

Documenting Collective Memory

- An Analysis of the New Swedish Process Oriented Archive Description System

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Title

Documenting Collective Memory – An investigation of the new description system in Sweden with organisational processes in focus

Abstract

In recent years we have seen a development within the archival tradition identified by some as a paradigm shift. The signifiers behind this shift are mirrored in the records continuum model - a model that then also reflects a wider socio-political understanding of the development of archival thinking. Hence this thesis intend to describe and analyse the current shift in archival description in Sweden – from allmänna arkivskemat to the implementation of a new description system based on organisational processes – using the records continuum model as its basis.

By framing the thesis from the above perspective archival description becomes a very important tool to support a democratic process. Archival description can through its contextual quality become more or less true to the event, in some cases even entirely false. It is through the many layers of documentary links i.e. metadata that archival description has the potential to minimize the risk of rendering records not true to the event. The documentary links is what marks the record's evidentiary qualities. It is also through this process that the work of the archivist/records manager gets inscribed in the record. Archival description thus is a tool of power and a tool that need to be under constant development.

The change in system of how to describe records within Swedish national government agency archives has to be considered as the starting point to move towards a more coherent view of records that link records to the act and the people having interfered and used them throughout their existence. But it also has to be seen as a beginning to establish new manners, for how to conceptualise our democratic rights, when considering records and their creators i.e. accountability.

The thesis is an attempt to make new paths emerge for future research around the process-oriented description system in Sweden, and open up for questions relating to the improvement of Riksarkivet's guidelines. Bearing in mind it is a theoretical attempt to raise questions and concerns and not an attempt to present practical solutions.

Keywords

ABM; Arkivvetenskap; Arkiv; Processororienterad arkivredovisning; Verksamhetsbaserad arkivredovisning; Processer; Records continuum modellen; Arkiv dokumentation; Archival paradigm shift; ALM, Archival science, Archives, Process-oriented archival description; Processes; Records Continuum Model; Archival documentation; Archival paradigm shift

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Introduction

The archive is first the law of what can be said, the system that governs the appearance of statements as unique events. But the archive is also that which determines that all these things said do not accumulate endlessly in an amorphous mass.

(Foucault 1989, p. 146)

By prefacing this present piece of writing with an epigraph from Foucault's *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, an attempt is made to immediately ground the work in a wider socio-political context where the archive¹ always through selection, organisation and representation limits what can be said, but also simultaneously is that which makes all things said possible to grasp – without the archive all things said become an unstructured mass. The archive and its functions are at once that which restricts and that which makes it possible to retain any sense of trace of an event. Hence the absolute vital need to, in a continuous manner, consider the main archival issues, appraisal and - in this thesis – archival representation. This thesis is a study of current archival theoretical discourse to broaden an understanding of the Swedish process-oriented system in its relation to international influences and then also in its relation to a wider socio-cultural sphere.

¹ It is important to note here that the archive as a concept can refer to many different ideas. The Society of American Archivists makes the following definitions: 1. *Materials created or received by a person, family, or organisation, public or private, in the conduct of their affairs and preserved because of their enduring value contained in the information they contain or as evidence of the functions and responsibilities of their creator, especially those materials maintained using the principle of provenance, original order, and collective control; permanent records.* 2. *The division within an organisation responsible for maintaining the organisation's records of enduring value.* 3. *An organisation that collects the records of individuals, families or other organisations; a collecting archives.* 4. *The professional discipline of administering such collections and organisations.* 5. *The building (or portion thereof) housing archival collections.* 6. *Published collection of scholarly papers, especially as a periodical.* Pearce-Moses, R. (2005). *A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology*. Retrieved from The Society of American Archivists: http://www.archivists.org/glossary/term_details.asp?DefinitionKey=156 den 15 05 2010. But when considering Foucault and his use of the term archive one has to expand these definitions following Wolfgang Ernst, as Foucault is dealing with a notion of the archive that is defined through the systems that determines all things that are possible to be said. Today Ernst argues it is the cybernetics that makes up the ground for the dominant system. Ernst, W. (2008). *Sorlet från Arkiven - Ordning ur Oordning*. Munkedal: Glänta Produktion. Ernst, W. (2008). *Sorlet från Arkiven - Ordning ur Oordning*. Munkedal: Glänta Produktion.

Context from an archival perspective is based on the interrelating relationship between records², but also their organisational and social context, metadata being the carrier of the contextual information. Context is absolutely essential for the understanding of the constant transformation and use of records, a use which also necessarily affect the way the event is understood historically. It then follows that the event and the traces it leaves behind has to be understood not in isolation but rather as a evolving social, cultural and political construct. The record that trace the event, and the way it is used, shapes the understanding of the event as much as the event in itself. In the continuing shaping of history we need not only to look at the isolated event but in the way it has been; organised, used, modified and when in time all these actions has been taken, to gain a wider understanding of the socio-political strata. Take for example a fictive record from the 50s in Sweden showing on a doctor's evaluation and decision to carry out forced sterilisation on a person with mental health problems. In its isolation it says very little of the wider legal, social, and cultural specificity of its time and specific context. But by placing the record in a wider context alongside relating records such as the doctor's ongoing evaluation process and dialogue with for example social services, the police, family members and so forth the record through this wider contextualisation can give evidence of a much bigger picture of its time – legal systems, prejudices, myths and other cultural specificities.

By this example I want to show on the complexity of the issues relating to context in relation to archival practice and the importance to constantly aim towards ways of representing archival material in a manner which can support society and history with a as comprehensive picture as possible of the event. Perhaps this sometimes even may have to involve parallel narratives. I also want to put an emphasise on the importance of notions of evidence in relation to the record and the impossibility of it, but yet at the same time the ethical need for archivists to constantly work towards new more comprehensive models for representation to ensure evidential and collective memory values. Furthermore, there is a need to expand the concept of context. We have to think of context not in the physical sense of the word as we now enter the digital era where physicality is being lost, rather the idea of context has to be thought of as something deriving from archival description. We need to rethink the founding principle of Swedish archival practice – provenance – how are we to think about provenance in an increasingly virtual world that we live in today?

In recent years we have seen archival practice and theory undergo some radical changes, which has been defined as a paradigm shift. The paradigm shift has forced archivists to reconsider the old methods put in place to describe and reassure evidential qualities of the record. Archival description is what archivists engage with when creating contextual links that can provide evidence for future purposes both from a legal and a cultural heritage point of view. Hence I will focus on current

² Throughout the thesis I will use a definition of the record as something other than a document. I will follow Barbara Reed's line of thinking when considering the nature and definition of the record as opposed to the document. (Reed, B. 'Records' in McKemmish, S.; Pigott, M.; Reed, B; Upward, F. *Archives: Recordkeeping in Society*, pp.101-130) Reed distinguishes the record from the document through its transactional nature. The record is always linked with doing something. It is only through viewing a document from a record perspective that we can understand its transactional nature and hence judge whether or not the document can be proved authentic. It is through the transactional nature of a record that we can rely on it.

theoretical archival discourse to discuss burning issues relating to archival description.

The records continuum model, as developed in the Australian context, can in many ways be argued to reflect some of the ideas significant for the archival paradigm shift and the conceptual model will be introduced in a Swedish context to investigate the potential gaps and possibilities with the new process-oriented archival description system, which from January 2009 gradually will replace the over 100 years old system called *allmänna arkivsystemet*. The continuum drawing on postmodern influences from different disciplines such as philosophy, sociology, historiography offers an interdisciplinary approach that open up new ways of understanding archival theory and new ideas for building up a practice.

It is from the perspective presented above that this current piece of writing is grounded and it is from this overarching concern the research questions has been formed. The thesis will on a broader level deal with ideas around collective memory through a focus on archival description or perhaps better archival documentation³. Based on the assumption that archival description necessarily reflects what the society of the time decides can be said and more importantly what cannot be said, the dissertation highlights notions of power in relationship to the archive and memory.⁴ More specifically though the text will localise ideas around a potential paradigm shift within archival theory and the implications this may have had on archival documentation in Sweden to show on its relationship with dominant discourse.

In Sweden there is currently a change taking place formalised through the directives from Riksarkivet of how to represent archival documents within public organisations. Starting beginning of 2009 by 2012 Riksarkivet under the governmental constitution are working on a total transition from *allmänna arkivsystemet* to a process-oriented documentation where the organisational structure is in focus. The old system *allmänna arkivsystemet* was created to suit particular needs of the organisational structure of its time and has been criticised to reflect ideas steeped in a positivist fashion where the function of the archival documentation system can be referred to as a straightjacket for the record. In a similar manner the process-oriented system has been developed to suit the practical needs of organisations of today, but in what way can it be argued to reflect current influences of archival theory and in what way can the system - considering the perspective of the record - be argued to function more dynamically than its predecessor? The main issue that I am interested in discussing is in what way the process-oriented system can be argued to reflect ideas of the paradigm shift as formalised in the conceptual framework of the continuum. This

³ Frank Upward and Sue McKemmish have argued in “Somewhere Beyond Custody” that the word description in a postcustodial tradition means something closer to the word documentation which then also accommodate terms like metadata and recordkeeping systems. Hence I will refer to this definition when using the term description from now on.

⁴ Here I am referring to the constant battle of that which society allows us to remember and that which we keep as our internal memory, as these two not always correspond. Power in this sense is referring to the power that the shaping of our collective memory holds over the power of individual memory, where power is conceptually understood as something exercised in a Foucauldian sense throughout our entire social network. For further discussions on society, archives and power see Eric Ketelaar ‘Recordkeeping and Societal Power’ in McKemmish, S; Pigott, M; Reed, B; Upward, F.; *Archives: Recordkeeping in Society*

study is a critical investigation into the ideas surrounding the process-oriented way of thinking, specifically looking at the formulation of the questions why, when considering the implementation of process-oriented archival documentation.⁵ Furthermore the study is only a beginning and is not attempting to cover a entirety of the field rather it is looking towards defining potential areas for future research to further explore the development of the system.

Research questions

To investigate the issues presented above I have mapped out the following areas of research. They are not distinctly separable but I have chosen to present them in two sections to emphasise my aim.

Firstly a broader theme relating to a wider archival theoretical analysis:

- Based on the area of research that I have extracted as significant for the paradigm shift - The Evidential and Memorial Nature of Records - how are we to understand process-oriented documentation from a continuum analysis?
- In what way can a continuum analysis shed light on further development of the process-oriented way of describing records when considering Riksarkivet's guidelines?

An secondly, a research question relating to a change within the Swedish archival community – a question already in some ways imbedded in the above presented themes:

- In what way – if any - does the Swedish process-oriented archival documentation system reflect a break with the previous dominant discourse as reflected in the documentation system *allmänna arkivskemat*?

Archival Contextual Background

In the last couple of decades postmodern influences has been visible in archival theory and has also slowly worked its way through archival practice. The continuum model and the process-oriented thinking, which will be dealt with further along this piece of writing, can in many ways be argued to reflect these current ideas - hence the necessity to firstly acknowledge some relevant themes that can reflect an archival shift which has become known as the archival paradigm shift in Thomas Kuhn's sense of the word. Kuhn has argued in *De Vetenskapliga Revolutionernas Struktur* (Kuhn 2009) that a paradigm shift occur when anomalies in what he calls normal science build up and pushes the limits of what cannot be included or explained by the previous paradigm shift. In some ways thinking in terms of paradigms makes visible

⁵ Eric Ketelaar when referring to Terry Cook raises this concern in "Archivistics Research Saving the Profession" when stating that the *Dutch Manual* 1898 standardised archival methodology before archival theory could expand. Their early professionalism forced Dutch archivists to ask "what" and "how" rather than "why". This I think is still a concern worth bringing to light when considering academic work of archival theory and practice hence I find the need to establish the premises on which I work for this thesis.

what was possible to express and think in a certain time. Kuhn thereby questions a positivist idea of scientific practice where facts are stable entities and presents a view where research and "facts" produced are a consequence of a particular context as research often is concentrated along the lines of what is defined within the paradigm particularly as this also closely relates to available funding. A paradigm allows for what can be said.

Terry Cook, outlines five themes that I will use as pillars when considering the characteristics of the archival paradigm shift and the shift in archival discourse that also reflects some of the aspects of an era that has become known as the postcustodial tradition.⁶ I have chosen to focus on these five themes as I think they give a useful overview of the context in which to understand the evolving continuum thinking. Firstly, the purpose of archives have shifted from a juridical-administrative justification to a socio-cultural justification serving not just the State but our collective memory as a whole; Secondly, there has been a change relating to what archives and archivists consider authentic reliable evidential records tracing the "truthful" event, where today's organisational structures and the emergence of electronic records demands archivists to intervene in the record throughout and even before its existence to ensure authenticity; Thirdly, a shift in archival theory has become visible where the focus no longer lies on the individual record and its content but rather on a wider structural analysis of the processes and organisational factors of the record creator which has premised its existence; Fourthly, due to the constant intervention by archivists to ensure evidential qualities of the record the role of the archivist are now openly becoming actors in the active creation of collective memory, archivists can no longer hide as objective passive keepers of memory; Finally fifthly, archival theory can no longer be considered as something holding true for infinite number of years but rather has to be considered as something that has grown from a certain context and moment in time not isolated from a wider socio-cultural sphere, archival theory has to be considered from a perspective not only looking at it self. (Cook 1997, pp. 43- 47)

These five broad areas was staked out by Terry Cook when considering the possibilities electronic records provide us with in terms of new ways of conceptualise, theorise and develop modes of practice for a continuous development of the archival profession. It is important to acknowledge the opportunities given for a structural rethinking however it is always worth bearing in mind the work done by our predecessors which is also why Cook in "What is Past is Prologue" is trying to historically map the traces and unpick the threads he finds representing an analysis of the current situation. In all of the ideas presented above postmodern influences are traceable but as Cook also notes the changes in attitude have not arisen in isolation from the technological development that rapidly has channelled research into certain

⁶ Frank Upward in "Structuring the Records Continuum, Part Two: Structuration Theory and Recordkeeping" brings forward an interesting aspect where post refer to a manner of going against the grain, against dominant modes of thinking and operating. "For Lyotard, 'post' thinking is best understood as counter thinking, based on the need to constantly think through, around, and beyond dominant ways of thinking. We need to consider different analyses, different shapes, different intuitions, and different memories." (Upward 1997) Worth noting though that although its name, post-custodial ideas do not only reflect possibilities for electronic records but are important also for the documentation and understanding of physical records.

areas. Fernanda Ribeiro marks the distinction between the paradigms as moving from a dominant *historical-technicist* paradigm to a *scientific-information* paradigm (Ribeiro 2001, pp.295-310) and Frank Upward and Sue McKemmish talks about a shift where archival ways of thinking move beyond custody as we go from an information society to a networked society (Upward & McKemmish 2009).

The paradigm shift has been defined in numerous ways and my intention is not to give an overview of all, but through the examples I merely want to emphasise that although the existence of different accentuations of what defines the shift, the growing need and want to define the current situation reflects a widespread international interest amongst archival theorists to reflect an archival change in attitude. Something is happening on the archival stage. But the theoretical need to reflect and define the current situation is also an attempt to move towards new ideas and ways of thinking not steeped in old mould-like attitudes, as the archivists work is a matter of creating the possibilities of what can be said and more importantly what cannot be said. The paradigm shift allows for new discourses of what can be said.

It is also in relation to this debate that we see a growing interest in the development of international standards for the archival profession, which is an indicator – especially when considering the technical advancements in society – of a growing need to secure effective, reliable and authentic records. We see this need especially for the multinational corporate bodies that need to find a way of integrating and unify work across borders. But the development of standards obviously can be criticised for working towards a unified system that doesn't take into consideration vernacular archival articulations. However one can also think of standards following Chris Hurley: “The whole point of standards is to mark the no-man's land between what we are constrained to do and what we aspire to do – otherwise what we are constrained to do will never change.” (Hurley 2005, p. 252) In this sense standards are guidelines that have the possibility to spark initiations for change – as old habits tend to die slow.

The new paradigm in its many forms it is described with its influences from a postmodern school reflects a way of thinking not based on questions such as how but rather why. The record, the archivist, the archive is constantly questioned. Truths are less stable which becomes an indicator for a constant move towards a rethinking of an archival practice. This opens up archival thinking towards the future and yet at the same time links it with the past, as everything has to be understood from its specific context again and again. Sue McKemmish has argued that it was the challenges of keeping electronic records that pushed archivists “back to the basic” to question old values and ways of thinking, and discuss their relevance of today. (McKemmish 2001, p. 333) This is exactly how we can find ways to move archival theory forward and how the practice of the profession can find new grounds to rely on.

Aim and Delimitations

Aim

The process-oriented way of describing records necessarily indicates a change that has to be analysed from a wider perspective including cultural, societal and international archival influences. Much of the material one come across in Sweden

when considering the change in ways of describing records often deals with practical solutions of how to implement the new system or business analysis of how to understand processes from an organisational aspect. Neither of which I find satisfying on their own, as I am convinced that to deal with practical solutions one has to think theoretically as well, which then broadens an analysis of process-oriented thinking presenting it from a wider angle - thinking practice through theory.

The aim with the thesis therefore is to open up the understanding of the new documentation system in Swedish to a wider international archival theoretical debate on changes that can be described as a paradigm shift within the archival scene. A change that, a Swedish system also most definitely has been affected by. Although much of the theory and ideas I will present certainly have been circulating for some time, the aim with the thesis is to present the ideas in a new context that hopefully can inspire to future research projects.

Delimitations

When mapping a wider international archival shift the literature available is obviously immense but I have chosen to stick with a few prominent names as I find in these writings a fulfilling point of departure to ground ideas of the theory of the continuum on which I will analyse the process-oriented documentation system. When considering the continuum theory there are some obvious Australian names of those that have been involved in the development of the theory that I mainly will focus on. To make distinct demarcations however, between writings on the paradigm shift and writings on the continuum is sometimes very hard as ideas fleet into each other and the continuum theory development in many ways reflect a way of thinking which is significant for the paradigm shift and a postcustodial tradition.

To understand and critically analyse the Swedish shift, from *allmänna arkivsystemet* to a process-oriented way of describing records, from the perspective of the ideas presented through the continuum and the paradigm shift, I have chosen to narrow the research down and only look at Riksarkivet's guidelines. I want to, from this angle, investigate what aspects Riksarkivet have chosen to enhance when considering how to implement a process-oriented way of describing records but also what they might have chosen not to expand on. I want to understand the potential limitations from a broader analysis arisen from the context presented above. Consequently the intention of the thesis is not to focus on practical detailed solutions of the improvement of Riksarkivet's guidelines of how to implement a process-oriented way of describing records. Rather it is aiming towards looking at a contextualisation of the current change in system to define areas of potential improvement on a theoretical level, that through future research can lead to practical improvements.

Theory and Method

Theory

Through the continuum theory presented below I intend to make an analysis of the Swedish process-oriented system following a tradition of postmodern theoretical discourse. In this respect I will take a stance within archival theory based on the assumption that recordkeeping processes are instable entities always in a process of becoming⁷ and archivists are necessarily inscribing their presence when describing and documenting records. From this point of view a number of questions arise: Can we think the lifespan of a record in a linear way with an exact beginning and end? Can power-relations be neglected when considering archival documentation? What role does the archivist play? What is being captured as a trace? Can this trace ever represent the actual event? The evidence of a trace and the transparency of the interference with a record is indeed what archivists should aim towards defining, through the various recordkeeping processes they put in place. And finally the impossibility of ever regaining a truthful account of the event, forces archivists to constantly question their work, their theories and their practice.

To make an analysis of this kind the continuum theory offers a highly multi-perspective complex way of thinking which gives resonance with my analytic aim. I will now present the continuum thinking briefly.

Continuum Theory

The Continuum theory grew out of a specific situation in Australia in the mid 80s but the issues that it was a reaction upon reverberated on an international scale, although one of course has to take social, cultural and political specificities into consideration. The continuum thinking as the form we see it take today - presented below - was triggered by many of the ideas outlined above as significant for the beginning of a postcustodial tradition within archival theory and practice, growing out of an paradigmatic change within archival theory and practice.

Around the mid 90s some Australian archival theorists developed the continuum theory – a theory that already had existed for some time but in a very different shape - into further new dimensions. Now offering an innovative way to understand the

⁷Sue McKemmish have described records always in a *process of becoming* when considering the constant shifting nature of it through use and its social and business context. See further expansion on this under the heading “Records Continuum Model”. For McKemmish meaning of the expression see: McKemmish, S. (2001). Placing Records Continuum Theory and Practice. *Archival Science*, 333-359. p. 359

complex nature of the record, in its many different stages emphasising the continuing social nature of a record. The continuum forces one to think 3D rather than linear when considering the nature of the record. This non-linear approach forces one to reflect on many layers at once and an analysis of the record from a continuum perspective does not allow for distinct stages in the life of a record, rather it produces opportunities for a multi-layered multi-textual analysis with no distinct beginning or end.⁸

Continuum Model

Within the continuum theory the continuum model⁹ - developed as a conceptual image to visualise a theoretical discursive field - emerged as an image that according to Frank Upward would “build a form of activity theory for archivists out of their concern with the relationship between recordkeeping and accountability”. (Upward 2005, p. 202) The image and explanatory text of the continuum that now follows are all taken from the work of Frank Upward. The theory is presented visually in the model with four spheres and four axes - the four axes representing *Evidentiality*, *Transactionality*, *Identity* and *Recordkeeping Container*. What might appear as circles in the model is rather supposed to be imagined as spheres making the model 3D rather than 2D, spherical rather than circular, that also means that the four axes cut through all of the four dimensions mentioned below. The Evidential axis is linked with the Recordkeeping axis and the Identity axis is linked with the Transactional axis but the four axes are all linked to each other in the fourth circle.

⁸ Here we find a break and a distinct difference between the way the record is viewed in the life-cycle model and the continuum. The life-cycle model as the name also suggests refers to a view on the record in a biological sense where different stages in its lifetime is distinctly separated such as creation, maintenance & use, and an archival “inactive” stage. For a useful comparison between the two see Sue McKemmish’s work in “Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow: A Continuum of Responsibility” (1997) based on the writings of Frank Upward.

⁹ The continuum model was developed by several but with Frank Upward as a central figure.

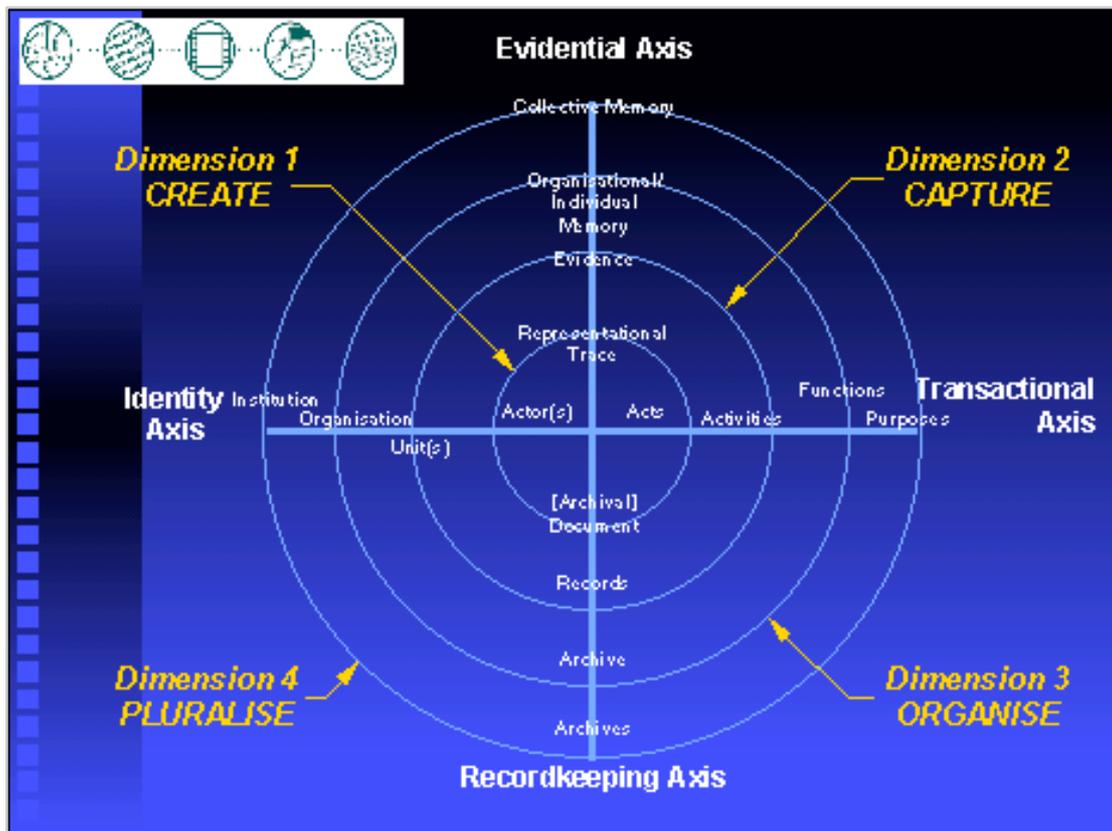


Figure 1. Upward's diagram of the records continuum model © Frank Upward, all rights reserved¹⁰

In each circle according to each axis there are different areas identified within the recordkeeping process, with a total of sixteen different modes. The model has its origin in Anthony Giddens space-time structuration theory with its four interacting regions.¹¹ These four regions or rather dimensions are also represented in the model.

- I. The first dimension in the continuum model is *create* and this is where the document gets its format and structure. In this dimension we find the event itself, the people involved in the event and the archival document of the event.
- II. The second dimension *capture*, is where documents are disembedded from their immediate context of creation and the embedded into new context that can serve as evidential links and be understood by those involved in this particular line of activity.
- III. In the third dimension *organise* the records are organised into a body of archives that can be understood by someone not directly involved in the line of activity in which the records has been part of but still have some sense of ownership or responsibility over the business activities.

¹⁰ Image reprinted from: McKemmish, S. (1997-98). *Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow: A Continuum of Responsibility*. Retrieved from Monash University Information Technology: <http://www.infotech.monash.edu.au/research/groups/rcrg/publications/recordscontinuum-smckp2.html#fig1> den 13 02 2010

¹¹ For further expansion on Giddens's ideas in relation to the continuum development see Frank Upward's article "Structuring the Records Continuum, Part Two: Structuration Theory and Recordkeeping"

- IV. Finally in the fourth dimension *pluralise* is where the archive is brought into a wider framework and can be viewed from the outside as collective and social memory. Pluralise refers to the mode in which an archival totality of an organisation can be viewed by someone not involved in the organisational structure.

From a continuum perspective the four dimensions are not linear stages in a record's lifetime. Rather they are supposed to be viewed as active dimensions right from time of creation or even before the time of creation. Organisational and collective memory is not something that archivists make sure to maintain at a later non-active (from a business activity perspective) stage of the archives of a particular individual, organisation or corporate body. Hence from a continuum perspective, archivists and records managers both need to be engaged in the process of setting up recordkeeping systems that sustain technical solutions from the beginning even before the existence of records, to ensure that the four dimensions are considered from the start of the process.

The dimensions in the model are not related to time and are not specifically bound up in a particular time. Rather they have to be viewed as historic and present at the same time from the start of the creation as McKemmish has argued:

The dimensions of the continuum are not time-based. Records are both current and historical from the moment of their creation. By definition they are 'frozen' in time, fixed in a documentary form and linked to their context of creation. They are thus time and space bound, perpetually connected to events in the past. Yet they are also disembedded, carried forward through time and space, and re-presented in the contexts of their use.

(McKemmish 1997-1998)

In this sense, in the continuum theory frame of reference the record is at once fixed and mutable. The record can be viewed historically through its immediate contextualisation from the beginning of the record's identity as documentary forms place it in the context of creation. Yet at the same time the record is disembedded in the second and third dimension to be understood also from the context of its use. The model offers a way of understanding recordkeeping processes from the perspective of accountability with simultaneous ways of reading and considerations possible at once. No priorities are given any one area in the model but they all somehow interact and interfere at once hence the necessity to think about them all when considering recordkeeping systems from a continuum perspective. Deriving from Giddens's space-time ideas the model emphasises the simultaneous fixity and mutability of the record's multiple contexts and hence puts forward the intrinsic complexity of the nature of the record.

Method

Many authors of archival theory have recently argued for the place of archival theory in archival practice. Amongst these we find Preben Mortenson who argues that there has been a break in the notion of our understanding of science. A positivist view where science can be beyond cultural, socio-political contexts have been replaced by a view where for example in archival theory we do not need to find the common essence of all archives, but rather offer a flexible theory where circumstances and variations in context is acknowledged. Hence archival theory ought not to seek for

generalisations but for a dynamic approach where we cannot turn to our senses for facts as for example in the case of deduction. (Mortenson 1999)

It is my intention to follow this line of argument throughout the thesis, making theory and practice relate to each other in an interwoven manner. There is a need for archival theory to be accepted in the practical field, as theory and practice necessarily goes hand in hand. Eric Ketelaar too calls out for archival research to strengthen this relationship when partly citing subsequent quote from "The Rock" by T.S. Eliot: "We educators and researchers have to make our professional colleagues aware of "The endless cycle of idea and action, endless invention, endless experiment"". (Ketelaar 2000, p.335) Following these ideas I have chosen to reflect current archival discourse, to gain a wider understanding of how to comprehend the changes in the Swedish system relating to the documentation of records. Rather than looking at particular instances and a detailed analysis of material answering questions of how, I am more inclined to investigate material that answers questions of why.

Through the themes brought to light when discussing the paradigm shift the research project will attempt to investigate these further in relation to a process-oriented way of describing records. Ideas around evidence and memory will be analysed from the viewpoint of a process-oriented documentation by using records continuum theory presented below. This method allows me to investigate the social, cultural and international archival setting to allow for a wider analysis of the process-oriented thinking and gain ideas of the potential gaps in the way the system has been developed according to Riksarkivet's guidelines. I have chosen to look primarily at Riksarkivet's guidelines RA-FS 2008:4 and its complementary commentaries Dna RA 20-2009/1265, as I through my analysis want to identify what Riksarkivet have chosen to bring to light in their communication to national government agency archives when considering this new way of describing records.

The Process-oriented Thinking

From the context presented above the process-oriented way of describing records will now be analysed. The analysis will take a departure from the paradigm shift and the specificities that the continuum model brings forward. Firstly though a brief context of the situation from which the process-oriented documentation has derived out of will be presented.

Current context

Archival description. The creation of an accurate representation of a unit of description and its component parts, if any, by capturing, analyzing, organizing and recording information that serves to identify, manage, locate and explain archival materials and the context and records systems which produced it. This term also describes the products of the process.

(ICA ISAD(G) 2000, p. 10)

Archival description or rather documentation (Upward & McKemmish 1998) is the process whereby the work of archivists/records manager gets inscribed in the records, but it is also the process that defines archivists from other information specialists as the context of a record is established. Archival documentation is constantly in need for development. The moment stable ways of working are established one need to start looking out for new ones. Standards like the one above from ICA are aiming towards reaching out to a broader community with new ideas for how to perceive the notion of documentation but even these internationally recognised definitions constantly need reworking.

In 1989 David Bearman envisaged that which could be said to define the principle behind process-oriented archival documentation. He proposed an archival documentation method resting on the idea “that archivists describe the context out of which records were created, rather than describing the content of the records themselves”. (Bearman 1989) This made way for a new role of the archivist based on finding the information to fit in descriptive models rather than making it. And in the mid 90s Frank Upward and Sue McKemmish outlined three main principles for continuum thinking where the third stated: “Institutionalisation of the recordkeeping profession’s role requires a particular emphasis on the need to integrate recordkeeping into business and societal processes and purposes”. (Upward & McKemmish 1998) We now see a practical presence in this way of thinking within a Swedish context. From Riksarkivet’s point of view the system in which records are managed is the main hub for their new electronic mainly automated service that are to support the

relationship between national government agency archives and the public. (Östholm, Jarborn & Gäfvert 2009) This way they emphasise the great importance of the development of the new system and the need for it to function effectively.

The process-oriented way of describing records follows the functions of the organisations. It detects the different kind of businesses¹² that have been taking place, and rather than focusing on the record in itself it is a function analysis that focuses on the way the organisation is built up and the way it is run. It makes visible the structures that lie behind the business activities and shows the context of the creation of the record. This is a major break from the previous description system used by national government agency archives in Sweden *allmänna arkivskemat*. In this sense the new system for documentation does reflect a rupture and indicates a change in attitude of the archival community, but a more detailed analysis is necessary to localise the specific points of rupture and the points of mere continuation. Hence I will now, based on a couple of key elements extracted from the ideas imbedded in the paradigm shift and the continuum theory presented above, analyse the new system.

The Evidential and Memorial Nature of Records

The evidential nature of records is very much depending on the context in which the record has been documented. A record is still a record even though it may be a false one, which means that it is the record's many documentary links i.e. the metadata that has been attached to it throughout its existence that marks its evidentiary qualities. This is why the main concern for archivists should be that of evidence, or at least the aim for evidence and hence work in accordance with the idea of a fully democratic society with complete transparency - where someone can be held accountable¹³ for their actions. The memorial nature of records also depend on context but a continual one and hence the other main concern for archivists should be that of collective memory and to work towards a situation where care are given the description of records from the beginning to see it through its entire existence and process of pluralisation.

A distinction when conceptualising the two concepts evidence and memory have caused conflict in agendas and goals sometimes even rendering the archive and records management community into two camps. However these two concepts are not different or opposed goals for archivists and records managers to work towards. It is important here to note that the continuum thinking offers a way to see records as both evidence and memory not either or. McKemmish argues exactly this by stating that: "...records cannot be categorised as *either* evidence *or* memory. They are both. It is their evidential nature that *distinguishes* them from other forms of recorded information, and enables them to play their *particular* role in forming memory, and shaping identity." (McKemmish 2001, p. 352) Hence I will now continue the research according to these ideas and investigate further the evidential qualities of records placed in a process analysis through the two categories transactionality and

¹² Here I am referring to business not in its strict sense but business as form of any activity.

¹³ In the standard ISO 15489-1 accountability is defined as follows: "principle that individuals, organisations and the community are responsible for their actions and may be required to explain them to others". ISO. (2002). *Information and documentation - Records Management Part 1: General*. Swedish Standards Institute.

contextuality, based on the assumption that records due to their continuing involvement in business and social activities can if documented properly act with evidential qualities. And finally collective memory and a discussion around above highlighted issues concerning the problems arising when rendering the archival community into two camps considering evidence and memory, will be presented in relation to the process-oriented documentation system.

Transactionality

Transactionality is defined in terms of the many forms of human interaction and relationships that are documented in records at all levels of aggregation. It encompasses individual acts of communication, and social and business transactions of all kinds, the social and business activities or processes of which they are a part, the social and business functions that they fulfil, and the social purposes they serve.

(McKemmish, 2001, p. 353)

Transactionality is a very important factor to consider when thinking about the nature of records. It is a way to perceive and detect the societal and business processes of which the record has been part. Following McKemmish it is extremely important to think of the fluidity of records rather than perceiving them as static and fixed entities. But, as she also notes, to consider the business and societal relationships inherent in the record one does not only have to consider the record's relationship to other records and the organisational structure as a whole, but the human involvement has to be considered as well.

The archivist as a professional has in recent years gone through a transformation from passive keeper to active shaper of knowledge.¹⁴ It is not a change in what archivists actually have been doing, but rather it is a change in attitude. The actions of archivists when intervening in records cannot be overlooked. This also goes for the record creator. Who made the document? Who turned it into a record? Who have interfered and used the record? What business or social role does the record fulfil? When considering these aspects the record is always in a process of becoming as Sue McKemmish has phrased it, as the transactional nature of the record allows for a continuing relationship between the record and its surroundings, through social and business use. (McKemmish 2001, p.359)

Here ideas around accountability become very relevant. Chris Hurley argues for the need to keep records in close relationship to accountability; "In any situation, who is accountable, what they are accountable for, who they are accountable to, and the criteria by which performance is to be judged must be clearly documented in advance." Ideas around accountability call for transparency, leaving instances of ambiguity less room. Hurley brings forward the importance of accountability in a democratic society not only in relation to the event but also in relation to the recordkeeping process. (Hurley 2005, p.252) Accountability then is not only a matter

¹⁴ This idea has been argued by many but Terry Cook has been amongst those taking the lead in this line of thinking, see "What is Past is Prologue: A History of Archival Ideas since 1898 and the Future Paradigm Shift" for more details. (Cook 1997)

of ethically justifying the transactional traces as close as possible to the actual event, but it is also a matter of accountability in relation to the keeping of those records. The transparency around the transactional value of the record necessarily plays a large role when implementing new systems of documentation if the evidential qualities of the record are to be considered and if accountability is something that is striven for - as it should be.

A process-oriented way of describing records does in some respect take the transactional nature of records into consideration from a social and business aspect, as the documentation system incorporates the social and business activities or processes of which they are a part, but also the social and business functions that they fulfil. These aspects are to be found in the guidelines from Riksarkivet of how to implement the new system. The process-oriented way of describing records according to the guidelines is based on three parts, firstly a brief overview of the national government agency and its archives named “arkivbeskrivning”, secondly a system for classification in which one can find a representation of the various processes within the national government agency called “klassificeringsstruktur”, and thirdly “arkivförteckning” a detailed overview of the records in each process and its relation to the system for classification. Under “arkivbeskrivning” one can find information about the agency’s name, date, organisation (structure but also laws that govern it), ways to find records in the archive, decisions of secrecy in regards to the material in the archive, archives that have delivered elsewhere or received from other national government agencies, the archival organisation (which job title is responsible for the archive, what other titles may there be). Under “klassificeringsstruktur” one finds the structural layout of the work that the national government agency carries out. So that a clear picture of the structure and its interrelated relations, purposes can be identified. And finally “arkivförteckning” represents a list identifying the type of records that come from a specific process, how they are organised, decisions regarding secrecy and appraisal and where the records are to be located. This list functions as a detailed search engine for the public and the employees to locate material.

A process-oriented way of describing records then offers a way of conceptualising the work that is carried out by the national government agency to a much larger extent than was previously possible with the old *allmänna arkivskemat*. This has certainly been a leap in the right direction and will give an entirely different view for the researcher in the future through a greater in depth understanding of the organisational structures that lie behind the creation of records. However the continuing societal and business use and the documented human interaction and relationships emphasised as important features by McKemmish, are somehow being overlooked. And the same goes for the accountability concern raised by Hurley. To satisfy these concerns further developed of its metadata structure is necessary. The metadata presented by Riksarkivet as required for a process-oriented documentation are stable and fixed entities, there is no room for metadata to follow the record through its social use. The guidelines do however acknowledge that the metadata they present are only the minimum requirement and depending on the organisational structure and its needs further metadata can of course be added.

“Föreskrifterna utgörs till stor del av metadata (uppgifter) som kan registreras i systemen. Det som föreskrivs utgör minimikrav. Vilka övriga uppgifter som registreras avgörs av verksamhetens behov och arkivredovisningens utformning.”

(Östholm, Hörnfeldt, Jarborn & Gäfvert 2009, p. 8)

This does not however mean that the continuing social aspect of the record is to be considered. So based on the guidelines a fairly static arrangement is presented, where no space is left for the continuing value and use of records to be documented.

“... archivists should begin to think less in terms of a single definitive, static arrangement and description process, but rather in terms of continuous, relative, fluid arrangements and descriptions as on-going representational processes. In fact, electronic records description begins at creation and continues throughout the records continuum as metadata is added to document such events as versions, access and redaction.”

(Yakel 2003, p.4)

Following Elizabeth Yakel the fluid and continuous arrangements has to be put in place. Archivists should aim towards finding documentation systems that can incorporate additional metadata to follow the use of the record. Who have accessed it? Are new altered versions being documented as different from the old? But with the guidelines from Riksarkivet a definitive single documentation is put in place and no alternative route to document the different paths that the record may take is made possible. The record hence will be fixed in time and space once and for all without allowance for further documentation for future “processes of becoming”. Following the transactional axis in the continuum the activities are being left out in the description. For archivists to work towards a view based on accountability this aspect cannot be overlooked. In this respect there is yet much work to be done to develop the new Swedish archival system.

Adrian Cunningham describes metadata as: “Structured information that describes and/or allows us to find, manage, control, understand or preserve other information over time”. (Cunningham 2001) In this respect metadata have always been the field of expertise of archivists. It is through the continuing development of metadata schemes that we can expand the vision of archival documentation. Thinking the continuum through archival documentation necessarily brings focus on to metadata. This is where the potentials of the continuum in relation to archival documentation can be fulfilled.

Involvement in the initial stage of the archival documentation process

Practically managing the support of the ideas presented above means that archivists has to be involved in the making of the records management system from the very beginning, even before the record has been created. This also implies that it is the archivists job in collaboration with those that know the organisation well enough to detect and foresee the different functions and processes in the organisation which produces records, what type of record each process produce and the interconnecting relationship between record, process and organisation as a whole. In the guidelines for implementing the new archival documentation system in Sweden to national government agency archives this transition is in some respects already made as the underlying idea of process-oriented documentation relies on a detection of business processes rather than the individual record. In the guidelines one can read: “För att

möjliggöra arkivredovisningens funktion som nav krävs det att myndigheten kravställer detta redan vid planering och utveckling”. (Östholm, Hörnfeldt, Jarborn & Gäfvert 2009, p. 6) This phrasing firstly puts an emphasis on the importance of the archival documentation as the central point of communication between the records management system and the individual, and secondly it emphasises the importance of its implementation and integration in the national government agency from the initial stage of planning. Archival documentation then from a process-oriented view can no longer be seen as something that an archivist can add to the record at a later stage and throughout its active use only have documentation that function as a mere searching aid.

A similar line of thought is brought up by Tom Sahlén’s in “Kaos eller struktur – om modern dokumenthantering” (Sahlén 2005) where one can find an attempt to give an historic overview of the organisational structures which has affected the Swedish development of today’s records management principles towards a process-oriented focus. Sahlén discusses the unavoidable transition from hierarchical ways of structuring business in a Fordist manner to a flat effective process-oriented structuring putting the client and work-processes in focus rather than the product – a development partly made possible due to technological advancements and the digital revolution. Through this analysis of the reorganisation he brings to light the issues discussed earlier relating to the function of the archive and records management system. From the perspective of the old archival descriptive system and the traditional paper-based way of going about business the archive was the last and final stop where documents could be ordered and classified by a professional group knowing nothing of that particular business. Today, however the digital process-oriented analysis of organisations and their way of business demands an archival presence even before the creation of the record, which ultimately creates a much higher pressure for organisations to integrate the archivist/records manager in the organisational structure. This, Sahlén continues, has previously been possible to overlook and he states that organisations today need to consider the function of the archive/records management program if a successful business is to be run. (Sahlén 2005) Sahlén here only brings forward the idea of effectiveness but this aspect has to be considered also from a cultural heritage perspective and not only from the purpose of effectiveness – an issue that will be dealt with further along this thesis when considering the record and its relationship with collective memory.

In relation to Sahlén’s argument, Eric Ketelaar’s notion of “archivalization” becomes very interesting and acts as a link between process analysis and continuum thinking. Archivalization refers to taking into consideration the stage that precedes archiving, based on the assumption that people working within the same organisation will use and create records in different ways, as will different organisations. Hence he, through the work of Richard Cox and Wendy Duff, calls for an extended understanding of how organisations work, and how records are used within this environment both socially and culturally. (Ketelaar 2000, p. 328) In some ways this is exactly what a process-oriented way of describing records aspire towards – to grasp the social and cultural factors for a more coherent view of the context. But better tools for describing a more in-depth analysis of processes and workflows are still needed.

Contextuality

The concept of contextuality in the continuum is concerned with the record's rich, complex, and dynamic social, functional, provenancial, and documentary contexts of creation, management, and use through spacetime.

(McKemmish 2001, p. 353)

Following McKemmish, contextuality in the continuum refers to the record's wealthy complex layer of "societal, functional, provenancial, and documentary contexts of creation, management, and use through spacetime". Contextuality then has to be understood from all four dimensions in the continuum considering all 16 different modes at once. Or as put by Frank Upward: "The four continua encapsulate what I am calling, in this chapter, recordkeeping-based activity theory. This could also be called 'new provenance theory'". (Upward 2005, p. 202) As will become clear further along the thesis, the concept of contextuality and the concept of transactionality are not clearly distinct areas - the concepts are sometimes blurred. The idea around provenance theory then or perhaps "the new provenance theory" seems relevant in the discussion around contextuality and transactionality. Specifically as the concept also can be considered an idea encompassing all of the features for a contextual discussion outlined by McKemmish above, "social, functional, provenancial and documentary". Definitions of the principle of provenance also occur as one of the first things stated in Riksarkivet's guidelines. Hence I will continue this chapter with a discussion around the principle of provenance and what ideas around a new provenance theory according to the continuum might mean.

Provenance has been and still is, according to Riksarkivet, the major archival principle for Swedish archival procedures. "Proveniensprincipen, det vill säga att arkivbildarens arkiv ska hållas intact och spegla arkivbildarens verksamhet, är fortfarande en grund för den svenska arkivvården." (Östholm, Hörnfeldt, Jarborn & Gäfvert 2009, p. 4) The principle - put simply by Riksarkivet, based on the idea that archives from the same archival creator should be kept together - has been the signifier for archival practice when *allmänna arkivskemat* was dominant and then also now when a function process-based archival documentation is in place. So, as Riksarkivet state in the guidelines, the principle of provenance is still the main pillar that the archival documentation system relies on. But provenance is a complex issue - much more complex than the simple explanation above - and so it should be.

As noted in the section above when considering the thoughts of Tom Sahlén the process-oriented approach in the Swedish context means forcing the record creators to engage in thinking about the records created even before they exist. In the old documentation system *allmänna arkivskemat* organisation could easily be done and often was a reconstruction of what was thought to be an original order. Provenance in this respect has been somewhat a construct. Process-oriented documentation forces an organisational and structural visibility right from the start or even before the creation of the record, creating a more accurate documentation of the organisational structure, not rendering it an issue for the archivist to construct at a later stage. However there are some other aspects concerning the principle of provenance that need to be discussed which brings provenance theory into a different light.

When the principle of provenance was developed it grew out of a need to discontinue the work previously done to separate archival material from the same record creator into alphabetic principles for easier finding. Archivists recognised the need to morally be able to defend records i.e. contextual information was needed for records to become trustworthy and retain evidential qualities, hence the need to create a principle whereby records were kept in original order, alongside all the other records from the same record creator. But the idea behind the principle of provenance has since moved on and become much further developed as recognised by Joanna Sasson through the work of Chris Hurley. (Sasson 2007)

Provenance is a dynamic concept. We have moved beyond simply identifying who created the body of records through nominating the single person or corporate body as creator, to understanding that relationships between the creator and the records need to be documented.

(Sasson 2007, p. 4)

Provenance then, can no longer be attached merely to the recognition of the creator of a record, rather we have to expand the concept to include the relationship between the record and its creator. The concept of transactionality then merges into contextuality and provenance can be argued to enter a new stage recognised by Frank Upward as “the new provenance theory”(Upward 2005, p. 202). Chris Hurley has described and developed this idea of a new continuum provenance theory as parallel provenance. Hurley’s parallel provenance theory grew out of the concern: what story should we tell? Hurley argues for a wider definition of archival documentation than the one presented by the ICA (International Council of Archives). He aims for a definition of provenance that includes both transactionality and contextuality. The context of provenance, referring to the record’s contextual nature also called ambience, have many different forms it could take. There are many ways, Hurley argues, to describe the ambience but, what he considers a fatal step within the archival profession, archivists have failed to acknowledge this and have convinced themselves that the selection of their choice is the only one solution. Rather we have to aim towards finding solutions for archival documentation models to accommodate two or more different ways in which the record can be described. (Hurley 2005)

The principle of provenance can perhaps easier be simplified in a paper world, however the distinction between much of today’s digital production and an old analogue representation through paper-based records should not create conflicting concepts. The digitalisation of records has to be regarded as a mere trigger to reconsider the concept of provenance that is applicable independently of media. Making it an inclusive term that does not begin with the idea of one single provenance but rather starts with the idea of provenances in plural.

Our thinking about cross-cultural, multiple and parallel provenances, within a model which acknowledges relationships akin to an ecosystem, challenges us to devise documentation practices which acknowledge the original and multiple sources of knowledge in our archives.

(Sasson 2007, p. 5)

Following Sasson and the idea of parallel provenance, we have to start acknowledging different multiple sources of knowledge. The beginning is never as simple and clear cut as archivists may have thought or at least have overlooked through descriptive systems. The idea of parallel provenance is an essential aspect when working towards

evidence focused archival documentation. There is always more than one road to take – always more than one story to tell. And archivists through their work are indeed the storytellers of our time so we need to think about the stories we tell. What remains for the purpose of shaping our collective memory?

Collective Memory

...the way we act when creating documents affects the way information can be captured, organized and pluralized, and our technologies and techniques for the latter processes affect the way we create information.

(Upward 2005, p. 198)

From a continuum perspective the major focus on accountability was according to Terry Cook an attempt on behalf of Sue McKemmish and Frank Upward to react upon several major public scandals in Australia where documents had been lost or deliberately destroyed. (Cook 1997, p. 39) From a collective memory point of view this is the very reason for working towards a different way of representing and keeping records. We need to make sure that the records we decide to keep actually are being kept, but we also need to make sure that the records can be reliable and that records are accountable. To reassure evidential qualities should then also imply a reassuring of collective memory as McKemmish has argued when considering documentation from a continuum perspective. (McKemmish 2001, p. 352) However it has been argued that there is still a distinct separation between the two ideas. I will now continue a discussion based on this separation in thinking and how it may relate to the profession of the archivist/records manager.

In the guidelines from Riksarkivet for the implementation of a process-oriented way of describing records (Östholm, Hörnfeldt, Jarborn & Gäfvert 2009) one of the reasons stated as triggering the change in ways of describing records was a separation in attitude - as conceptualised by a questionnaire set up by a research project group called Info-Tek-Red. - between those investigating the current documentation system and the national government agency archives which partook in the investigation (Jansson, Berndtsson & Lövblad 2002). The difference that panned out was based on different attitudes towards the nature and reason for the existence of a record and what purpose the documentation served to fill in relation to the record. The research group found a need to rethink the current system *allmänna arkivsystemet* as this, in their view rather antiquated, system would not fulfil the records accessibility over time i.e. their continuing collective value and the documentation system was found to represent something which was there to satisfy the archival institutions. However many of the national government agency archives seemed to be very happy with the system which they argued fulfilled a purpose as search engine. Here we find a separation not unlike the well-known international debate around records managers and archivists. For what reasons do we keep and manage records? There are and will be great divides within the Swedish border too, formally pronounced or not, between how the profession of the archivist/records manager is viewed.

Continuum thinking when considering recordkeeping systems however attempts to offer continuity, working against the separation between records managers and archivists. Although we don't necessarily have this formal division within the

Swedish border the debate is still absolutely essential for an understanding of Swedish record keeping processes. Particularly as shown above through the underlying research leading up to the current new archival documentation system, making visible the articulations of the reasons for why archivists carry out their work. Those concerned with the effectiveness of records and legal issues for financial and strategic gain, might not share the same concern as those working for the cultural heritage sector aiming to maintain records as cultural memory.

To move forward when considering modes of describing records one necessarily has to establish an integrated view of the two. As argued in the introduction collective memory and evidential values are not opposites and are both vital to take into consideration when considering recordkeeping processes. A joint effort is needed to bridge the gap and create a way of describing records that can uphold both cultural heritage and effectiveness. Hence the vital need for a continuum perspective to be introduced when considering the process-oriented system. When reading the guidelines from Riksarkivet one does however sense a strong emphasise on efficiency. "Det ska vara lätt, effektivt och rättsäkert att kommunicera med myndigheterna." (Östholm, Hörnfeldt, Jarborn & Gäfvert 2009, p. 5) Riksarkivet's guidelines are steeped in a spirit of evidence based effectiveness – expressed through the citizens need for quick and safe interaction with national government agency archives. The government and governmental agencies it says, are striving towards a quicker more efficient communication with the citizens through automated services. "För att effektivisera förvaltningen samt underlätta för medborgaren strävar regeringen och myndigheterna mot en mer automatiserad ärendeprocess". (Östholm, Hörnfeldt, Jarborn & Gäfvert 2009, p. 13) The guidelines also aim at working towards effectiveness but also to reassure access to information at the government agencies. "...bidrar föreskrifterna till att bland annat effektivisera informationsflöden och säkerställa tillgång till information hos myndigheterna". (Östholm, Hörnfeldt, Jarborn & Gäfvert 2009, p. 5) In these formulations we find a clear focus on reassuring the evidential nature of the records and the cultural heritage aspect seems to be secondary as this aspect is hardly mentioned.

A concern that may arise with this type of articulation has to do with the issue that Riksarkivet are overemphasising the evidence-based nature of records not bridging it with collective memory and cultural heritage aspects. If these wider concerns are not well enough articulated it may ultimately mean that when national government agency archives are to implement the new systems, the fourth dimension in the continuum dealing with *pluralising* becomes undermined, as the effectiveness of its current use will be in focus. Particularly, as discussed above, the guidelines are only giving guidelines for some metadata leaving it up to each national government agency to decide what other necessary metadata may be relevant. In Sweden however it is inscribed in the law under paragraph 3 in Arkivlagen (1990:782) that:

Myndigheternas arkiv är en del av det nationella kulturarvet.

Myndigheternas arkiv skall bevaras, hållas ordnade och vårdas så att de tillgodoser

1. rätten att ta del av allmänna handlingar,
2. behovet av information för rättskipningen och förvaltningen, och
3. forskningens behov

(Arkivlagen (1990:782))

Hence the national government agency archives are to consider the national cultural heritage aspect if the law is to be followed, but issues 1 and 2 relating to the freedom

of information and legal concerns, are presumably prioritised when documentation for active use is put in place. The third issue relating to the need for the national government agency archives to comply with the demand for research purposes may become secondary and perhaps considered as something which will be someone else's task to provide for. Although the process-oriented way of describing records have grown out of a concern for the ineffectiveness and non-comprehensiveness of the old description system as brought to light by InfoTek, the old ideas of what purpose the archival description system should serve may still be inherited into the new system.

This divide, that in some ways is grounded in the differentiation between current and non-current records and the relationship this carries forward relating to the view of the profession, becomes very important to consider when implementing a new documentation system that have the intention to change an old tradition. For a new system to challenge the old thoughts it is important to work towards a continuum thinking not steeped in ideas where the record have distinct phases from "active" use to a "passive" state. Rather if we look at the record from a continuum frame of reference we have sixteen constantly active modes that need to be considered from a descriptive perspective.

Process-oriented documentation offers ways for understanding the record from a functional organisational aspect, and through metadata and inscribing laws and appraisal strategies, it has the potential to offer a wide perspective of the existence of records both for future research, and contemporary use. But to ensure this - as the guidelines are somewhat flexible for the national government agency archives to make the documentation system suit their particular need – aspects around cultural heritage and collective memory need to be put in the foreground in the guidelines from Riksarkivet.

Conclusion

The intention of this thesis has been to question any stable notion of the archive and following Foucault consider the archive as that which both - through selection, organisation and representation - limits what can be said but at the same time is precisely also that which makes it possible for us to grasp any trace of the event. Hence archival documentation and the focus of this thesis is from this perspective a vital concern to focus further academic research on. Archival documentation has the power to make the trace of the event as truthful to the event as possible but has at the same time the power to turn the trace of the event into an inaccurate account very far from a truthful account. Throughout this piece of writing I have tried to show the importance of archival documentation and how the evidential nature of the record depends on it. The context in which the record has been documented i.e. the archival documentation is that which makes the record reliable and adds evidential qualities to it hence the vital need to keep many and thorough documentary links throughout the existence of the record to mark the evidentiary qualities.

The brief analysis of the archival paradigm shift prefacing the thesis was used as a way of emphasising the need for a process-oriented way of describing records to be understood from within a wider cultural and social context. Through this analysis I have intended to show that there is a need to widen the understanding of the reasons for why process-oriented archival documentation now is implemented in Sweden. A restructuring of the organisations of today moving away from the hierarchical way of operating significant for the last century but also technological progression towards digital solutions, has obviously been major factors for the decision to leave the old description system *allmänna arkivsystemet* in favour of a new process based system. However, other factors too are essential to consider thus an attempt has been made to present the archival discourse from which the continuum thinking has emerged and consider this discourse in relation to archival documentation and specifically process-oriented thinking.

Most likely the reflections I have made throughout this thesis have already circulated amongst the group that initiated and formed the basis for process-oriented documentation and amongst the ones who in Sweden produced the guidelines. But nevertheless I think it is very important to highlight that these aspects still need to be developed and considered, to reach an as comprehensive documentation system as possible. Particularly as previously shown the language used in the guidelines seem to slightly overlook certain important aspects such as the idea of cultural heritage and collective memory. Riksarkivet's guidelines are of course intended to suit a particular audience and hence the writing may also be pronounced in a certain way, this on the other hand does not necessarily imply that cultural heritage is something the

guidelines deliberately try to neglect. However the language used - although writing to inform government agencies of how to follow descriptive guidelines - need to be considered. In this particular case effectiveness should not gain dominance over a cultural heritage aspect. It is important that we - as in everyone dealing with records of some kind - try to formalise and unify reason for why we are doing what we are doing. Meaning for example that effectiveness has to meet ideas around cultural heritage, as both these concerns need to be in focus when considering archival documentation. Ultimately this shows on the importance of a consistent use of terminology for all involved to understand and conceptualise ideas in the same way.

The change in system of how to describe records within Swedish national government agency archives has to be considered as the starting point to move towards a more coherent view of records which links them to the act and the people having interfered and used them throughout their active life. But it also has to be seen as a beginning to establish new manners, for how to conceptualise our democratic rights, when considering records and their creators i.e. the accountability.

Accountability is what to aim for when considering archival documentation, the record has to present a history of creation and use – its social life has to be documented – for future and current use to ensure an as accurate as possible picture of how to read and understand the record and its contexts. Through focusing on accountability the evidential qualities of the record can be reassured and collective memory can be shaped following a democratic process. However one always has to bear in mind that the power of documentation and context can and will continually be misused for individual or organisational interest and gain. Archival records are and will be information relating to power. By placing ones gaze across Östersjön only 21 years ago one can find a great example of systematic use and creation of records to gain total control of a whole population. The Stasi system was through the use of records sustaining a society of control. The Stasi power derived from the systematic way of building up records and controlling any point of resistance by leaving a whole population uncertain on who was an informer and not. Records are power and the context around records and how they have been used most certainly relates to power structures and for this reason we need to focus on the record in relation to accountability and its evidentiary qualities to ensure all is made possible to sustain a democratic approach. The aspect of accountability i.e. metadata is also precisely where more research is needed for us to complement the new documentation system and reach a more comprehensive view of the record.

Today's archival tradition is still very much steeped in a custodial fashion and we have to start thinking outside of the filing box when considering archival documentation as we move on to an era where different media have to coexist in the archives. Hence we can no longer rely on physical relationships to explain the contextual nature of the record. This demand for new archival descriptive models, do not only derive from the digital revolution but also from a change in attitude towards the record and the reasons for describing. The digital revolution may have triggered archivists out of necessity to reconsider their habits and way of working but the re-conceptualisation was as necessary and essential irrespectively of media.

A high priority area for the immediate future is to work with IT professionals, librarians, information managers, cultural heritage players and other stakeholders in the development of coherent information architecture and metadata specifications within or across organisations or

jurisdictions to support document management, discovery and delivery in electronic networked environments.

(McKemmish 1997-98)

The change means something for the role of archivists who now need to be on the front line rather at the end of the chain – they are no longer passive keepers but active shapers of knowledge. Describing records through processes is undeniably a move in this line of thinking forcing archivists to act even before the existence of the record.

Through the presented arguments throughout this thesis I hope to make new paths emerge from where to anchor further research areas that can widen an understanding of the process-oriented system and improve the guidelines from Riksarkivet. And finally to conclude I want to make a reminder that the archive is and has to be considered a complex entity and archival documentation is that which can help us conceptualise this complexity. Following Derrida there is always a constant play between those invisible lines between secret and public, State and society even between oneself and oneself.

Nothing is less reliable, nothing is less clear today than the word “archive”. And not only because of the two order of the *arkhé* we distinguished in the beginning. Nothing is more troubled or more troubling. The trouble with was is troubling here is undoubtedly what troubles and muddles our vision (as they say in French), what inhibits sight and knowledge, but also the trouble of troubled and troubling affairs (as they also say in French), the trouble of secrets, of plots, of clandestineness, of half-private, half-public conjurations, always at the unstable limit between public and private, between the family, the society, and the State, between the family and an intimacy even more private than the family, between oneself and oneself.

(Derrida 1998, p. 90)

With these words of Derrida I wish to wrap up this thesis as a mark and reminder for the constant need to reconsider and work through new ideas for archival documentation, as the instability of the archive demands from us a documentation that can consider multiple stories to be told.

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