interesting also from the perspective of researching today's states of exception, sometimes still designating the LGBTQIA+ people and groups as their nr 1 public enemies. What were the plans of "Hiacynt" operations? How were they conducted? What were their results? How their disorganized and scattered, traumatized archives still contribute to the socio-political forming of minoritarian subjectivity? What kinds of justice are and could be enacted in order to recognize the minorities and their losses? These are just some of the questions asked in this long project, which in fact started with my first presentation about the "Hiacynt" operations in the international conference "Can we have some Privacy?" organized by the ICI Berlin in May in 2015. I published an expanded version of my presentation in the *Interalia. Journal of Queer Studies* in 2018 (submitted in 2016), and since then I have been working on the questions of archive, resistance and queer counterpublics. This website offers some publications, media materials, documents and useful links about the topics related to my work. It was generously sponsored by the National Center of Science (grant nr NCN2021/43/B/HS2/00579). The main publication - my book ***The Caring Leviathan? "Hiacynt" Pink Files, Biopolitics, and the Queer Weak Resistance*** will most probably be published with Brill in 2025/2026.

Between 1985-1987 several operations were conducted by the police and secret services of the state of Poland under the code name "Hiacynt" to examine, interrogate, infiltrate and analyze the gay persons and communities under the pretexts of the need to investigate their international connections, as well as the possible spread of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, as well as in order to close the unfinished investigations concerning crimes in which gay men were involved, often as main victims. Although planned as a "caring for the population", "Hiacynt" often resulted in fear and trauma, allowing further criminalization of the already marginalized and discriminated LGBTQ+ communities.

The operation's scattered and dispersed, heterogeneous archives include the state archives of the IPN (Institute of National Remembrance), the National Library, state institutions (such as those belonging to the ministry of health and of internal affairs), the private archives of the men targeted by the actions, the artistic archives created based on said witnesses documents and testimonies, as well as media articles and scarce academic articles. Approaching the "Hiacynt" operation almost 40 years later means confronting scattered and chaotic archives of very different kinds - those created by various state agents as well as those produced by terrified individuals and groups, those of the media, public debate, and the artistic ones. In this project the focus is on the minoritarian subject formation in those perplexed and disintegrated archives, on the subjectivity (de)formed in the process of state intervention, criticized as a brutal one, but also defended as an example of the caring operation of the state conducted to protect the supposedly vulnerable parts of the population.

The main academic gain of this research project lies in the comprehensive reconstruction of the “Hiacynt” operation dispersed and heterogeneous archives, under the main denominator of the minoritarian subject formation in the confrontation of the state apparatus and individual/collective bodies of the non-heteronormative persons and communities in Poland of the late 1980s emerging 40 years later from the scattered documents and accounts. In a search for the minoritarian subject formation patterns, emerging on the intersection of the vulnerable ontologies and epistemologies of weak resistances and the biopolitical repressive state action, this project builds an interdisciplinary methodology of researching scattered, heterogeneous archives, it also reconstructs the patterns of state repressive biopolitical action, thus allowing in-depth study of the usually separated aspects of contemporary state surveillance apparatus, and reconstructs the subjectivity formed in such traumatizing conditions. The paradoxes of “caring” hands of the Leviathan will be discussed beyond the strict separation of repression and control, and a critical feminist-queer analysis of the notion and abuses of care are an added element of this research. The smooth transition of welfare into repressive, militarize care, performed as surveillance, control or state of exception, designating a minority to subsume the place of the “enemy” is another part of this project. Yet another one is the reflection on the gendered evolution of the state apparatus. Perhaps the most important theoretical part of the planned publication revolves around the question of the archive, presented as necessarily dialectical in its intertwined immanent core dimension (archont, researcher, files) and the transcendental, yet also permeating dimensions of politics, cultural norms and *habitus*.

The “Hiacynt” operation is an important case demonstrating the contradictions of subject formation in late modern state. The subject formation of the gay men targeted by the “Hiacynt” operation emerging from its individual, community, media and state archives, as well as from art and literary works, is one of many faces, one of trauma and recovery, of suppressed and overtly expressed affect. It is one abandoned because of the painful conditions it emerged in, but also because of the complexity of their ontology and production and the heterogeneity of its archives and traces. The “Hiacynt” operation only has partial analysis and summaries. Its archives are scattered and procedures of justice are still until now refused. This project offers such summary, to be published as articles and a monograph, as well as a methodology, which could be applied in other archive studies of similar complexity. The project’s website and conference presentations will allow further dissemination of the project’s findings.

## **1. Research Project Objectives**

The image of public sphere reproduced in media and political theory, academia and to some extent also in art, most often suggests, that becoming public not only is voluntary, but also harmless, and should be seen as highly rewarding (see: Habermas, 1989). Discussions surrounding the concept of public sphere, including many of its critical reinterpretations, such as the concepts of proletarian, feminist, subaltern or queer counterpublics, have been permeating and destabilizing this idealist image of the public sphere, providing narratives of the excluded and marginalized groups, including the economically underprivileged, women, ethnic and sexual minorities, gender outlaws and others (see: Kluge and Negt, 1972; Fraser, 1990; Warner, 2002; Zinn, 1978). Among those counter-narratives, some concern the contradictions of the public sphere and counterpublics. In the context of non-heteronormative persons and communities, the main paradox is that their becoming public often implicates threats and dangers, and thus can become a weapon of their own emancipation or empowerment as well as a tool to destroy their private life, professional or political career etc. Becoming public of queer, homosexual or trans people and populations has always been permeated by this hiatus of becoming public as a means to empower and becoming public as a threat imposed from the outside.

In my research, I will examine this contradiction based on an in-depth analysis and discussion of the archives of a spectacular, yet – definitely to a large extent under-examined action of the police and secret services of the People’s Republic of Poland aimed at recognizing, data collecting and surveillance of the gay men community, conducted in the late 1980s, commonly known as “Hiacynt Action” (Akcja Hiacynt). Although the Action’s main framework was formulated in a biopolitical, “caring for population” style, the actions of the state apparatus are remembered as threatening and repressive by those, who were targeted. The documentation of state actions within the “Hiacynt Action” was collected in the archives of the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN), however it is claimed that the majority of the documentation is missing. Neither the IPN nor any other state or scholarly institution ever conducted an in-depth study of this action, although according to the discoveries announced by the politicians and activists in 1988, some 11.000 files were opened concerning particular persons investigated in result of the Action. The main framework documents show, that it covered such strands as the necessity to investigate the HIV/AIDS epidemic, the need of the state apparatus to learn about the lives of gay men and communities to better protect them from crimes, it also stressed the lively international activities of gay men around 1985 and the obligation of the state of Poland to know and infiltrate it (based on the documents stored in the IPN, investigated by the PI in 2015, numbered in the bibliography).

The main question I would like to ask in my project concerns the subject production of the gay men and community in the archives of the “Hiacynt Action”, or – as I will explain later – actions – conducted by the state, but involving and producing further repercussions, sometimes of a very different profile than the initial events, such as queer archives (see: Radziszewski, 2015-2017) or gay activism (as the Warsaw Gay Men Association, created by Waldemar Zboralski and others

around 1987). Who is the subject resulting of the repression and surveillance state apparatus is obviously the most general question, including the problems of the tools of state operations, as well as the modes of subject formation (Butler, 1993; Foucault, 1977 and 1997; Benjamin, 2021). Then – there is the problem of the archive – as Derrida warned some years ago, it is always a compulsive, violent entity, the question is, can an archive be empowering as well? (Derrida, 1995; Berlant, 2010). Some art projects and theories definitely agree so (see: Radziszewski, 2015-17, Cvetkovic, 2003). Is an archive a form of “cruel optimism”, as Lauren Berlant would frame it (See: Berlant, 2010) or rather a version of activism (Francis and Felts, 2017)? What are the main contradictions of the subject formed on the intersection of the repressive state apparatus’s archives, such as those of the police, the Ministry of Interior, the Institute of National Remembrance? How is the resilient, willful subject and community produced in the state action of repressive biopolitical nature? (Ahmed, 2015; Foucault, 1977). What kinds of counterpublics such subject formation builds in its making as well as in the confrontation with its archives? (Derrida, 1995; Berlant and Warner, 2003; Warner, 2002).

The “Hiacynt Action” requires an in-depth examination of the state apparatus in its subject forming, biopolitical function. In 1985, 1986 and 1987 the police and secret services functionaries engaged in quick, alarmed investigations, often appearing at the doors of men, whom they “suspected to be gay”. These interventions, sometimes limited to the interrogations at home, sometimes – at police stations, sometimes even arrests, immediately caused panic, fear and sometimes led to tragedies, as at the time, and in Poland still today, sexual orientation exceeding heteronormativity can still be experienced as a taboo and kept in secrecy. Thus even though many descriptions of the encounters between the men supposed to be gay and police agents do not show physical violence, it should be examined, what psychological trauma they must have caused by its very appearance, and in a massive scale of the estimated 11.000 men targeted in the entire Poland. Although the documentation gathered at the IPN only shows that the three “Hiacynt Actions” were officially planned for 48 hours each, in the years 1985, 86 and 87, the files and procedures opened in these short periods were continued for years and months. The actions also led to other activities by the police, such as education programs about HIV/AIDS and homosexuality, to opening files of crime cases with homosexual men involved, often as victims, and efforts to find perpetrators of the crimes. It must be stressed however, that the intensification and mobilizations of these 3 “Hiacynt Actions” by the whole repressive state apparatus, the immediate linking of crime, AIDS and supposedly suspicious international activities with gay men, gay communities and homosexuality as such caused moral and sexual panic, sense of terror and threat as well as very practical dangers for the men targeted. It is though necessary to provide a research and analysis of these events, even though the documentations and archives are scattered, and the witnesses – dispersed and traumatized, regardless of the fact that the action was conducted almost four decades ago. The state of Poland has shown resilience, not to say resistance to acknowledge its responsibility for human rights violations, terror, intimidation and sometimes brutality against the 11.000 men investigated in its course. The “Hiacynt Action” does not have any general analysis or summary, archives are scattered and procedures of justice are still until now refused.

Approaching the “Hiacynt Action” almost 40 years later means confronting scattered and chaotic archives of very different kind – those created by various state agents as well as those produced by terrified individuals and groups, those of the media, public debate, and the artistic ones. In this project the focus is on the subject formation in those perplexed and disintegrated archives, on the subjectivity (de)formed in the process of state intervention, criticized as a brutal one and defended as an example of the caring action of the state conducted to protect the supposedly vulnerable parts of the population (Foucault, 1977 and 1990; Agamben, 2008). My interest in the subjectivity created by the “Hiacynt Action” is justified partially by the fact, that the gay men and communities begun to coordinate, organize and resist police actions, so therefore we observe an exceptional case of resisting subject formation. But there also were stories of damage, depression and collapse of individuals targeted by “Hiacynt Action”, and new life trajectories by those, who decided to build solidarity and support networks without full resurfacing – in the art venues, in private parties, correspondence and other, more vulnerable forms of resistance (Butler, 1993; Ahmed, 2015; Berlant, 2010).

This project’s main aim is to investigate the subject formation in the twofold process of state surveillance and resistance, attack and solidarity, and its heterogeneous, scattered archives. Between the institutionalized brutality and the vulnerable, mutual aid and self care, which all appeared in the course of the “Hiacynt Action”, the emergence of the non-heteronormative subjectivity in the heterogeneous archives of this action can be seen. Following the work of such exquisite researchers, as Douglas Crimp, Lisa Duggan, Lauren Berlant, Michael Warner, Tomasz Kitliński, Paweł Leszkowicz, Joanna Krakowska, Krystyna Mazur, Tomasz Basiuk, Rafał Majka and artists/writers, as Anna Laszuk and Karol Radziszewski, this project is aimed at a caring reconstruction of the broken pieces of human lives and dignity. In a more theoretical way, obviously required for an academic research, we need to discuss the vulnerable ontologies and epistemologies of weak resistances in the conditions of biopolitical repressive state action conducted under the imperative of “caring for population”, and of the queer counterpublics these confrontations created, leading to the first open declarations of non-heteronormative individuals and groups in the public debate in Poland. The paradoxes of caring hands of the Leviathan should be discussed also beyond the strict separation of repression and control, because most often, and Foucault admitted that in his work, the replacement of carceral state measures by the biopolitical actions proceeds in more perplexed way that it can be assumed. The “Hiacynt Action” is an important case demonstrating these contradictions, also on the level of the (de)construction of the state and individual archives (Foucault, 1977; Derrida, 1995; Spivak, 1999). By using the notion of repressive biopolitical action, I aim to emphasize the contradicting nature of the state apparatus. By the vulnerable ontology of resistance, this research aims at a reconstruction of the subjectivity of those perturbed and threatened, who nevertheless became more than just repressed subjects, with their diverse ways to resist, survive and subvert the repressive apparatus.

The subject formation of the men targeted by the “Hiacynt Action” emerging from its individual, community, media and state archives, as well as from art and literary works, is one of many faces, one of trauma and recovery, of suppressed and overtly expressed affect. It is one abandoned because of the painful conditions it emerged in, but also because of the complexity of their ontology and production and the heterogeneity of its archives and traces. The examination of the “Hiacynt Action” can become a form of commemoration, symbolic restorative justice done to those targeted by its agents (Nijakowski, 2021; Majewska, 2017). The analysis will aim at several different kinds of archives: those created by institutions, those produced by informal groups and individuals targeted by such action, and those produced in the public debate by media, mediating institutions and other agents, such as non-governmental organizations and art projects/institutions. It is clear, that those archives all have their role in producing the non-heteronormative subjects as well as in the making of public of those, who often did not wish to become that. They also have their specificity.

The main aspects of this project are theoretical, as the answers to the questions concerning the nature of the subject formation in archives of a repressive biopolitical action, the production of a methodology of scattered archives, the discussion of various kinds of archives all building knowledges of the state apparatus as well as subject formation in late modern semi-peripheral society (Wallerstein, 1976; Althusser, 2014). The notion of “repressive biopolitical action” is a consciously built oxymoron, combining various strands of Michel Foucault’s work on the measures of surveillance and control, introduced at the dawn of modern era, to replace the strictly carceral modes of state organization (see: Foucault, 1967, 1977 and 1990). It surpasses the artificial assumption of the necessary separation of contradicting state strategies, while the state is, and has always been, contradictory and heterogeneous, just as the subjects subsumed in its making and the aims of safety, control and repression. The intertwining nature of various, usually considered separately, measures of state action, find their mirror reflection in the nature and ontology of the different archives, which need to be considered to understand the “Hiacynt Action”, its repercussions and the subjectivities emerging of its archives in what should be seen as their scarcity and abundance.

This project’s main hypothesis is obviously that the state repressive biopolitical action can form oppositional subjects, archives and knowledges, which function as counterpublics on the margins of the hegemonic political state apparatus, sometimes severely disturbing its main functions, often in a strange symbiosis allowing for mutual evolution in perfecting the biopolitical, supposedly “caring” functions, and sometimes becoming the mainstream public claim for recognition, as it happened with the gay population in Poland in the late 1980s, when some key state agents, as Mr. Mikołaj Kozakiewicz and some functionaries of the Ministry of Health decided to support the efforts of creating the first gay rights organization in Poland. Kozakiewicz and gay activists claim that some 11.000 individual files were created in the course of the “Hiacynt Action”, those files were, as can be observed even in the scattered state archives of the IPN, constructed and

The projects supporting hypothesis are that the method of scattered archive analysis can not only be built in the analysis of the “Hiacynt Action” and theoretical research combined, but also that it can prove to be useful in the analysis and research of other archives and events, even those, where the data was not destroyed to as large degree as in the case of the events examined here.

## **2. Significance of the project**

The sources concerning the “Hiacynt Action” available at the present moment are above all extremely scarce. They can be divided into rare academic articles (Fiedotow, 2012; Kurpios 2001), novels (see: Milcke, 2015), media articles (Pietkiewicz, 1987), reportages (Ryziński, 2016 and 2021) and state archive documents (from the 1980s, collected at IPN and other institutions). Some artistic research and archives have been built by Karol Radziszewski based on the memories and pieces of documents, photographs and correspondence from the late 1980s, reconstructed in interviews and encounters with gay men targeted in the “Hiacynt Action” (see: Radziszewski, 2015-2017). This project’s aim is to build a reconstructive, perhaps also restorative narrative on the subject formation of the non-heteronormative men targeted in the “Hiacynt Action” and resisting, opposing and surviving it, while sometimes building solidarity networks, artistic and political resistance, private parties and groups and other forms of support networks/ solidarity/ counterpublics. This project’s main significance is to conceptualize the state repressive biopolitical action, following Michel Foucault’s work on the history of sexuality, surveillance and control state functions as well as the heterotopias (Foucault 1967, 1977, 1990).

This project offers an evacuation route for the scattered Polish gay and queer theories, moving between the distant references to Stonewall and the US/American discussions and analysis of the HIV/AIDS epidemic (Crimp, 1987 and 2002; Kochanowski, 2004; Kitlinski and Leszkowicz, 2003; Basiuk, 2008 and others). The semi-peripheral, post-communist state of Poland has its own painful, traumatizing, under-examined and largely mystified set of homophobic events and practices as well as a history of resistance and solidarity in opposing and surviving it. Paradoxically, the archives are abundant, in data, memories, documentation of the days of said action, the main problem however is of the traumatic nature of the events, the secrecy of the state in revealing its involvement in the events of the “Hiacynt Action”, as well as the necessity to conduct intersectional, interdisciplinary research in the scattered archive. This project offers an analysis of those events and their documentation indirectly, focusing on the subjectivity emerging of the accounts and files, moving between the

heterogeneous bits and pieces of the scattered materials. Following the queer counterpublics research of Michael Warner, the HIV/AIDS memory works of Douglas Crimp, the queer resilience and subversion practices discussed by Lauren Berlant, Judith Butler, Ann Cvetkovich and Lisa Duggan, the queer cultural works analysis by Tomasz Kitlinski and Paweł Leszkowicz, to name just a few major references of this project, I would like to build a comprehensive theory of the queer subject formation in resistance and solidarity, emerging from the “Hiacynt Action” archives.

As the actions were not targeting women directly, it might be assumed, that only men were threatened by it, which is obviously not true. Witnesses claim that as the nature, aims and purpose of the “Hiacynt Action” were not revealed to the public, all members of the LGBTQ+ communities felt targeted and experienced the action as traumatizing. It is thus necessary to also provide an extensive analysis of those not targeted directly, yet also traumatized. This is why the choice to discuss the subject emerging from the “Hiacynt Action” archive as queer seems legitimate. Not even one scholarly book has been published specifically on the topic of the “Hiacynt Action”, which can be explained by the resistance of the institutions, as well as of the academic field to accept interdisciplinary research. Fears concerning contacting so called “fragile data”, which inevitably happens when investigating the materials collected at the IPN archives, might also have its role, just as does the repressive and painful memories of those targeted by the “Hiacynt Action”. This lack of stable, academic knowledge concerning the topic can be explained by the general assumption that “there is no archives left about the Hiacynt Action”, which proves to be untrue at even short time research in IPN, which I conducted between April and June 2015, as well as in 2017 at the Warsaw IPN headquarters (see: Majewska, 2017).

This lack of generalized narrative on the “Hiacynt Action” might lie in the methodological difficulties emerging in confrontation with partial, scattered memories, archives and accounts of traumatizing state actions. It is thus this project’s gain to open ways to build a knowledge production and epistemologic framework based on theories of the partial knowledge of Donna Haraway as well as on theories of the archive by Jacques Derrida, biopolitics of Michel Foucault and the queer counterpublic research of Michael Warner (Haraway, 1988; Derrida, 1995; Foucault, 1977 and Warner, 2002). The project’s impact can thus influence not only cultural studies, but also other disciplines involved in archive research, such as sociology, ethnology and anthropology, as well as history and literature studies, to name just a few.

With the general topic of the subject construction in the archive, this project moves from journalist investigation towards theoretical analysis, in which the state apparatus, the opposition and resistance to it, as well as the archives created by all different involved parties have their role in the forming of what we today understand as the subject of the actions. The contradictory nature of such subjects – being both: exposed and taking the role of the public defender of the excluded, as was the case of Waldemar Zboralski; those, who were exposed to the state apparatus and risked exposure of their unconventional intimate practices and/or sexual orientation, those who moved in-between these positions, providing some artistic performativity or activism, but to a smaller, local or community-based degree, requires a diversified method of analysis, which will be explained further. Based on the documents signed by high ranking state functionaries in 1985 and 1986, Mr Trzcinski and lieutenant Jabłoński, the “Hiacynt Action” itself had contradictory aims, formulated around three main issues: of the presence of homosexual groups in Poland, unknown to the state apparatus, which needs to be immediately infiltrated and surveilled because of their potential for international and political mobilization (documents stored in the IPN archives, details in bibliography); the spread of the HIV/AIDS and the need to “protect the population” (Foucault, 2003); as well as the incompetence of the police to solve crimes in which gay men were victims. Most of the “Hiacynt Action” imperatives most definitely had a purpose of the “caring for the population”, as a form of power, depicted by Michel Foucault under the name of biopolitics. The fact that the perpetuation of the “Hiacynt Action” often had brutal and dramatic character contradicts the peaceful atmosphere of the documents gathered in the IPN archives and demands measures of justice to restore harmed citizens rights as well as to commemorate the painful repercussion of the supposedly “state caring” actions.

The main academic gain of this research most definitely lies in the comprehensive reconstruction of the “Hiacynt Action’s” dispersed and heterogeneous archives, under the main denominator of the queer subject formation in the confrontation of the state apparatus and individual/collective bodies of the non-heteronormative persons and communities in Poland of the late 1980s emerging 40 years later from the scattered and abandoned documents and accounts.

The project’s central element is thus the making of a methodology of researching scattered and partly destroyed archives. It has most often been assumed, that the archives are whole, that they contain most of the necessary knowledge. The archive materials on the Hiacynt Actions are scattered and partial. It is thus necessary to formulate a methodology of archive research which, while it acknowledges the holes and missing points of the researched materials, still allows to investigate it, to deduce from the partial knowledge sources and to build conclusions in ways acknowledging the missing elements, yet also provide information. (details of the method are depicted below). The archive research methodology built in this project allows the analysis of scattered archives, its impact on interdisciplinary research of state archives as well as media materials and queer cultures in post-communist societies, and – perhaps most importantly – its role for a theoretical analysis of the subject formation processes in and by archives of opposing nature, such as the state, activist, artistic and media archive’s, which all add to the subject of repressive biopolitical state action formation, yet in often opposing ways. It can be used by scholars, journalists and archive researchers of cultural studies and other disciplines in archives previously seen as insufficient to build knowledge and account for past events.

This project’s other gains consist in the construction of a historically and geopolitically relevant framework and reference context for the analysis of the LGBTQ+ persons, groups and communities in Poland and perhaps also other countries of the

region. Given its preoccupation with the queer counterpublics, the state repressive biopolitical actions, the heterogeneous archive studies and methodology, it acknowledges the complexity of the politics of location of any study of non-heterosexual communities, while at the same time negotiating the queer studies axiomatics in the global academic context.

The project's further gains consist in the making of theoretical development in the line of biopolitical state apparatus study by further combining its repressive and biopolitical functions. In the analysis of today's state functions, these developments might prove useful. The discussions of the subject formation in the repressive actions and their heterogeneous archives are also necessary for better, more legitimate and theoretically advanced investigations in the archives, which are sometimes now visited and researched without any methodological clarity.

The monograph, articles and conference presentations of the hypothesis and results of this research project will further enrich the academic field of cultural studies and neighbouring disciplines, as well as the public and media discussion concerning the role of the state, the queer counterpublics and archive works.

### **3. Work plan**

This research project is divided into several general stages, obviously some elements of the work are constantly developed or overlap. The formulation of the complete project's methodology and finalizing the strategy of dissemination opened the work in early 2022, the decisions concerning the spread of the archive work were also taken at this early stage. A training for the project's Principal Investigator, and a data protection Action Plan was provided by the data protection expert to make sure state of art data protection is in place. The encryption software Vera-Crypt is used for data storing, and the standard procedures of safety will be applied. The data acquired by the project's PI require anonymization practically for any further use, including any form of dissemination of the project's results, as it contains sensitive information on individuals. The IPN has its strict regulations concerning the use of data acquired in their libraries, it is also a standard RODO and privacy protection matter to ensure anonymity and safety of sensitive data, and the state of art standards will be applied here. This is why procedures of encryption and anonymization are required, and they will be applied throughout the project.

A summary of the methodology of the project was built in mid 2023 - after the presentation of the early findings of the project in conferences (The Queer Genealogies, UAM Poznań; the Historical Materialism Conference, Athens and the Pink Files Conference in Kraków). The first large part of the archive research was conducted in the institutional libraries, such as: the Institute of National Remembrance, ministries of health and internal affairs, police regional headquarters, National Library and others. The data is collected, summarized and undergo a comparative analysis. The second large part of the archive research is conducted in the libraries, homes and sites of the individuals and groups targeted by the Hiacynt Action, and in the LGBTQ+ archives in other countries (Austria, Holland, UK), it also undergoes a summary, discussion and comparative analysis. Two queries were conducted that never were done before: one in the regional headquarters of the Polish Police (Komendy Wojewódzkie Policji) and the other - in the LGBTQ+ archives of some other countries - to compare the situation of gay people in Poland and abroad. The project's website was launched in 2024, providing the first informations on the project, its methods and expected outcomes.

Part three of the archive research consist in the work on publications and descriptions of the Hiacynt actions, contemporary and those from the past, comparative analysis. In this time, the project encountered its first expert analysis, review and evaluation; during the seminars conducted in Polish in 2022-2023 and in English in 2023-2024, and two panel discussions with invited experts: "Archival Justice?" with prof. Antke Engel, prof. Adam Bodnar, prof. Agnieszka Pantuchowicz, dr. Katarzyna Bojarska, prof. Tomasz Basiuk and prof. Ewa Majewska (6 March 2024), and "Decolonizing (queer) epistemologies" with dr. Robert Kulpa (in fall 2024).

Full summary of the archive research, its outcome and conclusions will be concluded by the end of the project. Then the analysis, discussion, dissemination and publication of theoretical implications of the work conducted in the project will take place, in publications, conference presentations and website. The data obtained in the project will be partly destroyed, applying the state of art techniques and safety regulations, and partly - after complete anonymisation and encryption - stored in the archives of the SWPS. All final operations on the data obtained in the project will be consulted with the data protection expert certified by the Polish Home Office. A destruction of some of the documents might be required by the Polish law, and specifically - the IPN regulations, and any data concerning specific persons needs anonymization anyways. The anonymization will be conducted throughout the project's duration, however only at the end of the project it will be completed. Some anonymized files will be copied for the Queer Archive of the Lambda Warszawa - LGBTQ+ ngo operating in Warsaw.

Summarizing the results of all research tasks performed in the project in a monograph in English language and report, evaluation and closing of the project will take place in late 2025.

The Principal Investigator's earlier research on the Hiacynt Action, conducted in 2015, allows to build a framework for the project presented here. It consisted in 3-months long research in the archives of the Institute of National Remembrance

(IPN), with access to some 100 files issued in the course of the Hiacynt Actions, combining the documents depicting the general framework of the action, issued in the Ministry of Interior and the Police headquarters and the local pursuits and investigations opened on the day of each of the three Hiacynt Actions, as well as their follow up. Another part of this early research preceding the now presented project consisted in the analysis of the media materials concerning the Hiacynt Action, gathered in the National Library in Warsaw and other resources. The early version of the intersectional method of the study has been built during the research work of the Principal Investigator at the Institute of Cultural Inquiry in Berlin, where the early draft of this first phase of the research was presented at the International Conference "Can we have some privacy?", to much acclaim. The peer-reviewed article written based on this research, 'Public against our will? The caring gaze of Leviathan, "pink files" from 1980s Poland and the issue of privacy' was published in *Interalia. Journal for Queer Studies* in 2017. After that publication, it was made clear, that further research should be conducted, aimed at a summary of the subject formation of the Hiacynt Actions and its heterogeneous archives. As the Principal Investigator developed theories of subaltern counterpublics and weak resistance in the meantime, it only seems natural to return to the topic of the so called "pink files" and build a systematic analysis of the Hiacynt Actions archives with a specific focus on the subject emerging from them.

The possible risks of this project are multiple, as in any interdisciplinary research in heterogeneous and scattered archives documenting traumatizing state actions on marginalized groups. The first group of risks consist in misinterpreting the aims and perpetuation of the Hiacynt Actions, thus legitimizing the possibly repressive measures of the state. Against such problems there are some measures that can be taken, such as the process of public discussion and consultation of the project in the course of its making, the peer-reviewed system of publication of its outcome. Another risks lie in the practice of illegitimate generalizations, which can be avoided by the methodological arguments of partial knowledge production, formulated by Donna Haraway and expanded since then. The other risk is the chaotic presentation of the data collected in the research, and this can be avoided only by means of systematic editing of the summaries of the research's outcomes. Yet another risk comes with the visits in state and private archives, which could lead to the publication of personal data. This can obviously be avoided by means of strict following of the fragile data management rules, issued by institutions as well as provided in more general academic standards well known to the Principal Investigator.

#### **4. Research Methodology.**

As it was emphasized above, such project requires an interdisciplinary, intersectional methodology, with strong theoretical basis, combining theory of knowledge and critical epistemology, with queer and studies, archive studies, biopolitical analysis as well as studies on repression, archive and power. The partial character of the archive can be deduced from the psychoanalytically inclined work on history and archive of Dominick LaCapra and Jacques Derrida (LaCapra, 2001; Derrida, 1995). Their work, usually avoided in historical research, provides necessary methodological suggestions for operating in any scattered archive. Then, there is the imperative of historical politics, formulated by Howard Zinn and expanded by queer archive theorists, such as M. Greene and others (Greene, 2013, Zinn, 1976). The necessity of a method allowing operating in partially destroyed archive is obvious in post-communist countries, where many of the state apparatus functionaries destroyed traces of their agency or that of the institutions they managed before 1989. It should be made possible not only to visit such archive, but also to generate knowledge based on its resources, consciously, as Donna Haraway suggested, of the location and partiality of such knowledge (Haraway, 1988). Such methodology requires strong theoretical basis of interdisciplinary methods, combining theory of knowledge and critical epistemology, with queer and studies, archive studies, biopolitical analysis as well as studies on repression, archive and power. This project learns from Judith Butler's theory of the performative nature of gender as well as from her study of the "excitable speech" and thus examines various forms of hate speech as not always successful forms of performance (Butler, 1993 and 1997). The project's method draws on queer affect archives, built around and after the HIV/AIDS era in the USA and then also around 2015 in Poland (Crimp, 1987 and 2002; Radziszewski, 2015-17). The biopolitical imperatives of contemporary states, as presented by Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze are also parts of the project's method, as they allow to distinguish the state's repressive functions (Althusser, 2014) and biopolitical ones (Foucault, 1967, 2003 and Deleuze, 1992). There is an important set of theoretical observations, useful for this project however never formulated as major paradigm, yet – in this project they are particularly important. One is the set of feminist and queer studies discussions of privacy as privilege or/and tool of oppression of the excluded (see: Gatens, 2004 and Berlant, 1999). In the wider context of feminist critiques of the public/private divide as a tool of patriarchal power's execution, this is a specific set of observations. This study also contains elements of theories of counterpublics understood as public spheres of the oppressed and marginalized (Kuge and Negt, 1972; Fraser, 1990, Warner, 2002 and Majewska, 2021).

The methodology of researching scattered and heterogeneous archives of a marginalized group subjected to state repressive biopolitical actions in a political regime no longer existing in Poland may seem particularly specific and thus hardly applicable in other archives and contexts. This project shows, that the opposite assumption proves more legitimate. Following Michel Foucault's most general assumption, that in order to understand the modern societies and modernity as a project, its marginalized communities should be studied, as well as the state means of their suppression, I believe that even this very general description of this project's method allows its applications in other archives and contexts, provided that they cause similar theoretical and methodological obstacles as the Hiacynt Actions archives – i.e. that they are scattered,

fragmented, dispersed, their authors are traumatized and the institutions resist cooperation. It can be seen, that perhaps most archives actually present at least a part of these problems.

During the previous researches at the IPN (Institute of National Remembrance) in Warsaw, I found documents from several regions of Poland, which allow some approximations as to when and how the Hiacynt actions were conducted. Many of them were from Szczecin and Białystok, some from Wrocław, Kraków, Ostróda and other cities and towns.

The query in the Regional Headquarters of the Police brought some 140 pages of documents, mainly from Warsaw, Radom and Ostrołęka.

The queries in the LGBTQ+ archives in Vienna, London and Amsterdam allow building a comparative context for the analysis of the gay situation in Poland after 1945.

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IPN KR I 020/87