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

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Cover Page



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Chapter VII:

Conclusion

At the start of this dissertation I set out to do the following: to use a literature review of displaced archival collections in order to set a precedent for my case studies in determining the universality of the continuum model and to discover certain qualities of various categories of displaced records; to introduce my two case studies in a way that would be relevant to understand them in terms of the continuum model; and, finally, to use my cases to test the relevance and universality of the continuum model and the idea of the shadow continuum introduced in Chapter II. This was to be done by analyzing each case using continuum model concepts, particularly the four dimensions. The cases in the literature review, and my two new case studies, were all linked by a period of silences, as per the definition provided by Michel-Rolph Trouillot.

The shadow continuum was created as a way to explain how even in secretly held records, continuum model principles still function. I noticed two major faults in the continuum model that I thought needed investigation. The first is that the universality of the continuum model can only be claimed after the pluralization of formerly displaced records. The second is that the continuum model has a reliance on an open and accessible society and archive. The work of Australian archivist Michael Piggott was part of the development of the objective to test the universality of the continuum model.

I determined that the shadow continuum was contingent on a lack of traces of a record. I defined these traces as 'publically accessible information that offers enough data to contextualize a missing record, determine its content and existence and to uniquely identify it'. With the shadow continuum and traces identified I moved on to my two case studies.

The *Djogdja Documenten* is an archive of diverse documents that became one collection as a result of the intervention of the Dutch military. Searching for proof that the Republican government were using the international opium trade to fund their revolution, had communist ties, and were breaking the peace agreement

through insurgency attacks, the Dutch military intelligence service seized records from throughout the Indonesian government. These separate records individually became re-created in the form of the *Djogdja Documenten*. This re-creation was analyzed using the continuum model, as were the capture and organization of the records by the Dutch military intelligence agency, NEFIS.

Detailing the diplomatic processes that occurred while the records were in the Netherlands that led to the shipment of the original *Djogdja Documenten* to the Arsip Nasional in Jakarta helped map further dimensions on the continuum model. Being sent to ANRI was a subsequent re-creation that led to re-capture, re-organization and re-pluralization. All background information was chosen for its usefulness in using the continuum model to analyze the records.

The existence of archival traces is essential to the idea of the shadow continuum. In the case of the *Djogdja Documenten* such traces exist in the form of NEFIS-created routing slips, which inform the reader of what was in the individual record even when the latter cannot be viewed. The routing slips make it unnecessary to implement the concept of the shadow continuum in relation to the *Djogdja Documenten*.

The second case study, the Migrated Archives from Singapore and Malaysia also included an introductory chapter with a literature review and a description of the initial creation and contents of the records. Important in describing the Migrated Archives was the culture of secrecy at both the Colonial Office and its successor, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, which led to their creation. This was especially relevant regarding the British role in the Malayan Emergency and the creation of Malaysia.

The decisions made by two men, O'Brien and MacMullan, played a key role in describing the Migrated Archives. These two men determined which records would be destroyed, sent to Kuala Lumpur or sent to London from Sarawak and North Borneo (Sabah). Other British officials made similar choices in Malaya and Singapore. Their choices directly determined which records would become part of the Migrated Archives, which like the *Djogdja Documenten* were also diverse records that became one collection later.

Understanding the decisions made is beneficial when placing the Migrated Archives in continuum model terms. However, the flaws that I had noticed in the continuum model were glaringly noticeable in the case of the Migrated Archives. Any analysis that I could do of the Migrated Archives through the continuum model was only possible because of the discovery of the records in the midst of writing my dissertation. The United Kingdom, an open and democratic society, still has situations where openness is limited, as the Migrated Archives show. This all strengthened by conclusion that the universality of the continuum model is dependent on pluralization, openness and access. Thus, I determined that in the case of the Migrated Archives the shadow continuum is relevant to its continuum model interpretation.

Relevance

Michael Piggott's call for testing the universality of the continuum model was one impetus for the direction this dissertation took, and I hope that my work can play a part in increasing reviews of the continuum model. To ensure that theory and practice regarding archives are based on scientific principles that have been critically tested, further work must follow.

The universality of the records continuum model needs further discussion and scientific testing. My research was meant to solve problems within the continuum model through the implementation of the shadow continuum. Ultimately, however, the shadow continuum does not prove nor disprove the universality of the continuum. It only draw attention to, and attempts to fix, the two interconnected flaws in the continuum model I noted. There are still tests to be done, but it could be the case that the universality of the continuum model stands up in any case when it is complemented by something like the shadow continuum or another, as yet unidentified, new way of viewing the model in cases that offer difficulty when attempting to interpret them with the continuum model.

As I noted in the introduction, Piggott gives no criteria for what constitutes a

test of the continuum model—only that they have not yet been done. The outcome of this is that this dissertation may not have been what Piggott envisioned, nor may it be the best test of the continuum model. The fact that it only uses two case studies may seem like a small sample size, but it only takes discovering one example disproving the universality of the continuum model to end the idea that it is time and culture independent.

Tests on the continuum model need to look outside traditional, western-style records management, as suggested by Piggott. Though this dissertation studied Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore, it was still concerned with records created under the influence of European colonialism. It says nothing about pre-colonial records, or records created in other circumstances. There are still questions left regarding the way oral records fit into the continuum model, or records created by a state like North Korea. This dissertation is also solely focused on government records, while the continuum model is meant for private and corporate records as well. Records that are created with the pre-existing decision to destroy them are another type of record that could still be tested against the continuum model.

The final outcome, however, may be the same as how Caroline Williams concludes her short entry on the continuum in her book *Managing Archives: Foundations, Principles and Practice*:

‘It would, I think, be a mistake to try rigidly to relate the theory [of the records continuum] to practice, but much more useful to allow it to insinuate itself into your consciousness and enhance your understanding of records and archives and the actions that are performed around them’.¹

If we remove the concept of universality from the continuum model, and instead view it as something relevant to modern recordkeeping, then tests become unnecessary. Perhaps the continuum model would also benefit from archivists and

¹ Caroline Williams, *Managing Archives: Foundations, Principles and Practice*, Oxford: Chandos Publishing, 2006, 13.

archival scholars reimagining its role in archival science. This involves determining whether it is a model of a shift in records management, or a tool for understanding records themselves. If the model is seen as merely theoretical, something worth striving to attain, that is different from using it to explore the nature of records. The model has its use in analyzing the moments acted upon a record after its initial creation, but the fact that pluralization is a foregone conclusion needs to be taken into account.

If the current reality stays the same, however, then a common test for determining the usefulness of the continuum model would be useful. My process of going through each pivotal action enacted upon the record and comparing it to the various dimensions was the most useful that I could imagine. The dimensions are such a central element to the continuum model that it made the most sense to focus my test around linking moments and actions to the dimensions.

As for the shadow continuum, I see it as being a worthwhile contribution to archival science. It can seem obvious, the continuum model's reliance on an open society and pluralization are not often mentioned in continuum theory. The shadow continuum is a reminder of some of the invisible factors at work in records creation and management. The shadow continuum reminds us that records are constantly being re-created. Its purpose is to strengthen the continuum model. Even when we do not see continuum principles at work, or when people intentionally work to limit access to information, the basic four dimensions of the continuum model are still at work. The shadow continuum draws attention to the period prior to pluralization.

What these findings make clear is that the concept of re-creation makes the continuum model an ideal starting point for studying archival cases where the records are removed or "missing" from public knowledge. This ties back to Michelle Caswell's point that the continuum model would be useful in her work on the Cambodian prison archive, even though she focused on archival silences as her core guiding concept. I see the choice of the continuum model, now with the addition of the shadow continuum, as the best way to see what is happening in these cases.

Each moment—for instance, the seizure by the Dutch military, the repatriation

to ANRI—can be understood through terms and concepts in the continuum model. What started for me as abstract cases without in-depth survey using archival theory, now became embedded in relatable concepts. The continuum model, the shadow continuum, and any future related concepts, can continue to be used as a way to conceptualize and analyze a variety of cases.

Future Work

While this dissertation focused on displaced or missing archives through the continuum model, my interest in these archival cases is not limited to this one aspect. I acknowledge multiple potential lenses through which to view missing archives, including through a social and cultural lens. Continued research can still be done on the topic in a variety of ways to help interpret them in archival and non-archival terms. I envision further research being done relating such cases to intelligence and secrecy, oral history, cultural heritage, and collective memory, among other topics.

Intelligence and Secrecy

Given the connection to Wikileaks, and that both the *Djogdja Documenten* and Migrated Archives were created as single archives for intelligence and state secret purposes, I would like consider the greater connection of missing archives to what Victor Marchetti and John Marks referred to as ‘the culture of intelligence’.² Their work was done in the 1970s, when previously classified information regarding CIA interventions around the world was disclosed, including the level of involvement in rebellions against the central Indonesian state of Sukarno’s Guided Democracy in the late 1950s.³ Since the disclosure of the recent NSA files, interest in American intelligence—and the roles of its allies—has once again become a topic of discussion in both academic and popular literature. The Migrated Archives fit

² Victor Marchetti and John D. Marks, *The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence*, Knopf: New York, 1974.

³ Marchetti and Marks, *The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence*, 29.

squarely into the same world as hidden CIA records or Wikileaks. Parallels can be drawn on both sides and as we learn more about both Wikileaks and the Migrated Archives further work can be done conceptually linking the two.

The *Djogdja Documenten* still have further research to be done on their post-seizure history. As my case study showed, very little attention has been paid to the *Djogdja Documenten* and its contents, when so much information can still be gleaned from them. There are also still some remaining questions from their period in the Netherlands. For instance, how and why did they get ‘mixed up’ as was claimed by Ambassador Jalink? The Cary Report sheds light on this question as it relates to the Migrated Archives, but for the *Djogdja Documenten* it is still unknown.

There are also still original documents in the NEFIS archive at Nationaal Archief, created in Indonesia. Some of them are non-governmental and thus can be claimed to belong to NEFIS after their seizure, but I believe that in a collection as large as the NEFIS archive there may still be records that could be the property of the Indonesian government—or at the very least are so intertwined with the independence movement in Indonesia that ANRI may be interested in knowing of their existence and having copies. This is a long term project that I wish to pursue in the future.

As far as future work on the Migrated Archives is concerned, at the time of writing the complete archive has not been transferred to The National Archives in London, as highlighted by Ian Cobain of *The Guardian*. I imagine that there will be more work done on that case in the near future. Historians are already reviewing those documents that have been released, and new research will continue. With copies available in Singapore, researchers in Southeast Asia have a location where access can be made closer to home.

Relation to Archival Theory and the Writing of History

Having explored these two examples in archival theory terms, there are still questions that linger when I think of their role in society. What are the effects of such archives outside the archival community? How does a lack of access to certain

archives influence history telling and how does that transpose itself into culture, society, and how a group of people identify themselves? These cultural questions are much more theoretical than this scientific study would allow, so I was unable to explore them in this dissertation. However, a further study could include how the history of decolonization is written and re-written by Indonesian, Malaysian and Singaporean historians.

Missing archives and their relation to the writing of history is another subject that I would like to further research. The existence of the Migrated Archives reminds historians that all research done in the archive is done with a large amount of trust. There is also this trust among the readers of histories written using archival sources. The trust is that 'we', as historians, are seeing in an archive that which is important historically. The idea is that the appraisal and selection process would have left those records of continuing value for historical evaluation later. A case like the Migrated Archives erodes this trust. Despite Badger's attempts to reassure historians, it is the public that must be reassured as well.

Oral History

The field of oral history was not discussed in this dissertation, but missing archives have obvious connections. In sub-Saharan African, where every country felt the effects of colonialism, many national archives had discussions on the amount of missing information. Alistair Tough tells us that '[o]ne of the most common outcomes was an oral history programme'.⁴ This is often seen as a solution of the problem of lost or missing archives and oral history projects have been implemented by the national archives of Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore.

Verhoeven referred to Malaysia in the 1960s as 'a country which has so many gaps in its archives', but similarly mentioned the attempt to fill said gaps through 'tape recordings of interviews with elder persons reminiscing on historical events,

⁴ Alistair Tough, 'Archives in sub-Saharan Africa half a century after independence', *Archival Science*, vol. 9, nos. 3-4 (2009), 193.

taken by National Archives personnel'.⁵ Not only does this mean archivists were learning about oral history, but older Malaysians were being appreciated for their knowledge by performing a task that helps not only the present, but the future. The same is true in Indonesia, where oral history also took an important role as a complement to paper records.

A major oral history program at the Arsip Nasional was undertaken in 1972, shortly after Soemartini was named director, and continued through the 1980s with a goal towards 'filling in the records and to provide a more complete and more coherent view of the past, grounded in the nation's sense of itself and its destiny'.⁶ A workshop was held at ANRI in 1982 with historians from throughout Indonesia detailing interview projects they were engaging in and the problems that come with oral history.⁷ Different projects discussed included Islamic groups and opponents of Sukarno in the 1950s. Most of the workshop, however, centered on documenting the revolution and the National Movement. The interest in oral history is another example of the growing interest in Indonesian identity, with oral history being the place where collective—or national—and individual memories intersect.⁸ Oral history, though different from an archive, is another aspect of the vast 'cultural archive' from which a community gathers its history. It is also a project that archival institutions generally undertake with the explicit goal of filling in missing information from the archival collection.

Oral history gives a voice to those who might otherwise never have their stories told. The voice then gives power, as now the story is told and retained for future generations. That the Arsip Nasional of the New Order would have been interested in giving a voice to Sukarno's opponents is no shock. It gives power to them while simultaneously stripping Sukarno of relevance. The emphasis on National Movement was similarly an easy choice. As the defining moment in Indonesian

⁵ NL-HaNA, ARA, 2.14.03, inv.nr, 1320

⁶ Djoko Utomo, 'Restarting the Oral History Programme in Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia', in *Power of Collective Memories and Evidence: Proceedings of the International Conference on Records and Archives, 17-18 July 2008*, Singapore: National Archives Singapore, 2009, 60.

⁷ IISG, Erkelens archive, 10511.9 Box 2.

⁸ Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, London: Routledge, 2010.

history, coupled with the fact that many participants were still alive, made documenting this history a necessity. The oral history project was meant to fill gaps in written sources from the Japanese Occupation to the Revolution era due to chaos, sudden changes, and destroyed sources.⁹ The *Arsip Nasional* obviously had archival and historical reasons to be involved in this work, and if taking oral histories from more and more people meant Sukarno's circle could be less prevalent then the work would also fit into the political atmosphere of the time.

Through these fields of work I would like to continue my research into these cases, and also invite further work by other scholars. Literature on the continuum model will continue, as it is an ongoing work in progress. This dissertation is just one in a long line of work attempting to describe the continuum model and explore its capabilities and limitations. As it evolves and takes on the work of more scholars, the continuum model's usefulness to archivists, and users, in strengthened.

⁹ IISG, Erkelens archive, 10511.9 Box 2.