

An Archive on the Move: Tracing Contested and Vulnerable Archival Spaces of the Polish Research Institute Archive

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Introduction

In this chapter we focus on the spatio-temporal life of a Holocaust archive and suggest that we need to understand the journeys an archive has made in time and space if we are to fully understand its value. We argue that the collection, creation, and housing of the Polish Research Institute (PIZ) at Lund University Library has created a history of contested spaces and this journey has involved the production and maintenance of different vulnerabilities. By taking an explicitly geographic approach to the history of an archive, we underline the importance of not only what it is, but where it has been. Whilst archival research sometimes focuses on unpacking the box, a geographic approach helps us to understand its contextualities, its surrounding geographies, and how these geographies partly shape and form our perceptions of what the archive and its contents represent. The idea of elaborating on a collections' movement is derived from Hill's argument on how collections — as well as practices of collecting — are essentially geographical.² Hill argues that tracing or following a collection's movements and geographies opens opportunities to include not only more conventional archival sites, but also more hidden ones; as well as geographies and practices of vulnerability, as we will show here. We suggest the spaces of the archive and the geographies it has been placed within are far from passive and neutral. By

¹ The authors are listed in an alphabetical order to acknowledge that this chapter was written in close collaboration of all three contributing authors. The authors would like to acknowledge that the chapter was written within the research project entitled "Ethical dilemmas of digitization: Vulnerability and Holocaust collections" (funded by the Swedish Research Council grant number 2021-01428).

² Jude Hill, "Travelling objects: the Wellcome collection in Los Angeles, London and beyond", *Cultural Geographies* (2006) pp. 340–366.

studying this archival journey, we specifically aim to explore the vulnerabilities embedded in the PIZ archive history and geography.

As emphasized by critical archival researchers, archives are always contested spaces of power and we should be aware of the many marginalized practices, voices, and communities in our archives.³ Such perspectives remind us that archives are far from passive vessels but can instead disempower as well as empower those they deal with. For vulnerable groups, the ways in which their histories and memories are archived may be especially important. Vulnerability is a complex concept that has been defined and perceived in multiple ways⁴ but here we view it as a silencing, marginalization and inaccessibility that is “politically produced, unequally distributed through and by different operations of power”.⁵

Empirically this chapter deals with the archive of the Polish Research Institute (PIZ) at Lund University Library which contains material from Polish Roman Catholic and Jewish concentration camp survivors who arrived in Sweden during the spring and summer of 1945. Initiated in 1945 by Lund University lecturer Zygmunt Lakocinski, it includes transcribed interviews (so-called witness protocols) with camp survivors, objects brought from the camps, as well as letters, diaries, and poems of survivors. Parts of the archive have been digitized and can be found via the library’s website and the Alvin platform for digital collections and digitalized cultural heritage.⁶

In this chapter, we discuss the movements of the PIZ archive, from the making of the archive at Lund University Library, to its deposition at the Hoover Institution Archives at Stanford University, its return to Lund University, its digitization in the early 1990s, and the creation of the platform ‘Witnessing

³ Daniela Agostinho, Catherine D’Ignazio, Annie Ring, Nanna Bonde Thylstrup & Kristin Veel “Uncertain Archives: Approaching the Unknowns, Errors, and Vulnerabilities of Big Data through Cultural Theories of the Archive”, *Theories of the Archive, Surveillance and Society*, (2019) pp. 422–441; Eric Ketelaar, “Tacit Narratives: The Meanings of Archives”, *Archival Science* 1 (2001) pp. 131–141.

⁴ Anu Koivunen, Katarina Kyröä, & Ingrid Ryberg, *The power of Vulnerability. Mobilising affect in feminist, queer and anti-racist media cultures*. (Manchester 2018); Dearbhail, Bracken-Roche, Emily Bell, Mary Ellen Macdonald & Eric Racine, “The concept of ‘vulnerability’ in research ethics: an in-depth analysis of policies and guidelines” *Health Research Policy and Systems*, 5:8 (2017) <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12961-016-0164-6s>.; Judith Butler, “Rethinking Vulnerability and Resistance”, in Judith Butler, Zeynep Gambetti & Leticia Sabsay (eds.), *Vulnerability in Resistance*, (Durham 2016) pp. 12–27; Carl H. Coleman, “Vulnerability as a Regulatory Category in Human Subject Research” *Journal of Law, Medicine and Ethics*, 37:1 (2009) pp. 12–18.

⁵ Butler et al., (eds) (2016) p. 5.

⁶ Witnessing Genocide. <<https://www.ub.lu.se/en/witnessing-genocide>> (January 20, 2023).

genocide' at the Lund University Library. A critical and geographical approach helps us hone in on the operations of power and contextualities of vulnerability, as well as on questions such as who is seen as vulnerable. We also ask how, where, why and who created, maintained, and contested the vulnerabilities of the PIZ archive. The PIZ archive is portrayed as far from an abstract, neutral, and isolated place but as a lived, practiced, and relational space. How vulnerability—those inaccessible, marginal and silenced voices—can be both understood and approached is a crucial issue for archival studies; not least as archives are renewed and transformed through digitization.

The Making of the PIZ Archive — Subjectivity as Vulnerability

The narrative of how the PIZ archive was initiated has been told many times by many people, but never by its initiators and makers.⁷ They never crafted a narrative or metatext to explain how and why they were creating the archive/collection, known today as the PIZ archive. At the end of the 1990s, the Gothenburg-based historian Paul Rudny was hired to organize the collection. Around this time Rudny also wrote, the oft-cited text: “Polski Instytut Źródłowy w Lund (PIZ) (The Polish Research Institute in Lund), a presentation of the archives” that is still available via the Lund University Library website.⁸ In the text Paul Rudny writes about the story of how Zygmunt Lakociński, a lecturer in Polish at Lund University, left behind two collections to the University Library: The first being his personal papers and the second a collection of material called The Polish Research Institute in Lund (the PIZ collection). The PIZ collection also consists of two parts: the archive (manuscripts and documents) and printed material. According to Rudny, the archive is significant in terms of its *unique documentation* and for the fact that the material is *in Sweden*.⁹

⁷ See for example Paul Rudny, “Polski Instytut Źródłowy w Lund (PIZ) (The Polish Research Institute in Lund). A presentation of the archives” Lund: Universitetsbiblioteket, Lunds universitet (2005); Izabela A. Dahl, “...this is material arousing interest in common history”: Zygmunt Łakociński and Polish Survivors’ Protocols”, *Jewish History Quarterly*, (2007) pp. 319–338; Victoria Van Orden Martínez, “Witnessing against a divide? An analysis of early Holocaust testimonies constructed in interviews between Jewish and non-Jewish Poles”, *Holocaust Studies*, DOI: 10.1080/17504902.2021.1981627 See also Victoria Van Orden Martínez forthcoming dissertation, *Afterlives. Histories of Survivors of Nazi Persecution in Sweden* (.prel.title).

⁸ Witnessing Genocide <<https://www.ub.lu.se/en/witnessing-genocide>> (January 20, 2023).

⁹ Paul Rudny, “Polski Instytut Źródłowy w Lund (PIZ) (The Polish Research Institute in Lund). A presentation of the archives” (Lund 2005).

The interviews (over 500) were made with Polish citizens that were ex-prisoners, irrespective of their religious or ethnic groups, with the purpose of informing coming generations of what had taken place. The interviews were made within 18 months of their arrival in Sweden. What makes these interviews significant is partly that the documentation was made shortly after the respondents were released and partly that the methods of conducting the interviews were reliable. This makes Lakocinski's work *relatively rare* from an *international perspective* (...) ¹⁰

However, as we have pointed out elsewhere, the PIZ archive is not as rare and unique from an international perspective, but should rather be understood in relation to similar initiatives that were instigated by the persecuted, refugees and survivors during and immediately after the Second World War and the Holocaust.¹¹ By way of example, Israeli historian Laura Jockusch has demonstrated how historical commissions and documentation centers were founded all over Europe immediately after the war in her seminal book *Collect and Record! Jewish Holocaust documentation in early postwar Europe*. In the first postwar decade, these initiatives collected thousands of Nazi documents along with testimonies, memories, stories, diaries, songs, poetries, and objects, both from and about those who were murdered and those who survived. We contend that the making of the PIZ archive should be understood in such a contemporaneous and international context. Of course, one could argue that all archives contain unique documentation and are the results of a range of unique cultural heritage practices in their creation, collection, archivization, and curation.

However, what we instead set out as particularly unique in relation to the PIZ archive is that it was created by funding from the Swedish state, in contrast to similar initiatives elsewhere. Furthermore, although the interviews were conducted by survivors, a Swedish Professor of History, Sture Bolin, was assigned to design the methodological guidelines for the work. In November 1945 Professor Bolin held a lecture for the working group on how to go about collecting

¹⁰ Rudny, (2005) p. 1.

¹¹ Malin Thor Tureby, "Memories, testimonies and oral history: on collections and research about and with Holocaust survivors in Sweden", *SOU 2020:21, Utredningen om ett museum om Förintelsen: Sveriges museum om Förintelsen*. Del 2 pp. 67–92; Malin Thor Tureby & Kristin Wagrell, "Vittnesmål från Förintelsen och de överlevandes berättelser: definitioner, insamlingar och användningar, 1939–2020", (Stockholm 2020) pp. 17–20.

the materials.¹² In the lecture Bolin emphasized that historical facts change easily and remove themselves from the truth unless they are immediately investigated or presented in subjective way. Therefore, the researcher must completely disavow subjectivity and take the position of an impartial (objective) observer and collector of materials. According to Professor Bolin:

The history of the last war, which is written according to known working methods, has certain areas — prisons and concentration camps — which require processing based on completely new methods. These methods would consist of collecting historical material from people rescued from concentration camps in the form of accounts, minutes and testimonies. Historical facts, witnessed by thousands of witnesses, will have a value as historical documents, establishing the historical truth and providing an overall picture of life in the prisons and concentration camps. All this will constitute a rich material for scientific investigations.¹³

To establish “the historical truth” it was viewed as important to carefully distinguish between personal testimonies about self-perceived events and those narrated by other witnesses. Sture Bolin also underlined the importance of the witnesses indicating as accurately as possible the geographical location of the scene of the crime and that the testimony was told in a correct chronological order.¹⁴

An ideal way to collect such testimonies would be to include the witnesses' statements on gramophone records. Since this is impossible for material reasons, the members of the working group should, as far as possible, act as such gramophone records by reproducing as faithfully as possible in writing the testimonies of the witnesses. One should give the witnesses complete freedom in their particulars, carefully and in detail record all the facts, carefully maintaining the language and expression of the witnesses. In this way, without affecting the witnesses in any way, their immediate, unadulterated impressions

¹² Minutes from meeting, Sture Bolin's lecture about Polish Historical (Research) Institute's activity and regulations (in Swedish and Polish), November 22, 1945. Polish Research Institute Archive (PIZ). Lunds universitetsbibliotek (LUB): <<https://www.ub.lu.se/hitta/digitala-samlingar/witnessing-genocide>>

¹³ Minutes from meeting, Sture Bolin's lecture about Polish Historical (Research) Institute's activity and regulations (in Swedish and Polish), November 22, 1945. PIZ, LUB: <<https://www.ub.lu.se/hitta/digitala-samlingar/witnessing-genocide>> Authors' own translation from Swedish to English.

¹⁴ Ibid.

and observations are achieved, which also provides valuable material for psychological investigations.¹⁵

The idea that it was possible to establish “the historical truth” by collecting the interviews/testimonies according to a strict methodological guideline — where the interviewer interacted with the witness as little as possible — and rather recorded and reproduced the words of the interviewees demonstrates how vulnerable (read easy to contaminate) these kinds of materials and methods were considered to be in the middle of the 1940s in Sweden. However, the ideas about the objective interviewer and the subjective interviewee also provide the witnesses with a certain status and agency. It was argued that if they were given complete freedom to express themselves, they would contribute with invaluable materials for future scientific investigations.

After the interview, a transcript of the witness testimony (called a witness protocol) was signed by both interviewee and interviewer. Each “witness protocol” also included comments from the person making the record of the person being interviewed:

The testifier is a simple, emotional woman. Her camp recollections arouse strong feelings in her, and she cries at certain points during her testimony. She is not prone to flights of fancy. Though her memory is poor, she endeavours to speak only the truth.¹⁶

Hence, the vulnerability of the interviewees and the subjectivity of the materials were considered simultaneously as a strength and weakness in the making of the archive in the middle of the 1940s.

The Deposition of the PIZ Archive at the Hoover Institute and Library: Accessibility as Vulnerability

Negotiations and decisions related to the future protection of the collection were made parallel to the collection of testimonies and at an early stage in the life of the PIZ archive. In 1946 plans were initiated by Lakocinski to guarantee the security of the archive — in particular the archive’s witness records — by moving it — from Europe to the USA. A plan was drawn up to create and move copies of

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Record of Witness Testimony 1 [Anna Danowska’s testimony received by Helena Miklaszewska], PIZ. LUB, <<https://www.ub.lu.se/hitta/digitala-samlingar/witnessing-genocide/witness-testimonies>>

the records, as well as to move portions of the original archival material from Lund's University Library and deposit them for 25 years at Stanford University's Hoover Institute and Library on War, Revolution and Peace. Financial reasons lay behind the proposed move, as well as political uncertainties surrounding the collection. In the immediate post-War period, it is perhaps no surprise that the archive's relocation and deposition was planned with an intention to use the geography and distance from post-war Europe and the politics surrounding Holocaust survivors and Poland's status as a nation in an effort to furnish safety. In 1948 it was evident that "the most important issue to solve for PIZ was the security of the material".¹⁷ Even from the archive's inception and early stages, the material was viewed, deemed, and labelled as vulnerable by Lakocinski himself: a status that is derived from context and one which had spatial implications and consequences.

At the end of 1946 Lakocinski started the process of securing the collection, a process that took some time before it could be finalized. Lakocinski initiated a dialogue about moving the archive outside Europe by activating his European and American networks and contacts. For example, contact was made with the Hoover Library representatives: one representative on Polish matters in London and another representative in Sweden. On initial contact with the Swedish representative of the Hoover Library in January 1947, Lakocinski explained his intention of future collaboration and financial support. In this correspondence he explains how the PIZ archive working group — consisting of the 9 archival workers and himself as the archival manager — had been financed until December 1946 by the Swedish "Arbetsmarknadskommissionen" Swedish Labour Market Commission — which was a state body that was concerned with labor market questions and the recruitment of foreign labor. Lakocinski explained further in the correspondence how his work had been increasingly directed towards ensuring financial means through contact with several organizations, including the Hoover archive.¹⁸ However, it is not until Lakocinski, almost one year later in December 1947 in a letter directed directly to the Hoover archive where he raises political uncertainties and the collection's position in the developing Cold War and the wish to deposit the collection that contact is

¹⁷ Paul Rodny Polski Instytut Źródłowy Lund (PIZ) (The Polish Research Institute in Lund). A presentation of the archives. (2005) p. 12.

¹⁸ Letter to Ebba Dahlin Hoover Library's representative in Sweden from Zygmunt Lakocinski, January 2, 1947, Brev/handlingar till/från The Hoover Institute and Library, Stanford Univ, USA 1946–1972, vol. 47:14, PIZ, LUB.

established.¹⁹ There was fear at the institute in Lund that the collection would be made available to or somehow vulnerable to the attentions of the Soviet bloc, not least stemming from the interest shown in it by the communist government in Poland.²⁰ Hoover had already begun to take a more active position in relation to Polish archive material after the end of the Second World War. For example, much of the Polish London government material was deposited or sold to the Hoover Institution. A choice was made that involved financing, but crucially the decision rested upon geography, spatial context and the positionality of actors. The Hoover archives were well-funded and a safe distance from Europe, but it should be noted that the Hoover Library and Institute is more than just a library and neutral space for storage and deposit, despite what the external image of the Hoover tower may suggest (fig. Illustration of the Hoover tower). Hoover has its roots in the archival work of Hebert Hoover who, before his inauguration as the 30th President of the USA, was a prolific collector of European war documentation and accounts. The library and associated institute that bears his name is dedicated to the preservation of peace, free enterprise and democracy and existed in a Western space in a concerted opposition to the Soviet bloc. That the PIZ finds its way to Hoover, positions the archive within a wider narrative framing of the Cold War, freedom, and the USA's role in European politics.

In the letter from December 1947 Lakocinski writes to the Hoover Institute and Library on War, Revolution and Peace: "As we appreciate the importance of the position of the Hoover Library in the States and as we would like American politicians and historians to be well informed about everything connected with Polish affairs, we should like to transfer a complete set (over 500 copies) of our documentation to the Hoover Library in the form of an open deposit under the usual conditions of such cases". The financial uncertainties of the archive were made clear in the letter. Lakocinski described the "primitive conditions" they were working under and asked for help financing the 3000 copies that made up the collection of documents.²¹ In the beginning of 1948 Lakocinski received a reply from Hoover Library stating their interest in the proposal of the collection,

¹⁹ Letter from Z. Lakocinski to Hoover Institute and Library and Professor H.H Fisher, December 15, 1947. Brev/handlingar till/från The Hoover Institute and Library, Stanford Univ, USA 1946–1972. vol. 47:14, PIZ LUB.

²⁰ Rudny (2005) p. 12.

²¹ Letter from Z. Lakocinski to Hoover Institute and Library and Professor H.H Fisher, December 15, 1947, Brev/handlingar till/från The Hoover Institute and Library, Stanford Univ, USA 1946–1972, vol. 47:14, PIZ LUB.

including files, reports, and statements of former inmates of German concentration camps. “We have a large collection of Polish materials on World Wars I and II and would appreciate receiving copies of the entire files of your institute”. Hoover Library also agreed to cover the suggested cost of preparing the copies for the Library.²²

However, because Lakocinski wanted to send copies and not the originals to the Hoover Library they had to deny the transfer as an open deposit and suggested instead that the materials would instead be viewed as a gift from Lund University Library to the Hoover Library. “As your materials would not be originals but only copies, and as we are contributing to the cost of their preparation, we would prefer not to consider these materials as a mere deposit. I would suggest that your collection be considered as a gift from your institute and we should catalogue it as such. The material would be accessible to all scholars and writers who consult the files of the library.”²³

In March 1948 Lakocinski reaches out to the national antiquarian “Riksantikvarien” Professor Martin Olsson to explore the option of sending the originals as a “secret deposition” to a Swedish institution.²⁴ Realizing such route is closed, Lakocinski ends up sending a reply to the letter received earlier that year from Hoover Library, writing that he would like to proceed by dispatching the copies as quickly as possible, “because of the unsettled state of the world”. Lakocinski adds that he also wishes to put the original files in security at the Hoover institution as an open deposit. However, he asks if it would be possible to send a small collection of documents as a closed deposit, “not to be used by the general public but only available to a very limited number of officials of the Hoover Library. It is important that the contents should not be divulged to any persons other than those connected with the Polish Research Institute”. Lakocinski also adds nine conditions to the deposit originals. One condition stipulated that “the deposit as a whole should remain the property of the depositors”. Another condition stated that “the deposit may be made available to those Government institutions and American authorities, as well as to those institutions and persons whom you supply with documentation on Polish

²² Letter from Easton Rothwell, Vice Chairman at The Hoover Institute and Library to Z. Lakocinski, January 15, 1948. Brev/handlingar till/från The Hoover Institute and Library, Stanford Univ, USA 1946–1972, vol. 47:14, PIZ, LUB.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Letter to Riksantikvarie Martin Olsson, March 3, 1948. Zygmunt Łakociński’s Archive. vol. 3, LUB.

affairs/except representatives of the Polish Communistic Government or any person maintaining friendly relations with this Government. Lakocinski also states how “Names and places of birth of the witnesses shall be kept secret until the year of 1995, provided the depositors/or the successors do not change this clause at an earlier date”.²⁵ He also asks if it is possible to send a smaller deposit, which in later correspondence he explains contains, a small collection of documents including a section on Russian-Polish relations in occupied Poland and relations to Soviet Russia generally as well as a collection of original documents, letters, identification papers and plans. Relations with Russia were taken to mean that “it is important to preserve great secrecy for the sake of our witnesses’ safety, a condition laid down by the witnesses before giving us their evidence”.²⁶ These conditions further underline how the mobility of the archive was not merely a question of finance or general safety but grounded in specific Cold War geographic imaginations and how academic institutions and archives held specific and important positions in this context. Indeed, the PIZ is seen as vulnerable to misuse and the testimonies were made silent and inaccessible to a larger public, but at the same time the archive itself has agency and could be seen as occupying the position of a potential agent in the Cold War conflict.

The Early Organization and Digitization of the PIZ Archive: Swedish Memory Politics as Vulnerability

In 1972 the archive returned to Sweden, after the request of Lakocinski by way of Lakocinski’s son and representatives for the Hoover institute. After two years in Sweden, the archive was given to Lund University Library and remained unopened until 1995, as had been stipulated by Lakocinski, before the material was handed over to the Hoover Library.

At the time, Lund University Library did not have any personnel with the competencies, linguistic or otherwise, needed to organize the material. Nor did they have funding to hire any staff that could organize and catalog the material. The person who would later be hired to manage the collection after its reopening, Paul Rudny, placed much emphasis on the relative role of Zygmunt Lakocinski

²⁵ Letter from Z. Lakocinski to Easton Rothwell Vice Chairman at The Hoover Institute and Library, April 21, 1948. Brev/handlingar till/från The Hoover Institute and Library, Stanford Univ, USA 1946–1972, vol. 47:14. PIZ, LUB.

²⁶ Letter from Z. Lakocinski to Easton Rothwell Vice Chairman at The Hoover Institute and Library, May 29, 1948. Brev/handlingar till/från The Hoover Institute and Library, Stanford Univ, USA 1946–1972, vol. 47:14, PIZ, LUB.

in the archive's significance. In his oft-cited text from 2005, he expounds on what he deems the greatest injustice of the long-forgotten archive: that Lakocinski had not been supported by Swedish academia or his projects funded by the Swedish state.²⁷ Indeed, he concludes his historical presentation of Lakocinski and the archive with an epilogue in which he, with a sigh of relief, ascertains that the PIZ archive had finally received the recognition from the Swedish state that it deserves. In 2000 he states the Committee for Living History (preparing for the institution of the Living History Forum) granted funding for the organization and partial translation and digitization of the archive. Rather than discuss the fact that Lakocinski feared that the participants interviewed for the archive could be persecuted by the Soviet Union, Rudny laments that the archive was not used until after the "fall of the Berlin Wall".²⁸ In Rudny's narrative, therefore, the participants are not the vulnerable parties, but rather, it is Lakocinski's reputation and work — his legacy in Sweden — that constitutes the main vulnerability of the archive at this point.

Lacking in Rudny's narrative is reflection on the impact that the Committee for Living History — working on the mandate of the Department of Culture — had on the organization and digitization of the archive. The Committee, consisting of bureaucrats, academics, Holocaust survivors and museum officials, was formed in the aftermath of Prime Minister Göran Persson's *Living History* campaign which was launched in the autumn of 1997. The campaign came about after a government survey showed that Swedish school youth had little to no knowledge about the Holocaust. Given the social climate of the late 1990s with discussions revolving around Holocaust denial, xenophobic and racist violence and the perceived growth of Neo-Nazi parties and organizations in Sweden, the informational campaign soon morphed into plans for something more permanent.²⁹ In preparation for this permanent initiative, a committee was appointed whose main task was to produce a proposition for a new institution for Living History. The directives given to the committee were vague and heated debates soon commenced with regard to the focus of the future institution. Should it only concern the history and memory of the Holocaust, or should it have a broader approach and include perspectives on contemporary forms of

²⁷ Paul Rudny "Zygmunt Lakocinski och polska källinstitutets arkiv i Lund 1939–87" *Slavica Lundensia* 23, (2007) pp. 177–201.

²⁸ Rudny, (2007).

²⁹ Kristin Wagrell, *"Chorus of the saved". Constructing the Holocaust survivor in Swedish discourse, 1943–1966*, (Linköping 2020).

racism, xenophobia and anti-democratic movements and ideas? Should it have its own holdings and collections and how should these be acquired? These were all pressing questions for the committee in the early 2000s as the eyes of the world turned toward Sweden and its new, leading role in Holocaust remembrance.

In the autumn of 1999 one of the committee members — the director of the museum *Kulturen in Lund*, Margaretha Ahlin — submitted a funding application to the Swedish Department of Culture. The application concerned the organization, cataloging and preservation (through digitization) of what was then referred to as the “Lakocinski archive”.³⁰ At first, this application received no feedback and it wasn’t until a revised, less ambitious application was submitted a year later that the project received an endowment of 500,000 SEK from the Department of Culture. At this point, the management of the archive had become intertwined with the committee’s greater initiative to collect and acquire material relating to the Holocaust. It was thus stipulated in the contract signed by the Department of Culture and Lund University Library that 25 of the 500 interviews in the archive should be translated and that these should represent the “diversity” of the archive.³¹ Even though there was a wide consensus within the committee that the PIZ archive was important and needed to be made accessible to both researchers and the public, there did not seem to be a sense of urgency with regards to the translation and digitization of all materials; only a handful were needed to exemplify life in a concentration camp. The agreement also stated that “If possible, the interviews should have a connection to the material that *Kulturen in Lund* holds as part of their collection”.³² This second stipulation related to an initiative that was partially funded by the Department of Culture, to create an online exhibition around and about some of the objects that Lakocinski had donated to *Kulturen* in 1966.

In addition, the PIZ archive was to serve as a complement to a new collection of Holocaust testimonies conducted under the auspices of the committee and both collections would serve as the archival basis for the Living History Forum established in 2003. The fact that the PIZ archive was selected alongside several other Swedish Holocaust collections as part of the new government agency had to do with underlying ideas of what constitutes a reliable source for knowledge

³⁰ “Röster från Ravensbrück”, vol. 23, Kommittén Forum för Levande historia med Projekt Levande Historia, Ku 1999:9, Riksarkivet (RA).

³¹ “Konsultavtal: Bilaga 1”, vol. 23, Kommittén Forum för Levande historia med Projekt Levande Historia, Ku 1999:9, RA.

³² Ibid.

about the Holocaust. In all of the committee documents in which the “Lakocinski-archive” is mentioned, it is consistently presented as a “unique” and “scientific” collection. When summarizing the University Library’s holdings pertaining to the Holocaust, the library also contended that “international scholars” had evaluated the archive and deemed it unique, not only in a Swedish context but also internationally. What made it unique compared to other early initiatives to document the Holocaust was said to be the scientific methods with which it was collected and the promptness with which the interviews were conducted after the liberation of the camps.³³

The arguments of uniqueness and scientific rigor must be understood in the context of Swedish memory politics in the 1990s and early 2000s. While many lauded the efforts of Holocaust survivors to communicate their memories, some — trained historians in particular — questioned whether the memories of survivors could be trusted and whether more recent interviews with survivors should even be part of institutional initiatives to educate young people about the Holocaust.³⁴ One of the reasons why the PIZ archive was so readily adopted as *the* Holocaust archive that needed prompt organization, translation and digitization thus rested on the notion that survivor accounts of the past were only interesting and useful if they had been collected using traditional source critical methods (i.e. had been verified by other sources) and came from individuals whose memories had not deteriorated with time.

Because the Living History campaign rested on a problem complex that emphasized young people’s lack of historical knowledge of the Holocaust, the political solutions presented by the committee also became characterized by a focus on the creation of solid, historical evidence that demonstrated *what had happened*, rather than how the event itself had been remembered and treated in a post-Holocaust world. This, in turn, meant that little consideration was paid to the voices and lives that contributed knowledge, which were deemed ‘unhelpful’ to the democratic education of Swedish youth. In short, there was little interest in the survivors themselves; how they remembered, how they lived with their memories and how they viewed the accessibility and use of the narratives and objects they contributed to different documentation projects.

³³ ”Arkivmaterial m.m. med information rörande Förntelsen, förvarat i Lunds universitetsbibliotek”, vol. 20, Ku 1999:9, RA.

³⁴ Malin Thor Tureby & Kristin Wagrell, ”De överlevande” i det svenska samhället” [prel. title], *Sverige och Förntelsen: En lärobok* (Stockholm 2023 forthcoming).

There is only one mention of ethical considerations of the interviewees in the committee's documentation about their funding of the PIZ archive. This can be found in the revised application that was submitted by Lund University Library within which it is stated that some of the material cannot be made available to the future Living History Forum due to "explicit provisions" given by Lakocinski that some "sensitive material" should not be distributed externally of the managing institution.³⁵ However, what this sensitive material consists of or how it is to be protected is never explained.

In these early digitization efforts, little care was shown for the survivor voices of the PIZ archive. In Rudny's view, justice had been done when the organization of the archive was funded by the committee for Living History, thereby recognizing Lakocinski's achievements. Yet, the working group that had labored to interview the 500 camp survivors and the people that worked *with* Lakocinski to make sure that the archive was kept intact did not receive any recognition or attention in the early 2000s. Their stories — the relentless activism of Lakocinski's right-hand woman, Ludwika Broel-Plater, the agency and professionalism exhibited by the survivors of the working group and their ultimate precarity as subject to the financial aid of the Swedish Labour Market Commission — are not exposed in these early efforts. Their vulnerability lies in their inability to speak through the archive, to make themselves heard in a context where survivor victimization and the ability of survivors to prove the existence of the Holocaust is all that matters. Even though they have been returned from their "tower of silence" at the Hoover Library and been scrutinized and evaluated by national and international experts alike, their vulnerability as silenced subjects of the archive remain.

Concluding Discussion: Locating the Vulnerabilities of the PIZ Archive

We understand that archives involve a range of cultural heritage practices and spaces in their creation, collection, maintenance, and performance. Archival epistemologies and the practices of cultural heritage institutions and management involve multiple vulnerabilities, and perhaps nowhere is this truer than in the cases of archives that concern vulnerable groups. Holocaust archives

³⁵ "Röster från Ravensbrück", vol. 23, Kommittén Forum för Levande historia med Projekt Levande Historia, Ku 1999:9, RA.

are historical resources just as they are living actants centrally positioned in the politics and identity of communities. In this chapter we have argued that by tracing the spatio-temporal life of the PIZ archive, we get to address the layers of complex and changing narratives of vulnerabilities enacted, contested and re-created in the organization, management and early digitalization of the archive. In our brief presentation of the case it can be seen that there are several narratives of vulnerabilities being enacted simultaneously and that these have changed as the archive has changed hands and place.

It is the silenced, marginalized and hidden voices of the camp survivors and victims that define the vulnerability of this archive. Nonetheless, along its journeys a series of other voices, claims, narratives, and positionalities came into play. Some of those that have been raised up or have fallen down: methodological claims to establishing historical truth; the role of working groups and others; competing narratives on origins and Lakocinski's legacy; the geopolitics of memory and institutional positions during the Cold War; and the Swedish politics of living history. Geographic mobility, different spatial settings, and later spaces of digitalization have worked to change the conditions of access and context and have had important roles in the voices and silences the archive builds upon. To paraphrase Butler et al. (2016), this case amply illustrates the operation of power by actors and institutions through memory and vulnerability that are politically produced and unevenly distributed through time and space.³⁶

³⁶ Judith Butler, Zeynep Gambetti & Leticia Sabsay (eds.), *Vulnerability in Resistance*, (Durham 2016).