BRIDGING THE GAPS BETWEEN COMMUNITIES AND THEIR MEMORIES.
COMPARING COMMUNITY-BASED ARCHIVES ACROSS THREE CONTINENTS

Andrew Flinn (UK)
Magdalena Wiśniewska-Drewniak (Poland)
Mônica Tenaglia (Brazil)
Luisa Seixas (Portugal)
Mengqiu Li (China)

Archives: Bridging the Gap.
9th Conference of the International Council on Archives.
19-23 September 2022. Rome
BRIDGING THE GAPS BETWEEN COMMUNITIES AND THEIR MEMORIES.
COMPARING COMMUNITY-BASED ARCHIVES ACROSS THREE CONTINENTS

INTRODUCTION:

● Recognition of a growing international and multicultural discussion and research on the topic of community archives in different parts of the world;

● Due its heterogeneity and independent features, it is hard to have a general understanding of these reality in different contexts;

● The aim of our comparative approach is to provide a richer understanding of these realities, including different ways of doing and comparing methods, practices, their nature and impacts. It also aims at providing tools to further the international communication of studies on Community Archives, understanding the relevance of this heritage to scholars and social frameworks and fostering international cooperation of practitioners.
Although the generalisation of the term “community archive” may not be consensual, it has been thoroughly debated and has increasingly been used in reference to multiple initiatives and projects dedicated to the identification, preservation and use of archival and other heritage produced or detained by specific groups or communities, with different levels of active agency from the latter. The uses of the term take into consideration these vast variety of activities and its ambiguities and limitations.
BRIDGING THE GAPS BETWEEN COMMUNITIES AND THEIR MEMORIES.
COMPARING COMMUNITY-BASED ARCHIVES ACROSS THREE CONTINENTS

INTRODUCTION — RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:

I. To further the knowledge of Community Archives and Heritage worldwide;

II. Compare practices and the relevance of these heritages in different national contexts;

III. Enhance the work of a network of CA practitioners by acknowledging their contributions to Community Heritage;

IV. Providing a comparative framework of analysis which may be used by researchers and other interested scholars or practitioners.
BRIDGING THE GAPS BETWEEN COMMUNITIES AND THEIR MEMORIES.
COMPARING COMMUNITY-BASED ARCHIVES ACROSS THREE CONTINENTS

INTRODUCTION — METHODOLOGY:

I. Identifying and developing a set of questions / criteria which may significantly influence the development and activities of CAs in the different context, providing a foundation for researching this environment while also allowing its comparison to other context. The topics attempt to allow for the crossing of diverse social, geographical and cultural features, including recent history, political and economic systems, cultural and social frameworks.

II. Applying the topics to different national contexts

III. Performing a cross cutting & comparative analysis of the different considerations, resulting in a synthesis of the approach in the three realities, providing a comparative look at similar and different aspects of community archives in the three (original ) countries
BRIDGING THE GAPS BETWEEN COMMUNITIES AND THEIR MEMORIES.
COMPARING COMMUNITY-BASED ARCHIVES ACROSS THREE CONTINENTS

INTRODUCTION — QUESTION AREAS FOR ANALYSIS

I. Terminology and definitions
II. Typologies and characteristics
III. Recent history and social structure
IV. Relation to external entities
V. Funding and support
VI. Law and national archival and heritage system - legal position
BRIDGING THE GAPS
BETWEEN COMMUNITIES AND THEIR MEMORIES.
COMPARING COMMUNITY-BASED ARCHIVES
ACROSS THREE CONTINENTS

Andrew Flinn (UK)
Reader in Archival Studies and Oral History — Department of Information Studies, University College London | a.flinn@ucl.ac.uk

Magdalena Wiśniewska-Drewniak (Poland)
Assistant Professor - Archival Science at Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń | magwis@umk.pl

Mônica Tenaglia (Brazil)
Assistant Professor – Archival Science at Federal University of Pará | monicatenaglia@ufpa.br

Mengqiu Li (China)
PhD Candidate at Renmin University of China — School of Information Resources Management | lmq828@ruc.edu.cn

Luisa Seixas (Portugal)
PhD Candidate at NOVA University of LIsbon | luisaseixas@fcsh.unl.pt
1. Community archives in the UK

Andrew Flinn

1. TYPOLOGIES and CHARACTERISTICS

2. RECENT HISTORY and SOCIAL STRUCTURE

3. RELATION TO EXTERNAL ENTITIES
2. Community archives in Poland

Magdalena Wiśniewska-Drewniak

1. RECENT HISTORY AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE
2. TYPOLOGIES AND CHARACTERISTICS
3. RELATION TO EXTERNAL ENTITIES

A woman in the ruins of Warsaw, 1945; Zofia Chomęto wska, © Chomęto wscy / FAF

A postage stamp - underground publishing of “Solidarity”, 1982-84; KARTA

Exhibition in an old tram car, 2014; Opowiadacze Historii Dolnego Miasta w Gdańsku

Community Archives Centre www.cas.org.pl
3. Community archives in Brazil

Mônica Tenaglia

I. RECENT HISTORY and SOCIAL STRUCTURE

II. RELATION OF COMMUNITY ARCHIVES TO EXTERNAL ENTITIES

III. FUNDING AND SUPPORT
4. Community archives in China

Li Mengqui

I. TYPOLOGIES AND CHARACTERISTICS
II. RELATION OF COMMUNITY ARCHIVES TO EXTERNAL ENTITIES
III. LAW AND NATIONAL ARCHIVAL AND HERITAGE SYSTEM
5. Community archives in Portugal
Luisa Metelo Seixas

I. TYPOLOGIES and CHARACTERISTICS
II. RELATION TO EXTERNAL ENTITIES
III. LAW AND NATIONAL ARCHIVAL AND HERITAGE SYSTEM - LEGAL POSITION
BRIDGING THE GAPS BETWEEN COMMUNITIES AND THEIR MEMORIES. COMPARING COMMUNITY-BASED ARCHIVES ACROSS THREE CONTINENTS

SOME CONCLUSIONS:

• Community Archive type activity is identifiable across our 5 countries
• But history, society, culture matters
• Recognition and support can also matter and transform
• Terminology / definitions can help but must be applied with care
• Community-based archives / formal archives – not a binary distinction but part of broader environment
BRIDGING THE GAPS BETWEEN COMMUNITIES AND THEIR MEMORIES.
COMPARING COMMUNITY-BASED ARCHIVES ACROSS THREE CONTINENTS

DISCUSSION:

• Contributions regarding community archives in our countries
• Complexity of terminology and definition, locally determined?
• Suitability of categories / criteria used to contextualise CAs
• Relevance of the international comparative approach
• Significance of the comparative approach on CAs to Archival Science and practice more broadly