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QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DATA MANAGEMENT AND ARCHIVING

LISA CLIGGETT

CHAIR & PROFESSOR

DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY, UK

- Gwembe Tonga Research Project

  https://anthropology.as.uky.edu/cligget/gwembe-tonga-research-project

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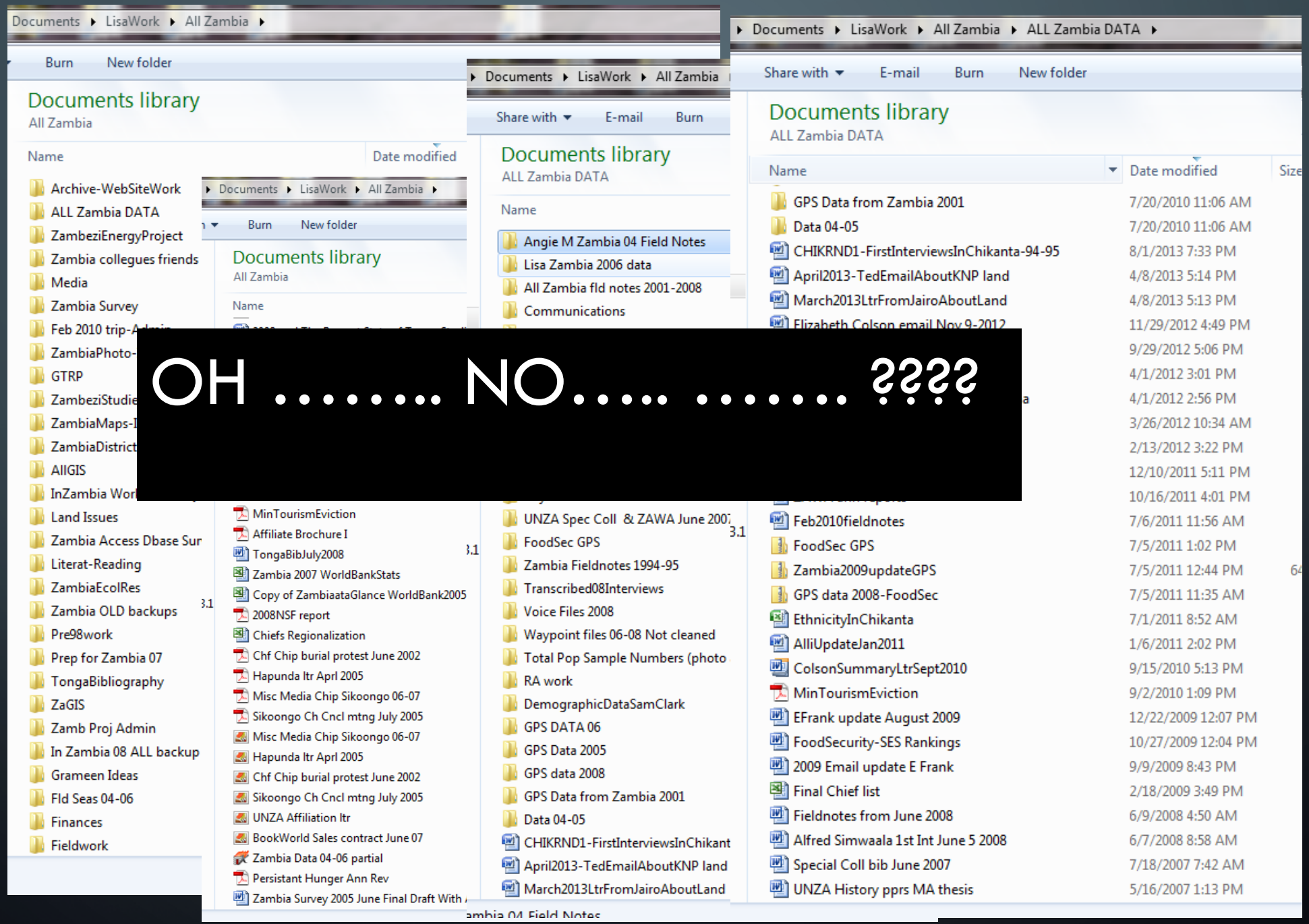
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OH ……. NO…… ……. ????

WHAT IS QUALITATIVE DATA?

- It is ALWAYS a mix….. and can include (not an exhaustive list):
  - Narrative and other forms of text
  - recorded media (voice and video)
  - still images
  - maps (from variety of software, and even hand drawn!)
  - “systematic data” in tabular form (spread sheets): household demographics, economic data, etc
  - Text / media produced by others (internet accessed data)
  - More…. (for current generations, increasingly data collected from social media…)

SOME OF THE CHALLENGES (BARRIERS?) FOR QUALITATIVE DATA MANAGEMENT:

- The researcher herself / himself:
  - Proprietary sense of data (it's mine, and no one else can understand it, or should see it)
  - Often wonder why manage / preserve beyond immediate need
    - The dissertation, book, articles will get done, THAT's the real product (we don't have the same replicability expectations as STEM research)
- Challenges of sufficient anonymity / confidentiality
- IRB and policies regulating human subjects research
- The sheer quantity (of text especially) – difficult to systematize
  - equates to a time issue

STRATEGIES TO GET BEYOND BARRIERS:
WORK THROUGH THE WHY QUESTION

- New Policies / Mandates
  - NSF / NIH…
- Horrors of data loss (stories of woe…)
  - Hard copy losses
  - Digital loss (crashes, obsolescence …)
- For data collector's OWN use
- For data sharing, (if scholars are willing)…
  - IMPORTANTLY: increasingly, study communities want (sometimes demand) access to data
  - Legacy of knowledge! (for project, discipline, "science", history of science….
  - NSF and NIH mandate data sharing NOW

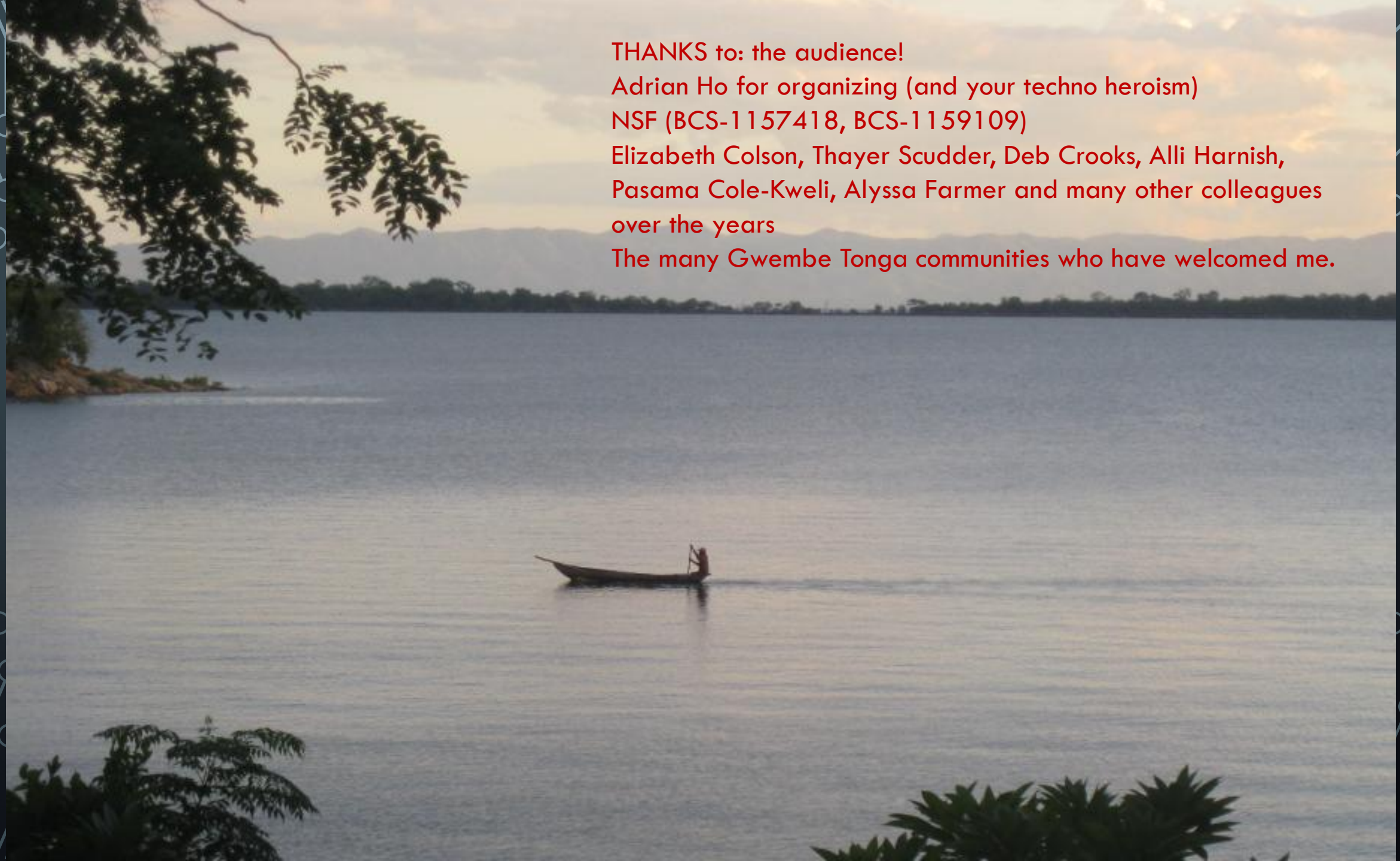
STRATEGIES TO GET BEYOND BARRIERS:
WORK THROUGH THE CONFIDENTIALITY, ETHICS, PROTECTION OF STUDY COMMUNITIES ISSUES….

- Archives / Repositories allow restricted access
- Anonymize data?
  - How do we maintain (ethnographic) context and data linkage over time????
  - The IRB paradox…..
    - MUST anonymize / must destroy after completing project
    - How does this work for longitudinal QUALITATIVE data? (ie: qualitative PANEL data)
      - People linked over time, and across data sets
    - Example: How does a new scholar find descendants in the living population, if the data is completely anonymized?
- We need discussions with IRB about preserving / re-using qualitative data.
  - A new strategy of informed consent

STRATEGIES TO GET BEYOND BARRIERS:
WORK THROUGH THE QUANTITY / MANAGEMENT / TIME ISSUE

The answers here are both structural and technical:

- Structural
  - Qualitative Researchers must include time in research for data management and preservation
    - agencies / departments / supervisors must allow / support / recognize these activities
  - T&P / Progress reviews must reward that work.
    - One way to have data sets / data archives "count": list them as research products
    - Ideally, cite data sets in publications (as we cite other research products).
    - Encourage re-use
- Technical
  - All the 'how to" questions…
  - Which leads directly to the next panelists' discussion!



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Adrian Ho for organizing (and your techno heroism)
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Elizabeth Colson, Thayer Scudder, Deb Crooks, Alli Harnish, Pasama Cole-Kweli, Alyssa Farmer and many other colleagues over the years
The many Gwembe Tonga communities who have welcomed me.