"Are You a Spy?": Methodological Challenges to Studying Community Archives[1]

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Abstract:
Within archival studies, the past ten years has seen an increased interest in research on identity-based community-based archives, that is, grassroots efforts by marginalized communities to document their own histories. Yet, dominant social science research methodologies in the post-positivist paradigm do not adequately address the realities of conducting community-engaged research. The kinds of contextually-situated, politically-engaged, identity-dependent research warranted by community-based archives challenge standard assumptions about, for example, the objectivity of the researcher, the epistemological benefits of outsider status, and the benefits of conducting comparative analyses across organizations and contexts. Based on the research team's experiences conducting ten focus groups with users of community archives at five different sites in Southern California, this paper addresses the methodological challenges presented by conducting empirical research in community-based archives. First, we address notions of insider/outsider status, arguing that researchers who are outsiders to the communities they are studying may encounter an insurmountable level of mistrust that may severely limit the types and quality of data that can be collected. Next, we address how the issues impacting community archives are often deeply dependent on the specificity of the political and historical context of the communities they serve, weakening conclusions based on decontextualized comparative analysis. In conclusion, we argue that research on community-based archives necessitates a methodological shift towards interpretivism and calls for increased engagement, sustained relationship building, and deeper attention to social, cultural, and political context.

Introduction

As part of a multi-year, IMLS-funded study on community archives, our research team seeks to answer the following questions: What is the impact of community-based archives on the communities they serve and represent? What is the affective impact of representation in such archives? How do community-based archives cause us to reimagine dominant archival concepts?

We define community-based archives as grassroots efforts by marginalized communities to document their own histories; while such organizations take a variety of forms and may collaborate to varying degrees with mainstream university or government repositories, a defining characteristic of community archives is that community members themselves maintain some

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degree of autonomy over the collections in terms of physical custody, appraisal, description, and/or access practices.[2]

In seeking answers to our research questions, we encountered several methodological challenges that raised new research questions: What methodologies are most effective for studying community-based archives? What are the ways that the study of community-based archives challenge dominant modes of social science research conducted in the post-positivist paradigm? What are the benefits of adopting an interpretivist approach instead?

We found that community-based archives challenge standard post-positivist social science research methodologies because such archives are contextually-situated, politically-engaged, and identity-dependent. In addition, community-based archives challenge standard assumptions about the objectivity of researchers, the epistemological benefits of outsider status, and the benefits of conducting comparative analyses across organizations and contexts. Unlike dominant post-positivist social science research methodologies which often collapse social, cultural, and political contexts, an interpretivist research paradigm could adequately address the realities of conducting community-engaged research through ethnographic participant observation, participatory research design, and action research. We operated from an interpretivist paradigm as we conducted our research, but we found pressure from funders and reviewers to conduct post-positivist work; indeed, multiple prior iterations of our research proposal were rejected because the reviewers predicted that our "bias" towards community archives would inflect—and somehow tamper-- our research. Our approach is explained through a discussion of three complications we have identified: challenges to the concept of objectivity, insider/outsider status, and the importance of specificity and context over generalizations.

Literature Review

Community Archives

Aforementioned, we define community archives as grassroots efforts by marginalized communities to document their own histories. Following Patricia Hill Collins's notion that people construct community to understand and "shape their everyday lived realities,"[3] community archives are created by members of a particular community to preserve materials that document those lived realities, connecting them to history. The realization that preserving their histories are important to make sense of the past, present, and future is often connected and in response to community members discovering that their communities are erased, misrepresented,

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[2] Andrew Flinn, Mary Stevens, Elizabeth Shepherd, "Whose memories, whose archives? Independent Community Archives, Autonomy, and the Mainstream," *Archival Science* 9 (2009): 75.

[3] Patricia Hill Collins, "The New Politics of Community," *American Sociological Review* 75, no. 1 (2010): 8.

or further marginalized by mainstream repositories. Scholars refer to this action/condition in archives as symbolic annihilation, a concept that was first developed by feminist media studies scholars in the 1970s[4] and later introduced into archival studies by Michelle Caswell, based on the events that led to the creation of the South Asian American Digital Archive, in partnership with Samip Mallick.[5] Subsequent research underlines the impact of symbolic annihilation on marginalized communities, its significance in mainstream archival practice, and how community archives, through the feeling of "representational belonging", could serve as sites of empowerment in which historically marginalized people and groups exercise independent authority over the presentation and representation of their existence, stories, and societal contributions.[6] Flinn, Stevens, and Shepherd highlight archives as sites of power by characterizing community archives as initiatives directed by engaged community members on their own terms.[7] Anne Gilliland notes that community archives inspire activism and the pursuit of social justice, as they serve to counter the erasure or marginalization of historically underrepresented groups in official records.[8] Eric Ketelaar identifies community archives as critical sites for archivists to explore the complexities that inspire and drive social and cultural activism.[9]

Research Paradigms

Jane A. Pickard defines positivism as the belief that "a social reality can exist just as a natural reality exists."[10] In a positivist paradigm, in which researchers seek a reality or a truth,

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[4] Gaye Tuchman, "Introduction: The Symbolic Annihilation of Women by the Mass Media," in *Hearth and Home: Images of Women in the Mass Media*, eds. Gaye Tuchman, Arlene Kaplan Daniels, and James Benet (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 3-38.

[5] Michelle Caswell, "Seeing Yourself in History: Community Archives and the Fight Against Symbolic Annihilation," *The Public Historian* 36, no. 4 (2014): 26-37.

[6] Michelle Caswell, Marika Cifor, and Mario H. Ramirez, "To Suddenly Discover Yourself Existing: Uncovering the Affective Impact of Community Archives," *American Archivist* 79 (2016): 56–81; Michelle Caswell and Marika Cifor, "From Human Rights to Feminist Ethics: Radical Empathy in the Archives," *Archivaria* 81 (2016): 39; Michelle Caswell, Alda A. Migoni, Noah Geraci, & Marika Cifor, "To Be Able to Imagine Otherwise": Community Archives and the Importance of Representation," *Archives and Records* 38, no. 1 (2017): 1-20.

[7] Flinn, et al., "Whose Memories, Whose Archives?", 73.

[8] Anne J. Gilliland, "Archival and Recordkeeping Traditions in the Multiverse and Their Importance for Researching Situations and Situating Research," in *Research in the Archival Multiverse*, eds. Anne J. Gilliland, Sue McKemmish, Andrew J. Lau (Melbourne: Monash University Publishing, 2017): 67.

[9] Eric Ketelaar, "Archival Turns and Returns," in *Research in the Archival Multiverse*, eds. Anne J. Gilliland, Sue McKemmish, Andrew J. Lau (Melbourne: Monash University Publishing, 2017): 284.

[10] Jane A. Pickard, *Research Methods in Information*, 2nd Edition (Chicago: Neal-Schuman Publishing, 2013), 7.

objectivity is a key tenet.[11] In positivism, there is no place for the notion that researchers have an effect on research participants, or vice versa, during a research study. An assumption of "neutrality" is connected to positivism. While positivism insists on empirical data, post-positivism welcomes qualitative methods/data and "insider" perspectives.[12] Like positivism, objectivity is a characteristic of post-positivism and therefore assumes disengagement between researchers and participants.

In comparison to positivism and post-positivism, interpretivism is the "belief in multiple constructed realities."[13] At the core of interpretivism is the idea that people are reflexive and always engaged in understanding their environments, so interpretivists believe that the social world is different from nature.[14] In which post-positivists seeks a reality or a truth that is generalizable, interpretivists seek to identify the meanings behind human experiences[15] while acknowledging differences and multiple constructed realities. Unlike positivism and post-positivism, interpretivism permits ways of knowing through the interaction between researchers and participants as they influence each other, empathetic methodological positions,[16] and the understanding of social, cultural, and political context in analyzing and reconstructing data, all of which are necessary for research that engages communities of varying identities and social realities. An interpretivist approach is used by researchers who are engaged in research that acknowledges that different things are true or accepted for different people at different times.

Methodology

From November 2016 to May 2017, the research team conducted 10 focus groups with a total of 54 community members at five different community-based archives sites in Southern California. The principal investigator (PI) (the second author of this paper) recruited the research sites in summer 2016 and all research sites agreed to participate. The sites were chosen because they reflect the diversity of community archives in Southern California; they represent a range of marginalized identities (LGBTQ, Latino/a, Southeast Asian, Japanese); occupy a range of spaces; and are governed by a variety of structures, from total autonomy as stand-alone nonprofit organizations to integration within large public universities.

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[11] Kirsty Williamson, "Research Concepts," Research Methods: Information, Systems and Methods, eds. Kirsty Williamson and Graeme Johanson (Tilde University Press, 2013): 7.

[12] Ibid, 8.

[13] Pickard, *Research Methods in Information*, 7.

[14] Kirsty Williamson, "Research Concepts," 9.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

The research team employed a semi-structured protocol to conduct the focus groups (Appendix 1). Focus group sessions ranged from 60 to 120 minutes. With the permission of the participants, the focus groups were recorded by the researchers and then transcribed. All team members were granted Institutional Review Board approval prior to initial contact and data collection. Participants for the focus groups were recruited in two ways: via flyers at the sites, as well as based on recommendations from archivists at the community archives sites. In order to protect the privacy of archives users (as enshrined by library codes of ethics and California law), the team did not directly recruit participants face-to-face as they use the archives. Instead, the staff of each community archives contacted potential research subjects, gauged their interest in participation, and asked for permission to provide their name and contact information to the PI.

Participating community archives each received a $500 stipend for their work recruiting users to participate in focus groups and interviews; given how tight financial resources are for many community archives, this stipend was necessary to compensate the staff of the participating organizations for their time. While this recruitment process introduces an element of bias to the design, it is crucial for protecting user privacy and is in line with the ways other archives user studies have been conducted.[17] Participants in the focus groups were each compensated with a $15 Amazon gift card; this compensation was necessary given that these community members are, for the most part, non-academic users who may work multiple jobs, have multiple pressing time commitments, and may be unfamiliar with (or, in some cases, even suspicious of) academic research.

The authors feel it is necessary to acknowledge their own positionality and identities given the interpretivist paradigm in which this research was conducted. This is done to ensure transparency of possible factors that may affect researcher/participant relations and inherent power structures of the focus group format. The members of the research team occupy multiple and diverse identities; in some cases they were insiders to the communities they studied, in other cases they were outsiders. The first author of this paper identifies as a queer Filipinx American with a middle-class background. The second author of this paper identifies as a white, straight, cisgender woman who grew up working class and is in the first generation of her family to graduate from high school. One of the other research team members identifies as a Chicano with a working class background and is a first generation college student. Another research team member identifies as a white, disabled, gender nonconforming queer person from a middle class background. The research team openly discussed and reflected on these differences and commonalities and believe this multiplicity ultimately strengthened the research, allowing them to collectively see more than each individual team member could alone.

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[17] Paul Conway & Ricardo Punzalan, "Fields of vision: Towards a New Theory of Visual Literacy for Digitized Archival Photographs," *Archivaria* 71 (2011): 63-97.

Sites

Five community archives sites in Southern California participated in the focus groups: La Historia Society of El Monte, Lambda Archives of San Diego, The Little Tokyo Historical Society, Southeast Asia Archive at the University of California at Irvine, and The Studio for Southern California History. A brief background of each site is described below, revealing a little about their social, cultural, and political context.

An independent, community-driven organization, La Historia Society of El Monte ("La Historia") was founded in 1998 to preserve the history of El Monte and South El Monte, two communities that historically were comprised of Chicano farm laborers. Its founding was motivated by the lack of Latino representation in the official El Monte Historical Society Museum. In 2001, La Historia Society opened its own museum, which displays photographs of the city's nine *barrios* (neighborhoods): Hicks Camp, La Mision, Medina Court, Wiggins Camp, Chino Camp, Canta Ranas, Las Flores, Granada, and La Sección. La Historia Society traces its roots to an annual reunion of individuals from La Mision and Hicks Camp.

Originally named "The Lesbian and Gay Archives of San Diego", the Lambda Archives focuses on preserving and teaching Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) history and culture primarily from San Diego County and Northern Baja California. Lambda Archives was founded in 1987 with the personal collection of Jess Jessop and Doug Moore. Housing material that dates back to the 1920s, Lambda Archives has grown to include a broad range of material such as newsletters, photographs, ephemera, audio and video, and newspaper clippings collected from community members and their families, as well as personal papers of activists and records from local organizations and political campaigns.

The Little Tokyo Historical Society (LTHS) was founded in 2006 by members of the Little Tokyo community in downtown Los Angeles to preserve the history and contributions of Japanese and Japanese Americans in Little Tokyo. As part of its mission, Little Tokyo Historical Society "focuses on researching and discovering the historical resources, stories, and connections of sites, buildings, and events related to Little Tokyo as an ethnic heritage neighborhood."[18] Once a thriving Japanese American neighborhood, Little Tokyo's Japanese American residents were forcibly evacuated to prison camps during World War II; while Los Angeles's Japanese American population has since dispersed, the neighborhood remains a center of commercial and cultural activity for Japanese Americans. What differentiates the Little Tokyo Historical Society from similar organizations is their focus on documenting the history and culture of Little Tokyo only as opposed to documenting the history of Japanese Americans across Los Angeles, throughout California, or nationwide.

The Southeast Asian Archive (SEAA) was established in 1987 at the University of California at Irvine (UCI) to document the personal experiences of refugees and immigrants

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[18] Little Tokyo Historical Society, "About Us," accessed March 8, 2017 http://www.littletokyohs.org/about-us.html

from Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, including but not limited to their journeys toward resettlement and various aspects of their lives in the United States. Community members of these Southeast Asian groups proposed the idea of collaborating with UCI to preserve their histories. The archives is directed by Thuy Vo Dang, who works closely with local Vietnamese, Laotian, and Cambodian communities to collect, describe, and display materials.

The Studio for Southern California History ("The Studio") is a nonprofit organization dedicated to critically chronicling and sharing Los Angeles and southern California's social history and sponsors the LA History Archive. The organization was founded and is led by Sharon Sekhon, an LA-based public historian. The archive aggregates historical documents to produce resources to serve educators, students and the general public. The digital archive provides illustrated timelines, interactive maps, documented community art projects, and lesson plans "in order to foster a sense of place." It differs from the other participating community archives sites because it is a digital archive and based on geographic identity and a broader sense of history from below, rather than, for example, a specific ethnic, sexual, or gender identity.

Findings

Based on the research team's collective experiences conducting ten focus groups at five different archives sites in Southern California, we have identified three complications in studying community archives, which include but are not limited to challenges to the concept of objectivity, insider/outsider status, and the importance of specificity and context over generalizations.

Complication 1: Challenges to Objectivity

One of the complications to studying community-based archives lies in the dominant post-positivist notion that as researchers, we are objective and disengaged observers as we conduct our studies and engage with participants. As our research study centers *identity-based* community archives, the community members brought their whole selves to the focus groups—their identities, their perspectives, their biases, and their memories about their lived experiences and their complex relationships with their families, communities, and society—all of which have constructed and continue to shape their ever-changing realities. As researchers, while we do not intend to pose leading questions or reveal details about our personal lives, we cannot deny that our own perspectives and realities have been constructed and shaped by the same general forces as the community members, so just like them, our whole human selves are present, including the natural response of emotion.

During one of the focus groups at the SEAA, Kevin Duc Pham, an undergraduate student at UCI, introduced himself and shared his experiences "growing up American, especially as a child of immigrants," and deemed himself like other kids "who are… not quite totally American,

but at the same time we're not quite totally that other half at the same time. We're such an odd mixture of both that we're trying to still find our place in the world…."[19] As an Asian American child of immigrants, the first author immediately understood an aspect of Kevin's perspective, even though their ethnic identities differ from each other, and recognized the familiar feeling of that "not quite" sense of belonging as an American-born Asian American of immigrant parents.

As Kevin continued to talk about being Asian American, his family, the community of Asian American students on campus, we eventually asked about him about his experiences in the archives: how does it make you feel then to come here and see the experiences of your community representatives? He responded,

> It makes me very emotional. I've teared up a couple of times just seeing what these people went through, what they've had to experience, just knowing how I'm still affected by it, how lots of members of my community are still affected by it. Seeing how all these people were put into these refugee camps, these re-education camps, all the ways that they suffered, all the ways that they've tried so hard to come out and reach America and how, even though they have started a new life here, a lot of them are still affected by what had happened before.[20]

At this point, the focus group had progressed only 19 minutes in, but the first author already found themselves tearing up a little. We reiterate that the first author and Kevin's ethnicities differ and acknowledge that Kevin is referring to trauma connected to war in Vietnam. However, as the first author's parents are from the Philippines, they found themselves experiencing a natural emotional response to relevant thoughts of their parents' hardships and sacrifices. As two people with multiple intersecting marginalized identities and similar thoughts in regards to family and our social locations, it is not surprising that the first author could relate to one of the community members in various ways, including on an emotional level.

It is a fallacy that researchers of identity-based community archives are objective, disengaged observers; indeed they are active participants in the contexts of the communities they are studying. This understanding, in connection with the interpretivist approach to social science research, is important because researchers and participants in community-engaged research are connected by the fact that they cannot divorce themselves from their identities. Also, it is possible that researchers may connect to participants on an emotional level, which is not surprising because "emotions are at the center of what aligns us" with others.[21] Lastly, trust is

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[19] Kevin Duc Pham, Focus Group at Southeast Asian Archive, Irvine, CA, February 3, 2017.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Marika Cifor, "Affecting Archives: Introducing Affect Studies to Archival Discourse," *Archival Science* 16, no. 1 (2016): 19.

paramount in studying community-based archives. As we know, developing trust requires time, but unfortunately time is not factored into the prevailing demands of tenure and promotion requirements, funding cycles, and time-to-graduation expectations. The concept of trust is also connected to the next complication in studying community archives.

Complication 2: Insider/outsider status

Upon arriving at one of the community archives sites, two members of our research team —clearly ethnic outsiders to the community—were asked, "Are you a spy?" Researchers who are viewed as outsiders to the communities they are studying may encounter an insurmountable level of mistrust during the research process. This could severely limit the types and quality of data that can be collected, but also significantly impacts the relationship and possibility of future collaboration between the researchers and these communities.

Insider/outsider status is nuanced. In their responses, some of the community members sometimes referred to themselves as "Asian American" or spoke of "Asian American" communities. The first author of this paper identifies as Filipinx American, but sometimes uses "Asian American" as an identifier, depending on the social context in which they[22] are located at a particular time and place. Identifying as Asian American, however, does not mean that they were considered by the Asian American community members as part of their respective organizations or communities. Likewise, as the first author's racial/ethnic identity intersects with their sexual and gender identities, it does not mean that community members at the Lambda Archives considered them as part of their organization or community.

Insider/outsider status also affects the community members among themselves in regards to the types and quality of data collected. For example, not everyone in the SEAA focus groups identifies as Southeast Asian, and not everyone in the LTHS focus groups is of Japanese descent and/or lives or previously lived in the neighborhood of Little Tokyo. In addition, being an insider could also affect the limits and quality of collected data, to some extent among community members, as participants may not want to be critical of their organization or community or reveal personal-political information among themselves, in an effort to respect, for instance, family members from an older generation who have lived through individual and collective trauma. This can also occur in focus groups that highlight power dynamics between, for example, students and professors or board members and staff who are also users of the archives. Here, a level of trust among the community members is important for data collection, but also for continued relationships within the community. Research conducted at community archives should address the complications of insider-outsider status in an interpretivist paradigm.

Complication 3: Specificity and context over generalizations

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[22] The first author of this paper uses the following pronouns: they, them, theirs.

The last complication in this discussion is the fact that post-positivist social science research favors decontextualized, generalizable analysis over specificity. The issues impacting community archives are often deeply dependent on the specificity of the political and historical context of the communities they serve, weakening conclusions based on decontextualized comparative analysis. Specificity in regards to the purpose and importance of community-based archives is demonstrated by the following contribution by a participant in one of the SEAA focus groups. She explained,

> One of my concerns is that Southeast Asia, as it's presently constituted, is often about the Vietnam War, when actually there's a larger issue, because it's about... The larger picture's actually about US relations between Southeast Asia. And that's been going on... I mean the first formal colony was in the Philippines. So, there's a sustained story towards militaries more. I think the Southeast Asian Archives can also be a place where we consider what are our connections to other people, what are our associations with other groups, what does it mean to be Southeast Asian American? And how is Southeast Asian American a political construct?[23]

As a community member, the participant highlighted a significant aspect of the Southeast Asian Archive, which may not be immediately understood—*sustained* U.S. relations/militarized interventions across Southeast Asia and the possibility of connections through shared histories. In discussing their complex relationships with family, their communities, their institutions, and global interventions by the United States government, community members revealed significant political and historical context that should not or cannot be severed from their experiences. For example, to compare data collected at this site with data collected at Lambda Archives, an LGBTQ archives, to make broad generalizations about community archives collapses important historical, political, cultural and social differences. Such contextualizations are imperative to the overall analysis of a study on community-based archives.

Discussion and Conclusion

Based on the experiences of our research team conducting focus groups with users of community-based archives, we argue that studies on community-based archives require a methodological shift from post-positivism to interpretivism. Such a shift ensures that researchers do not collapse important differences, along with social and political contexts.

As mentioned under the complication of objectivity, the first author could immediately relate to the community member's perspective as an Asian American child of immigrant parents. As such, the first author could have provided insight into Asian American family relationships

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[23] Participant, Focus Group at Southeast Asian Archive, Irvine, CA, February 3, 2017.

and cultural values during the process of data analysis. Of course, this has its limitations since the first author and the community member have different ethnic backgrounds. Also, the emotional response of the first author as the community member spoke of his own emotional response to seeing his community in the archives was a natural occurrence and further illustrates how researchers of community-based archives are not disengaged from the participants nor the subject of study. Post-positivist research methodologies do not serve community-engaged research well nor the communities affected if they require researchers to not respect the entirety of participants and deny their own identities and human emotions.

The complication of insider/outsider status could significantly limit the types and quality of data that researchers of community-based archives can collect. To identify who is an insider and/or outsider, it is not possible to collapse differences among the researchers nor the participants, which is connected to the complication of objectivity. The underlying characteristic of the insider/outsider complication is the concept of trust. As previously mentioned, as part of our methodology, staff at each of the community archives sites contacted users of their archives to gauge interest in participating in our research study. Because some degree of trust had already been established between users and the archives and their staff, this helped to inform some degree of trust among archives users in order to agree to participate in the study and
 engage with both researchers and their fellow community members who are all in some ways outsiders and in other ways insiders, and sometimes both. While participants established trust in order to participate, the researchers did the same. The significance of insider/outsider status reveals itself in the engagement that plays out to the extent that it impacts not only the types and quality of data but also how it impacts the possibility of future collaborations between the researchers, archives, and community members.

As demonstrated across the board, community-based archives are contextually-situated, politically-engaged, and identity-dependent, so post-positivist social science research methodologies that favor decontextualized analysis are not appropriate. Research on community-based archives necessitates a shift to an interpretivist paradigm and calls for increased engagement, sustained relationship building, and deeper attention to social, cultural, and political context. Attention to such context is demonstrated throughout this paper and the same is evident in the papers that are being developed by research team members based on this study. Increased engagement and sustained relationship building can be direct and indirect in which community-based archives in and/or outside of a particular research study benefit or are involved. For example, research team members have presented our community archives research at two of the community archives sites thus far. For example, we contacted Lambda Archives about sharing our findings and analysis. Lambda invited their community to attend while the PI contacted Lambda focus group participants directly to invite them. The June 2018 event led to an engaging discussion among the community members and researchers. In addition, the authors of this paper

were invited by UCI Libraries, which includes the Southeast Asian Archive, to present their community archives research in July 2018. In addition, research team members continue to develop publishable papers for consideration and intend to share the finalized drafts with some of the focus group participants prior to being submitted for publication.

Furthermore, the authors continue to work directly and indefinitely with community archives or community archival projects "outside" of their scholarly commitments—the first author with the API LGBTQ[24] Archiving Collective in Los Angeles and the second author with the South Asian American Digital Archive (SAADA).[25] Sustained relationship building is evident in their ongoing scholarly/community work.

While this particular research study was charged with assessing the use of community-based archives, the drive for this research is to determine how our research benefits the actual communities we are studying. The next steps for the research team is to design a toolkit for community archives to assess their own impact, test the toolkit, and develop material applications.[26] While we have identified a few methodological challenges to studying community-based archives, further research involving marginalized identity-based archives communities may reveal more, particularly if the identities on which the archives are based vary. Our research indicates that further studies, based on interpretivist methods such as ethnographic participant observation, participatory research design, and action research, will yield more detailed—and more community-engaged and culturally appropriate—findings.

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[24] Asian Pacific Islander Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer

[25] In addition, in 2018 Michelle Caswell received a multi-year grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation that funds Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) and IS PhD students at UCLA to complete paid internships at local community archives in Southern California. In addition to students receiving stipends, each participating community archives site will be awarded $1,920 to pay for related expenses (staff time training and supervising the students, plus materials required to carry out the proposed project).

[26] As the toolkit is developed, it will be shared directly with the community archives sites and once finalized, it will be made accessible via communityarchiveslab.ucla.edu for public use.

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Appendix 1: Focus Group Protocol

1. Biographical and Demographical Info
- What field are you in?
- Would you describe yourself as a member of the community this community archives represents?

2. Research
- Why do you come to this community archives? How often?

- How long have you been using the materials at this community archives?
- What materials have you used?
- How have you used them?
- What is your research about? How did you come to study that topic?
- What is your experience doing research in this community archives?
- Can you tell us a story about something you found in the archives and how you used it?
- How central are the materials you found here to your work?
- Prior to using this community archives, had you looked for materials in other archives? If so, what did you find? Can you describe this experience?

3. Community Archives' impact

- How did you first find out about this community archives? What was your initial response to it?
- Do you feel the records in this community archives are representative of the community you were interested in or apart of? Why or why not?
- How would you describe the importance of this community archives to someone who has never seen it before?

4. Conclusion

- Is there anything we haven't asked that you would like to discuss?