

Archivos digitales críticos

Hannah Alpert-Abrams
University of Texas at Austin
@hralperta

Critical Digital Archives

Hannah Alpert-Abrams
University of Texas at Austin
@hralperta



Thanks to:

Tyler Feezell

Sean Moxley-Kelly

Mari Ocando



Thanks to: all of you for joining me today
to think about digital practices for critical
archives.



Or maybe, to think critically about digital
archives.



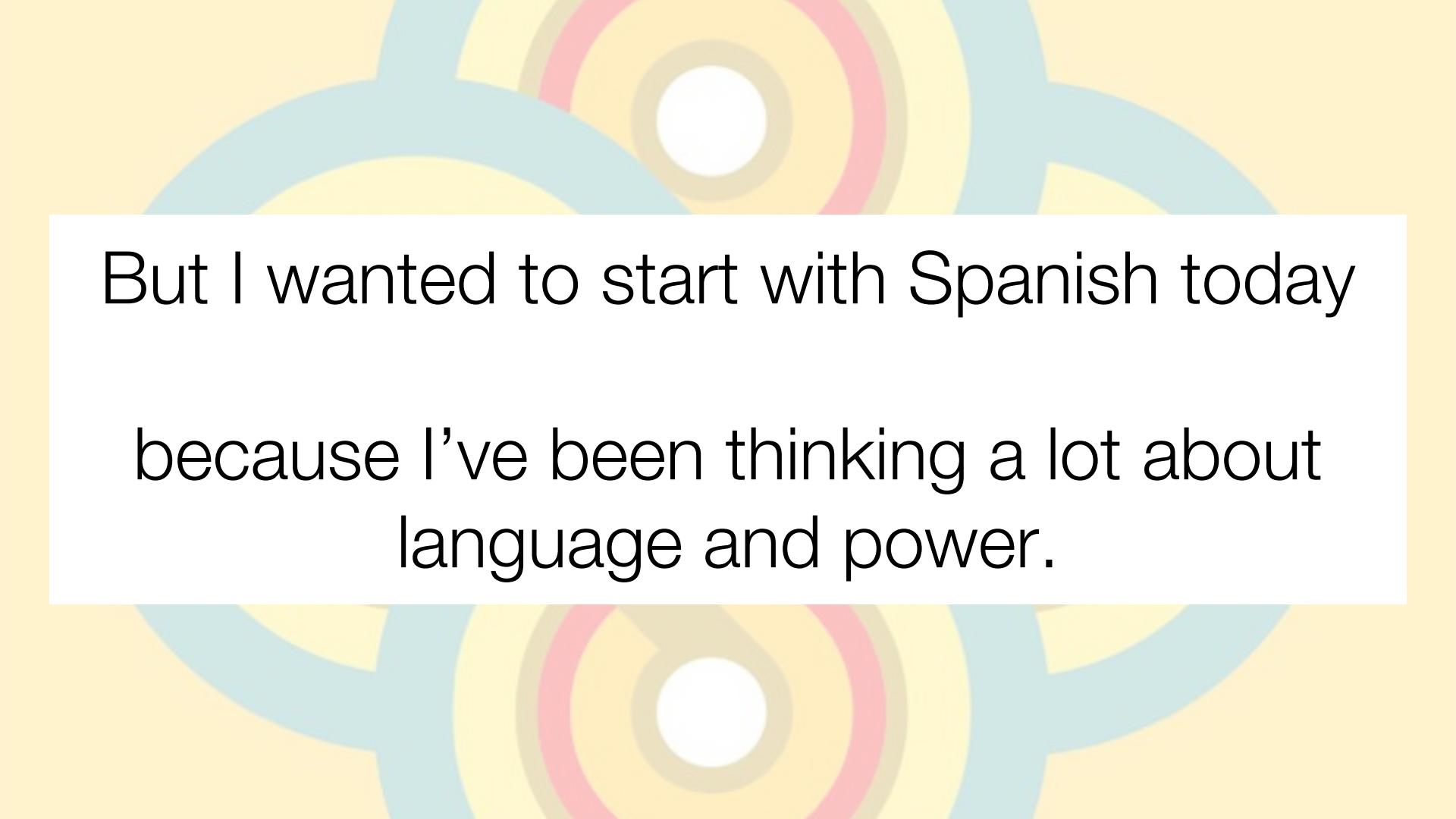
My talk today will not be in Spanish.



I don't speak Spanish regularly, and even less in a public forum like this.



I'm actually really nervous right now.



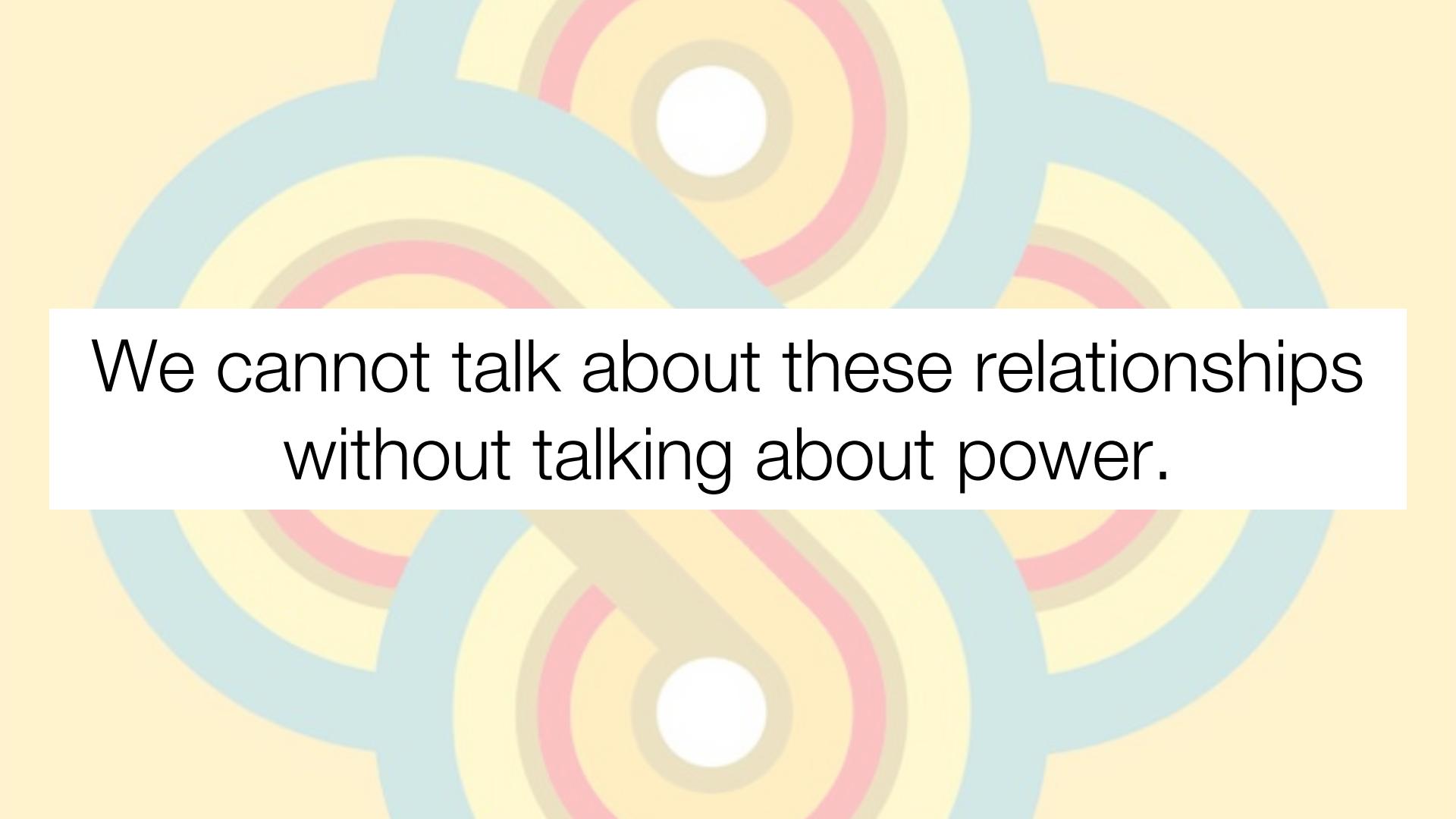
But I wanted to start with Spanish today

because I've been thinking a lot about
language and power.

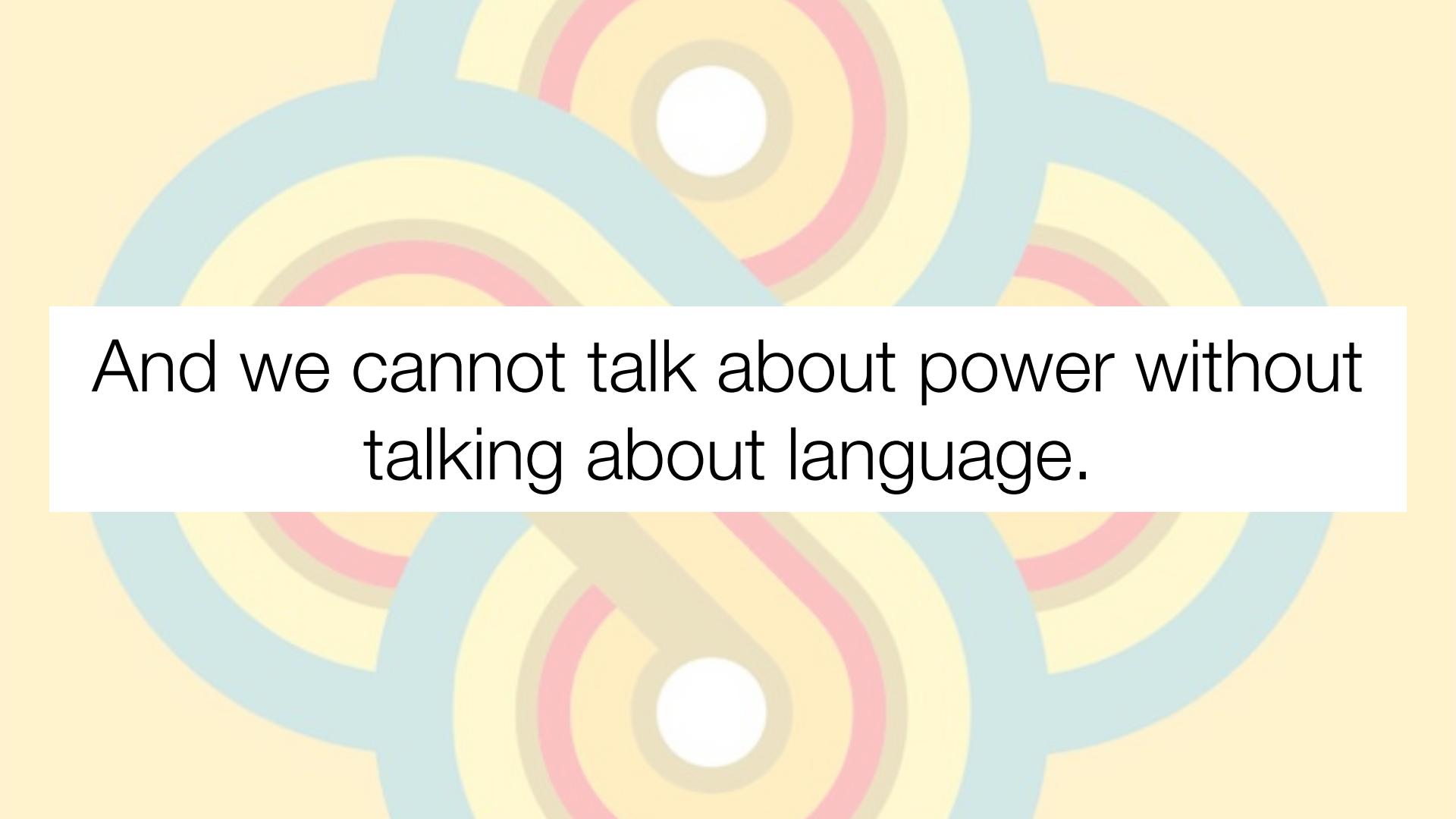


Today I will be talking about relationships
between archives that are based in Latin
America

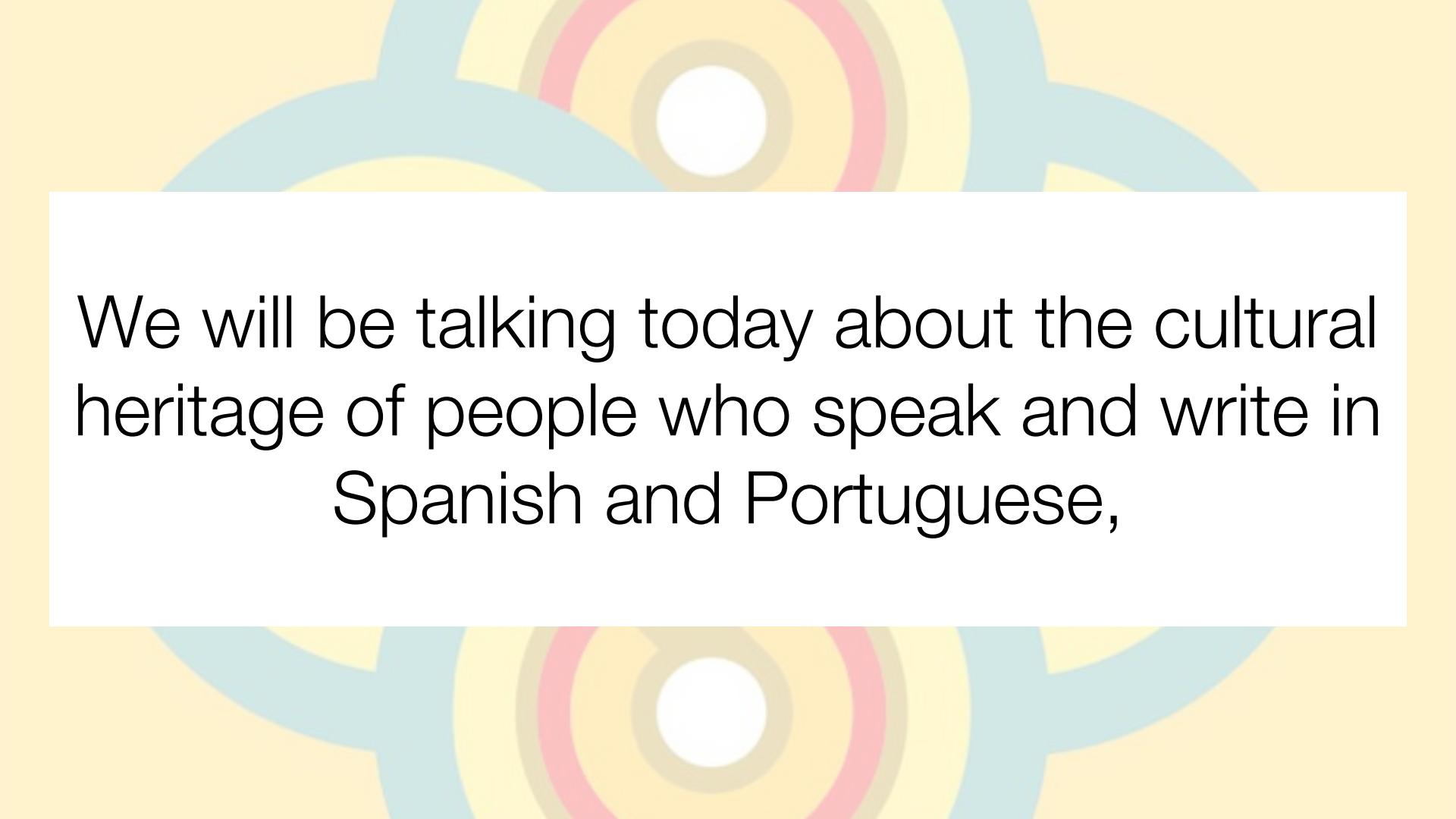
and libraries located in the United States.



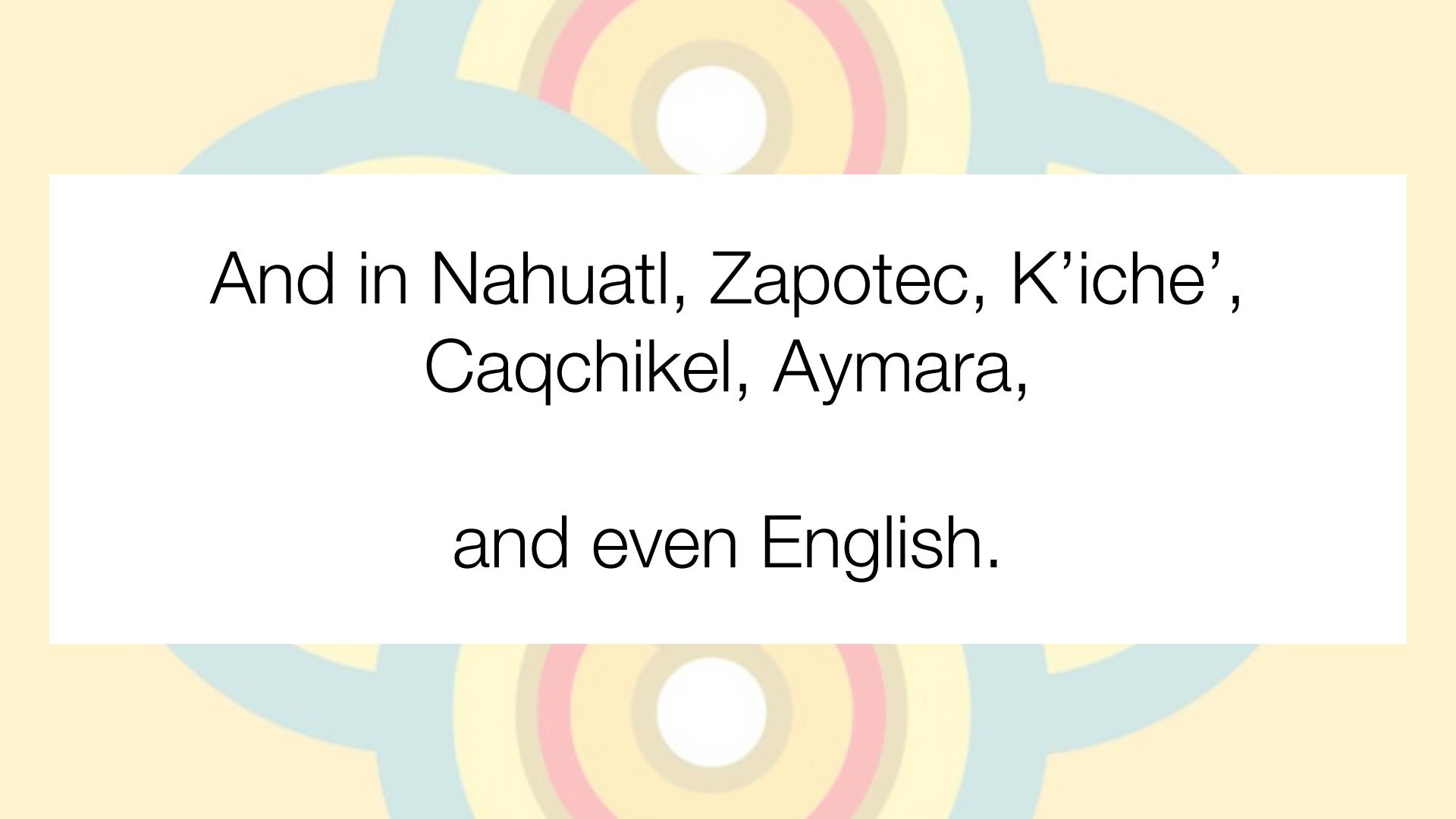
We cannot talk about these relationships without talking about power.



And we cannot talk about power without talking about language.



We will be talking today about the cultural heritage of people who speak and write in Spanish and Portuguese,



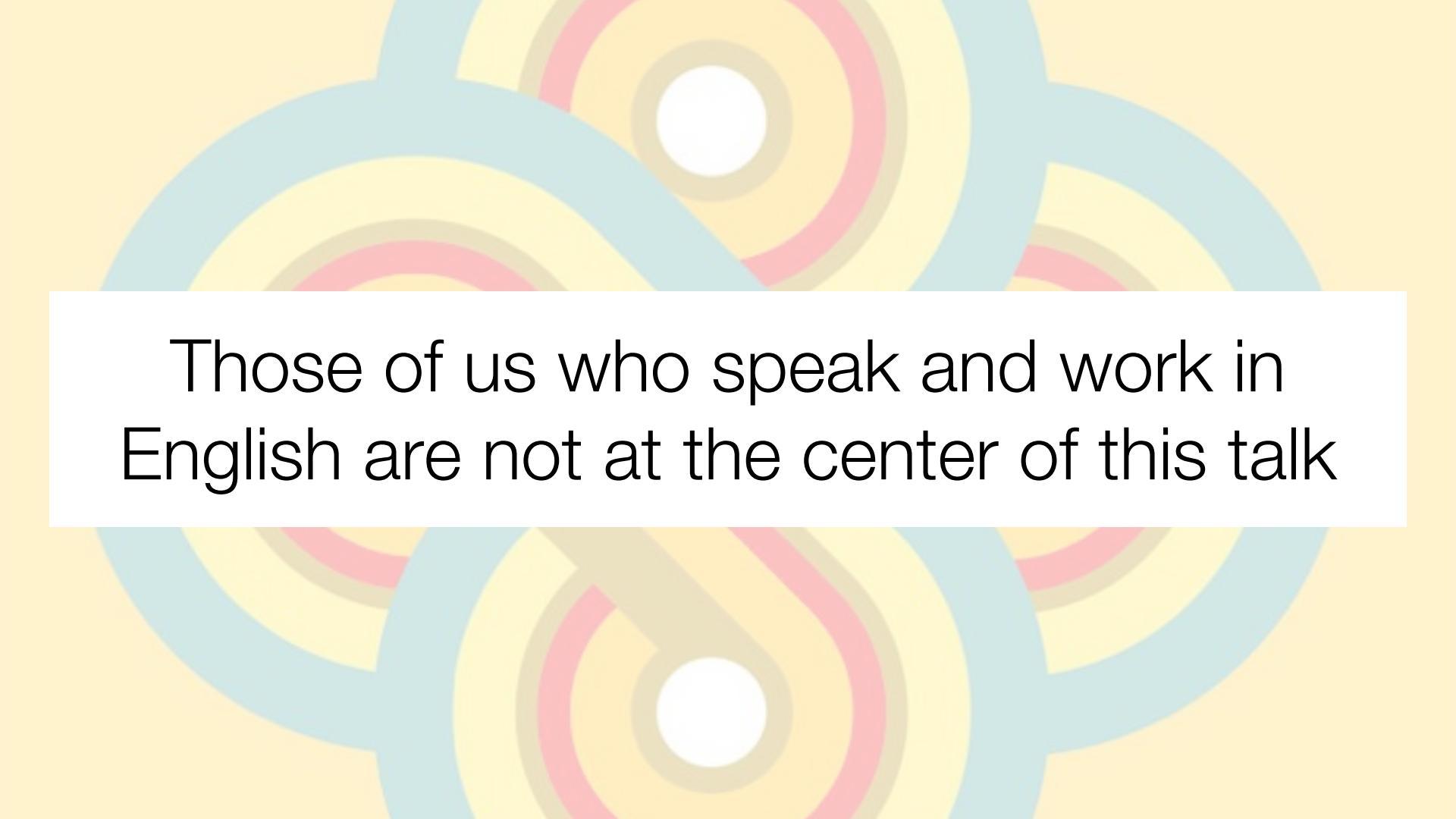
And in Nahuatl, Zapotec, K'iche',
Caqchikel, Aymara,

and even English.

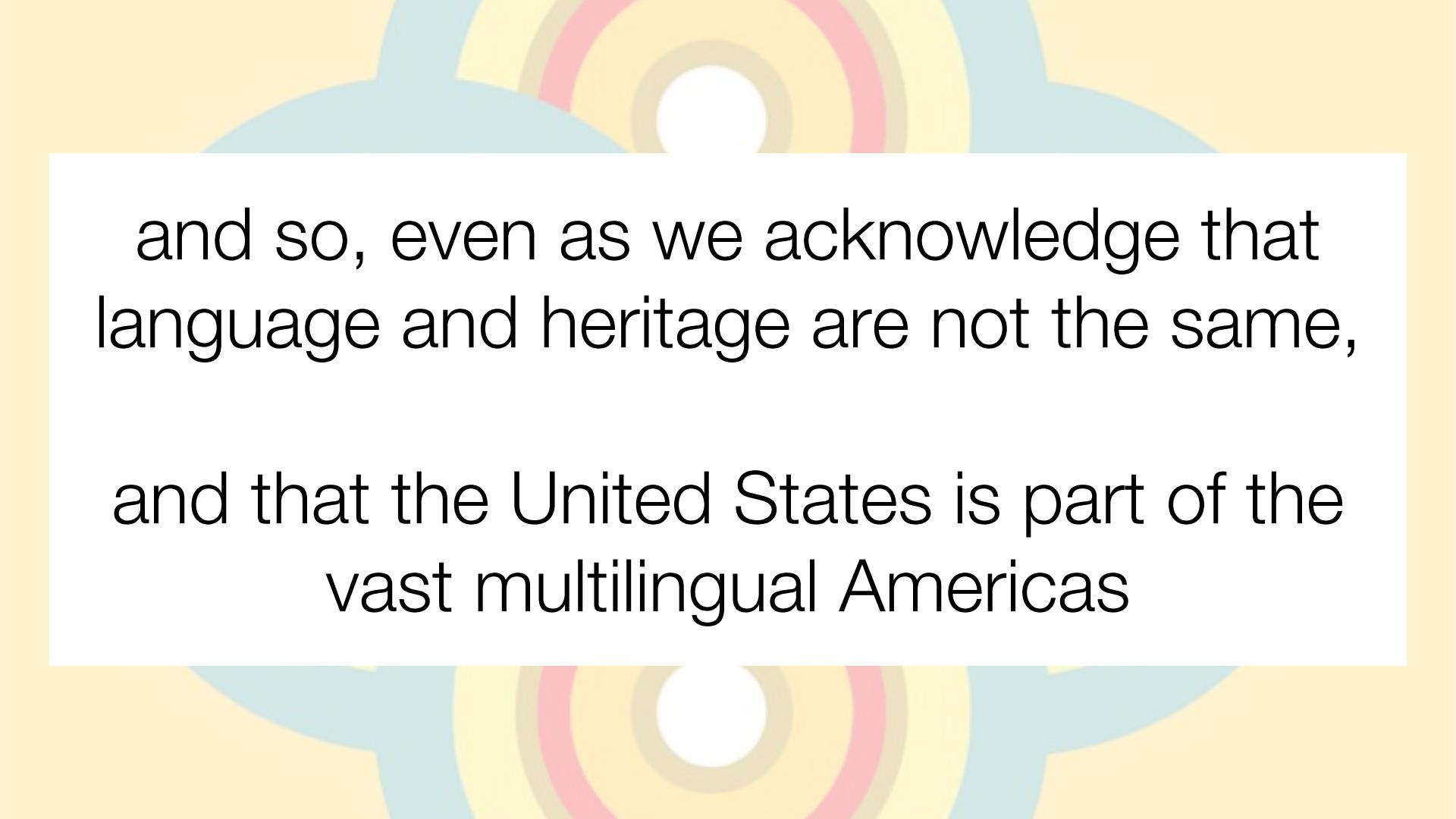
English is present in these archives, but it
is not at the center of the documents they
contain,

the histories they preserve,

or the lives of the people affiliated with
them today.



Those of us who speak and work in English are not at the center of this talk

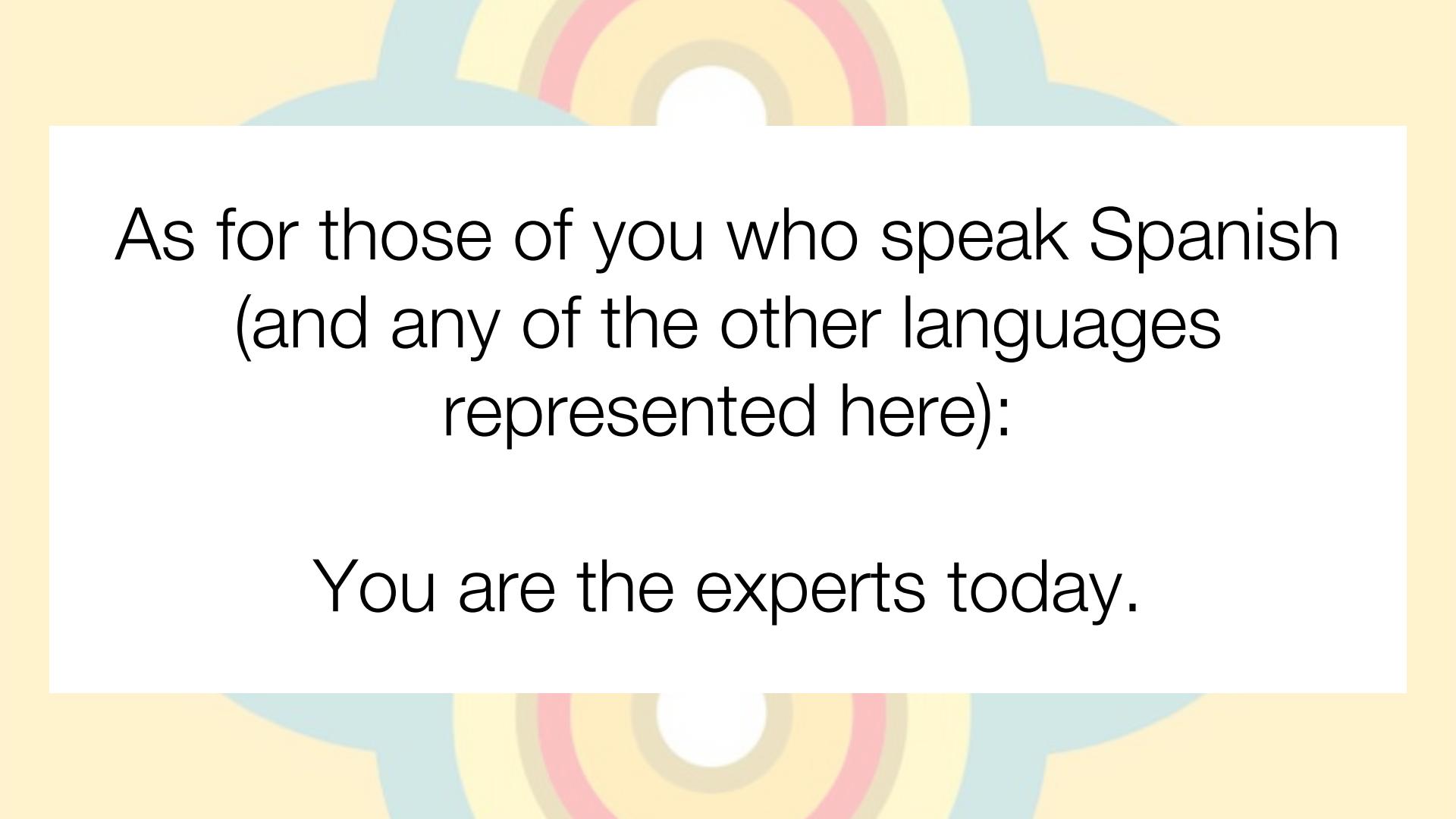


and so, even as we acknowledge that language and heritage are not the same, and that the United States is part of the vast multilingual Americas



I think that, for those of us who are most comfortable working in English,

it can be useful for us to begin from a place of discomfort and uncertainty.



As for those of you who speak Spanish
(and any of the other languages
represented here):

You are the experts today.

Critical Digital Archives



Archive: a collection of historically or culturally important objects.



Critical Archive:
A vulnerable archive in urgent need of
preservation or dissemination.

Archives of critical importance



Munduruku headpiece from the Brazil National Museum.
[https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/04/science/brazil-museu
m-fire.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/04/science/brazil-museum-fire.html)

Archives of critical importance

A linguistic map of Brazil by Curt Nimuendajú
<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/13/world/americas/brazil-museum-fire-indigenous.html>

Archives in critical condition

FRENTE DE ACCIÓN POPULAR UNIFICADO -F.A.P.U.-

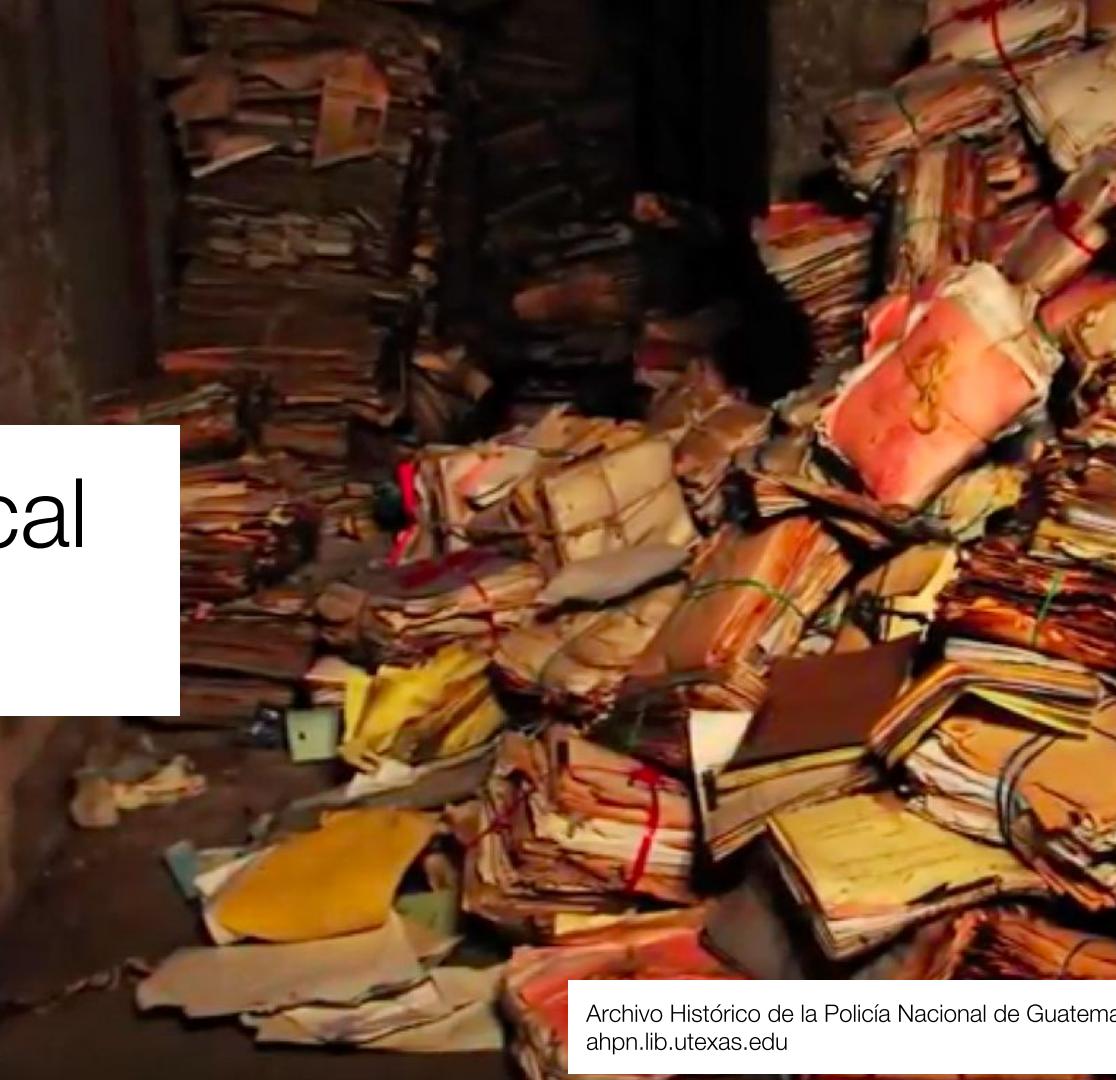


El pueblo avanza hacia su definitiva independencia

Latin American Documentation Initiative

<http://ladi.lib.utexas.edu/en/islandora/object/mupi%3A3947>

Archives in critical condition



Archivo Histórico de la Policía Nacional de Guatemala
ahpn.lib.utexas.edu

Archives in critical condition



Radio Venceremos
http://av.lib.utexas.edu/index.php?title=Category:Radio_Venceremos

A photograph of a large, multi-story building, likely a museum or library, engulfed in intense orange and yellow flames. The fire is visible from the roofline down to the ground floor. Thick smoke billows from the burning structure against a dark night sky. In the background, other buildings and streetlights are visible.

Archives in critical
condition

EMILY DREYFUSS CULTURE 09.07.18 10:07 AM

BRAZIL'S MUSEUM FIRE PROVES CULTURAL MEMORY NEEDS A DIGITAL BACKUP

Incêndio no Museu Nacional reforça necessidade de digitalizar acervos

Culture

Students Are Collecting Images to Digitally Preserve Brazil's Museu Nacional After Tragic Fire

Wikipedia Has Received Thousands of Images for Their Archive of Brazil's Museum Fire Losses

50% 17:00

ps://mobile.twitter.com 12 :

Thread

Katy Rawdon @lemurchild

People are really out here acting as if digitized cultural heritage collections don't require as much infrastructure, staffing, planning, and funding as physical collections. 😞

2:25 PM · Sep 7, 2018

94 Retweets 379 Likes

Katy Rawdon @lemurchild · Sep 7
Replying to @lemurchild

If an institution wasn't being supported well enough to prevent its actual damn building from burning to the ground, they sure couldn't have managed a sustainable digitization program. If you care about the stuff, FUND CULTURAL HERITAGE

67% 13:56

Tweet

Ondatra iSchoolicus; @libskrat@mast... @LibSkrat

Dear Wired:

wired.com/story/brazil-m... is jawdroppingly misconceived—and I say this as one both knowledgeable about and a fan of digitization and digital preservation.

There ain't enough money in the GALAXY to do this, much less do it well.

See also: that nimrod Daniel Caron.

Brazil's Museum Fire Proves Cultural Memory Needs a Digital Backup wired.com

67% 13:57

Tweet

Jeanine Finn @JFTitone

This is stunningly bad reporting. NO ONE with expertise in preservation of cultural heritage materials and digitization projects (TWO! SEPARATE! THINGS!) was cited here. These experts exist and write and publish extensively. This is so exhausting.

Ondatra iSchoolicus; @libskrat@mastodon.social @libskrat@mastodon.social

Dear Wired:

wired.com/story/brazil-m... is jawdroppingly misconceived—and I say this as one both knowledgeable about and a fan of digitization and digital preservation.

There ain't enough money in the GALAXY to do this, much less do it well.



Critical Digital Archive: A digitized critical archive

often supported by a powerful
collaborator.



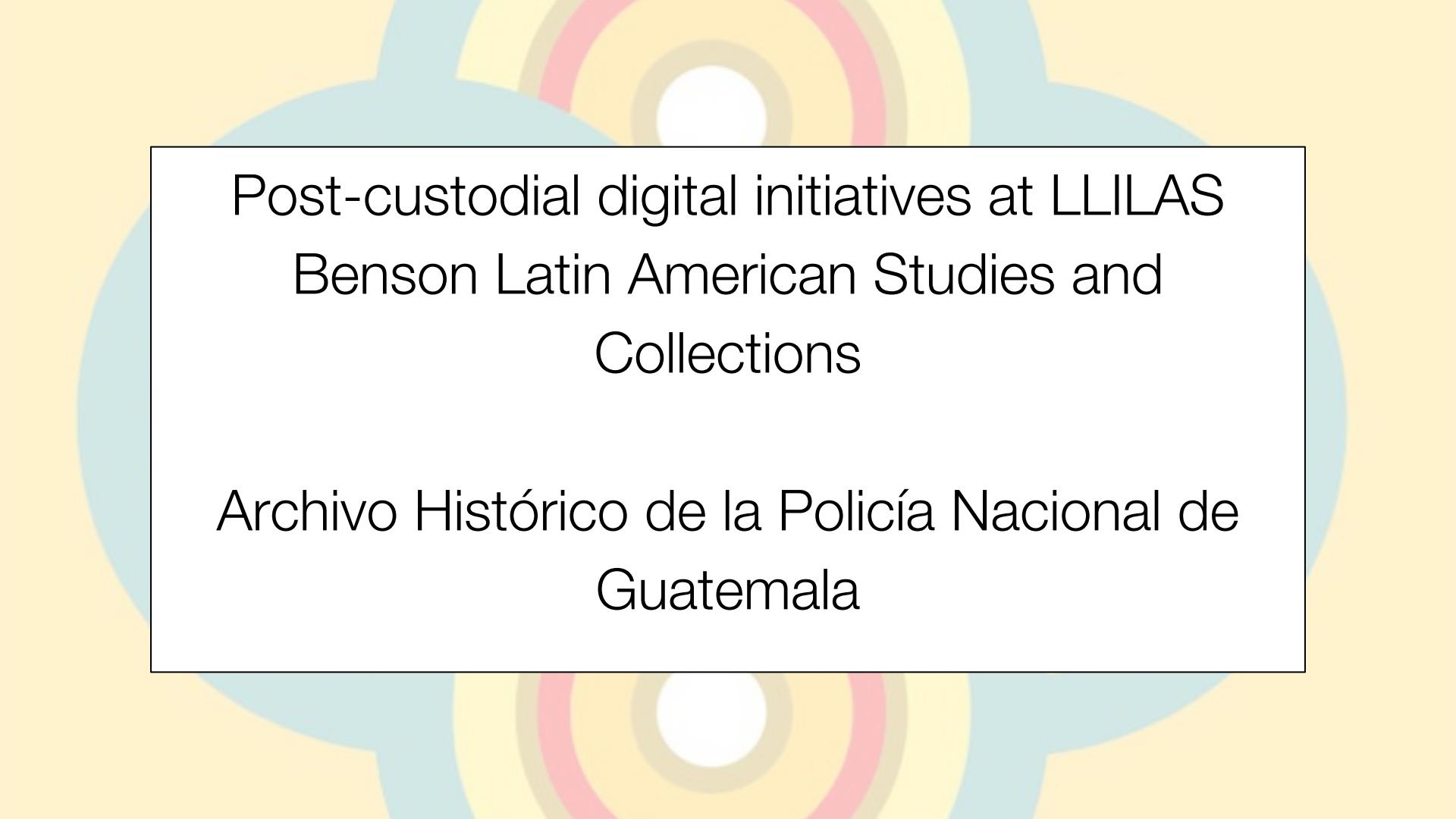
Theresa Polk, David Bliss, Itza Carbajal

T-Kay Sangwand

Kelly McDonough, Virginia Garrard, Tamy Guberek

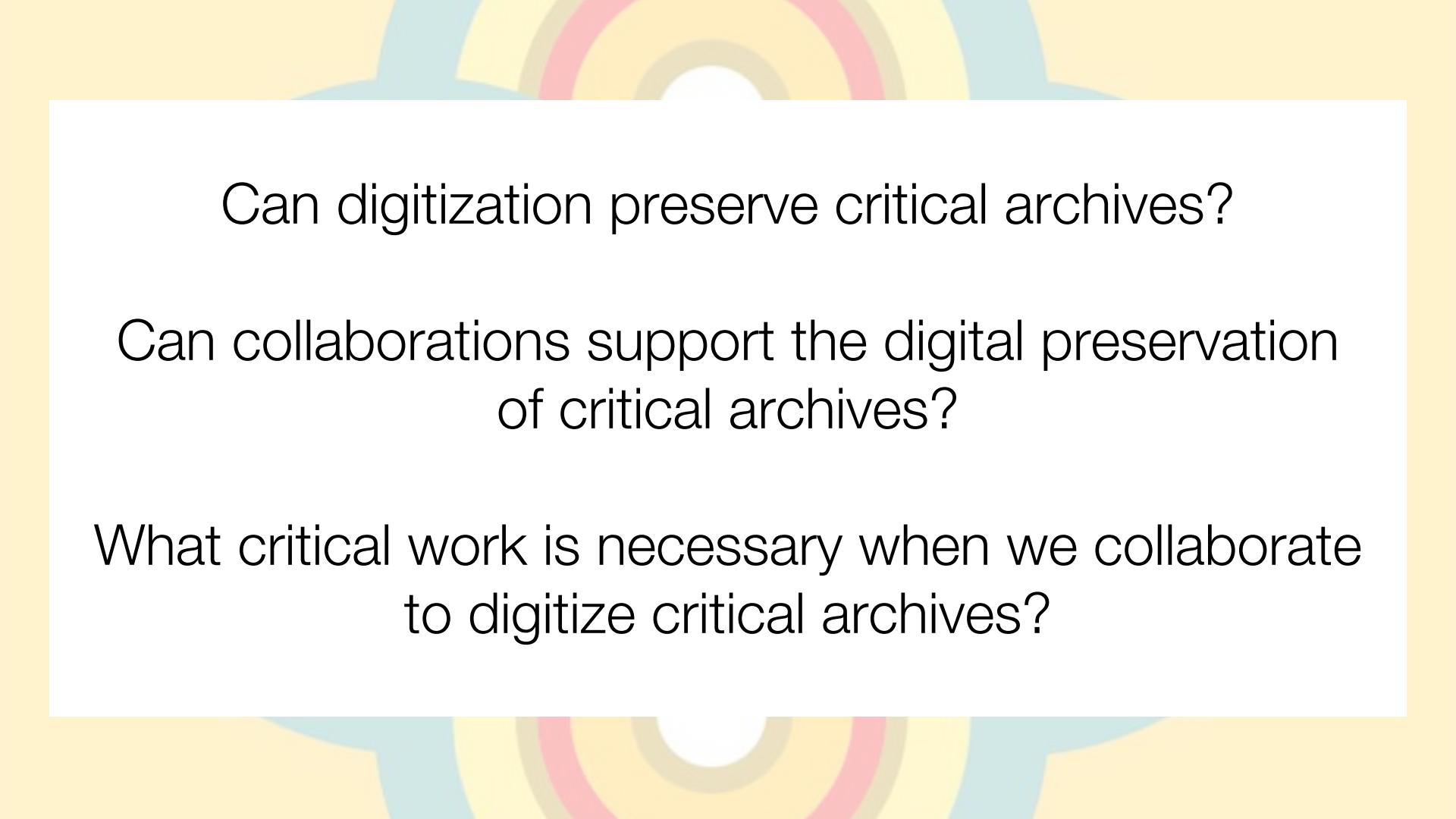
Archives & Social Justice Reading Group

Graduate students of Central American Archives &
Critical Digital Archives Seminars



Post-custodial digital initiatives at LLILAS Benson Latin American Studies and Collections

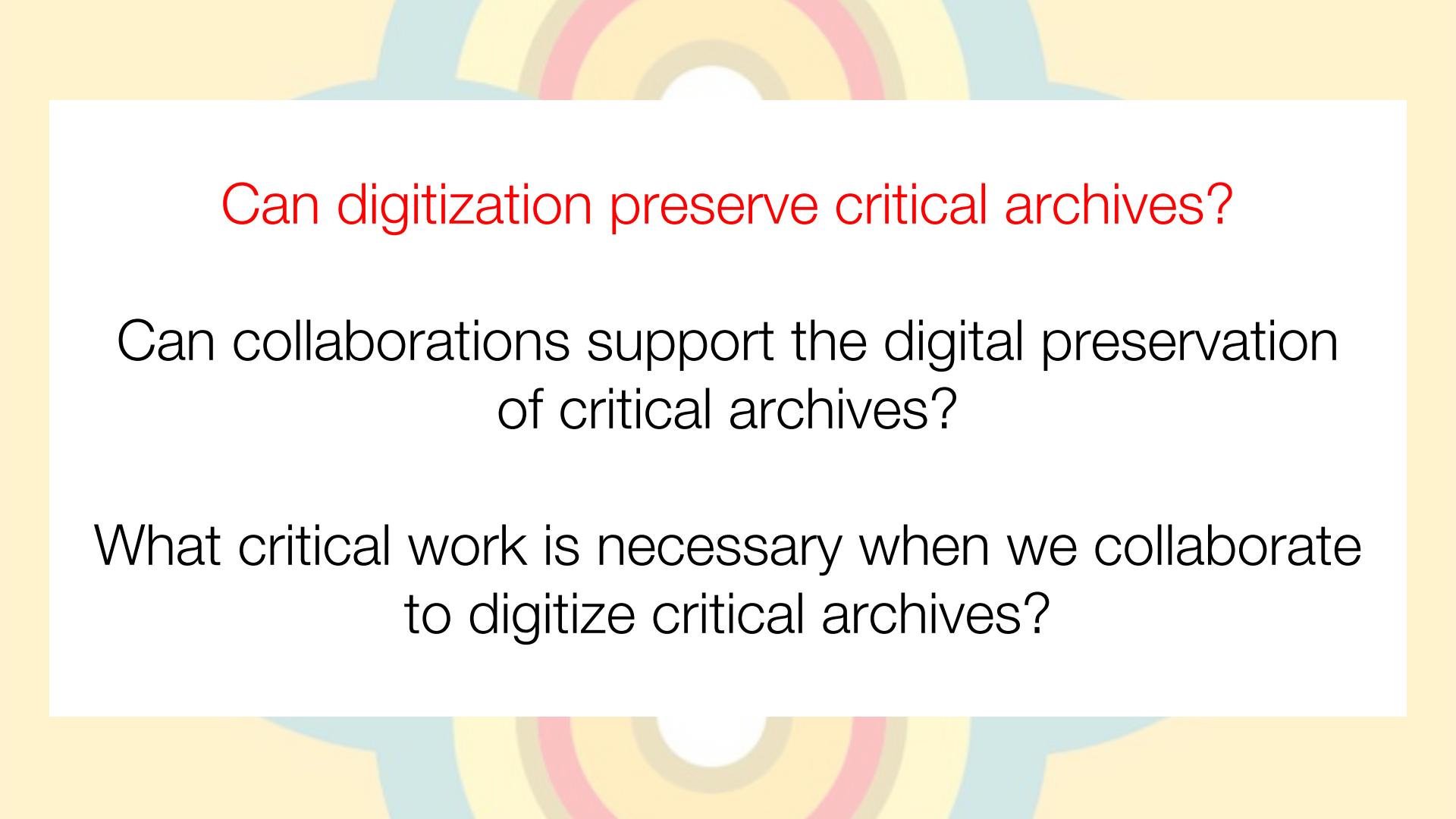
Archivo Histórico de la Policía Nacional de Guatemala



Can digitization preserve critical archives?

Can collaborations support the digital preservation
of critical archives?

What critical work is necessary when we collaborate
to digitize critical archives?



Can digitization preserve critical archives?

Can collaborations support the digital preservation
of critical archives?

What critical work is necessary when we collaborate
to digitize critical archives?

Can digitization preserve critical archives?

Archivo Histórico de la Policía Nacional De Guatemala

Can digitization preserve critical archives?

July, 2005

Guatemala's Human Rights Ombudsman's Office
finds the National Police archives.

Can digitization preserve critical archives?

July, 2005

1882-1996

80 million documents

Armed Internal Conflict: 1960-1996

* Weld, Kirsten. *Paper Cadavers*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2014.

Can digitization preserve critical archives?



Can digitization preserve critical archives?

The most important thing for us was to find proof. Information about what happened to all the "disappeared". This was a way of making the archive a place for the families of the victims above all. By now we even have a database where you can enter the name of your relative and it will tell you whether something has been found about them in the archives.

Lucio Yaxón (Nim Alae)

<http://www.digital-development-debates.org/issue-07-transition--society--interview-the-past-is-not-forgotten-nim-alae.html>

Can digitization preserve critical archives?

January, 2011

11 million documents digitized

Can digitization preserve critical archives?

January, 2011

Presidential elections in Guatemala

(Ex-general Otto Pérez Molina elected
November 2011)

Can digitization preserve critical archives?

January, 2011

Partnership between The University of Texas at
Austin and the Archivo Histórico de la Policía
Nacional de Guatemala (AHPN)

Can digitization preserve critical archives?

January, 2011

- Exchange of technical expertise
- Cooperation in research
- Exchange of digital materials
- Legal and academic networks
- Academic conference

Can digitization preserve critical archives?

December, 2011

Launch of the acervo digital, a digital portal to the
AHPN.

Can digitization preserve critical archives?

December, 2011

The screenshot shows the homepage of the AHPN (Digital Archive of the Guatemalan National Police Historical Archive). The header features the AHPN logo and navigation links for English and Español, Home, Search, Microfilm, Related Resources, Project Partners, About this Site, About AHPN, Latin American Studies & Human Rights at UT, and RECEPTORUSA. Below the header is a search bar with the placeholder "Search for names, dates, keywords or metadata values" and a "Search" button. The main content area displays a list of search results. At the top of the results list is a message: "3643447 found. Drill down to view at document level." The results are categorized by date range:

- Filter by Date**
 - 1870-1879 (539)
 - 1880-1889 (542)
 - 1890-1899 (254)
 - 1900-1909 (17)
 - 1910-1919 (11)
 - 1920-1929 (128)
 - 1930-1939 (520)
 - 1940-1949 (1207)
 - 1950-1959 (1849)
 - 1960-1969 (30911)
 - 1970-1979 (873914)
 - 1980-1989 (1427433)
 - 1990-1997 (116128)
 - Without Date (1309310)
- Filter by Name**
 - À (176035)
 - È (55238)
 - È (148180)

The results are presented in five sections, each with a title and a brief description:

- GT PN (3156459) Documents**
 - 02 ARCHIVOS DEPARTAMENTAL EL PROGRESO (579) [Finding Aid Documents](#)

Los documentos de archivo escaneados en este fondo son libros originales, manuscritos, que registran actividades realizadas por la Jefatura Departamental de *El Progreso*: control de servicios del personal, novedades ocurridas en la Jurisdicción, servicios del aparato de radio FM sobre capturas y otros hechos delictivos, copia de radiogramas. También libros para el control de conocimientos de correspondencia, filiación de reos, rodajes de vehículos en las garitas.
 - 03 ARCHIVOS DEPARTAMENTAL SACATEPEQUEZ (118) [Finding Aid Documents](#)

Los documentos de este Fondo son libros originales, manuscritos, que registran el control de las actividades realizadas en la Jefatura Departamental de Sacatepéquez. Entre otros, novedades, filiación de reos y controles de servicios del personal, capturas, circulares y radiogramas, conocimientos y entrega de vehículos.
 - 04 ARCHIVOS DEPARTAMENTAL CHIMALTENANGO (253) [Finding Aid Documents](#)

Los documentos de archivos son libros originales manuscritos en donde se registran las funciones realizadas por la Policía Nacional en esa jurisdicción.
 - 05 ARCHIVOS DEPARTAMENTAL ESCUINTLA (4) [Finding Aid Documents](#)

Los documentos de archivo que se encuentran en este fondo documental son tres libros originales, manuscritos que registran el control de armas y rodaje de vehículos.

Can digitization preserve critical archives?

September, 2017

The screenshot shows the homepage of the AHPN (Digital Archive of the Guatemalan National Police Historical Archive). The header features the AHPN logo and navigation links for English and Español, Home, Search, Microfilm, Related Resources, Project Partners, About this Site, About AHPN, Latin American Studies & Human Rights at UT, and RECEPTORUSA. A search bar is present with the placeholder "Search for names, dates, keywords or metadata values" and a "Search" button.

On the left, there is a sidebar titled "Filter by Date" containing a list of date ranges with their respective document counts:

- 1870-1879 (539)
- 1880-1889 (542)
- 1890-1899 (254)
- 1900-1909 (17)
- 1910-1919 (11)
- 1920-1929 (128)
- 1930-1939 (520)
- 1940-1949 (1207)
- 1950-1959 (1849)
- 1960-1969 (30911)
- 1970-1979 (873914)
- 1980-1989 (1427433)
- 1990-1997 (116128)
- Without Date (1309310)

Below this is another sidebar titled "Filter by Name" with the following options:

- Δ (176035)
- ▀ (55238)
- ▀ (148180)

The main content area displays search results for the date range 1870-1879, stating "3643447 found. Drill down to view at document level." It lists five categories of documents:

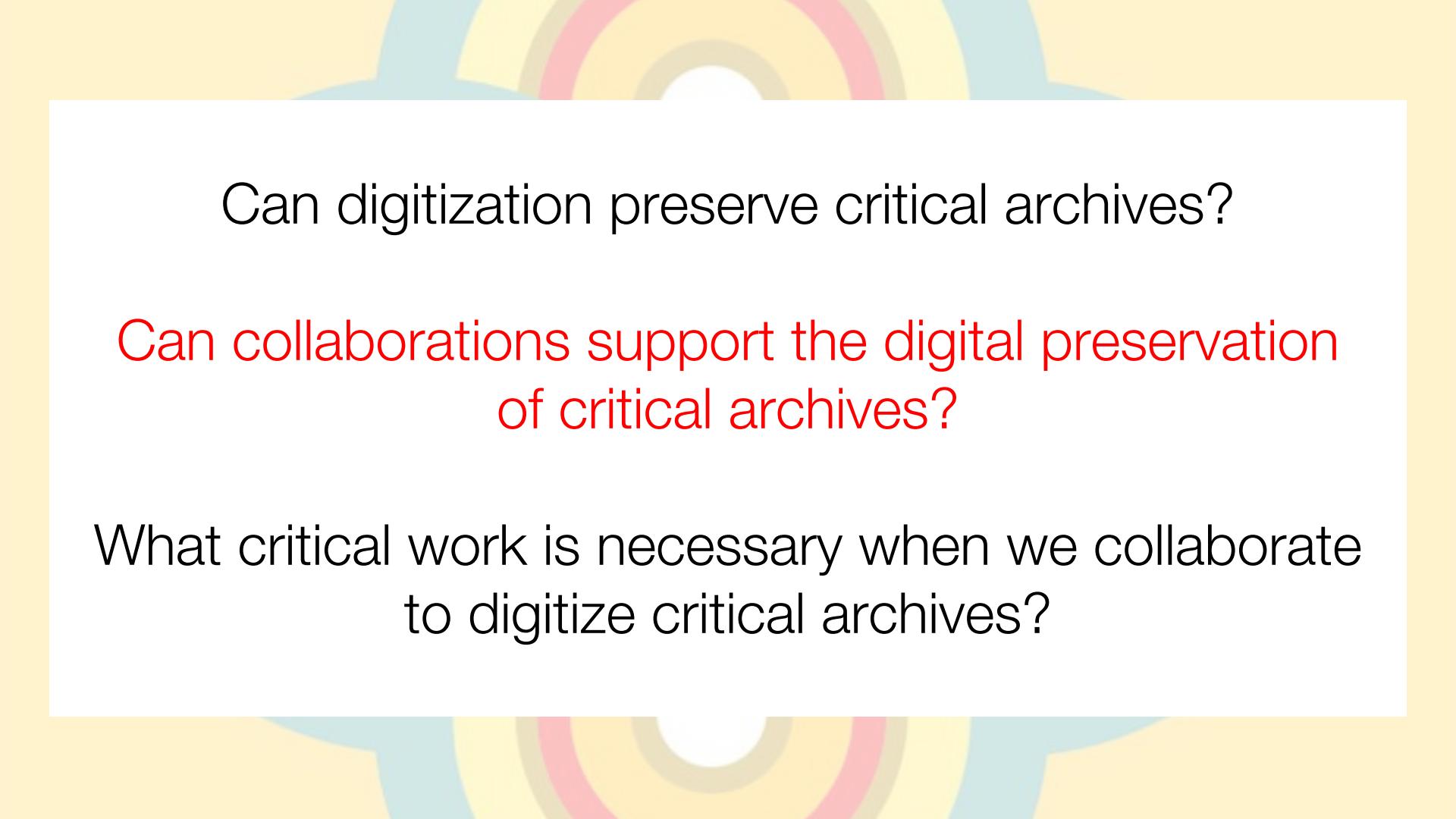
- GT PN (3156459) Documents
 - > 02 ARCHIVOS DEPARTAMENTAL EL PROGRESO (579) [Finding Aid Documents](#)

Los documentos de archivo escaneados en este fondo son libros originales, manuscritos, que registran actividades realizadas por la Jefatura Departamental de *El Progreso*: control de servicios del personal, novedades ocurridas en la Jurisdicción, servicios del aparato de radio FM sobre capturas y otros hechos delictivos, copia de radiogramas. También libros para el control de conocimientos de correspondencia, filiación de reos, rodajes de vehículos en las garitas.
 - > 03 ARCHIVOS DEPARTAMENTAL SACATEPEQUEZ (118) [Finding Aid Documents](#)

Los documentos de este Fondo son libros originales, manuscritos, que registran el control de las actividades realizadas en la Jefatura Departamental de Sacatepéquez. Entre otros, novedades, filiación de reos y controles de servicios del personal, capturas, circulares y radiogramas, conocimientos y entrega de vehículos.
 - > 04 ARCHIVOS DEPARTAMENTAL CHIMALTENANGO (253) [Finding Aid Documents](#)

Los documentos de archivos son libros originales manuscritos en donde se registran las funciones realizadas por la Policía Nacional en esa jurisdicción.
 - > 05 ARCHIVOS DEPARTAMENTAL ESCUINTLA (4) [Finding Aid Documents](#)

Los documentos de archivo que se encuentran en este fondo documental son tres libros originales, manuscritos que registran el control de armas y rodaje de vehículos.



Can digitization preserve critical archives?

Can collaborations support the digital preservation
of critical archives?

What critical work is necessary when we collaborate
to digitize critical archives?

Can collaborations support critical archives?

Gerald Ham (1981):

Who's going to take custody over born-digital materials?

Can collaborations support critical archives?

Gerald Ham (1981):

Who's going to take custody over born-digital materials?

If custody is shared, what can archivists do?

Can collaborations support critical archives?

Jeannette Bastian (2001):

The primary purpose of a post-custodial archivist is to provide access.

Can collaborations support critical archives?

Jeannette Bastian (2002):

The primary purpose of a post-custodial archivist is to provide access.

Access must prioritize marginalized and silenced communities.

Can collaborations support critical archives?

How can digital technology support the long-term preservation of vulnerable records?

Can collaborations support critical archives?

Post-custodial collections

Non-extractive relationships with community
archives.

Partnerships that prioritize community needs.

Can collaborations support critical archives?

Post-custodial collections

Material custodianship: in the hands of the
original owners.

Digital custodianship: in the hands of
institutional partners.

Can collaborations support critical archives?

Case 1:

Digital copies are shared with a more wealthy,
stable, or secure partner.

Can collaborations support critical archives?

Case 1:
The AHPN in Europe

Challenges:
Access
Mechanical Failure

Can collaborations support critical archives?

Case 2:

Digital copies are shared with a more wealthy, stable, or secure partner **who provides online access.**

Can collaborations support critical archives?

Case 2: The AHPN and the University of Texas

Challenges

Long-term preservation

Information control

Can collaborations support critical archives?

Benefits:

International security

Institutional resources

Challenges

Long-term preservation

Information control

Can collaborations support critical archives?

Case 3:

Institutions partner to **share skills and resources** towards the digitization of a collection.

Can collaborations support critical archives?

Case 3:
The Latin American Digital Initiatives project
(LADI)

Can collaborations support critical archives?

Benefits:

Long-term investment in capacity

Mutually beneficial partnership

Challenges

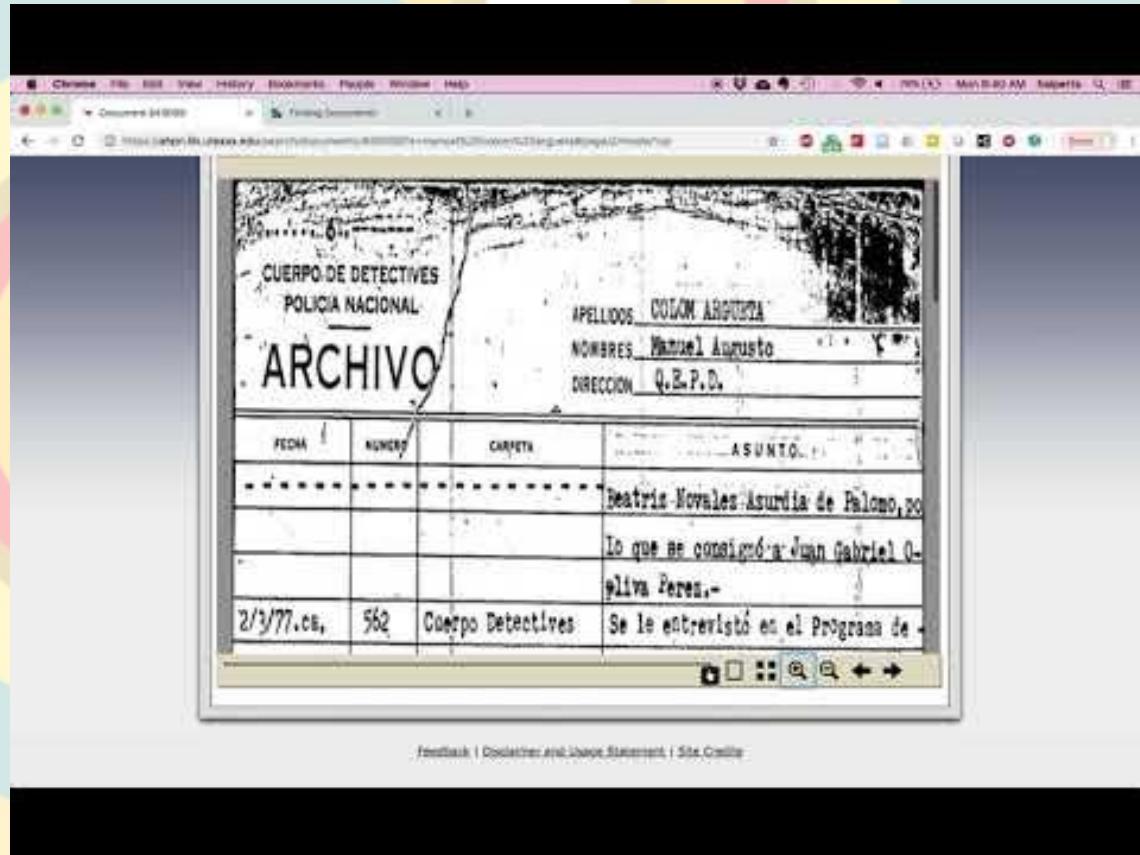
Maintaining equity over time

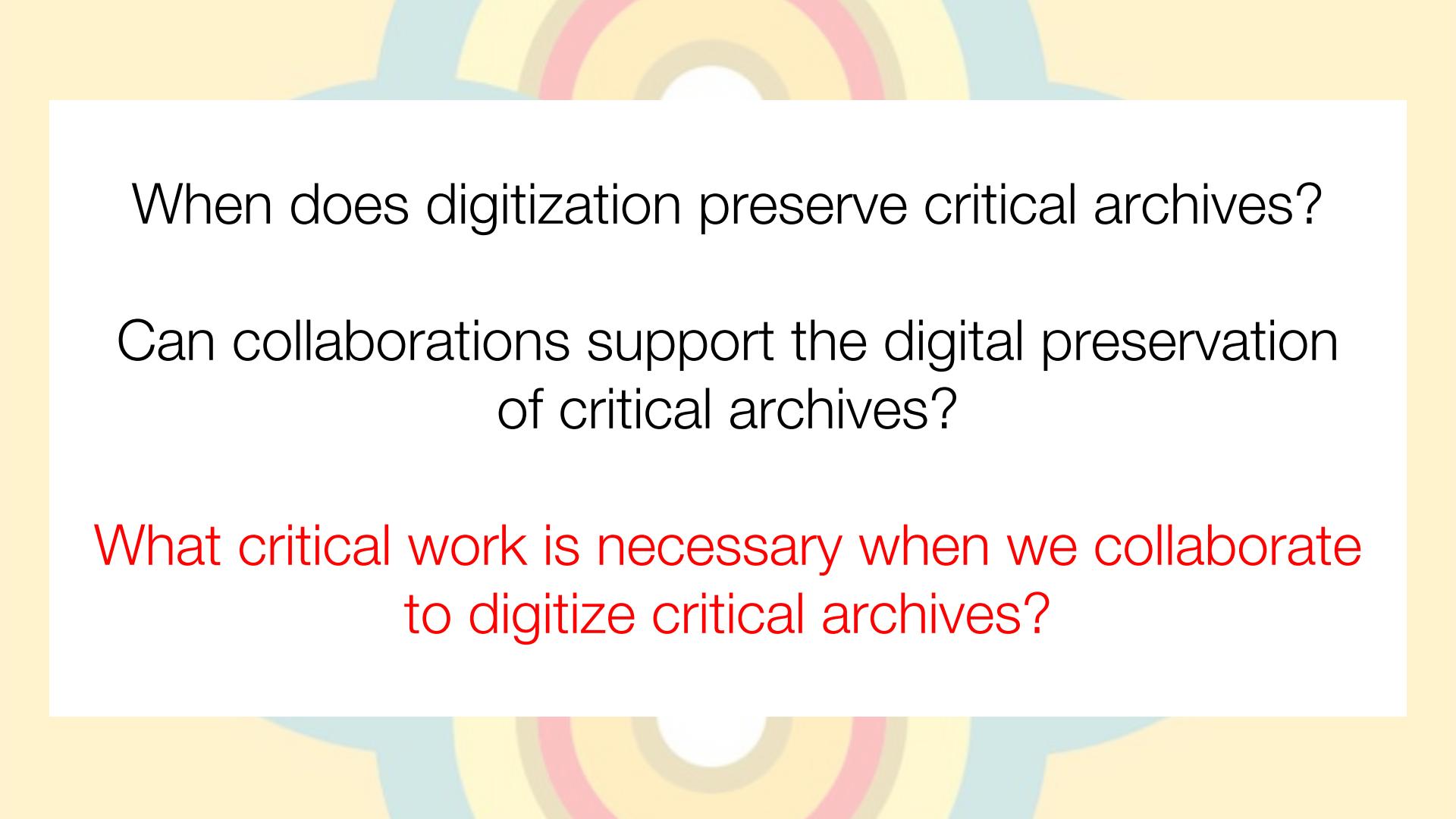
Can collaborations support critical archives?

ahpn.lib.utexas.edu

<http://scalar.usc.edu/works/introduction-to-the-ahpn/>

Can collaborations support critical archives?





When does digitization preserve critical archives?

Can collaborations support the digital preservation
of critical archives?

What critical work is necessary when we collaborate
to digitize critical archives?

Critical archival work

Labor

Contingent Workers

Cultural and Linguistic Knowledge

Critical archival work

Labor

Contingent Workers
Documentation

Cultural and Linguistic Knowledge
Hiring Priorities

Critical archival work

Inequity

Software and Platforms

Accessibility

Accumulation of Resources

Inequity

Software and Platforms

Community Access

Accessibility

Minimal Computing

Accumulation of Resources

Community-Directed Funds

Community of Care

Retraumatization

Transitional Justice

Maintaining Relationships

Community of Care

Retraumatization

Trauma-informed design & pedagogy.

Transitional Justice

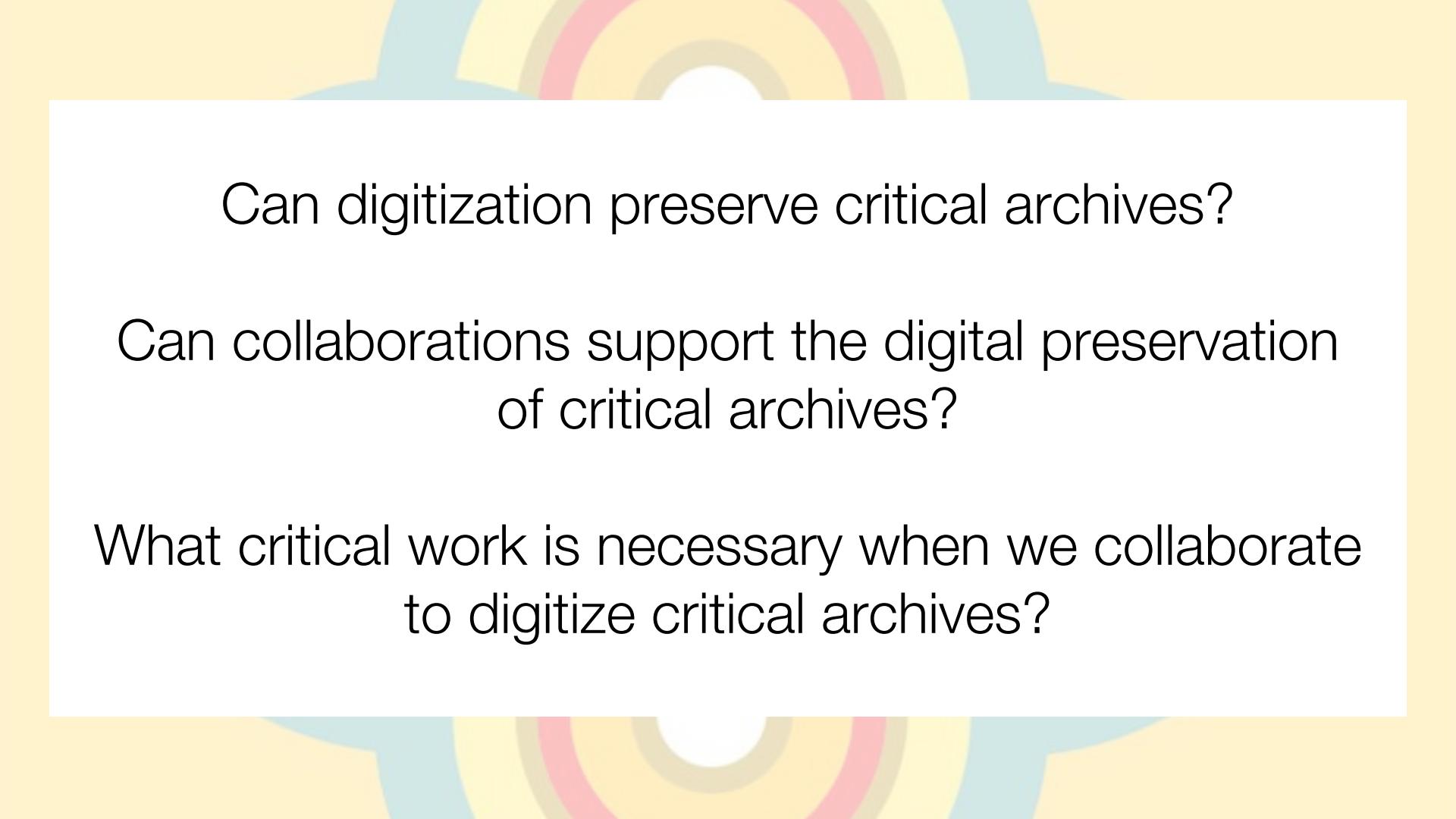
Turning a sense of responsibility into a practice
of hospitality.*

*Harris, Verne. "Antonyms of Our Remembering." *Archival Science*, vol. 14, no. 3–4, Oct. 2014, pp. 215–29

Community of Care

Maintaining Relationships

How do we center relationships in our
long-term data preservation plans?



Can digitization preserve critical archives?

Can collaborations support the digital preservation
of critical archives?

What critical work is necessary when we collaborate
to digitize critical archives?

What is the role of humanists in shaping the future of critical digital archives?