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The shadow continuum : testing the records continuum model through the Djogdja Documenten and the migrated archives

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**The Shadow Continuum:
Testing the Records Continuum Model through the *Djogdja Documenten* and
the Migrated Archives**

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MJK

Abstract

This dissertation aims to test the universal suitability of the records continuum model. The records continuum model was created in the 1990s by Australian archivist Frank Upward, and is seen by many in the archives community to be a successor to the records life cycle model that appeared in the mid-twentieth century. A major draw of the continuum model is its all-encompassing nature. The continuum model is meant to visualize and describe all cases of records, thanks to its innovative approach to the period after a record is initially created. Rather than seeing time as linear, the continuum sees records as free to move throughout four records 'dimensions'.

Using two case studies of archives from the decolonization process with non-traditional experiences, this research attempts to 'map' these cases onto the continuum model and test the universality of the model as a result. The first case study is known as the *Djogdja Documenten* and comes from Indonesia. Seizing documents from various Indonesian government ministries during the Indonesian struggle for independence, the Dutch military turned these unrelated records into one archives group. The second case is the so-called Migrated Archives. Unlike the *Djogdja Documenten*, the records that make up the Migrated Archives were created by the colonial administration—in this case the British. While the Migrated Archives are a worldwide phenomenon, I concentrate on records from Singapore and Malaysia. The Migrated Archives became one archive when records from various colonial governments were sent to London on the eve of independence rather than have them fall into the hands of the successor governments. After nearly fifty years of being hidden in a Foreign Office warehouse, the Migrated Archives were only available to public viewing in 2012.

Following each case study, which includes an extensive history of the archives' formation, background, context, and content, I will attempt to place the archives on the continuum model, mapping each action on to a corresponding dimension. The *Djogdja Documenten* poses no problems at doing this, and in fact acts as a prime example for showing how the continuum model's idea that dimensions can occur in any order is applicable in real world cases. In the case of the Migrated Archives,

however, the glaring omission from the continuum model of places in between dimensions where records can get trapped or lost is seen. I rectify this through the creation of something I call the shadow continuum. In the shadow continuum records proceed through the dimensions of the continuum model, even when they are unknown to exist. The functioning of the shadow continuum is the same as the original continuum model, only its actions are kept intentionally veiled by those who control the record.