

Recordkeeping in an outsourcing public agency

Recordkeeping

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Received 3 February 2017
Revised 24 August 2017
Accepted 25 August 2017

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to discuss the implications of an outsourcing policy for public recordkeeping. The research question addressed is as follows: What are the current impediments to create, capture, organize and pluralize records produced by contractors to whom work has been outsourced?

Design/methodology/approach – The paper uses four dimensions of the records continuum model (RCM) as a structure for understanding what important aspects of recordkeeping that can be affected by an outsourcing policy and discuss the consequences for the creation of public archives. An investment project at a Swedish public agency with a far-reaching outsourcing policy in the form of a client–contractor model is used as a case to exemplify the problem.

Findings – The findings indicate that the legal framework for recordkeeping needs further development, or clarification as to how it should be interpreted in the outsourcing context. More case studies are needed to provide richer data about recordkeeping challenges arising from outsourcing and further opportunities for theoretical analysis using the RCM.

Originality/value – The RCM has been used in a first attempt to understand various aspects of records management practices and what principles need to be taken into account when making such significant organizational structural and cultural changes.

Keywords Sweden, Records management, Outsourcing, Digital archives, Recordkeeping, Records continuum model

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

This paper addresses problems related to collaborative recordkeeping in the context of a client–contractor relationship between a public agency and their contractors, a context where principles and practices, as well as legal conditions, remain unclear, despite decades of development strongly influenced by new public management. Recordkeeping requires ongoing attention and continuous revisions are needed, for example when new technology and ways of organizing the business are introduced. A topic of high relevance today is the practical and theoretical implications of digital work processes, which have been discussed at length among scholars in the archival and recordkeeping domains. Research projects such as InterPARES (<https://interparestrust.org/>), AC + Erm (McLeod *et al.*, 2010), the Clever Recordkeeping Metadata Project (www.monash.edu/it/our-research/research-centres-and-labs/cosi/projects/past-projects/crkm) and E-Ark (<http://e-ark-project.com/>) have focused on identifying and tackling the challenges of managing and preserving digital records. The present paper turns the focus toward changes that are occurring parallel to the development of digital work processes, which are further increasing complexity, namely, changes in the way public agencies organize their business. The example put forward here is the use of outsourcing[1].

Public sector outsourcing[2] has been described as one of the major policies associated with new public management (Alonso *et al.*, 2015), a mechanism for government service



provision which “[...] enables the government to retain control over the specification of the service, the management of the contract and the evaluation of the service provider’s performance” (Jensen and Stonecash, 2005, p. 769). This can have the effect of consultants and contractors creating records that would previously have been created by the agency. This may become problematic because the public sector and the private sector are governed by different legal frameworks, and the established recordkeeping regimes tend to be based on a less complex form of organization.

This paper discusses how the four dimensions of the records continuum model (RCM) (Upward, 2005) can be used as a structure for identifying which important aspects of recordkeeping can be affected by an outsourcing policy, and the practical and theoretical consequences. An investment project at a Swedish public agency with a far-reaching outsourcing policy is used as a case to exemplify the problem.

Scope and objective

The theoretical framework developed within archival science can offer insights on how to tackle existing challenges. The RCM was designed as “[...] a dynamic and active tool, a means to assess and understand recordkeeping and also to improve it” (Cumming, 2010, p. 48). In this article, the RCM is used to identify and discuss the recordkeeping challenges that may face a public agency outsourcing large parts of their business using a client–contractor model. The research question is:

RQ1. What are the current impediments to creating, capturing, organizing and pluralizing records produced by contractors to whom work has been outsourced?

Background

Swedish practices for public recordkeeping are based on the principle that each agency owns and takes full responsibility for capturing and preserving the records that originate as a result of their business, and are needed to meet existing regulations. The legal structure assumes that each agency keeps and controls their own records. However, current political goals point to a future where information is shared and used by more than one actor (Näringsdepartementet, 2013). The Archives Act is a framework law, and consequently, it is up to each public agency to implement it in practice in such a way that it suits their respective objectives.

The Swedish concept of the archive is constructed upon the principle of transparency in government businesses. As a general rule, citizens have a constitutional right to access public records[3] from the point of creation or arrival at a public agency, unless the information is confidential due to official secrecy, personal integrity or other specified reasons (SFS, 1949:105). This requires searchability, which is why official records should be registered as soon as they arrive or are created (SFS, 2009:400) and *accessibility*; hence, registration should take into account its importance for effective archiving, using materials and methods appropriate to the needs of archival permanence (SFS, 1990:782).

There is no exact equivalent to “record” in the Swedish language, the closest term is “allmän handling”, translated as “official record” or “public record” (in this paper, the latter concept is used). The Archives Act stipulates that “the archives of an authority are composed of the public records created through its activities” (SFS, 1990:782). Public records are considered part of the agency’s archive and of national cultural heritage. The law does not make a distinction between current records and archival records: a public archive can consist of both “active” records still in use by the organization, and “inactive” records that are preserved. The present study found that this view has several similarities with the

principles of the RCM. [Table I](#) in the section *Result and analysis* provides a further account of these parallels. Recordkeeping

Records created or received by public agencies are to be preserved, kept in order and handled in ways that ensure: “(1) The right of free access to public records; (2) The information requirements of the public jurisdiction and administrations; and (3) Research requirements” (SFS, 1990:782 as translated by [Hörnfeldt, 1998](#)). Public records should be assigned metadata documenting:

- when the record was created or received;
- the registration number or other designation;
- the sender or receiver; and
- in brief what the record concerns ([SFS, 2009:400](#)).

The traditional way to do this is through a “diarium” or registry, and by manually adding metadata to the records. “Diarium” is not a juridical term in the manner of “registry” or “registering”, but is indirectly explained in the Public Access to Information and Secrecy Act ([SFS, 2009:400](#)) as a continuing register of the records which have arrived or are created at a public agency. The main purpose is to contextualize and keep track of records. The basic meaning of “e-diarium” is “electronic registry”, yet the term increasingly tends to imply integrated solutions for case- and document management where registration is only part of the functionality ([Riksarkivet eARD, 2013](#)). There are currently no binding regulations saying that public agencies should incorporate this functionality into their business systems, yet some form of contextualization is required, as citizens not only have the right to know which information public agencies preserve but also how and in what

Role	Responsibilities
Project leader ("Interviewee 1", 2016-09-15)	Overall responsibility for records creation, capture and preservation until the project is finished and delivered from the Investment Department to the Maintenance Department
Project engineer & delivering coordinator ("Interviewee 2", 2016-09-20)	Supporting the project leader by coordinating the capture of records generated by the project is among the tasks of a project engineer
Land negotiator ("Interviewee 3", 2016-08-29)	Draws up contracts with landowners regarding infringements and compensation. Manages agreements with owners of lines and cables that are affected by the building process
Receiving coordinator ("Interviewee 4", 2016-06-17)	Works proactively to ensure that the project is able to deliver the records required by the Maintenance Department
Project manager ("Interviewee 5", 2016-09-06)	Follows up the work at the construction site so everything is done according to the contract
Site manager ("Interviewee 6", 2016-12-08)	Delivers records to TRA via the project manager
Assignment manager ("Interviewee 7", 2016-12-13)	Responsible for documentation of the project on behalf of the contractor. Delivers records to TRA via the project manager

Table I.
Interviewees and
their respective areas
of responsibility

context the information has been used by the agencies ([Offentlighets- och sekretesskommittén, 2002](#)).

Case

The agency used as a case in this paper is the Swedish Transport Administration (TRA), which was created in 2010 through a merger of several other agencies, among which are the Road Administration, the Railway Administration and the Shipping Board. The agency is governed by the Ministry of Industry, with responsibility for the long-term infrastructure planning for road, rail and sea operations, and the construction and operation of state roads and railways ([SFS, 2010:185](#)). TRA procures and orders products, services and construction projects with an annual value of approximately 40bn Swedish crowns ([Swedish Transport Administration, 2015](#)). They are currently striving to intensify their outsourcing and become a “pure outsourcing organization”, which means increasing their outsourcing to the broadest extent possible, according to a client–contractor model. The goal is “to get more value for money through increased productivity, innovation and competitiveness in the construction industry” ([Swedish Transport Administration, 2011](#)). Using outsourcing means that the state no longer produces its infrastructure, but acts as policymaker, system administrator and client ([Ek Österberg, 2016](#)). The ideas that have influenced this development – such as competition, management, streamlining and cooperation – mirror broader trends in the ongoing development of public administration ([Jacobsson and Mujkic, 2016](#)).

The implications of the outsourcing policy for recordkeeping have not been formally discussed on a higher managerial level within the agency, yet, as the result of previous studies have shown ([Engvall and Samuelsson, 2015](#); [Klareld, 2016](#)), and the present study confirms, several such unanswered questions are of relevance in the daily business. Pressing issues that have been raised by employees include: when do records created by a contractor become public? How should requirements for delivery of records at the end of a project be formulated in contracts and agreements? What are the formal criteria a contractor or consultant should meet to gain access to and be able to work in TRA’s business systems?

Planning, building and operating national infrastructure requires long-term access to reliable records. Roads, railways, bridges, tunnels and other constructions are documented in maps and drawings that should be accessible for decades, even centuries. As a general rule, most of the records for which the TRA is responsible are public, which means that not only business needs but also the needs of citizens and future researchers should be taken into account when making decisions that affect recordkeeping. Equally important is protection of potentially sensitive information. Records might be confidential for reasons of official secrecy, personal integrity, national security, crime prevention, etc. ([SFS, 2009:400](#)).

Several processes within TRA include more than one actor – both internally in the form of different departments and functions, and externally in the form of contractors and consultants. In one and the same business process, a number of transfers and submissions are often made, which entails practical as well as strategic issues.

This paper is part of a research project focusing on how ongoing developments affect recordkeeping in the public sector. Previous studies have explored how the concept of the “middle archive” is defined and explained ([Klareld, 2015b](#)); discourse types used when decision makers talk about changes needed to promote e-archives supporting digital work processes ([Klareld, 2015a](#)); how the decision to create a national e-archive relates to existing legislation ([Klareld, 2015c](#)); how the concept of the e-archive is illustrated and interpreted ([Klareld and Gidlund, 2017](#)); and what recordkeeping issues employees at a public agency see as relevant for discussion in relation to an outsourcing policy ([Klareld, 2016](#)).

Theoretical background and related research

This paper uses the four dimensions of the RCM as a structure to identify important aspects of recordkeeping that may be affected by an outsourcing policy. Conceptually, “continuum thinking” originated in Australia in the 1950s with National Archivist Ian Mclean (McKemmish and Piggott, 1994). The word “continuum” was put to wider use by Canadian archivist Atherton (1985). The RCM was developed by Frank Upward in the 1990s, and first published in the two articles *Structuring the Records Continuum – Part One: Postcustodial Principles and Properties* (Upward, 1996) and *Structuring the Records Continuum – Part Two: Structuration Theory and Recordkeeping* (Upward, 1997). The articles aimed to “[...] build into a theory about the constitution of the virtual archives” (Upward, 1996). McKemmish has described the model as:

[...] a graphical tool for framing issues about the relationship between records managers and archivists, past, present, and future, and for thinking strategically about working collaboratively and building partnerships with other stakeholders (McKemmish, 1997, p. 19).

The model can be seen as a unified strategy which embraces all aspects of importance, and offers “[...] a framework by which records and recordkeeping can be seen and understood as a coherent whole but also as the composite of their component parts” (Cumming, 2010). This approach inspired AS 4390-1996, the Australian standard for records management, in turn reflected in the international standard ISO 15489-2001, and recently revised as ISO 15489-1 (2016). This standard is valuable when planning for and applying recordkeeping practices.

The RCM has been used in a variety of ways by researchers, for example to explore documentation in pre-trial investigations, using the model as:

- a holistic and conceptual framework;
- a way of combining transactional and documentation processes;
- a help to focus on the documentation context; and
- an analytical instrument for distinguishing between processes related to creation, capture and organization (Valtonen, 2007, p. 180); to study the development and implementation of metadata schemes at public agencies, with the aim of gaining a better understanding of recordkeeping practices in contemporary organizations (Troselius and Sundqvist, 2012); to design interview questions and discuss how long-term preservation challenges in the municipal sector can be mitigated (Svård, 2013).

In the case studied here, which is a public agency responsible for national infrastructure, long-term access to records is of great importance due to the long life span of the artifacts managed. This requires proactive recordkeeping, where the agency takes an overarching approach, paired with an ongoing development of policies and practices. By using the dimensions of the RCM, recordkeeping issues can be addressed in an overall manner and improve the adherence of the legal requirements.

A previous study found that the intensified use of outsourcing had increased the need for explicit requirements related to recordkeeping, and that an important issue currently occupying TRA was how to ensure more efficient reporting from external actors. The researchers argued that archival science could contribute valuable knowledge and perspectives, for example “[...] defined quality parameters, such as authenticity, reliability, integrity and usability” (Engvall and Samuelsson, 2015, p. 30), but that further research was needed to establish whether these and other concepts were sufficient in the context in which

the agency carries out their activities. One problem identified was that employees at TRA perceived it difficult to grasp the value of information for all stakeholders in their work processes. Therefore, strategies need to be identified to strengthen understanding throughout the organization that records are valuable and significant for the business. A more holistic view was necessary if TRA were to contribute in a wider societal perspective where information created by them could also be of use in other contexts. An example brought up was sensor technology, which is expected to increase the demands on security, integrity and the capacity to aggregate and analyze information[4]. Engvall and Samuelsson (2015, p. 4, author’s translation) found that the agency had “[...] difficulties to ensure records are valued throughout the whole process and by all stakeholders”. Another recent study identified seven matters perceived as important in relation to recordkeeping when increasing outsourcing. These included (among other things) information governance, knowledge transfer and the role of a public agency (Klareld, 2016).

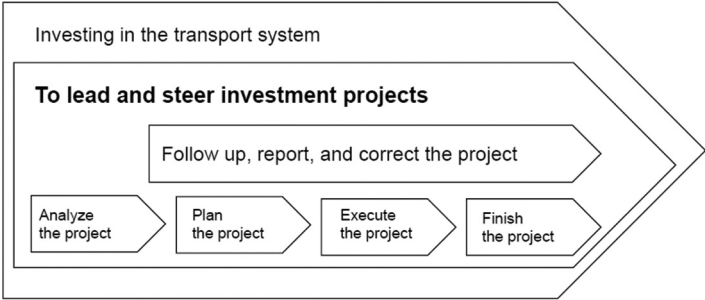
The present paper sheds further light on issues that the agency needs to address, by identifying the current impediments for recordkeeping in a specific project. The result aims to be of value to practitioners by discussing, in a readily available manner, how the structure of the RCM such as capture, create, organize and pluralize, can be used to identify potential problems in an outsourcing context. According to Valtonen, the compact structure of the continuum model can help designers of recordkeeping systems to “[...] check the critical points of records management” (Valtonen, 2007, p. 184).

Material and method

The choice of the RCM as a structure for studying the case of a Swedish public agency currently working according to a client–contractor model was made with the intention to understand the overarching problems for recordkeeping in this context. This approach contributes knowledge about how the RCM can be used to identify issues of importance when public agencies outsource part of their business, and provides practical help to practitioners by offering perspectives that may be of use in their business development. The wider complexity of problems is here exemplified by issues that employees and contractors in an investment project at the TRA have experienced. The general process of investment projects at TRA has been illustrated by the agency in Figure 1. The paper focuses specifically on the execution phase because this is where the artifact (in the form of a bridge, a road or, as in this case, a bike lane) is built, and corresponding records are created and used.

Data were collected while following the project, in which employees and contractors collaborated to build a bike lane of approximately 1 km in a small village in Sweden. In the process, they create, manage and use records, of which some are public records that the

Figure 1.
The investment
process as illustrated
by TRA (Investment
Project Portal *Lead
and govern projects*
[accessed 12 October,
2016], translation by
the researcher)



TRA is responsible for preserving. The choice of project was made by contacting representatives at the agency and asking for suggestions of suitable projects. The majority of the projects suggested were very large and extended over more than one year. A smaller project was chosen as it gave the opportunity to obtain a fuller overview of the building process from start to finish. The researcher attended five construction meetings, which can be described as a way of maintaining regular contacts between the outsourcing agency and the contractors, and interviewed seven persons in total, of whom three were employees at the TRA and four were contractors/consultants hired by the agency.

The construction meetings lasted for about 2 h each, and interviews ranged from 30 min to 1 h. The researcher was given access to the Investment Project Portal (IPP) which is the main information management system used. It included minutes from the construction meetings, plans, technical specifications, contact information and more. None of the persons interviewed were archivists or records managers by profession, yet they all created and used records in their daily work and had thoughts about existing practices. The archivists and records managers work in departments other than Investment. The interviewees had first-hand experience of creating and handling records in the organization. Some of their ideas concerned the need to change routines and duties that would, from the perspective of a certain group or individual, facilitate recordkeeping. A few suggestions had been put forward to the managerial level. The roles and responsibilities represented at the construction meetings of the present project are outlined in Table II. The first three are employees at TRA and the four following are consultants/contractors.

Dimension of the RCM	Equivalent in the Swedish context
<i>Create.</i> The first dimension represents the time or place where an event takes place and a record is created	According to the Archives Act, public agencies should "... when creating records use material and methods appropriate as regards the need for long term preservation" (SFS, 1990:782 § 5)
<i>Capture.</i> The second dimension focuses on the more defined form a record attains when being communicated or connected to other records in a system. The record thereby becomes part of a chain of events, and obtains status as evidence	The <i>Public Access to Information and Secrecy Act</i> says "Public records should be registered as soon as they arrive at or are created by a public agency" (SFS, 2009:400 § 1). The register should state: "1. Date when the record was created, 2. registry number or other designation, 3. where applicable information about sender or receiver, 4. briefly what the record concerns" (SFS, 2009:400 § 2)
<i>Organize.</i> The third dimension focuses on the record as part of a broader context: an archive. It concerns the organization of recordkeeping processes. How an agency defines its recordkeeping regime forms the memory of the business	The <i>Archives Act</i> says public agencies are to "1. Organize the archive in such a way that the right to access public records is facilitated, 2. Create an archival description that gives information about what types of records that can be found in the archive of the agency and how the archive is organized, and a systematic archive schedule" (SFS, 1990:782 § 6)
<i>Pluralize.</i> The fourth dimension represents the overarching social context in which a record is being used: the record as part of collective, historical, and cultural memory	The Archives Act says archives are part of cultural heritage (SFS, 1990:782 § 10) The <i>Freedom of Information Legislation</i> says "To encourage the free exchange of opinion and a comprehensive information, every Swedish citizen has the right to access public records" (SFS, 1949:105 § 1)[8]

Table II.
The dimensions of
the RCM mapped
against the Swedish
legal framework

The goals of the bike lane project were twofold, according to the project specification: First, there were the *efficiency goals*:

By making it more attractive for the unprotected pedestrians and cyclists to travel through and between destinations in the village, the conditions for an increased proportion of travel by bike over the distance will improve. More children will be able to get to school on their own.

Second, there were the *project goals*:

[...] to implement cost efficient measures to improve safety and increase accessibility. If more people choose to walk and ride a bike instead of traveling by car it will lead to improvements of environment and health in the area (Project specification, 2014-10-14).

Even though these goals are not about recordkeeping *per se*, building and maintaining national infrastructure depends on records when planning, procuring, calculating costs, settling eventual compensations with property owners, checking what has been done on a route before and documenting the changes made as a result of a particular project, just to give a few examples.

Issues identified as problematic were assigned by the author to the four dimensions of the RCM and to the related legal regulations during the analysis phase of the study. To extend the perspective beyond the specific project in focus here, [Engvall and Samuelsson's \(2015\)](#) study was also used as a reference and comparison in the analysis, as a basis for discussing the issues brought up in relation to the agency in its entirety. Internal policies and steering documents were also used for this purpose.

There were differences in perspective between employees at TRA and consultants or contractors. This article discusses the general problems for recordkeeping in relation to the legal framework and does not go deeper into those differences in perspective. This could, however, be done in a future study. The four dimensions, namely, create, capture, organize and pluralize, are used as a structure in the paper. The four axes such as transactionality, evidentiality, recordkeeping and identity ([Upward, 1996](#)) are outside the scope of this paper, but could be used in future research to broaden the perspectives on recordkeeping in public agencies that outsource.

Result and analysis

In the case used, the recordkeeping is approached from the perspective of staff at the Investment Department of TRA, and associated contractors, who were working together on a relatively small project to build a bike lane. Documentation[5] was created in relation to the artifact during the building phase. Construction meetings, in which the researcher participated, entailed discussions about the practical execution of the project and eventual problems. Issues related to recordkeeping, such as which templates to use, where to upload records and how to find records needed, were brought up on several occasions. The legal framework governing the public recordkeeping dictates that certain considerations (as presented above) should be taken into account. However, the practical implementation of these legal principles is up to each agency to achieve. Procedures and practices are developed both from the “top down” and from the “bottom up”: recordkeeping issues should be addressed by the organization as a whole and are not limited to specific professions. The need to revise the recordkeeping in light of the new form of organization had been expressed by managers as well as employees at TRA. Earlier interviews had shown that the value of using their records throughout all business processes could be perceived as problematic in a number of ways ([Engvall and Samuelsson, 2015](#)).

In the study upon which this paper is based, the existing legal framework was used as a point of reference in combination with the RCM, to identify problem areas. A comparison was made between the RCM and the Swedish legal framework as part of the analysis and showed that the RCM can be seen as a condensation of the main principles to which a public agency should adhere. The likenesses are shown in [Table II](#).

The impediments and challenges to recordkeeping found through participating in construction meeting and interviewing the participants are presented below according to the dimensions of the RCM.

Create

The records continuum promotes proactivity in providing:

[. . .] a consistent and coherent regime of management processes from the time of the creation of records (and before creation, in the design of recordkeeping systems) through to the preservation and use of records as archives (Standards Australia AS 4390-1, s.4.22)[6].

A proactive approach is also one of the requirements in the Swedish Archives Act, which states that records should be created with the needs for long-term preservation in mind. Persistent paper and ink have been developed for archival purposes, and long-term preservation should be taken into account when procuring business systems and choosing formats. However, there are no stated requirements for records sent to a public agency. Thus, in the outsourcing context, it becomes important to determine the limits of the organization – are the records created by contractors to whom work has been outsourced considered to have been created or received by the agency? This was not clear at the time of the study. As a way of guiding records creation the agency had created templates that contractors were obliged to use. However, some interviewees experienced problems with these as they were in word format, and it was described as difficult to find the right version due to regular updates of the templates.

Creating records is not only a question of providing the right material but also a matter of motivation. The present study found that the relevance of certain records could be questioned. Interviewees gave examples of records that they could not see any use for from their perspective and thus gave these records lower priority. Under some circumstances, this had led to missing records: in the case at hand the quality plan, a record which according to the project engineer was actually required before the start of the project, was not created and at the fourth construction meeting the contractor stated that they did not intend to create it. Both employees and contractors questioned the value of creating certain records that they could not see any use for. One of the contractors said it was unclear what records should be created because it differed between projects: “if you work with too many approaches it becomes very cumbersome” (“Interviewee 5”, September 06, 2016). When asked if there were no one at the TRA to whom he could turn for guidance, he replied “Why make it so difficult that you need support?” The number one priority from his perspective was building the physical infrastructure, while documentation was secondary and sometimes had to be delayed due to lack of time. Recordkeeping was even described by one of the contractors as “a swamp that you can be drawn into and get stuck” (“Interviewee 7”, December 13, 2016).

The current strategy used by the project engineer to tackle the problem of missing records was to “nag” at the contractors, with varying results. The incorporation of records into the archive of the agency, from a theoretical as well as a legal point of view, requires a more consistent approach. One possibility mentioned was to put a “price tag” on each record, in the form of a penalty fee to be paid by the contractor if required documentation is not produced. Another strategy would be to organize the creation of records in a more

collaborative manner and be more explicit that this is an important part of all investment projects. At present, records creation was generally described as too time consuming, and though this responsibility was included in many professional roles, the introduction to it was considered insufficient and too informal for project engineers, land negotiators and other officials.

Creating records was seen as time-consuming, especially from the contractor's point of view. One said:

TRA is good at what it is doing, but it gets heavy for us who work in the projects because it is a lot of paper work for things that we consider to be common sense – of course we have done this and that – but we have to be able to show it somehow.

All participants noted that delays were commonplace. An example of a routine where the “same” record had to be created several times was when a severe incident in the form of a hit and run happened at the construction site, and the site manager had to report this to the Work Environment Authority in their system, report it to the Police, report it in the contractor's business system, then print a copy and send it to TRA, that in turn had to create a similar report using the same business system as the contractor.

Capture

Registration is a way of “capturing” records and creating relationships between individual records in a system. The traditional form of capture used in Sweden is a registry where each record is given the metadata required such as the date sent or received, a registry number linking the record to a case, where applicable a serial number indicating at what point in the case the record was created and in short what the record concerns. Currently, the registry is often managed using an IT system. However, it is not a requirement that this specific type of registry should be used, and the general rule is that all records preserved by the agency are public regardless of registration. The important thing is that the records are searchable and can be produced on request. Sometimes automatic registration is used, when a system is connected to an e-service.

In the present case, records were captured both by the public agency and by the contractor. The “same” event or transaction was thus documented several times. The agency's primary way of capturing records related to the project was through the IPP. That some records should also be sent to the registry was described by the interviewees as a form of “double bookkeeping” that did not add any value to the business. However, the interviewees did not think it was possible to change existing procedures as the registry was perceived as being firmly rooted in its current form and not apt to change in the same way as other parts of the business. Instead, better connections between business systems and the registry system were suggested as a way of facilitating the recordkeeping and not having to send all records to the registry manually. One interviewee said he regularly used his own hard drive to store documents until a project was finished and said his colleagues did it too because it was faster and easier than using the agency's business systems.

Interviews and previous research (Klarelid, 2016) show that the question of when a record is captured by the agency is open to discussion: is it only those records that are delivered to TRA, or also those in the business system of the contractor? The legal framework does not provide a clear answer to this question. Records are to be registered or “captured” with respect for the needs of not only the business but also of citizens and researchers. Capture can be seen as taking place both in the business systems of contractors, in the IPP and in the registry. Interviewees described the registry as an administrative necessity, used to fulfill rules and regulations, as being more of juridical than practical significance and as creating

more work than necessary in relation to their contribution to the business. This was because the records they needed were also captured in the IPP. Recordkeeping

Organize

The organizational dimension in the RCM and the corresponding legal regulations identified focus on the concept of the archive. (However, it is worth noting that the previously discussed dimensions and regulations form a coherent whole that together are meant to support recordkeeping from creation onwards). The organization of records in the archive should facilitate searchability as the archive represents the “memory” of the creating agency, and in a wider perspective also that of the society in which it originated. In the legal sense, the archive of TRA consists of all public records preserved by the agency (regardless of age, format or storage), yet the interviewees had other, and differing, understandings of what was meant by TRA’s “archive” such as it was variously perceived as only including the registry, only the records preserved by the archives department or the registry and one or more of the agency’s business systems.

Project leaders were free to organize the file structure in IPP after their own preferences, which was seen as confusing for contractors working in several different projects with the TRA, as they did not recognize a consistency and said it was unclear in which file each record belonged. However, the possibility of adapting the file structure according to the needs of each individual project was seen as advantageous by the project leader.

Interviewees also expressed concern about the lack of overview on how records are, or ought to be, handled and organized to fulfill the needs of the agency in its entirety. The number of systems used was experienced as a problem as there was a potential risk of missing some system when incorporating the records from the project into the agency as a whole. Internal relations between different departments, rather than external relations with contractors and consultants, seemed to complicate this matter. When a project was finished, records should be transferred from the Investment Department to the Maintenance Department. This was currently done by transferring records from the IPP to a corresponding system called Maintenance Project Portal (MPP). This was a matter of concern for those involved – according to the delivering coordinator there were always major discussions around the time of delivery about where records should be placed, and how they should be delivered.

Records should be organized in the archive of the creating agency, which in the legal sense is TRA. However, according to the IT department, the agency was working toward a divided ownership of information concerning the responsibility for information governance, and the responsibility for delivering information. Information governance included responsibility for structure and quality, while information ownership was tied to the functional responsibility for main processes. The various departments had different budgets and different needs for records. Relations between the Investment Department and the Maintenance Department were described as problematic. One interviewee even said Maintenance was generally reluctant to assume responsibility for records that they prefer that the records remain at Investment due to the associated costs of preservation.

Pluralize

The fourth dimension of the RCM represents the archival records in a wider context than that of the creating agency, yet the previously discussed dimensions and legal requirements lay the foundation for the societal value of public recordkeeping. In the words of Reed, the fourth dimension represents a “pluralized space”, where “[. . .] the knowledge of events (in our case reflected in records) is communicated to social groups, creating shared experience

and knowledge across communities” (Reed, 2005a, p. 3). The Swedish legal framework emphasizes that public records should be accessible for citizens, and that archives are part of national cultural heritage. The public recordkeeping should facilitate pluralization, and where applicable protect confidentiality, by capturing records and organizing them according to a structure. Although most records are public, some may contain potentially sensitive information that has to be classified.

An impediment related to availability and communication was that contractors found it difficult to find records, and to obtain requested records on time. One contractor gave an example wherein they were responsible for demolition on the site but had only obtained records stating the area to be demolished, which was 500 square meters, not where exactly these square meters were located. This was given as a reason for the delayed start of the project. Records created as a consequence of an investment project should, according to the legal framework, be captured as part of the TRAs’ archive and organized in relation to previous documentation, to facilitate pluralization: the value of the records in a wider context. This is the responsibility of the agency as a whole but the concrete work is done by individual employees, and now also by consultants and contractors. Several interviewees said they were unsure about what exactly their professional role entailed when it came to documentation, as they had learnt by mistakes and informal contacts with colleagues, in the absence of established training. The project engineer, also the delivery coordinator, said it ought to be included in the job description as he has to spend much more time on this than anticipated; an experience he said was shared by many colleagues. One problem was that existing recordkeeping principles were poorly understood, both by TRA staff and contractors.

In the present case consultants, contractors and the TRA were working together to accomplish the result, which is a bike lane. As Engvall and Samuelsson (2015) have emphasized, that needs for information vary over time internally within TRA, depending on the life cycle of the infrastructure (planning, construction or maintenance), thus complicating the matter of pluralization. Although TRA is one organization, responsibilities and perspectives vary between different departments. Records about infrastructure that should be reused by one department may be preserved by another department on another budget, though formally it is the agency as a whole that has the responsibility. An important aspect that the fourth dimension illustrates is that records should be able to be reviewed, accessed and analyzed past the context of their creation and provide accountability from various perspectives for as long as required (Reed, 2005b, p. 1).

Discussion and concluding remarks

The result of the study indicates three connected problems in the outsourcing context. First, the legal conditions are not clear regarding this type of collaboration. Second, different actors are involved in different processes, which sometimes intersect and the “same” record can be part of more than one process. Third, the rather fragmented archives make it difficult to get the “whole picture” of a phenomenon, for instance as in the case presented here, the process of building a bicycle lane.

The RCM represents “[. . .] the totality of recordkeeping, all perspectives and all realities within which a record may concurrently exist and have meaning” (Cumming, 2010, p. 48), and is a way of “[. . .] graphically representing complexity which can apply to any records environment” (Reed, 2005b). The RCM is not a linear model: several stages can happen at once and all dimensions need to be taken into account when planning for and designing recordkeeping regimes. In this paper, the model has not been used in all its complexity. Instead, the four dimensions have been used as a structure, mapped against the Swedish

legal framework which is governing public recordkeeping. The RCM was found to correlate well with some of the most the important aspects a public agency need to consider, and where proactivity is a key aspect. When looking at the problem from theoretical and legal points of view, there are some areas that leave room for discussion and improvement.

Though outsourcing is a trend in many agencies, the most common form of organization still implies that public records are created, managed and preserved by the responsible agency.

This has been problematized by Gilliland, saying that:

Recognizing only one actor as the provenance of records denies agency to other parties, even the general citizenry, who are involved in the creation of other events and transactions documented in the records (Gilliland, 2016, p. 40).

In the case studied, issues were raised about which of the records created were “incoming” and which of them were “outgoing” in relation to the public agency. As the legal framework is formulated today, there is no recognition of any form of “co-creation”.

The implications of archives being created by more than one actor have been discussed by Chris Hurley, using the concept of “multiple provenance”[7]. Hurley notes that traditional archival approaches assume a single common provenance but that there is a social dimension that extends the perspective beyond the writers/creators of records; an aspect he believes has received insufficient attention in archival studies. Hurley argues that methods allowing for multiple-provenance enable description of the records from more than one reference point, allowing for societal provenance to be documented (Tranter and Hurley, 2013).

Facilitating records management in interconnected environments is currently being addressed at an international level by the ICA Experts Group on Archival Description (EGAD), with the recent release for public comments of the initial draft of the first part of a two-part standard for archival description named Records in Contexts (RiC). When completed, the standard will include a conceptual model (RiC-CM), and a formal ontology (RiC-O). RiC takes into consideration emerging communication and network technologies that open up new opportunities to improve descriptive practices, as well as ongoing scholarly and practical critiques of archival description, principles and practice. The consultation draft problematizes *respect des fonds*, the part of the principle of provenance saying records created, accumulated and used by a person or group in the course of life and work constitute an interrelated whole and are to be kept together and not intermixed with records from other sources (www.ica.org/en/egad-ric-conceptual-model). It might be useful to explore whether multiple-provenance and/or the use of RiC as a descriptive tool could be useful in outsourcing situations where records must be shared and the borders of organizational responsibilities are sometimes blurred.

It is the obligation of the agency as a whole to develop their recordkeeping to fit the organizational structure and ensure that the legislation is followed. Formally, the responsibility lies with the Director General, but in practice, it is a complex issue where different departments and officials combine their efforts and specific perspectives. Questions raised as unclear included: what practices are mandatory, why particular records are required, how they should be created and captured and where and how existing records are to be found. The time required for managing records was seen as surprisingly extensive.

The result of the present study supports the argument that there is a need to introduce multiple-provenance in practice: that is, to enable description of the records from more than one reference point (Gilliland, 2016; Tranter and Hurley, 2013).

The RCM has been used here as a structure in a first attempt to understand various aspects of records management practices and what principles need to be taken into account when making significant changes in work procedures. Further research is needed to explore the theoretical consequences for recordkeeping that arise through public sector outsourcing. More case studies are needed to provide richer data about recordkeeping challenges arising from outsourcing and further opportunities for theoretical analysis using the RCM. Results of the research presented in the present paper indicate that the Swedish legal framework for archives management needs further development or clarification as to how it should be interpreted in the outsourcing context.

Notes

1. The buying in of components, sub-assemblies, finished products and services from outside suppliers rather than by supplying them internally (Doyle, 2016).
2. The transfer of service provision from the public to an external organization (which is typically in the private sector but may also be an in-house team) (Jensen and Stonecash, 2005).
3. "Any written or pictorial matter or recording which may be read, listened to, or otherwise comprehended only using technical aids" (SFS, 1949:105).
4. It is important to note the difference between the concept of information and the concept of a record. This paper focuses on recordkeeping, and sees information management as a related issue.
5. "Documentation refers not only to documents produced but also those actions intended to capture the relation between the activity (for instance examination of a witness) and the documents produced (the examination record) (. . .)" (Valtonen, 2007, p. 181).
6. Standards Australia AS 4390 has since been superseded by ISO 15489.
7. A concept introduced by Ian Maclean and Peter Scott with the development of the series system of control in the 1960s, implying that a series of records could have more than one provenance over time as its creators altered under administrative change.
8. This requires accessibility for citizens as soon as a record has been created and captured into the organization's system(s).

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