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“Come Correct or Don’t Come at All:” Building More Equitable Relationships Between Archival Studies Scholars and Community Archives



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Abstract

This collaboratively authored white paper reports on a May 2021 two-day online workshop about the current state of academic research on community archives, its impact on communities represented and served by such organizations, and ways to envision and enact more equitable relationships moving forward. Participants included community-based archivists, advocates for community archives, academic researchers, and students. This white paper reports on key themes that emerged from this two-day workshop, and presents collaboratively-derived principles and protocols for building ethical, more equitable partnerships between academic researchers and community-based archivists in the future. Our findings surface several damaging tendencies in academic research, including: parachuting in, knowledge extraction, financial inequity, and transactional consent. We then identify nine key principles for building mutually beneficial relationships between academic researchers and community archivists: relational consent; mutual benefit; investment; humility; accountability; transparency; equity; reparation; and amplification. We then propose ways academic researchers can enact these principles via protocols for building more equitable research partnerships moving forward.

Introduction

In November 2019, a small group of community-based archivists met in Chicago to begin planning the Community Archives Collaborative, a mutual aid association for independent memory organizations.¹ At this inaugural meeting, several co-authors of this paper engaged in a conversation on the relationship between community archives and academic researchers. The discussion quickly turned from not *how* researchers could support community archives, but *if* they could, with community archivists describing what they characterized as extractive, exploitative, and harmful research conducted by some academics at their organizations. It became clear that the topics of research ethics, reciprocity, and accountability demand further discussion and action in the emerging subfield of community-based archival studies.

Until recently, the bulk of research conducted in archival studies has concerned the archives and recordkeeping processes and practices of government agencies and/or large bureaucratic organizations. In that context, where government agencies and corporations have generally *more* structural power than academic researchers, reciprocity with researchers is achieved when agencies and corporations are made more accountable to their stakeholders. Yet as archival studies turns its focus to records created by marginalized or minoritized individuals and communities (that is, people with generally *less* structural power than academics), the meaning and stakes of research reciprocity become less clear. Defining research reciprocity in this context and creating guidelines to ensure such reciprocity are increasingly important as the extractive nature of academic research is continuously more recognized and disparaged. Community manifestos like “Red Women Rising” and “Research 101: A Manifesto for Ethical Research in the Downtown Eastside” critique—in unflinching terms—the ways in which academic researchers see more material and social benefits from research projects than do the communities in which research is conducted.² They call for academic researchers to make clear plans for returning research to communities in respectful, meaningful and accessible ways; to involve community members in ways that honor their unique expertise; and to acknowledge their debt to communities for making their research possible. Researchers are tasked with ensuring that their work is not only an academic exercise, creating more knowledge for privileged consumers, but instead a process that empowers communities to translate research into action.

Friends and colleagues in the small academic field of archival studies, Michelle Caswell and Jennifer Douglas casually discussed these issues at conferences and one-on-one conversations over several years. When an opportunity to more formally collaborate arose via the University of British Columbia (UBC) and University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) Collaborative Research Mobility Award, they jumped at the chance. In 2020-2021, Caswell and Douglas were awarded USD\$6,000 and CAD\$8,000 to launch the “Reciprocity in Researching Records” project. Caswell used the entirety of her award to pay community-based

¹ SAADA, “Community Archives Collaborative,” <https://www.saada.org/project/community-archives-collaborative>. Initial ideas for the Collaborative emerged at the Architecting Sustainable Futures event in September 2018. Architecting Sustainable Futures, <https://architectingsustainablefutures.org/>.

² Carol Muree Martin and Harsha Walia, “Red Women Rising: Indigenous Women Survivors in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside,” Downtown Eastside Women’s Center (2019), <http://dewc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/MMIW-Report-Final-March-10-WEB.pdf>. Louise Boilevin, Jules Chapman, Lindsay Deane, Caroline Doerksen, Greg Fresz, DJ Joe, Nicolas Leech-Crier, et al., “Research 101: A Manifesto for Ethical Research in the Downtown Eastside” (O. UBC Community and Partner Publications, March 2019), <https://dx.doi.org/10.14288/1.0377565>.

archivists a USD\$1,000 honorarium for participation in the project. Douglas used the entirety of her award to fund two graduate student researchers, June Chow and Rachael Bradshaw, to work on the project.

Over two days in May 2021, Caswell and Douglas pulled together a group of community-based archivists and advocates, all co-authors of this paper, for an online workshop about the current state of academic research on community archives, its impact on communities represented and served by such organizations, and ways to envision and enact more equitable relationships moving forward. The workshop sought to address the following research questions:

- As research in archival studies turns towards personal and community archives, what does reciprocity look like?
- How can archival studies scholars ensure that their research benefits the people, communities, and organizations they study?
- What policies, procedures, and principles should be in place to build ethical and mutually beneficial collaborations between academic researchers, memory keepers, and community archivists working within marginalized communities?

This white paper reports on key themes that emerged from this two-day workshop, and presents collaboratively-derived principles and protocols for building ethical, more equitable partnerships between academic researchers and community-based archivists in the future.

Literature Review

Community Archives

UK-based archival studies scholars Andrew Flinn, Mary Stevens, and Elizabeth Shepherd define *community* as “any group of people who come together and present themselves as such, and a ‘community archive’ is the product of their attempts to document the history of their commonality.”³ The same research team writes, “the defining characteristic of community archives is the active participation of a community in documenting and making accessible the history of their particular group and/or locality *on their own terms*.”⁴ In the US, the phenomenon of community archives is inextricably linked to power and oppression. Those who have been disempowered by oppressive systems, those who have been “symbolically annihilated,” those whose histories have been ignored, maligned, misrepresented, and/or grossly distorted by mainstream memory institutions (as agents of and conduits for those oppressive systems), feel the need to create their own autonomous community archives.⁵ As Nancy Liliana Godoy argues, community-driven archives are spaces for BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ communities to reclaim narratives and to heal from trauma.⁶

These archives are often formed in reaction to the failure of mainstream archives to tell an accurate and complex story of marginalized communities. Such archival spaces enable communities to enact a stake in their own history, often through practices that value and

³ Andrew Flinn, Mary Stevens, and Elizabeth Shepherd, “Whose Memories, Whose Archives? Independent Community Archives, Autonomy and the Mainstream,” *Archival Science* 9, no. 1-2 (2009): 75, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10502-009-9105-2>.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 73.

⁵ Michelle Caswell, Marika Cifor, and Mario H. Ramirez, “‘To Suddenly Discover Yourself Existing’: Uncovering the Impact of Community Archives,” *The American Archivist* 79, no. 1 (June 1, 2016): 56-81, <https://doi.org/10.17723/0360-9081.79.1.56>.

⁶ Nancy Liliana Godoy, “Community-Driven Archives: Conocimiento, Healing, and Justice,” *Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies* 3 (2021), <https://journals.litwinbooks.com/index.php/jclis/article/view/136>.

encourage the participation of their users, who are assumed to be community members. These community archives may vary in size, governance structure, financial capacity, relationship to dominant institutions, and the nature of the identity and community being documented, but they are united in their insistence that communities take ownership of their own historical representations as a way of enacting a more just present and envisioning new futures.⁷ Through interviews, focus groups, and participant observation, researchers from UCLA's Community Archives Lab found that community archives practices often disrupt the hierarchical models in traditional archives, prompting community members to view collections as belonging *to the community* and challenging dominant practices and conceptions of custody, description, and ownership.⁸

Community members who work or volunteer for these archives are experts in their own right, yet many organizations lack the capacity to fully support their important work. Due to the inequitable distribution of resources to support BIPOC-led cultural heritage institutions, many community archives struggle financially, with some operating on annual budgets of less than USD\$100,000 and relying on volunteer labor. As Bergis Jules of Shift Collective writes, "Small donations and one-time funding are available to community-based archives, but substantial and long-term sustainable funding remains elusive."⁹ He continues, "community-based archives can develop successful fundraising programs, but some need support to sustain and grow the capacity of those efforts."¹⁰ This points to how community archives possess the knowledge to steward their records, but they suffer from a lack of financial resources to perform and sustain this labor. This fiscal precarity increases the vulnerability of community archives, for whom negative exposure in published research can result in financial harm. By contrast, positive exposure in published research can be a form of advocacy for community archives, resulting in public awareness, perceived mainstream legitimacy and ultimately, philanthropic support.

Community Engaged Research

A 2018 editorial in *The Lancet: Global Health* defined a parachute researcher as one who "drops into a country, makes use of the local infrastructure, personnel, and patients, and then goes home and writes an academic paper for a prestigious journal."¹¹ Community engaged research (CER) seeks to counter this parachuting by building sustained and mutually beneficial relationships between researchers and communities. CER is a set of methodologies that aims to counter extractive and exploitative research practices and instead "be committed to approaching each stage of the research process as part of an ongoing relationship-building process with the community they are working with."¹² Of the methods that fall under the umbrella of CER, Karen

⁷ Michelle Caswell, "Inventing New Archival Imaginaries: Theoretical Foundations for Identity-Based Community Archives," in *Identity Palimpsests: Archiving Ethnicity in the U.S. and Canada*, ed. Dominique Daniel and Amalia S. Levi (Sacramento, CA: Litwin Books, 2014), 35-55.

⁸ Jimmy Zavala et al., "'A Process Where We're All at the Table': Community Archives Challenging Dominant Modes of Archival Practice," *Archives and Manuscripts* 45, no. 3 (2017): 202-15, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01576895.2017.1377088>.

⁹ Bergis Jules, "Architecting Sustainable Futures: Exploring Funding Models in Community-Based Archives" (Shift Design, February 2019): 8, <https://bit.ly/ShiftASFreport>.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Editorial, "Closing the Door on Parachutes and Parasites," *The Lancet Global Health* 6, no. 6 (June 2018), [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X\(18\)30239-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X(18)30239-0).

¹² Tara Mahoney, Kari Grain, Patti Fraser, Jackie Wong., *Community Resource Handbook* (Community-Engaged Research Initiative, Simon Fraser University, 2021),

Hacker identifies community based participatory research (CBPR) as seeking to engage most fully with the community in all aspects of the research process, from initial framing of the research problem to the dissemination of completed research.¹³ The research method emerged in the 1970s from Paolo Freire’s work on participatory pedagogy, with its emphasis on recognizing community knowledge.¹⁴ A handbook on community engaged research produced by the Simon Fraser Community-Engaged Research Initiative explains that, “By allowing communities to co-create knowledge, community-engaged research can build capacity for imagination, and enhance the capacity of communities to advocate for their own well-being.”¹⁵ As CER and CBPR are increasingly used by researchers working in marginalized communities, Shauna MacKinnon notes that it is even more essential “that researchers must clearly articulate what it [CBPR] means to them. It entails much more than simply undertaking research in a community.”¹⁶

One of the tenets of community engaged methodologies such as CBPR is reciprocity or “bringing the research back.”¹⁷ In “Research 101: A Manifesto for Ethical Research in the Downtown Eastside,” community members urge prospective researchers to ask themselves, “What is your plan to move toward this being a reciprocal relationship with mutual benefits for academic researchers and the community?”¹⁸ The manifesto emphasizes that reciprocity does not simply entail sending a finished academic paper—research products must be accessible in format and content, and researchers should provide the opportunity for feedback and follow up. Indeed, reciprocity is important at all stages of CBPR. Social workers Francisco Ibáñez-Carrasco and Pilar Riaño-Alcalá explain that true community-based research, “engages communities and individuals as agents (not subjects) of activities, products, and knowledge production.”¹⁹

CER methods have been adopted in archival studies, often with the goal of developing archives that better meet the needs of specific communities. Of the CER methods used in such research, participatory action research (PAR) is most common. PAR uses the same methods of community engagement, but with an eye to affecting change through the research process. The Australian project Rights in Records by Design uses a PAR approach to co-design records systems to support the needs of people who experienced out-of-home care.²⁰ The research team

https://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/ceeri/images/Archive/Publications/Community%20Resource%20Handbook_SF_U%20CERi.pdf, 9.

¹³ Karen Hacker, *Community-Based Participatory Research* (1 Oliver’s Yard, 55 City Road London EC1Y 1SP: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2013), <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452244181>, 3; Shauna MacKinnon, *Practising Community-Based Participatory Research: Stories of Engagement, Empowerment, and Mobilization* (Vancouver, BC: Purich Books, 2018), 4.

¹⁴ Dani Wadada Nabudere, “2. Research, Activism, and Knowledge Production,” in *Engaging Contradictions*, by Charles R. Hale (University of California Press, 2019), 62–87, <https://doi.org/10.1525/9780520916173-006>; Shauna MacKinnon, *Practising Community-Based Participatory Research: Stories of Engagement, Empowerment, and Mobilization* (Vancouver, BC: Purich Books, 2018).

¹⁵ Mahoney et al., 6.

¹⁶ MacKinnon, 6.

¹⁷ Jules Chapman, Lindsay Deane, Caroline Doerksen, Greg Fresz, DJ Joe, Nicolas Leech-Crier, et al., “Research 101 : A Manifesto for Ethical Research in the Downtown Eastside,”

<https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/ubccommunityandpartnerspublicati/52387/items/1.037756>, 20.

¹⁸ Chapman et al., 14.

¹⁹ F. Ibanez-Carrasco and P. Riano-Alcala, “Organizing Community-Based Research Knowledge between Universities and Communities: Lessons Learned,” *Community Development Journal* 46, no. 1 (January 1, 2011), <https://doi.org/10.1093/cdj/bsp041>, 74.

²⁰ Gregory Rolan et al., “Voice, Agency, and Equity: Deep Community Collaboration in Record-Keeping Research,” text (University of Borås, September 15, 2019), <http://informationr.net/ir/24-3/rails/rails1803.html>.

for Rights in Records by Design includes both academic researchers and advocates who work with care-leavers. Together the team has worked to develop a “space of mutual learning” and to determine how research findings are accessibly disseminated. Others in the fields of archival and library studies have used PAR to develop a digital repository for a scientific community,²¹ to study the information needs of clients at a homeless shelter,²² and to suggest a model for the development of open-source software.²³

Methodology

As previously stated, this paper results from a two-day workshop held over zoom in May 2021 between academic researchers at UBC and UCLA and community-based archivists and advocates. The workshop was proposed by Jennifer Douglas and Michelle Caswell and funded by the UBC and UCLA Collaborative Research Mobility Award.

Collaborators were selected based on their previous track record of organizing and advocacy on behalf of community archives, their deep engagement with the minoritized communities they serve and represent, and recommendations from other participants. Collaborators are not meant to be representative samples of *all* academic researchers, community-based archivists or advocates. Furthermore, the boundary between researchers and subjects, PIs and participants was made permeable, as all participants collaboratively and actively co-produced the knowledge presented in this paper.

We approached this research through an interpretivist research paradigm, in which we do not claim to be neutral observers to the phenomena that we are observing, but rather integral parts of them. Furthermore, the aim here is for rich, “thick description” of a specific and under-researched topic rather than a broad or generalizable understanding of larger international phenomena. The research project was given approval by both UCLA’s and UBC’s Institutional Review Board.

The first day of the workshop consisted of introductions, consent processes, goals, and discussion of the current state, harms, and stakes of relationships between academics and community archives. The second day of the workshop addressed definitions of reciprocity, envisioning what reciprocal relationships might look like, and what potential benefits community archives could derive from academic research. Day two concluded with a discussion of principles and guidelines that need to be in place to form mutually beneficial relationships. Conversation flowed freely both days, with many participants responding to and building off of each other’s comments. Across communities and organizations, participants largely seemed to be in agreement, and to be actively listening and learning from the experiences and practices being described.

With consent from the participants, the workshop sessions were recorded and transcribed by the research assistants, with help from Zoom’s automated transcription function. Draft

²¹ Lorraine L. Richards, “Teaching Data Creators How to Develop an OAIS-Compliant Digital Curation System: Colearning and Breakdowns in Support of Requirements Analysis,” *The American Archivist* 79, no. 2 (September 2016): 371–91, <https://doi.org/10.17723/0360-9081-79.2.371>.

²² Misa Mi, Jill Stefaniak, and Nelia Afonso, “Community Needs Assessment to Reach Out to an Underserved Population,” *Medical Reference Services Quarterly* 33, no. 4 (October 2, 2014): 375–90, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02763869.2014.957075>.

²³ Vandana Singh, “Applying Participatory Action Approach to Integrating Professional Librarians into Open Source Software Communities,” *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science* 52, no. 2 (June 1, 2020): 541–48, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0961000619836724>.

transcripts were sent to all participants to check for accuracy, intent and attribution. The researchers at UBC and UCLA then coded these transcripts, identifying reoccurring themes and pulling quotes that richly illustrated these themes. Douglas and Caswell then drafted this paper based on these themes and quotes. The paper draft was sent to all participating co-authors for edits and approval before being published. The participants are quoted at length with attribution (when consent was given), as a way to acknowledge and attribute specific participants' contribution to the knowledge generated by this paper.

As the power issues that arise when university-based researchers conduct research on community archives are the focus of this paper, we feel it is important to address the power dynamics of this particular collaboration. Douglas and Caswell are both white women in tenure track positions at large public universities; the majority of the other collaborators are BIPOC archivists and advocates working for small, independent, fiscally precarious organizations. Until relatively recently, community archives have been delegitimized by academic researchers. It is thus imperative that academic researchers conducting research on or at community archives acknowledge this power differential and attempt to bridge or level the gap to build mutually beneficial relationships. As Bergis Jules writes, "Collaborative work with academic partners exists and is desired by community-based archives, but equity and recognition of the legitimacy of the archive should be foundational to the relationship."²⁴ This project began with a fundamental recognition of the importance and legitimacy of community archives as knowledge institutions with important theories and practices from which academic researchers have much to learn. While this project strived to be mutually beneficial, with community-based archivists and advocate collaborators receiving stipends, the gulf between large, well-endowed research universities and small, chronically under-funded community archives remains. The larger fault line of inequity underlying this gulf will not be eliminated by a small grant-funded project like this one; eliminating inequities will take a seismic structural shift in society writ large. We hope that the themes and principles herein contribute in some small way to this seismic shift.

Findings

This section reports on key themes that emerged from the workshop, organized into three sections:

1. Current state of academic/community archives relations;
2. Principles for building mutually beneficial relationships;
3. Enacting these principles: Protocols for building more equitable research partnerships

Findings Part 1. Current state of academic/community archives relations

The first discussion of the workshop addressed community archivists' experiences working with academic researchers. While participants described some positive experiences and successful long-term working relationships with academic researchers, they also identified several concerning issues, including tendencies for academic researchers to parachute in and out of community archives; to approach research with a knowledge extraction mindset; to treat consent as transactional; and to fail to adequately acknowledge and/or redress the significant differences in resourcing and capacity that exist between community archives and research universities.

Workshop participants characterized many past engagements with academic researchers as fleeting, artificial, and opportunistic, and explained that there is a level of risk and damage control required of community-based archives in entering these engagements. Several

²⁴ Bergis Jules, "Architecting Sustainable Futures: Exploring Funding Models in Community-Based Archives."

participants in the workshop described researchers parachuting in, showing up in the community when it suited them and their research agenda, and then disappearing after the research was completed and published. Kat Rodriguez from the Indigenous Alliance without Borders said:

I think that my feelings about academics for many years was that they parachute in, they want information, they make some close friendships, you know, go out for drinks and even maybe will help cut out or make signs for event, sometimes. And then they disappear, and there's not even...an internal feeling of owing the community even their thesis, or like, "here's what I did" or "here's how hours and hours of one-on-ones with different people in the community" [contributed to my research]. Sort of like extracting these stories out of people's guts and hearts and, you know, there were a lot of feels...And then they would say, oh so-and-so is now "an expert" on the border, yet they haven't been back to the border in five years.

Academics might see the site of their community-based research as a temporary object of interest; as Rodriguez put it, "It felt very artificial. It was more like they were interested in it, and then 'Oh, you know that was an outfit I wore last year, I don't wear that anymore.'" She contrasted community activists' work with the work of academic researchers: whereas those *in* the community work *for* the community, with academics "it sometimes felt like they saw the value of our communities only to better themselves."

This type of extractive or "parasitic" research approach, where a researcher parachutes in and uses community resources—collections, labor, and community knowledge—to benefit their own research agenda and career without contributing resources back to the community also often fails to acknowledge community contributions in final research products such as presentations and publications. Academic researchers often assume ownership of community knowledge passed on to them during their research engagement with the community and relay such knowledge without attribution.

Participants sensed that many academic researchers approach community archives with their own research interests and career goals as their primary motivation, failing to consider the particular needs, capacity, and capability of their community archives research "partners." Many of the relationships described were not mutually beneficial, nor were they entirely transparent. Bergis Jules raised the possibility that there is a fundamental incommensurability between the motivations of community archivists and academic researchers. He said:

When I work with community archives, folks building archives in their community, their motivations are completely different...It's not tied to their career. It's tied to a deep love of the community, of the people they have surrounding them. It's tied to a deep level, to finding justice for the people around them, and it's just very different. It's two completely different motivations and...it's very hard for me to see how academics can completely separate career aspirations from the work they do with community-based archives.

The financial relationship between academic researchers (and their institutions), funding agencies, and community archives was a particular sore spot. Participants described a huge imbalance in financial resources between academic institutions and community-based archives, despite grant applications being funded (in part) based on partnerships and collaborations and research drawing upon the resources of community-based archives. Participants described

projects where university partners used community archives' collections in grant applications to secure funding for themselves but failed to secure any direct funding to support the care of those collections; where they expected the community archives to provide labor to collect oral histories and other materials to be included in institutional repositories and/or as part of the academic researcher's project, again with no or insufficient financial support; and where academic researchers appropriated research tools created by community archivists without credit. Gabriel Solis from the Texas After Violence Project noted that, particularly in the aftermath of George Floyd's murder and the Black Lives Matter uprisings, universities have been eager to "partner" with community archives, but frequently, these "partnerships" are more extractive than reciprocal. As Solis explained, universities are "wanting to latch on to these movements, and they want to point to our community collection that's housed there, but we haven't seen a single penny to support our community based archival efforts." Bergis Jules responded, "We hear it, and we see these groups getting \$4 million for whatever 'community archive'..." without any funding (or very little) trickling down to community organizations.

Participants expressed frustration with current funding models that limit the eligibility of small organizations to receive large grants. They discussed how funders are more likely to fund universities than small, independent, nonprofit organizations. Furthermore, community-based practices like collective ownership can complicate copyright and digitization agreements with funders and in some cases, render community archives ineligible for certain streams of funding.

Community archivists also described a disjuncture between academic notions of consent based on a one-time transaction and ongoing relational forms of consent that reflect the values of their own communities. Similarly, participants addressed how academic research protocols and institutional review board training and approval do not take into consideration the processes of approval from within their own communities. Rodriguez summarized:

There's this thing about consent where...people think because you've signed something, because you're going to be coming to our organization's meetings, that it implies almost like an ownership, like you have a right to our words and our spaces or conversations you might overhear. [There's] an arrogance, that it feels like there's an implied right to your space and to your words and to everything, because you signed [a consent form.]

Patrisia Gonzales from the Indigenous Alliance without Borders similarly noted instances where academic researchers ignored community protocols, only paying attention to their university ethics protocols and ignoring Indigenous research protocols while doing research *in an Indigenous rights organization*. She explained that however the relationship between community archives and academic researchers plays out, community archives and organizations must manage the consequences within their communities. Gonzales said, "If our names are on that, and somehow it gets through, then we're the ones that pay the cost, not them, because they're not in the community, and they still don't get that." Gonzales further linked this lack of awareness on the part of academic researchers and the university system more broadly to white privilege: "I think there's a blinder there that [white researchers] can't see, and if we try to raise it they say, 'oh well, you know, we get it, we get it.' But they don't get it, and then it creates more labor for us to then try to correct everything."

Some participants mentioned instances in which relationships with academic researchers have been beneficial to community archives. Examples of beneficial relationships include cases in which academic researchers: raised funding for the community archives; served on the

archives' board of directors or advisory board; redirected funding from universities to community archives; engaged in research that was later used for public relations or fundraising efforts; shared knowledge and publications to source communities; wrote books or articles that were published by the community archives; assisted in the acquisition and/or description of collections; and advocated on behalf of community archives to funders. However, these mutually beneficial practices were the exception, not the rule. This conversation made clear both the damages done by academic researchers at community archives and the need for guidelines and principles for building mutually beneficial relationships moving forward.

Findings Part 2. Principles for building mutually beneficial relationships

The second day of the workshop surfaced nine key principles for building mutually beneficial relationships between academic researchers and community archivists:

1. relational consent;
2. mutual benefit;
3. investment;
4. humility;
5. accountability;
6. transparency;
7. equity;
8. reparation; and
9. amplification.

We now report on the discussion of these principles.

Principle 1: Relational Consent

Given their experience working with community members to acquire records and record oral histories, community-based archivists are experts at conceiving of and obtaining consent. In their archival work, community-based archivists have dispensed with dominant notions of consent as a one-time-only transactional process, and instead conceive of consent as an ongoing relational practice. As Dino Robinson of the Shorefront Legacy Center stated, "Anything and everything that we do, we're always asking permission. Even if we got it yesterday, we're going to ask the next day, 'Is it okay to use this?'" In this construction, asking for consent is a gerund, signaling an always-evolving practice.

Participants expressed the need for academic researchers conducting research about or in community archives to similarly shift their notion of consent from the required one-time consent transaction (be it written or verbal) as dictated by a university's institutional review board, to an ongoing practice based on relationships that shift over time. The principle of consent as an ongoing relational practice demonstrates genuine care and respect for the other person's well-being across space and time and acknowledges that levels of consent may shift depending on context. Robinson illustrated some of the ways a researcher might check in with an interview subject to raise concerns about making materials public, even if consent was given to publish them: "[Consent is] being good custodians and saying, 'Thank you for your time. You interviewed for this, you gave the okay, you said we could post it, but I have concerns about these comments you're making, and I have concerns about your well-being and how it might impact you. Why don't we hold on this for a while.'" Pausing and reflecting together is an integral component of consent as relational practice.

Robinson also called attention to the need for researchers to build a relationship with a community before asking for consent and to consider how even the form consent takes can embed relationship-building or -breaking elements: “I think the scariest thing that our communities can see is a legal form, a legal consent form coming from an institution...especially when you’re trying to engage in the community in a real, personal way, and say, ‘hey, I will love to hear your story, but first, slap this down, I need your signature on this legal form so you can’t sue us.’ And I’m thinking, that’s not how you build a relationship.”

It is not only the idea that consent is a one-time transaction that needs to be challenged; researchers also need to consider who provides consent, recognizing that consent needs to be negotiated at many levels when working with community-based archives given their engagement in co-ownership models with their communities. In a relational consent model, levels at which consent must be addressed include, but are not limited to: the individual, family, elders and knowledge keepers, tribal council, organization and community.

A shift from understanding consent as transactional or procedural to relational further requires researchers to recognize how obtaining consent through the one-time signing of a research form does not grant researchers limitless access to a community or ownership of its knowledge. It is the individual’s or community’s right to withhold or withdraw consent at any time. Community archivists may determine a relationship with a researcher is not a good fit or wish to “break up” in a research relationship for any number of reasons. Recognizing the prerogative of community archivists to withdraw consent at any time is a key part of understanding consent as an ongoing relational practice.

Academic researchers who recognize community archivists’ expertise (see *Principle 4: Humility*) and their contributions to the creation of knowledge as a result of research should understand that a relational model of consent must also provide participants with opportunities to consent to being credited in publications and other research products, with the important caveat that researchers need to be mindful about all the implications of named authorship, including real harms associated with the identification of individual persons. As Kat Rodriguez put it: “Sometimes we want to be seen and sometimes we don’t want to be seen, depending on the space.” Reminding us that “there’s some Indigenous knowledge that literally has gotten people killed,” Rodriguez advised that the stakes and safety concerns differ across communities and for individuals in communities, “You’re never wrong to ask each and every time.”

Principle 2: Mutual Benefit

Academics derive a great deal of professional benefit from their research at community archives. They obtain information that leads to publications, which are the currency for academic promotion and tenure. If tenured, academics enjoy fiscal and professional security. Publications can also lead to invitations for public presentations, which are often financially compensated. Yet the impact of such academic research on community archives can be unclear or, at worst, actively harmful. Participants described multiple instances of extractive research, in which they felt themselves or their communities were exploited for professional gain of the academic. Participating community-based archivists expressed that research that does not create real benefits to the communities they serve or represent is a missed opportunity and a waste of time. As Kat Rodriguez explained: “Our interest usually is in the movement, supporting the movement, building the movement, growing the movement. So that’s how I tend to look at things when people want something from me: What does this do for the movement? And if it doesn’t, I have had to learn to say no.”

Community-based archivists expressed the desire to form collaborative, mutually beneficial relationships with academics. Such relationships are entered into consensually and openly. They are two-way relationships. They should feel good, even when they surface points of tension, and are about cultivating the right fit between researcher, archivist, and community. Research that is beneficial to community archives can serve as a form of advocacy, communicating the impact of community-based archival work to potential funding agencies, donors, volunteers, and other stakeholders in positions of power. Research can also result in conceptual shifts, practices, and tools that are of use to community archives. Community-based archivists expressed the strong desire that academics “give back” their research to the community from which it originated. Indeed, researchers should recognize that the research is not theirs to give back; in a mutually beneficial research relationship, knowledge is co-created and shared.

Avoiding extractive research practices involves not only recognizing the expertise and authority of the community being researched, but also reciprocating by sharing one’s own expertise. Academic researchers can share their expertise with community archivists by crafting grant materials, marketing materials, solicitation letters, finding aids, and policies. Expectations about how research is documented, shared, circulated, and preserved, as well as about how academic researchers can give back in other material ways, need to be worked out collaboratively, at the start of the relationship between community-based archivist and academic researcher and, as with relational consent, should be revisited frequently.

Participating community archivists noted that academic researchers can be challenged in thinking about mutual benefit because, as Samip Mallick of the South Asian American Digital Archive (SAADA) pointed out, “the structures of academic success are very different...to the ones that we think of in terms—in community-based archives—of how we gauge our success. And it’s only when academics are willing to either ignore or challenge those structures of success that there’s mutual benefit.” Niv Karthikeyan of SAADA suggested that academic researchers need to begin to recognize the positive ways they might be changed as a result of their work with community as a benefit, that can then also go on to benefit community archives if the researcher applies this learning in their own spaces, in their teaching, and in their future research work. She said: “When a researcher can say, ‘I approach movement work, I approach being a person in this community, I approach my own work as a human being differently because of what I’ve learned from this, from the experiences I had with this community archive.’ And then holding that going forward.” She adds: “Knowing, as part of movement work, that the practices of the institution are going to change in a way that’s beneficial, beyond just that specific researcher, beyond their specific research career interests is important and valuable.”

Principle 3: Long-term Investment

Community-engaged research takes time. Relationships of trust do not develop on a schedule. Legacies of distrust and extraction cannot be healed overnight or in adherence to a tenure clock. Sustained investment is the opposite of parachuting in. Community archivists expressed that academics doing research at or on community archives should be invested in the long-term health and sustainability of the community archives. Such investment is demonstrated by sustained commitment over time, and may include expectations that academic researchers complete a range of tasks in support of organizational goals, such as fundraising, making connections for the archives to acquire new collections, arrangement and description of collections, educational outreach, etc.

For academic researchers, this temporal investment differs considerably from the experience of doing archival research in a university or government repository. This investment also deviates from standard academic expectations and schedules, and may not be rewarded in the context of tenure and promotion. Academics entering into engagement with community archives should be aware of the time and labor commitment upfront.

For many participants, it was a researcher's long-term investment in the community, rather than membership in the identities being represented or served, that was most salient. Over time, outsiders to the communities served and represented by community archives can develop deeper relationships based on trust, long after the research has been published and the academic merits achieved. Academics should expect these relationships to take time. As Patrisia Gonzales said, "We need to know who are you, how you live, how you roll" before trust can be developed. Community archivists value knowing researchers as people, who are impacted personally by the work and the relationships that emerge from it.

Principle 4: Humility

Academics should approach community-based archivists and communities with humility. Community-based archivists and elders at community sites are experts in their own right. Dino Robinson described a tendency for academic researchers to make assumptions about the knowledge and/or expertise of community archivists and members: "Sometimes the misunderstanding is that institutions are coming and bringing a certain level of expertise, of knowledge, and then going into a community not realizing that the community is made up of people who matriculated through institutions and are themselves experts in their field, living within a community." Robinson adds that academic researchers need to understand "that you're working within a community that's made up of people with institutional knowledge and coming from institutions. If that knowledge is not there, that respect is not there, it's not really going to go too far."

Many community-based archivists also engage in their own research and hold copyright over their work and words. They have the authority to say yes, as well as to say no, which must be respected. Patrisia Gonzales talked about how academic researchers tend to assume that they know what to do and how to behave, without understanding particular community contexts and protocols. She said:

...[academics] feel like they're so used to the way they've done their research or the way we understand consent from a Western perspective, but I've had to say, from an Indigenous perspective, it doesn't matter, that's the Western protocol, we have our own protocol. And it might not even be written, and you have to respect it, you know, because it's why we exist as an organization, because we take so much care with our relationships.

Community spaces and relationships are privileged and sacred; they need to be approached with care and humility. Kat Rodriguez spoke of a kind of "arrogance" or a sense academic researchers have of an "implied right to your space and your words and to everything because you signed [a consent form.]" She stresses:

I think it would be helpful if academics...were a lot more humble. Overly humble would not be too much, right? Like even overly humble would not be enough, really, for those

[community] spaces...I think the humility of knowing that if you could do this on your own, you wouldn't be coming to communities, and so you have to acknowledge that they are the experts and...that you should actually be getting a pulse check from them, like, "is this the right question? Is this the right way?"

Dino Robinson summarized his advice to academic researchers approaching his organization for the first time, "Come correct or don't come at all."

Principle 5: Accountability

Community-based archivists deal in long-term relationships of trust within their communities, to whom they are accountable. Academic researchers are responsible not only to their institutions and academia, but to the communities with and/or about whom they perform research. Kat Rodriguez spoke at length about community accountability:

People sometimes only worry about behavior in academia, like if they get in trouble, or if they cited wrong...But there's a lot of ways that you can create problems in an organization with behavior, and I think that there should be a piece as well about what does accountability look like and how are you accountable to that organization or the community that you're entering, embedding yourself, however it's taking form? There can be harm, and then you leave, you go back to the ivory tower, you go back to wherever, and then those repercussions are there...I'm thinking about the protection of the community itself because then they're going to have to deal with whatever could have happened...If a researcher only feels accountable to the academic institution that they're writing for and not to the community that they're actually part of, there's a big problem. And I think sometimes that is the sense or the tone, like they're not worried about those people, they're worried about their department chair getting upset.

Researchers' responsibility includes ensuring that consent is fully understood and continuously negotiated by both parties, that ethical procedures are followed by researchers, and that community members are informed about how their information is being used.

Accountability is also demonstrated when academic researchers commit to "bringing real resources back to communities," which as Bergis Jules said, "is a real sign that you're on the right path." Participants talked about how grants are often acquired by academic researchers on the backs of community archives, and stressed that researchers—and the foundations that make funds available to researchers—need to be accountable to communities in order to shift the status quo of extractive relationships. Accountability in the sense of repairing relationships also extends to academic researchers' home institutions, which are built upon and uphold colonial systems.

Accountability cannot merely be talked about. Accountability means that there are consequences for any harm done or trust broken, and formal mechanisms such as scheduled community check-ins and written agreements for holding researchers to account need to be put in place. Kat Rodriguez discussed how community members protect "each other and ourselves" as a means of "self-defense" but argues that "there really should be a mechanism for accountability that the person wanting to do the research should have with the community." Though Rodriguez was not sure what such a mechanism might look like, she asserts that a real "part of the problem is that it doesn't exist." These types of mechanisms need to be developed and implemented "out of respect for the tons and tons of harm that has been done historically to communities by

researchers studying and writing” without any accountability measures in place. Without accountability measures in place, Rodriguez said, “the burden goes on to the community” to repair broken trust and harms done within the community, which is another way that researchers impose extra “labor on the community at the expense of the community.”

Principle 6: Transparency

Transparency involves honesty on the part of the researcher about their intentions. Participants discussed the need for academic researchers to be completely transparent about the level of their engagement with and commitment to the community being served and represented by the community archives. Dino Robinson advised academic researchers to be “very honest with yourself that you are...parachuting into a community, and we know that you will leave once your assignment’s done, we’ll probably never see you again. So be up front and honest about that. Set that expectation in a real way, and that way you’ll get real responses, and real commitment from people who will want to work with you.” Similarly, Bergis Jules said, “Just be honest about why you’re there, be honest about how merit works in the university system, right, because some of us do know how it works, and some of us see clearly that you cannot separate [your career aspirations from your community work], so that can be a huge gap.”

Jules’ comment raises the need for transparency about the professional and material benefits of research in an academic context. A great deal of confusion surfaced about academic hierarchies, the tenure and promotion process, and payment for scholarly publications. Community archivists expressed the need for clarification about these processes and for academic researchers to be upfront about the potential benefits of their research to their own careers. As Rodriguez noted, “I think one of the ways in which academics benefit when they go into communities, is that we don’t know those systems. Like, we don’t know if something’s ethical or not ethical.” She continued, “I personally really like it when researchers are very, very blunt and upfront and very clear. Because then you know where you stand, and I think communities have a long experience of not really knowing where we stand and not really knowing what are they doing with this, what’s going to happen with this. Because we have seen the worst, right?”

Principle 7: Equity

Inherent power imbalances exist in relationships between academia and community which must be named and acknowledged. Bergis Jules said:

When an academic reaches out, or an institution, they have the power. No matter what happens, the university benefits from that relationship. They benefit when that academic gets a grant, they benefit if you partner with the university and...the university markets the hell out of grants when they get grants. So the newsroom will reach out to you..and they get tons of goodwill out of these projects just by mentioning that they’re working with these organizations. So there’s a power imbalance right away, and I think it’s important for academics who are going to be involved to recognize that and to acknowledge that.

Jules further commented that while many “academics engaging with [community archives] spaces don’t like to look at themselves” or at the universities they belong to, they must learn to become “comfortable with dealing with the hard truth [of power differentials] up front, as the

first negotiation to get into the work.” Jules suggested that every research project should begin with a power analysis of the relationship between a community archives, academic researchers, and the institutions to which they belong, including looking at “how the power that the university has acts as roadblocks to supporting this really community-centered space.”

Participants questioned whether true reciprocity could ever be achieved between community archives and academic researchers, given pervasive inequities. Patrisia Gonzales noted that the scale of power between universities and communities would have to be completely recalibrated for reciprocity to be possible. As such, several participants eschewed the notion of reciprocity, in favor of “more equitable” or “mutually beneficial” relationships. More equitable relationships may be achieved if researchers recognize and honor the power and authority of community organizations and are willing to shift the power dynamic by giving up power within collaborations. Power dynamics can be shifted when researchers leave their expertise and research questions at the door, are open to the possibility that they are asking the wrong questions or taking the wrong approach, and instead share the power of forming the right (and most useful) research questions with community members.

Principle 8: Reparation

Participants spoke repeatedly about the importance of shifting financial resources to community organizations in order to repair historic and ongoing harm. Redirecting material support to community archives can be an “important expression of care,” as Bergis Jules formulated. This requires academics to navigate the bureaucratic structures of their own institution on behalf of community-based archives, although such efforts are not always successful.

Community archivists discussed how important it is for researchers to pay community members for their participation. As Patrisia Gonzales said:

A psychologist told me once that every time you tell the story of a trauma that happens to you, you are re-traumatized. So you’re talking about creating a deficit in an individual. And I’m not saying money would solve it, but there could be things put in place for healing, right, for support that the community says, “this would help us.”

In this context, reparations are not just symbolic, but are an important acknowledgment of labor and move towards material redistribution of resources.

Principle 9: Amplification

A final principle connects to many of the other principles outlined here: in recognizing the expertise and authority of a community, acknowledging its ownership of its own stories and experiences, and practicing humility in the community, academic researchers must be constantly on the watch to ensure that as much as possible—and unless directed otherwise by community—they are not dubbing themselves over community voices, but amplifying those voices and the community’s own concerns. In our workshop, Kat Rodriguez talked about how researchers can be tempted to try to force their research to go the way they thought it would, but cautions:

Maybe that wasn’t the way it was meant to be, or maybe that’s not what the community was interested in. And I think when it’s forced on people, where it’s stuck into that rigid model, I think it feeds into that disconnect where the researcher then feels like “I don’t know, this is my idea, these are my questions, this is how I wanted to do it.” And then in their own head, it reinforces this thing that they own it, that it’s theirs. And I think that’s

where things get really dangerous in terms of eliminating community from spaces and rather than amplifying community voices, you're dubbing your story over theirs. And that to me is the difference between dubbing and amplifying. That's a huge thing that researchers should be doing. They should not be dubbing their lens over someone's story, they should be amplifying that story on its own [terms].

It was clear from the workshop conversations that community archivists want to have the voices of the communities they serve and represent shine through, with attribution, any academic work that is published or presented.

Findings Part 3. Enacting These Principles: Protocols for Academics to Build More Equitable Research Partnerships

Workshop participants clearly voiced that these principles are not just abstract concepts, but should be put into practice. Bergis Jules suggested that community archivists need a set of protocols to guide the relationship with academic researchers:

Not protocols that just sort of sit there and aren't used, but an actionable set of protocols that can help guide the relationship between community-based archives and academics. The protocols are a set of values that people could see and react to, but [they are also] actionable and something that an archive can activate depending on the kind of project or engagement that an academic might want or that you might pursue with an academic or an institution.

Transforming the principles into actionable items, the following protocols were co-created by workshop participants. Although community-engaged academic work demands flexibility in response to context, these protocols can serve as a way to guide initial and ongoing conversations between academic researchers and community archivists. We hope that academic researchers read and enact these protocols *before* undertaking research with community archivists, and we advocate that they check in on these protocols regularly *while* undertaking such research. Furthermore, community archivists can use these protocols to hold academic researchers accountable to the communities whose archives they are researching.

Protocol 1: Be transparent

Community archivists want academic researchers to be perfectly transparent about their motivations for conducting research and their intentions to commit to community involvement. Academic researchers must be honest about what they hope to accomplish using community archives collections and how they plan to contribute back to the community. Researchers should be upfront about their capacity and willingness to engage in community work, and about the types of contributions they can make, for example, by compensating community archivists' time and labor, reporting findings back to community, sharing credit, providing student research assistantship, etc. Researchers need to acknowledge the power differentials between their academic, institutional context and the community archives context as well as the inherently extractive nature of research and "be real" about the nature of the relationship they will enter into with community.

Protocol 2: Respect community authority, expertise, and timelines

Academic researchers working in the community must remember, in the words of Kat Rodriguez, that they “aren’t the experts and there’s always layers they don’t even know about until they’re invited into those spaces.” Researchers need to respect community authority to say yes or no to a project, and welcome community expertise in co-designing research projects. For example, researchers should work with community archivists to craft research questions and co-design projects. As experts on their collections and members of the communities they serve, community archivists stress the importance of working with them not only to develop and shape researcher-driven questions, but also to reflect on whether researchers are asking what Rodriguez calls the “right question” in the first place.

Co-designing research can help to “change the dynamics” of the relationship between academic researchers and community archivists: as Samip Mallick put it, “knowing that what we value or what is important to us and what would help the work we’re doing is actually important to [researchers] would just feel really different.”

Community timelines, often very different than an academic researchers’ grant timeline, must also be respected. Realistic timelines that respect community needs and expectations need to be established and reviewed as necessary throughout a project. Academic researchers must acknowledge the extra labor their projects invariably cause communities and be respectful of a community’s decisions to prioritize other kinds of work.

Ultimately, academic researchers must recognize the authority of community archivists to decide the terms of engagement and to end or change those terms as required by the communities they serve. As Patrisia Gonzales said, “We are the keepers, we are the authorities of the contract. And the contract can change.”

Protocol 3: Transform consent into an ongoing relational process

Academic researchers need to rethink how, when and how often they obtain consent from community archivists and community members. Recognizing that consent is ongoing and relational, academic researchers should consult with community archivists about who will provide consent and what mechanisms for obtaining consent are most appropriate. Workshop participants noted problems associated with “legalistic” and “othering” consent forms introduced into community by academic researchers; although university ethics boards often assert strict requirement for consent forms, researchers should work to create forms that are clear, transparent and that acknowledge community expertise and agency. The consent form should be viewed as a tool in relationship building.

Academic researchers must also recognize that there can be other layers of consent and agreement required within community, beyond the consent procedures required by a university ethics review board. Kat Rodriguez suggested the need for academic researchers and community archivists to draw up a set of *acuerdos*, or agreements, at the beginning of a project. She described these *acuerdos* as “community agreements” that need to be talked about before research begins and that create mutually agreed upon agreements about “how we’re working on things” including: “how we call each other in,” “how we stop a meeting” when things are not going well, how language is used, how to address changes to research protocols and procedures as needs change, and the right for the community to say no at any time. The development of collaborative and cooperative *acuerdos* respects the need for mutual benefit in research and embraces community expertise and agency; *acuerdos* can provide a roadmap for a relational consent model that moves far beyond seeing consent as a transactional and isolated procedure.

As Rodriguez stressed, “neither of us can make this happen without the other and we want to feel good the whole way.”

Protocol 4: Prioritize community safety

The safety of a vulnerable community is more important than any research objective. If community members express concern about their safety related to any collection, recording, representation, or circulation of information shared by or related to them, researchers must cease research activities and work with community to redesign research protocols that are not harmful to the community; if protocols cannot be redesigned safely, the research project must be terminated.

Discussing and enacting the protocols outlined in this white paper can help to empower community members to speak up and back to researchers. Academic researchers should work to normalize the ability for community members to say what is safe or not by engaging in regular check-ins, really listening, and holding themselves accountable to community feedback.

Protocol 5: Check in and report back regularly and formally

Academic researchers should make a commitment to checking in and reporting back to communities in a regular fashion. Formalized, pre-scheduled check-ins allow researchers and community archivists to continually evaluate the status of the research relationship and to regularly negotiate ongoing consent. Regular reporting back to community can also be a way of ensuring that research data and findings are co-analyzed and discussed by both researchers and archivists.

As part of reporting back, academic researchers should make accessible research documents available to communities. As needed, research documents should be translated into languages used in the community and provided in both digital and paper copies. Kat Rodriguez has found that it has been helpful when researchers have not only made documents accessible but also have had “a little conversation about ways that we could use [the documents] without telling us how to use it.” For example, if there are policy implications that a community archives could leverage, these should be discussed and strategies shared.

Academic researchers can also consider reporting back not only what they have learned about their research subject but also what they have learned directly as a result of their collaboration with community. Rodriguez remembers a meaningful research relationship where academic researchers reported back frequently and “part of it was framed as what we’ve learned from you...it was very much a message to the community that we’ve learned this from you, you’ve taught us.” Part of checking in for academic researchers can include checking in with their own spaces and communities: bring what you learn in community back to these spaces to encourage more reciprocal approaches to research planning and design.

Protocol 6: Give published research and primary sources back to the community

Any findings of a research project that are published should be provided to the community. Academic researchers should make several copies and should have research products translated into languages read and spoken in communities. Primary sources created during the research project can also be of use or hold meaning to community members, and academic researchers should provide copies of these, or in cases where appropriate, originals, to the community at the end of a research project. In addition to sharing copies of publications, public presentations of research to community members can also be an important way to share knowledge back to the

community. Kat Rodriguez characterized research as “the legacy that belongs to the children of the elders you spoke to or the future, maybe their grandchildren one day...[Giving research material back to the community] reinforces or normalizes the language around ownership: I didn’t give these words to you, I spoke them and they still are my words.”

Protocol 7: Give explicit credit

Provide explicit credit to community archives and archivists (and other community members as relevant) in all published and presented work, with their consent. If using archival materials in publications or presentations, provide clear attributions. Ask for permission to cite community archivists and other community members when using their words. Dino Robinson suggests providing a “dual credit” when using oral histories collected by a community archives so that both the archives and the person providing the history are cited.

Before attributing quotes to community archivists and/or members, it is important again to seek consent. As Kat Rodriguez explains, “sometimes we want to be seen and sometimes we don’t want to be seen, depending on the space.” Sometimes, community archivists in conversation with academic researchers may be quoting other community members and attributing the quote to the community archivist would be disrespectful to the original speaker.

Consider options for co-authorship with community archivists and/or members when co-authorship is in the best interest of the community; be aware that community archivists may not benefit from authorship credit in the same way as academic researchers, that co-authorship can mean more labor for community archivists, and that in some cases, co-authorship can be un-safe, for example when communities are under government or other surveillance.

Protocol 8: Acknowledge labor through compensation for community archivists and activists

Asking permission to quote and providing explicit citation is not the only—or a sufficient—way of recognizing community contributions to research. As Kat Rodriguez pointed out, academic research “creates emotional and physical and psychological and moral labor” for community archivists and their organizations. Community archives have a right to ask and expect compensation for this labor, and academic researchers should normalize such compensation.

Dino Robinson explained that Shorefront Legacy Center will not work with an institution or researcher who does not share resources from a grant that makes use of Shorefront’s collections or knowledge: he wants to see “if we’re a line in their granting process. Not by name, but also an actual dollar to it.” Robinson reiterates that community archives deserve a share in the grants from which researchers are gaining “accolades” and should be compensated for their contributions to a researcher’s project; at Shorefront, the money that comes in through researcher compensation is applied directly to programming. Academic researchers can also compensate community archives through what Samip Mallick calls “in-kind donations,” where academic researchers provide interns paid out of their own funds, keep community archives materials on their servers, perform archival tasks like description and digitization; and offer other types of material infrastructure and support. Importantly, this type of arrangement must serve the needs of the community and not create more labor (for example, training student interns can produce more work than benefit for community archives.) In discussion, participants also suggested how this type of in-kind contribution can further entrench power differentials, with the university and researcher holding community resources; in-kind contributions might “serve a purpose for a short term,” but may not be beneficial to communities in the long term. In this light, in-kind contributions should be explicitly driven by the needs of the community archives.

Sources of financial compensation include but are not limited to passing on speaker fees to community archives and sharing or passing on book royalties. Ultimately, academic researchers must expect to compensate community archives, be prepared to negotiate the terms of compensation, and to acknowledge the community archives' authority in determining what arrangements are truly compensatory.

Protocol 9: Bring resources back to community archives

In addition to acknowledging and compensating community labor that contributes directly to a research project, academic researchers can work to support community archives beyond the scope of a project. As Samip Mallick explains:

...there are these bureaucratic structures in place at academic institutions, as well as lots of resources that can actually be activated for the kinds of work that we do, and academics are in a position to help navigate some of that stuff. Often those of us who are outside of those institutions don't even know how to advocate for ourselves, how to make the case for something. And so I think that that could be a powerful way that academics could support, is trying to figure out what resources are there within these institutions and then trying to figure out how they can be moved in this direction.

Researchers can work with community archives to translate their research findings into grant proposals to secure funding for the archives and into marketing materials that publicize the archives.

Another way academic researchers can help bring resources to community archives is to advocate for structural change within funding agencies to help them to design better grant opportunities; for example, many grants require organizations to own the materials they receive funds to work with, but "community archives often don't take ownership over anything." That is, as Gabriel Solis points out, "community archives 101," but can immediately disqualify community archives from receiving funds. Academic researchers can advocate to funding agencies on behalf of community archives for more realistic funding criteria.

Protocol 10: Get involved in the work of community archives

When possible, academic researchers should try to "put aside the career benefits" and think about "what work is meaningful for them and ways to be involved" with the real work of a community archives. Samip Mallick suggests that what "academics actually derive from the relationship with community-based memory work" is "not only about scholarship, [but] also about being able to be part of something that's really meaningful and making change."

Some ways academics can get involved in community archives include: serving on a community archives board of directors; contributing to the work of the community archives through the description of archival materials and other archival work; and fundraising for the archives.

Research should ask themselves if they are expecting what Jane Field calls "transactional reciprocity"; "Are you just doing work with us that isn't directly related to your research in the expectation that it will benefit your research? Or are you getting involved to get involved?" As Kat Rodriguez put it, is an academic researcher "one of those people who show up after the chairs are set up and leave before the floor is cleaned up and the trash is gathered?" Or does an academic researcher show up to support necessary but unglamorous work?

Protocol 11: Take care of your own space first

Before undertaking a community archives research project ask whether you are, or have been, taking care of your own space. Niv Karthikeyan from SAADA suggested that while there might be no way an academic institution can fully repair “decades and decades worth of harms,” there are ways that individual researchers can “try to take care of their own spaces, whether that looks like teaching different guidelines in their classrooms or changing the way that they approach archival or research procedures.” Researchers can teach reciprocal or mutually beneficial research values and methods, incorporate them into their research design, and advocate for their wider adoption in institutional settings as part of ongoing efforts to create more equitable research relationships.

A formal power analysis is one way for academic researchers to acknowledge the harms caused by their institutions. Bergis Jules discussed the need to conduct open and explicit power audits before organizations with asymmetrical access to power and resources enter into relationships. He described being part of a partnership between a university and a community space that began with an equity analysis as a way to put the university’s values “up front.” He said, “Let’s look at the ways that your institution and their practices either have harmed our space and our community or has the potential to harm our space or our community and let’s start the work there with that conversation. I think people would get the gravity of the work if we [start with] an equity analysis.” Such an analysis can take the form of a series of conversations, a list of questions, a written report, and an actionable agenda for stopping ongoing extraction and repairing historic harm. Participants agreed that we need more examples of this kind of equity audit in archives, suggesting an area for future investigation.

Conclusion

As this white paper has outlined, participants in the workshop described their past experiences working with academic researchers, conceived of ethical principles for engagement between academic researchers and community archives, and proposed a set of actionable protocols to guide this engagement moving forward. Although workshop participants revealed some major pain points in which they felt their labor and expertise had been extracted or exploited by academic researchers, there was consensus that these relationships *could* be improved with care, trust, commitment, time, resources and power shifts. Some questioned the possibility of truly reciprocal relationships in an inequitable world, preferring instead to conceive of “mutually beneficial” relationships in the face of significant power gaps between the academy and community archives. Such mutually beneficial relationships will take sustained effort, communication, courage, and time on the part of academic researchers.

The workshop highlighted the inequities of scholarly research solely *about* community archives, rather than doing research *with, alongside, and for* community archives and the minoritized communities they serve and represent. In listening to community members, enacting protocols, and holding ourselves and each other accountable, community-engaged scholars of archival studies can do work that truly serves the needs of community archives. By shifting modes of doing community-engaged research in archival studies, we can prevent further extraction and exploitation, instead conceptualizing and enacting mutually beneficial partnerships moving forward.

In her past experiences working with academics, Kat Rodriguez described feeling “like a little brown cake topper... [who] had no say in the cake, or the batter.” The description, principles, and protocols presented in this white paper aim to overhaul the whole process of how

we “bake the cake”: the recipe, the timing, the ingredients, the techniques, and most importantly, who gets to eat. Let’s bake—and share—a more nourishing cake together.