

The Archivists' Understanding of New Public Management and Outsourcing of Government Information: The Case of Sweden

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the archivists' understanding of New Public Management (NPM) and its impact on their role as gatekeepers of government information. The paper therefore presents the views of the archivists who traditionally manage the creation, capture and organisation of information at the Swedish Transport Board (STB). Government information is key to institutional transparency and hence the stringent legal framework that governs it. Sweden is considered a highly transparent country and through its Press Act, which dates as far back as the 1766, all its citizens enjoy the right to access government information. This way, citizens can follow and scrutinise the government processes, which increases openness and trust in government institutions. However, this image of Sweden as open and transparent was challenged by the "Transportgate IT scandal," which put it in the limelight of both national and international media. The scandal was due to outsourcing. Global governments these days operate under increased financial constraints, demands for efficiency and environmentally sustainable solutions and are therefore engaged in the outsourcing of government functions. Outsourcing is a strategy within New Public Management and is regarded as a solution to the above-mentioned constraints. Outsourcing is being done within the growing popularity of NPM, which is the adoption of methods and best practice from the private sector. However, among the challenges that outsourcing poses is data/information security. Yet, one of the building stones of trust in government institutions is secure and trustworthy government information. As the "Transportgate IT scandal" unfolded, the focus was on IT security and there was a total lack of discussion on the information contained in the systems. This paper used a case study as a method to explore the above issues. It applied a literature review and interviews as data gathering techniques. The results confirmed that

the archivists had a full understanding of NPM and its impact on the management of government information. They are supposed to play a key role in the management of government information, but they were not at all involved in the outsourcing process. There is a danger that this development might impact the trust citizens have in government institutions since access to government information might be compromised. Therefore, outsourcing of government information should involve all the stakeholders and there should be well-formulated clauses to protect it.

Keywords: institutional transparency; archivists; government information; New Public Management; outsourcing

Introduction

This paper investigates the archivists' understanding of New Public Management (NPM) and its impact on their role as gatekeepers of government information. It further examines the role they played in the Swedish "Transportgate IT scandal" that took place at the Swedish Transport Board (STB). It, therefore, presents the views of the STB's archivists because they traditionally manage the creation, capture and organisation of government information at their institution, and because during the scandal their voices were not heard. Why were their voices not heard in what was referred to as one of the biggest government information breaches in the country? Could it be that despite the key role records and archives management personnel play in ensuring that information is effectively and securely managed, they still lack strategic positions in the information management landscape? Why was the focus on IT security and less on information security? Why was the general director of the agency ignorant of the enormous consequences the deviation from the laws governing government information would cause? What does the scandal say about Sweden's established record of being a transparent country that promotes readily access to its information and hence its transparent institutions? Why was the media slow in exposing the scandal? What does the scandal tell us about the current information management environment that is populated by different professions of information and data management? What consequences could the scandal have on access to public information? What implications has the efficiency frenzy, through New Public Management (NPM), had on the management of government information? The list of questions could be extended but the focus of this paper is on the archivists' understanding of New Public Management (NPM), its impact on their role as gatekeepers of government information and their role in the scandal. It is not the intent of the researcher to answer all the questions raised above in this paper but rather to indicate the need for further debate within the records and archives management community. These questions need to be exhaustively investigated since government institutions continue to pursue efficiency and to embrace NPM.

Institutional transparency is achieved through access to government information and Sweden is internationally highly ranked in global surveys as a transparent country with low levels of corruption (Bauhr et al. 2010). The Swedish Constitution is governed by four fundamental laws: the Instrument of Government, the Swedish Press Act, the Fundamental Law on Freedom of Expression, and the Act of Succession. These take precedence over all other laws. The Constitution states that all citizens have the right to freely seek information (Bohlin 2010; Sveriges Riksdag 2016). The openness of Swedish government institutions is promoted through readily available access to government information. Access to government information is granted by the Press Act of 1776, which further promotes media and public scrutiny. The principle of public access to government information is one of the cornerstones of the Swedish judicial system (Bohlin 2010; Regeringskansliet 2009; Sundqvist 2009; Svärd 2014).

The function of an archivist in a Swedish government institution is to ensure the effective management of information as regulated by the legal framework that governs it. However, despite this important role that promotes information access and transparency, archivists in Sweden do not occupy strategic positions. Most functions in organisations require professionals with specialised knowledge. The current complex information management landscape also requires professionals that can securely manage all the information assets of an organisation for use and re-use. Archivists have traditionally been responsible for selecting, organising, describing and preserving information in order to make it readily accessible for re-use. This is a function which for example ensures that records of enduring value are managed effectively to provide evidence of the processes that take place between the citizens and the government administrations. However, the archivists' contributions have so far not been recognised as equally important as that of their IT colleagues. Management groups tend to listen more to the IT personnel than to archivists. Additionally, despite the fact that the management of information is dependent on information systems and vice versa, the collaboration between the IT personnel and the archivists has not always been smooth (Kallberg 2011; Svärd 2011).

Bad information management regimes cause scandals, and, in the spring of 2017, Sweden was rocked by an IT scandal referred to as the "Transportgate IT scandal." The scandal was caused by the director of the Swedish Transport Board (STB), who deviated from the laws governing government information and outsourced the board's IT operations to IBM. IBM had subcontractors who had not been cleared by the Swedish Security Service. What was even more troubling was the fact that information about the illegal outsourcing of the data/information was known since 2015, but it never became public until 2017. The SBT is a government institution under the Ministry of Infrastructure, responsible for the rail, air, sea and road transport. It creates regulations that govern the transport infrastructure and enforces them. The information that it produces is a public good and must be managed according to the legal framework that governs public information.

Additionally, this information should be securely managed and guarded because it documents the entire transport infrastructure of the country. Its negligent management could pose security threats. Ceeney (2008) argued that our ability to protect ourselves against crime no longer only depends on natural wealth or on the walls and fences that we build around us, but on the ability to manage information effectively. The current information management environment requires organisations that are aware of the need to securely manage their information resources through a robust information management infrastructure. All employees need to understand the consequences of poor information management regimes and hence organisations need to embrace a good information culture which is about the employees' attitudes and norms towards the information that is created by the organisation (Oliver 2008). A poor information culture creates poor information management regimes that could have implications for a country's security and the trust that the citizens have in their institutions (Douglas 2010; Oliver 2011; Svärd 2014). The effective management of information is a necessity amidst new public service demands from the citizens.

Economic challenges, the increased demand from the citizens for better service delivery, and the push to embrace technology to harness efficiency, accountability and transparency have put government institutions out of their comfort zone (Sarikas and Weerakkody 2007, 153). Governments across Europe have due to fiscal crises embarked on the trimming down of the public sector, to create more efficient government administrations. This is being done through the employment of management techniques adopted from the private sector. The idea is to correct the pathologies of the public sector in these times of constant change (Alonso, Clifton, Díaz-Fuentes 2015). The trend to emulate private sector management techniques is what is referred as New Public Management (NPM). It is about introducing private sector practices into the public sector, strengthening the prerogatives of managers, measuring performance, increasing competitive pressures and cutting costs (Larbi 1999; O'Donnell, Allan, and Peetz 1999).

Outsourcing is one of the NPM strategies and it is about contracting out to service providers certain government processes. McCarthy, Silvestre and Kietzmann (2013) posit that it is an agreement in which one company contracts out parts of their internal activity to another company. It is a means to gain specific value-added benefits to the services delivered by government institutions to the citizens. The Swedish government agencies are similarly operating under increased financial constraints, demands for efficiency through digitalisation and the need to embrace environmentally sustainable solutions. They are therefore involved in outsourcing. However, among the challenges that outsourcing poses is data/information security. Archivists are traditionally responsible for the management of government information in Swedish government administrations, which made it interesting to investigate their understanding of NPM, the impact it has had on their role as government information gatekeepers and the role they played in the scandal. The paper presents an introduction, the research problem and questions, a literature review, the methodology, a discussion and a conclusion.

Research Problem and Questions

Government institutions in Sweden are by law required to hire archivists who are considered competent to manage government information. They should have the expertise to establish and to promote efficient information management regimes. This enables government institutions to comply with the laws governing government information. Furthermore, archivists should play a key role in educating fellow employees in the management of government information. However, research confirms that archivists still lack a strategic position to influence information management decisions (Kallberg 2011; Svärd 2011). They currently operate in a changing environment with new organisational models such as New Public Management and outsourcing strategies. IT professionals are often listened to more by management than the archivists even where information management is concerned. The main objective of the study was therefore to investigate the archivists' understanding of New Public Management (NPM) and its impact on their role as information gatekeepers. The paper further examines their role in the "Transportgate IT scandal" which took place at the Swedish Transport Board (STB).

The paper therefore addresses the following research questions:

1. How did the archivists understand the concept of New Public Management and how has it impacted their role as information gatekeepers?
2. What role did the archivists play in the "Transportgate IT scandal"?

Literature Review

Databases such as Google Scholar and Science Direct with scientific articles have been used to search for scientific articles relevant to the study. Search words such as "New Public Management," "outsourcing," "transparency," "information management," "records management" and "government transparency" have been applied to the search activity. The author does not claim to offer an exhaustive literature review on the themes being addressed (New Public Management, information governance and the role of archivists), but has prioritised literature that is primarily relevant to the study. The literature search however confirms that there is a paucity of studies on the impact of New Public Management (NPM) on the management of government information and the role of archivists during the outsourcing activity.

Government Information

Government institutions in Sweden are by law obliged to manage their information resources in terms of the following objectives:

1. The right of free access to public records;
2. Information requirements to public jurisdiction and administration;

3. Research requirements.

The Swedish Archives Act and Ordinance of 1990 spell out the general rules for records and archives management (Sundqvist 2009). The above requirements on the management of government information are supposed to promote access to information and hence transparent institutions. Meijer, Hart and Worthy (2018) argued that transparency is meant to make government less corrupt, more efficient, democratic, accountable, and legitimate. The traditional information landscape has been stable, and information has automatically solely been managed by the generating organisation. Demands for more efficient government institutions have led to new management styles such as New Public Management, which is creating new challenges such as the participation of private sector actors in the place of government administrations who do not necessarily comply with government information management laws. Yet, institutional transparency hinges on the efficient management of and access to government information. Government information is defined as the information generated, collected, maintained, managed and held by government institutions. Access to government information is part of a social contract between the governed and the government. In Sweden, archivists are the profession trained to manage the information generated by the government administrations.

The Transportgate IT Scandal

In April 2015 IBM was contracted to manage the Swedish Transport Board's (STB's) IT operations. By so doing, the general director of the board deviated from the laws governing sensitive information. When this was known, an investigation was carried out against her in January 2016 to establish whether the decisions made to outsource the IT operations risked exposing sensitive government information. According to an article published by one of the Swedish newspapers, *Metro*, on the 13th of March 2018, recounting the responses of the general director during the interrogation by the Constitutional Committee, it was confirmed that she never informed the government officials concerned when the decision to outsource the IT operations in 2016 was made. The general director did not understand the consequences until February 2016, when she met with the Swedish Security Service (SÄPO). She further argued that when she took over the Swedish Transport Board in the spring of 2015, her focus was on its business operations and that if she had not outsourced, it could have been hard for the IT operations to function and this could have had bigger consequences. She further confirmed that when the Swedish Security Service recommended that she cancels the contract with IBM, it was too late. She also informed the committee that when she signed the contract with IBM, she did not realise that she was breaching the law. The new director who succeeded her confirmed that the board had a naive view of the management of its information resources and that information security was not a priority (*Metro* 2018). The board outsourced the maintenance of its firewalls, networks and databases with information about all vehicles in Sweden, information on police and military vehicles, people with protected identities, the routes of armoured vehicles

which transport large sums of money, information about the weight capacity of roads and bridges, personal details of fighter pilots, police force members, members of the Swedish military—the most secret units and information on people in Sweden’s witness protection programme, information on criminal suspects and encrypted communications systems used by Swedish authorities (Krug 2017; Warwick 2017). The pursuit of efficient business processes led to the outsourcing of the STB IT operations.

New Public Management and Outsourcing

Van de Walle and Hammerschmid (2011) provided an overview of an academic evaluation and impact studies of the entire NPM style reform programmes. Referring to NPM as an ill-defined concept, they argued that despite its long life of 30 years in the European public sector, there were very few empirical evaluations of its effects. They distinguished between two sets of NPM style changes and reforms: one that involves specific managerial innovations within public organisations and another that constitutes changes to the role of government and citizens. They concluded that a lot of academic work has focused on the first NPM style while the second style was only a critical discourse with limited empirical studies. They suggested that evaluations should not only look at specific managerial and operational reforms but the wider effect that NPM reforms have on the role of the state and on the position of the citizen-client. Their study revealed that the key ingredients of NPM include the following: productivity, marketisation, service orientation, decentralisation policy and accountability for results. They presented a topology that included a drive towards efficiency, downsizing, and decentralisation—all in the search of efficiency and public service orientation. They further confirmed that analysing the impact of NPM on aspects of efficiency, effectiveness, accountability and social cohesion was not an easy task. Van de Walle and Hammerschmid (2011) highlighted issues that the author also recognised while conducting her PhD research. The issues include the pursuit of efficiency, the emulation of the private sector language of referring to citizens as customers, and the decentralisation and constant change that fatigued the municipal employees. Public-sector organisations are exposed to constant changes in the pursuit of efficient service delivery, transparency and accountability (Svärd 2011; 2014).

Hammerschmid et al. (2019) were of the view that research on NPM has tended to focus on the changes in structures and processes. They confirmed a lack of empirically informed observations, a conclusion that Van de Walle and Hammerschmid (2011) drew seven years ago. They assessed the perceptions of 7000 top public-sector officials on the impact of New Public Management (NPM) style reforms in 20 European countries and focused on five key NPM reforms which included downsizing, agentification, contracting out, customer orientation and flexible employment practices. They further looked at four dimensions of public sector performance, which included cost-efficiency, service quality, policy cohesion and co-ordination and equal access to services. Their findings confirmed that major structural reforms such as downsizing are associated with a decline in service quality and that managerial reforms such as

customer orientation and flexible employment practices have positive effects on the four performance dimensions. They also contended that top officials believe in NPM reforms as effective tools for saving money, which makes outsourcing of certain functions understandable. However, they concluded that an emphasis on structural reforms such as downsizing, agentification and contracting out services does not seem to stimulate many other performance benefits as the proponents of NPM assert. They instead argued that European central governments that have downsized have experienced a decrease in service quality. On the positive side, they were of the view that the focus on the customer has made public-sector servants more customer oriented and centred which has led to a change in culture and has made flexible employment forms possible and hence public-sector improvement.

Innocenti and Labory (2004, 107) stated that outsourcing has been carried out in industrialised countries for the last 30 years. They argued that it is the source of the downsizing of organisations and that “it arose in the field of organized vertical markets in which vertical co-ordination by large firms has progressively been substituted by decentralized network of suppliers governed by principles of lean production and just-in-time.” Their study compared outsourcing processes in France, Italy and Japan in large and small firms. They established that outsourcing had increased during the last decade.

Klareld (2016) explored the consequences of implementing an outsourcing policy at the Swedish Transport Administration and focused on the issues that the employees considered important. She endeavoured to understand how the archives (in Sweden archives refer to information kept in government agencies and local government administrations, that is, both active and archival information) would be affected. Using phenomenography as a method and interviews as a data gathering technique, she identified issues that the 15 representatives of the Swedish agency considered important. These included information governance, knowledge transfer and the role of a public agency. The outsourcing policy had actualised the routines and practices of the agency. For example, one of the interviewed representatives expressed that the management of public records required the agency to address issues related to the allocation of responsibilities, information governance and information ownership. The agency had received criticism due to failure to effectively execute its tasks and this had been attributed to weaknesses in records management, which is central to its work. Indeed, construction and maintenance work require effective and trustworthy documents. Information regarding the construction and maintenance of the Swedish transport infrastructure was being outsourced. The records that had traditionally been created, managed and preserved by the agency were now being generated by the contractors. This posed challenges to the democratic transparency of government institutions. She therefore emphasised that these records should be controlled by the agency in question and urged researchers to further investigate the implications of the outsourcing policy.

Developments within NPM affect all aspects of the organisation including the information management landscape. For example, in a report published by Iron

Mountain (2015), the UK government, in an endeavour to cut costs, closed workplaces or relocated its institutions. This was done without any guidelines to establish how records were to be relocated and they hence ended up being abandoned (Iron Mountain 2015).

The Role of Archivists

In a study that was pursued by Engvall, Liang and Anderson (2016) under the auspices of the InterPARES Trust project and that focused on the role of an archivist and records manager in an open government environment, it was confirmed that archives and records management functions are not valued in organisations and the society at large. Therefore, the low priority accorded to the archives and records management functions also affects the role of the archivist. The interview results expressed the need to expand and reinforce the role of the archivist because, in the open government environment which aims to create greater transparency and information re-use, archivists can ensure that the information is secure and trustworthy, and assist with the classification through arrangement and description.

The role of archivists in changing organisations has been examined by Svård (2011) in her thesis entitled “The Interface Between Enterprise Content Management and Records Management in Changing Organizations.” Some of the studies that Svård conducted during her licentiate research, which took place in environments that had embraced e-government development to improve service delivery, confirmed that archivists were excluded from projects that required strategic information planning despite their expertise. This created a situation where the entire information continuum was not planned for and yet it was digital information that was to be managed. Digital information requires a proactive and holistic approach, but because projects had a defined timeframe, proper information management planning was never part of the project plans; yet, it was claimed that information was central to efficient e-government development. Although these were municipalities that did not fall under the guidance of the National Archives of Sweden, the information resources that they generated had to be managed according to the legal framework that governs Swedish government information.

Kallberg’s (2011) licentiate research also focused on Swedish local government administrations. She examined recordkeeping awareness in three arenas that she refers to as the legal arena, the political arena and the workplace arena. She applied the profession theory to identify professional recordkeeping challenges and to establish how the political decisions and information technology impacted the archivists’ professional practice and status. Her findings indicated a gap between the legal and the workplace arenas due to lack of recordkeeping awareness within the political arena. She further confirmed that the archivists’ professional status was limited and that they were hence at a risk of being replaced by other professions.

The literature reviewed above addressed challenges posed by New Public Management (NPM), the lack of empirical studies and the issues that outsourcing policies raise for the democratic transparency of government institutions. Democratic transparency can only be upheld through ready access to government information. This however hinges on the effective management of information by the institutions that produce it and by the people with the right skills. The marginalisation of archivists despite their central role in the effective management of government information has also been discussed by some of the authors. I have not however come across studies that have focused on the archivists' understanding of New Public Management (NPM) and its impact on their role as gatekeepers of government information. Therefore, this study contributes to this gap.

The Methodology

The study applied an interpretivist paradigm which allows researchers to explore the world through the perceptions and views of those who participate in a research study (Roth and Mehta 2002). The data gathering techniques constituted a literature review and a group interview that involved the researcher and the two archivists. The researcher conducted a literature search on scientific databases such as SöderScholar, Google Scholar and Emerald, which helped her access the relevant articles. The interviews gave the researcher a chance to access the views of the study participants and to probe for further clarifications to avoid any misinterpretations. The interviews were carried out on the 13th of April 2018. The archivists that the author interviewed were recommended by fellow archivists working at STB as best suited to answer the research questions. Since interviews are pursued in the form of a conversation, the interview was based on an exchange of knowledge on a subject of common interest (Merriam 1988). An interview schedule with questions about the themes of New Public Management (NPM) as a concept, the archivist's role and information governance were sent to the archivists three weeks prior to the interview. A telephone platform that allowed a synchronous interview process with both archivists was used. The questions were asked by the researcher and the archivists would choose among themselves who was best suited to respond, or they would complement each other. They also in the process sought each other's confirmation. The researcher both recorded and transcribed the interview which helped in the confirmation of any unclear statements during the process of the interview. The transcription of the interviews gave 18 pages of raw data that the author thinks is profound enough to inform the issues being researched. The respondents will be referred to as X and Y where citations are made in the findings. The findings are presented under the themes identified during the data analysis. This article derives from a study published in the *Records Management Journal* on "The Impact of New Public Management through Outsourcing on the Management of Government Information" (Svärd 2019).

The Research Findings

The section below presents the research findings according to the following themes: the archivists' understanding of New Public Management (NPM) as a concept, its impact on their role as government information gatekeepers, and their role in the Transportgate IT scandal.

The Swedish Transport Board

The Swedish Transport Board has the overall responsibility for the Swedish transport infrastructure and draws regulations that govern it. It further ensures that the society at large follows the regulations. It is a member of the European car and driving licence information system (EUCARIS). This is a continent-wide collaboration of national agencies with a mission to facilitate data exchanges on vehicle registration, driving licences, traffic and parking violations and accompanying personal data. EUCARIS uses a closed and encrypted EU network for the cross-border transfer of data between individual states. The partners in the EUCARIS collaboration must ensure the secure storage and legitimate use of the transferred data. Compliance with EU data protection regulations is a condition of EUCARIS's membership. As such, it is an important institution (ITS International 2017).

The Archivists' Understanding of New Public Management as a Concept

Responding to the question of how the archivists understood New Public Management, Respondent X expressed that they do not talk much about the concept, but they work a lot according to its principles, such as carrying out analyses of different processes. Respondent Y defined the concept as follows:

That one tries to run a public organisation as a private organisation even if one is not after profits. One must deliver quarterly reports, follow ups, have a focus on the customer, on efficiency and costs. We have lived with that way of working for a long time now especially during the former management. There has been a lot of focus on efficiency and costs. One should measure the different activities. It is hard to measure the delivery of information and appraisal investigations, but the management has all the time urged us to measure all that and to think about how such processes could be effectively carried out. The intent is to be cost-effective, streamline and to be able to measure everything. This is something which is hard to do when it comes to information management but there have been lots of discussions on how efficiency, cost cuts and downsizing should be achieved. I think this has a negative impact on the organisation.

Respondent X used a metaphor of a ball to express what NPM is and explained that it is like one throwing out a ball and before one has kicked it to the goal another one is thrown out. In such a situation no one kicks the ball to the goal and this is what causes workers stress because it gets hard to know which ball to prioritise. What is important can also change very quickly depending on when another ball is thrown out and the ball

owner starts kicking it. She argued that, for the greater good, maybe it would have been better to hold on to the first ball, for better strategic and long-term results. X further asserted that new business models are presented all the time. The employees do not get a chance to implement and follow them up before newer ones are introduced. This is a challenge to the creation of common routines and knowledge is constantly lost.

New Public Management's Impact on the Archivists' Role

Before NPM started being practised, the archivists used to train the employees in information management. After the introduction of NPM principles of operation, the training was reduced to a 20-minute web-based programme. The training responsibility was transferred to the heads of the departments. X argued that some of the heads of departments are recruited from the private sector and therefore have a different information management culture and hardly understand why government information must be managed in a certain way. This poses challenges since the training of the employees becomes dependent on the heads of departments' understanding and interest. Additionally, the quest for efficiency also led to the reduction of some of the administrative personnel. This increased the workload of those who are still in employment and meant that certain work processes must be prioritised over others. These developments were however taking place in a constantly changing environment where the STB was recruiting personnel from the private sector. The new recruits needed the archivists' help to fully understand why government information must be managed according to the legal framework that governs it. X argued that lack of this understanding led to a cultural clash since not everyone in the organisation understood their role. They however confirmed that their director was very much interested in information management issues and paid attention to their work. This made them wonder why the director never considered them as equally important during the outsourcing deal. Both X and Y however informed that the IT personnel are listened to more in the organisation and however much they try to draw their attention to the fact that they must follow the National Archives Regulations governing government information systems, they never get through with their message. They clarified that this was because most of the IT personnel came from the private sector and did not know the regulations governing government information.

The Archivists' Role in the Transportgate IT Scandal Environment

Responding to the question regarding their role in the Transportgate IT scandal, the archivists argued that they were never consulted during the outsourcing process of government information that led to the data breach. They argued that management saw it as a clear IT issue that was therefore handled by the IT personnel without the archivists' involvement. They read about the intent to outsource information on the organisation's intranet and tried to involve their fellow archivist, but that person found it difficult to ask the right questions where there was no information directly provided. They therefore did not know about the full details of the outsourcing deal and the

scandal other than what they were accessing via media channels when it became public. It was a rushed deal where the information security aspects were not considered. Respondent Y confirmed that after what played out in the public domain, that is, the revelations by the different media, he understood why some people who were involved in the outsourcing were indirectly asking him certain questions.

Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to investigate the archivists' understanding of New Public Management (NPM) and its impact on their role as gatekeepers of government information. It further examined their role in the Swedish "Transportgate IT scandal" that took place within the Swedish Transport Board (STB). This was to be achieved by answering the following research questions:

1. How did the archivists understand the concept of New Public Management and how has it impacted their role as information gatekeepers?
2. What role did the archivists play in the "Transportgate IT scandal"?

The demand for efficient government administrations has led to the implementation of new management styles such as New Public Management (NPM) and the implementation of outsourcing policies. Outsourcing is being embraced by European governments and the Swedish Transport Board is no exception. However, amidst all the efficiency frenzy is the need to effectively and securely manage government information. Regarding research question 1, the archivists understood the concept of NPM. It was according to one of them running a public entity as a private one. Archivist X even used a metaphor to demonstrate the nature of the NPM style: "Having several balls in the air without being able to kick one of them all the way to the goal." They expressed that this caused stress and undermined the creation of stable working routines and the maintenance of knowledge. NPM was about creating efficient processes in order to effectively utilise the available resources which had also led to the reduction of administrative personnel. The creation of effective processes meant that the archivists had less time available to them to educate fellow employees in information management issues and instead the responsibility was given to the heads of departments.

Regarding research question 2, despite the fact that archivists are by law supposed to play an important role, especially in today's open government environment where the focus is on increased institutional transparency, accountability and access to information, the literature review confirmed that archivists do not occupy strategic positions to influence information management decisions. Yet, archivists are the trained professionals to manage government information in the Swedish institutions. The fact that the archives and records management functions are not a priority also negatively impacts the role of the archivists. This could clarify why the archivists were for example not consulted during the outsourcing of the IT systems. The management of IT systems was outsourced without well-thought-out processes in the pursuit of efficiency. Like the

archivists informed, STB was hiring people from the private sector who did not fully understand how the legal framework that governs government information works. This fact demonstrates the need for archivists to re-engage in the information management training sessions to improve the information culture of STB. The archivists did not play any role in the “Transportgate IT scandal” because it was perceived to be an IT issue by the management.

Lack of training led to lack of understanding of the legal framework that governs government information and as a result, the scandal occurred. Those working in the information management field should understand that the current government information management environment is complex, and it is also populated by actors from the private sector. Information management issues require collaboration among people from different disciplines such as lawyers, business processes managers, IT personnel and archivists/records managers. The outsourcing of government information should involve all stakeholders in the organisation and there should be well-formulated and thought-through clauses to protect it. The archivists in this study were voiceless because they were not part of the outsourcing process. The archival sector is not only there to oversee the management of cultural heritage but also the effective management of active government information. It is now, in these times of constant change which force directors of government institutions to deviate from constitutional laws to attain efficient processes, that the archival sector should demonstrate its relevance towards the management of government information.

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