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Open Government and Open Data:
A qualitative study of three Swedish municipalities

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Table of Content

1. Introduction	1
1.1. The research problem	1
1.2. Purpose and research questions	2
1.3. Background.....	3
1.4. Previous research.....	7
2. Methodology and theoretical background	10
2.1. The Records Continuum.....	10
2.2. Discourse analysis	13
2.3. Power, knowledge and archives	15
2.4. Analysing the source material	17
2.5. Selecting the source material	19
2.6. Disposition.....	22
3. Investigation	23
3.1. Uppsala Municipality	23
3.2. Uppsala Municipality – Policy	23
3.3. City of Västerås	32
3.4. City of Västerås – Policy	33
3.5. City of Stockholm.....	38
3.6. City of Stockholm – Policy	39
3.7. Discussion and conclusion.....	44
4. Reference List.....	49
4.1. References	49
4.2. Other printed sources – the Internet	54

Sammandrag

I Sverige finns en lång tradition kring öppenhet och transparens rörande offentlig information. Svenska arkiv har spelat en central roll för medborgarnas rätt att ta del av offentlig information och arkivarier har sedan länge utvecklat metoder för att säkerställa handlingars autenticitet och tillförlitlighet. De senaste tjugo årens tekniska utveckling har däremot inneburit en förändring. Krav på ett tidigare tillgängliggörande av offentlig information och framsteg för nya sätt att publicera och (åter)använda offentlig information såsom *öppna data* ställer nya krav på de sätt som allmänna handlingar hanteras och görs tillgängliga. Syftet med denna studie är genom att analysera tre svenska kommuners arbete med öppen förvaltning lämna ett bidrag till forskningen kring öppen förvaltning och öppna data. Målet är att besvara följande frågor: Vilka skillnader och likheter finns mellan kommunala policys rörande öppen förvaltning och öppna data? Vilka är motiven bakom policyerna, det vill säga, vad finns för mål och motiv med öppen förvaltning? Hur påverkar detta arkivvetenskapliga principer om autenticitet och reliabilitet till handlingar? Genom en diskursanalys och ett teoretiskt ramverk baserat på modern arkivvetenskaplig teori visar studien att kommunala policys rörande öppen förvaltning och öppna data skiljer sig, mycket beroende på politiska målsättningar inom kommunerna. Vissa kommuner är mer motiverade än andra att verkligen bli ”öppna” genom policys för öppna data, medan andra i högre utsträckning endast verkar se sådana som en skyldighet. För att säkerställa att handlingar tillgängliggjorda som öppna data är autentiska, relevanta och tillförlitliga skulle därför ett större samarbete mellan arkivarier och andra informationsspecialister vara värdefullt.

Sökord: Öppen förvaltning, öppna data, PSI, arkiv, Stockholms stad, Uppsala kommun, Västerås stad

Abstract

Sweden has a long tradition concerning the concepts of openness and transparency regarding public records. Swedish archives has over the centuries played a pivotal role for citizens rights to information and has successively developed methods to ensure public records authenticity and reliability. However, the technical development during the last two decades has affected public governance. Demands for earlier access to public records and new ways to publish and reuse public information on the Internet, such as *Open Data*, has changed they way public records are kept and made usable. The purpose of this study is to make a contribution to the field of Open Government research by examining three Swedish municipalities' e-Governance developments. The aim of the study is to answer the following research questions: what differences and similarities can be found in the municipal policies regarding e-Governance and Open Data? What is the rationale (i.e. specific objectives, motives and goals) behind the initiatives? How does this affect the archival concepts of authentic and reliability in open records? Using a discourse analysis and a theoretical framework based upon modern archival science the study shows that the policies regarding Open Government and Open Data vary, much depending on the political aims of the municipalities. Certain municipalities are truly motivated to become more open by creating an open data policy, whereas others seem to view the creation of an open data policy more as an obligation. To further help to ensure that records made available as Open Data are authentic, relevant and reliable a greater deal of cooperation between archivist and other information specialist would be beneficial.

Keywords: Open Government, Open Data, PSI, Archives, the City of Stockholm, Uppsala Municipality, the City of Västerås

1. Introduction

1.1. The research problem

Sweden has had a long tradition with *openness* and *transparency* regarding public records. The first regulatory act concerning public records the Freedom of Press Act (*Tryckfrihetsförordningen*), one of Sweden's four fundamental laws, was passed in the year 1766 and established the so-called Freedom of Information-principle. This principle grants every citizen the right to access records that are deemed public (i.e. documents and pieces of information not considered to be confidential). Swedish archives, therefore, has over the centuries played a pivotal role for citizens' rights to information and Swedish archives has developed methods to ensure public records' authenticity and reliability.

However, technical development during the last two decades has affected public governance. Demands for earlier access to public records and new ways to publish and reuse public information on the Internet, such as *Open Data*, has changed the way public records are kept and made usable. This progress, to "open up" public information, has increased all over Europe, and indeed the whole world.¹

At the same time, this raises questions about fundamental archival principles such as the authenticity and reliability of open records, and the way these concepts can be preserved in a digital environment; and indeed how archivists, together with other professions, can aid this rapid development. As Maria Kallberg recently argue this development in fact "challenges the archival body of knowledge regarding how to understand and manage archives"² since the focus has moved from the archival authorities to the record creating agencies. The archival authorities has to an extent stepped aside and argued that electronic recordkeeping is a responsibility to be solved by the agencies themselves.³

In an online environment it is still vital that archival principles such as authenticity and reliability is preserved but, as Geoffrey Yeo argue, we may be uncertain "how far

¹ Janssen 2011, p.446.

² Kallberg 2013, p.1.

³ Kallberg 2013, p.29.

traditional methods of verifying trustworthiness [in records] can be applied in these new domains”.⁴ The risk is that if records are not managed professionally in the digital environment their availability and usefulness as a source for Open Data initiatives can be compromised.⁵ A basic prerequisite for guaranteeing principles such as authenticity in order to establishing trust in records, is necessary to have a clear set of conditions and standards that one can relate to.⁶ Policies and directives likewise govern individual decisions, but so far very little attention has been given to the governmental policies that govern Open Government and Open Data development, which is needed if focus has truly moved from the archival authorities to the record creating agencies themselves.

1.2. Purpose and research questions

The purpose of this study is to make a contribution to the field of Open Data and Open Government research by examining three Swedish municipalities’ e-governance developments.

My aim is to answer the following research questions:

What differences and similarities can be found in municipal policies regarding e-governance and Open Data?

What is the rationale (i.e. specific objectives, motives and goals) behind the initiatives?

How does this affect the archival concepts of authentic and reliability in open records?

By studying and comparing policies that govern decisions regarding the Open Government and Open Data development and analysing the rationale behind the initiatives the challenges caused by the “difference between e-government visions and the reality of recordkeeping practise” could be better understood.⁷

Open Government should be understood as “the leveraging of information technologies to generate participatory, collaborative dialogue between policymakers and

⁴ Yeo 2013, p.217.

⁵ Thurston 2012, [No pagination].

⁶ Hänström 2007, p.81

⁷ Kallberg 2013, p.2.

citizens”. The current Open Government movement, which will be further discussed below, emerged from the adoption of e-government (or, as it is known in Sweden, *e-förvaltning*) in the mid-1990s.⁸

1.3. Background

There isn't any formal definition of the concept of Open Data, but it is usually defined as digital information that is free to use without restrictions, or perhaps more accurately as defined by the Open Knowledge Foundation (OKF) “Open Data is data that can be used freely, shared and built upon by anyone, anywhere, for any purpose”.⁹ According to the Swedish *E-delegationen* [e-Government Delegation] this should be understood as “information that is freely provided, without any significant technical or legal limitations on its usability”.¹⁰

The concept of Open Data is often used together, or even as a synonym for the term *Public Sector Information*, as it is used in the so-called PSI Directive. The PSI Directive defines Public Sector Information through the term “public sector document” and defines this as:

[...] any representation of acts, facts or information - and any compilation of such acts, facts or information - whatever its medium (written on paper, or stored in electronic form or as a sound, visual or audiovisual recording), held by public sector bodies. A document held by a public sector body is a document where the public sector body has the right to authorise re-use.¹¹

Thus, as the PSI Directive deals with records or documents that can be found in governmental institutions one could naturally describe Open Data as Public Sector Information, a term close to the Swedish concept of “*allmän handling*” [Public Record]. One should note however, since this type of information is not necessarily free to use, but can be made available through payment for instance, there is indeed a difference

⁸ Evans & Campos 2013, p.173.

⁹ McDonald & Léveillé 2014, p.100.

¹⁰ E-delegationen 2013, p.12. My translation. The translation is always the authors unless the quote is already translated into English in the original source material. Swedish laws, terms and organizations will initially be given an English translation in brackets for clarification.

¹¹ European Parliament 2003, p.4.

between Public Sector Information and *Open* Public Sector Information (such as information made available on the internet).¹² “*Allmän handling*” is however a legal term based on the concept of Public Record as it is defined in the Swedish Constitution, specifically *Tryckfrihetsförordningen* [Freedom of the Press Act] Ch. 2, Art. 3:

Record is understood to mean any written or pictorial matter or recording which may be read, listened to, or otherwise comprehended only using technical aids. A record is official if it is held by a public authority, and if it can be deemed under Article 6 or 7 to have been received or drawn up by such an authority.¹³

However, the right to view official records is subject to restrictions: the general public is entitled to read only those official records that are classified as *public* records; some records are kept secret for different reasons. There has been some confusion regarding the Swedish term “*handling*” (whether public or not) and the English term “record” – other Swedish translations of the term includes “*akt*” [file], “*dokument*” [document], “*ärende*” [errand]. It is my view that the English term record does not have a functioning Swedish translation.¹⁴

According to the Open Data Institute (ODI), a non-profit organization founded by Tim Berners-Lee, best known as the inventor of the World Wide Web, Open Data must have a license that proves it is in fact Open Data; without a license, the data can’t be reused. The ODI also adds that *good* Open Data is known by four decisive principles: good Open Data can be linked and thus easily shared; it is available in a standard, structured format and thus easily processed; has guaranteed availability and consistency over time thus reliable; and finally, good Open Data is traceable, which makes it trustworthy.¹⁵

Directive 2008/98/EC on the re-use of public sector information, otherwise known as the PSI-directive, is a major cause for Open Data developments all over the European Union, and indeed Sweden. Initially, perhaps due to Sweden’s long tradition with openness and transparency regarding public records, the implantation of the PSI-

¹² See <http://www.opengov.se/blogg/2011/oppen-data-definition/>

¹³ Svensk Författningssamling 1949.

¹⁴ For a further discussion on the term record in a Swedish context see Borglund 2007, p. 44-56.

¹⁵ See <http://theodi.org/guides/what-open-data/>

directive into Swedish legislation was not seen as a top-priority. In fact, the first Swedish legislation meant to secure the implementation of the PSI-directive in Sweden *förordning 2008:31 om villkor vid vidareutnyttjande av information från statliga myndigheter* [regulation 2008:31 on conditions for re-use of information from government agencies] was heavily criticised by the European Commission for being not sufficient to bring Swedish legislation in line with the PSI directive:

The Commission felt that too much uncertainty still remained about the scope of the PSI ordinance (it seemed to apply only to central government and not to local authorities) and about the possible means of redress. In addition, there were no clear and binding rules on the limits of the fees and no rules were in place to prevent cross-subsidies. Finally, no rules or activities were in place to do away with existing exclusive agreements.¹⁶

The PSI directive was finally implemented in Sweden through the so-called PSI Law in 2010, e.g. *Lag 2010:556 om vidareutnyttjande av handlingar från den offentliga förvaltningen* [Law 2010:554 on re-use of public sector information].

The e-Government Delegation, a committee formally under *Näringsdepartementet* [the Ministry of Enterprise, Energy and Communication], has since 2009 worked to coordinate the e-Government development projects of government agencies in Sweden and to investigate their impact on citizens, business and public administration employees.¹⁷ In 2010, after the PSI Law was passed, the e-Government Delegation received an additional remit on public information and social media. The delegation has since then been instructed to promote and coordinate the Swedish agencies' efforts to improve the conditions "for the re-use of documents".¹⁸

In regards to the various developments on a more local level, the members and employers' organization *The Swedish Association of Local Authorities And Regions* (SALAR), or as it is known in Sweden *Sveriges Kommuner och Landsting* (SKL), has developed their own tool for the release of Open Data. This tool called "Öppna Kommunala Nyckeltal" [Open Municipal Key Figures], retrieves and creates links to local data and indicators that already are published on a database called Kolada

¹⁶ Janssen 2011, p.450.

¹⁷ Statens offentliga utredningar 2009.

¹⁸ Statens offentliga utredningar 2010.

Kommun och Landstingsdatabasen [the Municipal and County database], owned by the organization *Rådet för främjande av kommunala analyser* [The Council for the Advancement of Municipal Analysis] which, in turn is owned by SALAR and the Swedish Government. According to SALAR's website, 50 of Sweden's 290 municipalities used their tool after only a couple of weeks.¹⁹

The fundamental purpose with Open Data policies such as the PSI Directive is to ensure long-term transparency of government information thereby contribute to citizens' rights to public access. However, the policies at this high level also often state that Open Data developments have important economical benefits. As Katleen Janssen notes, the commercial information market in the European Union has been estimated at around 27 billion euros, and this does *not* take into account the profits of Open Data gained by civil society, the public sector itself, and the citizens, as these are more intangible. Consequently, she adds, the potential of public sector data is very large.²⁰ The Swedish governmental agency Vinnova, an agency that administers state funding for development and research, previously estimated the direct commercial value of "opening up" public sector information in Sweden at 10 billion Swedish kronor (approximately 1 billion Euro).²¹

Moreover, as Anneke Zuiderwijk and Marijn Janssen states, despite their many similarities Open Data policies emphasize different objectives. The European PSI Directive emphasizes the economic gains generated from the use of Open Government data (as seen above) whereas the American initiatives by the Obama administration (i.e. *Open Government Directive 2009* and *Digital Government 2012*) to a larger extent focus on increasing transparency, participation and collaboration between the government and the people.

However, while differences at a federal level easily can be distinguished, previous studies have largely neglected the policies created at a lower level, so possible differentiations and similarities at this level are largely unknown. However, as

¹⁹ See <https://opnadata.skl.se/> & Sveriges Kommuner och Landsting 2014, [No pagination].

²⁰ Janssen 2011, p.446.

²¹ Vinnova 2012, [No pagination].

Zuiderwijk and Janssen argue, policies written at this lower level are nonetheless important, as lower level policies must be implemented in order for higher-level policies to have any effect.²² In other words, the directives from higher levels of government are putting pressure on the lower levels of government to find answers to a wide range of questions in relation to Open Data and Open Government (e.g. the possible benefits, challenges, potentials of Open Data and e-governance).²³

1.4. Previous research

Although Open Data and Open Government development is a fairly new area of research there are several studies about Open Data as a political phenomenon. It should however be stressed that e-Governance or Open Government is not entirely a new concept, in fact, as Maxat Kassen writes, “the first efforts to promote new public administration by reinventing government and engaging citizens into the decision-making process via use of new technology were offered in 1990s by the Clinton administration”.²⁴ Paul Jaeger and John Carlo Bertot have previously explored the use of e-governance and new social media to “open up” access to government. The authors argue that while the Internet has made transparency easier to accomplish in practical ways, it has also added new complications to ensuring equal access to born-digital information.²⁵ Christian Geiger and Jörn von Lucke have similarly discussed the potential benefits and challenges with Open Data. According to them successful implementation Open Government data in European countries cannot be achieved by simply copying foreign concepts of modernization for state and administration, because administration is limited by perceptions, traditions and cultures in the public access and transparency debate; therefore, each administration should produce their own ideas.²⁶

However, as Peter Conradie and Sunil Choenni have noted, studies on Open Data lack the focus on the issues experienced on a local level. In fact, they argue, there “is an absence of understanding on local government levels on the impact, barriers and opportunities of open data release”. That is, while many studies exist about Open Data

²² Zuiderwijk & Janssen 2013, p.17.

²³ Conradie & Choenni 2014, p.10.

²⁴ Kassen 2013, p.512.

²⁵ Jaeger & Bertot, p.374.

²⁶ Geiger & von Lucke 2012, p. 270.

from a national perspective, a view of the issues from a local perspective is not as yet present.²⁷ Similarly Kassen argues that while there are several studies about Open Data as a political phenomenon is not yet clear how the potential of the Open Data concept can be realized at the local level, as there has been no analysis of current projects so far.²⁸

The same argument can be made on studies specifically about Open Data policies and directives. Zuiderwijk and Janssen previously noted that in spite of the considerable attention that had been given to Open Data and Open Government, no overview of existing Open Data policies was available at the moment of their study. Their subsequent framework for comparing Open Data policies in seven Dutch governmental organizations is therefore of importance to this study. Most importantly, they state that contextual information is vital to help explain why Open Data policies might, or might not, work.²⁹ This study will therefore partially analyse contextual information about the municipalities to better understand the said policies. Kassen's case study on the Chicago Open Data project similarly provides a framework that hopefully will benefit this study. This includes an analysis of the legal basis, an analysis of the political and economic environment and an evaluation of the Open Data project itself. Although this study won't follow Kassen's framework to the letter (mainly due to the contextual differences between Open Data and Open Government projects in Sweden and USA), it still provides a framework for analysis of an Open Data and Open Government project on a local level.³⁰

A few studies have noted how the broad definitions of the term data in both Open Data policies and Open Government projects have been rather problematic. Lluís Esteve Casellas Serra, while examining the Open Data project in the Spanish city of Girona's City Council noted how there is often an inclination to prioritize the publication of information referring to transparency in decision-making, rather than to facilitate the reuse of data, which caused the inclusion of unstructured information the Open Data project. According to Casellas Serra there has to be a distinction between the

²⁷ Conradie & Choenni 2014, p.10-11.

²⁸ Kassen 2013, p.509.

²⁹ Zuiderwijk & Janssen 2013, p.18-20.

³⁰ Kassen 2013, p.509.

publication of records and the publication of data sets. Contributions of records management to Open Data and Open Government projects in the appraisal of data (by Records Classification Schemas for instance) are therefore essential. However, for this involvement of record managers in Open Data projects to be truly productive Casellas Serra argue that:

[T]here are some changes that need to be made in the way of working with records management. These changes are motivated by the gradual transformation of records, digital or in paper, into coherent data sets that end up assuming the same role, i.e. it is necessary to adapt records management to the new environment of data management in business systems.³¹

In a similar discussion about the need for classification and record management in Open Data and Open Government projects in a Swedish context Erik Borglund and Tove Engvall has presented a view that “both the open data and archival management initiatives are derived from [previous] work with e-government and both affect public authorities as well as the general public.”³² They propose that it is possible to see the Open Data initiative and modern archival practice as two discourses that have used different terminology to express and communicate their messages in the literature. Indeed, Borglund and Engvall find that the information constructs used in Open Data are nothing other than records, as they are defined in the archival discourse. However, the terms data and information were used more reckless in the Open Data discourses, sometimes even used interchangeably.³³

Lastly, the InterPARES project ITrust is currently conducting a series of case studies in Europe and North America. These studies will contribute to a further understanding on local Open Data and Open Government projects.³⁴ By examining and comparing the motives, aims and ideas behind three Swedish municipalities’ Open Government policies this study will hopefully provide additional information on the subject.

³¹ Casellas Serra 2014, p. 90-97.

³² Borglund & Engvall 2014, p.164.

³³ Borglund & Engvall 2014, p. 165-174.

³⁴ For more information see <https://interparestrust.org/>

2. Methodology and theoretical background

2.1. The Records Continuum

This study is theoretically built upon the Records Continuum theory, as defined by Frank Upward, Sue McKemmish, David Bearman and others. Much can be said about the continuum theory, and much has been written about it. I will not try to give a full explanation of the theory or the model based upon it. I will however discuss some of the fundamental concepts in the theory and their use for this study.

The Records Continuum model is constructed around the assertion that management of the record is a continuous process from the moment of creation. The theory was first formulated due to the previous Life-Cycle Model's division of records into active, semi-active and inactive records, was seen as problematic in an increasingly digital world. Largely because, according to Bearman, it is unnecessary to apply physical divisions onto digital environments.

For as long as the records are kept, the "original order" physically imposed by the office filing procedure is the basic method for supporting access within the recordkeeping system, a valuable clue to the meaning of records and an essential component of their evidential value. This approach to records is neither necessary nor desirable for electronic records. [...] Not only can the electronic record not be expected to have the physicality associated with either record series or fonds in paper records, it is unnecessary to impose it.³⁵

Glenn Dingwall accordingly states that the separation between active and inactive records becomes a *logical* rather than *physical* division since the use of digital records is made in an environment where the actual placement and the medium on which the information is written is abstract.³⁶ This means that Peter Scott's earlier statement that "the physicality of the record has no importance compared to its multirelational contexts of creation and contemporary use" indeed is correct.³⁷

Records are according to the Records Continuum Model linked to ever-increasing layers of contextual information (e.g. metadata) that makes them both reliable and understandable.

³⁵ Bearman 1996, p.1-2.

³⁶ Dingwall 2010, p.146.

³⁷ McKemmish, Reed & Piggott, 2005, p.170.

For records maintained in electronic form, appropriate metadata provided at the time of records creation can establish conditions governing access to the whole or parts of a record and pertaining to different users in different ways, and automatically ensure that records "show" themselves differently, and appropriately, to each class of different users.³⁸

A record can thus both be static in terms of content and structure but still be in a process of change. Indeed, Frank Upward means that it is fairly impossible to fix a record in time and space since they move chaotically and continuously is a time "in which there are billions of moments and movements out from the moment, with no privileging past, present or future moments."³⁹

That is why a *proactive* approach in recordkeeping – at the very creation of the record – is important to ensure authenticity and reliability. That is, electronic records cannot be reliable and accountable if they are not supplied with contextual information about their "birth" and receipt and information about their structure, which is adequate for their subsequent reconstruction. If this is completed, as in the Life-Cycle Model, at the very end of the record's "life", important contextual information has been lost:

This descriptive metadata cannot be separated from them or changed after the record has been created. [...] The metadata created with the record must allow the record to be preserved over time and ensure that it will continue to be usable long after the individuals, computer systems and even information standards under which it was created have ceased to be.⁴⁰

However, in the context of Open Data and Open Government, new questions on the reliability of records are being asked. If documentation of provenance and context forms a basis for enhancing their transparency and thus for evaluating their trustworthiness as described above, what happens in digital environments where resources are reused and remixed at will? As Geoffrey Yeo suggests, transparency has become the new objectivity. Indeed, transparency "allows us to see how a resource was formed". Transparency indeed prospers in a linked medium (e.g. the Internet) because links let us "see the connections between a resource and the ideas and values that informed it, and this in turn gives grounds for trust". The same way claims about objectivity once gave

³⁸ Bearman 1996, p.5.

³⁹ Upward 2005, p.201.

⁴⁰ Bearman 1996, p.6.

us reasons to have confidence in paper materials transparency does for the Internet. But what can help us give records transparency on the Internet? According to Yeo, provenance is certainly an important ingredient in evaluating trust in records. It is however not enough:

Regardless of whether the statements we read about provenance or meta-provenance are provided by a single source such as an archivist or by a ‘crowd’ of sources, we must use our knowledge or our perception of the creators of those statements and the publishers of the databases or websites where the statements are made, and our level of confidence that creators and publishers are who they say they are, in deciding whether we are willing to trust them. If the statements we read have been captured automatically by a computer application, we must similarly rely on our judgment of the application and those who wrote it.⁴¹

It is thus a question of trust. And as Yeo argues, trust towards governmental institutions has waned in many western countries, including Sweden. However, not only has trust in professional experts and institutions declined, but according to Yeo we also face issues of “disintermediation” since online users “cannot interact with archivists or sense the physical institution in the way that traditional users could”.⁴²

The establishment of trust is therefore paramount when business information is transacted over digital networks between people who do not know each other and likely will never meet, as Luciana Duranti and Corinne Rogers argue. However the speed with which digital technologies are changing far outpaces society’s ability to adapt pre-existing structures and norms. Consequently, policies, practices and infrastructure in “the Cloud” do not currently support an assessment of the specific types of knowledge used in the past to establish trust in records. The question has thus become: “how can we make decisions related to trust in this new environment?”⁴³

While many of the statements above apply to all types of records and recordkeeping – both digital and analogue – Open Data sets present new challenges to record-keepers and archivists. Anne Catherine Thurston argues that although there is an assumption that Open Data will provide basis for openness in the future, real openness must be built

⁴¹ Yeo 2013, p.218.

⁴² Yeo 2013, p.216-218.

⁴³ Duranti & Rogers 2012, p.523.

upon a “foundation of reliable high quality source records that document government policies, activities and transactions”. That is, it is very valuable to have data flow freely on the Internet but:

[...] the reality is that most government information lies submerged a part of the larger iceberg below and that unless this information is managed openness is limited and governments cannot be held accountable. Alongside the enthusiasm for Open Data, therefore, it is important to take a deeper look at the factors that make information, both records and data, trustworthy. There is an opportunity to make a more substantial contribution to transparency, accountability, anti-corruption and citizens’ rights and economic development by linking Open Data to accurate, reliable, trustworthy records.⁴⁴

The problem is thus quite clear. Much of the early work on Open Data has focused on realising datasets without a methodology for ensuring their accuracy and traceability to reliable information sources. Even in the US and Great Britain where the availability of large datasets with a relative high degree of reliability has made it possible to release a growing number of data there are still concerns about the quality, accuracy and integrity of the data. Thurston therefore argues that context and traceability are the core elements for dataset authenticity and reliability: “Once data has context wrapped around it, it becomes a record”. But if datasets are separated from the records from which they are derived, that context is lost. Making data available without context can thus compromise the value of the information. Failure to address the record issues will, according to Thurston, undermined the long-term success of Open Data initiatives, and more generally Open Government. There is therefore a need for collaboration between the Open Data and records management communities.⁴⁵

2.2. Discourse analysis

The purpose of this case study is to analyse three Swedish municipalities policies and directives regarding Open Data and Open Government. In order to do so, a qualitative method is used when analysing the written documents published by the municipalities. However, as Mats Alvesson and Kaj Sköldböck state, qualitative methods are not always easily defined. They are nonetheless often based upon an

⁴⁴ Thurston 2012, [No pagination].

⁴⁵ Thurston 2012, [No pagination].

empirical research which is formed by reflection and scepticism towards what at a superficial glance appear to be unproblematic reflections of how reality works, while maintaining faith in the study of appropriate section of this reality can provide important input into a knowledge building that opens rather than closes, providing opportunities for understanding rather than to establish "truths". It means taking seriously how different linguistic, social, political, and theoretical elements are interwoven in the knowledge process in which the empirical material is constructed and interpreted. The qualitative method chosen is a form of discourse analysis. This method truly emphasizes the role of language and text centrality in social, philosophical, scientific and other contexts. Instead of seeing language as a reflection of and input to other phenomena discourse analysis sees it as an active and constitutive force. Discourse analysis states that it is hardly possible to easily determine what is true or not true. But it is possible to focus on the propositions that allude to attitudes and ask the questions: On what occasions are different attitudes expressed? How are these statements made? In what contexts are these statements included and how are they constructed? Indeed, the key is to study how various statements become truths.⁴⁶

As I mentioned in the previous chapter, Borglund and Engvall also used the concept of discourse in a discussion about Open Data. They see the Open Data initiative and modern archival practice as two separate discourses, which, although they use different terminology, both originate from the work with e-government. In their article discourse is defined as “the social practice to signify and represent the world”. The discourse “contributes to the constitution of social structures, norms, values, relations, conventions and identities and also constructs and reconstructs the meaning of the world”. It therefore has a double meaning since it both reflects social structures and at the same time, constitutes them and influences social relations, identities and institutions. Strictly methodically speaking Borglund and Engvall however use a mixed method, combining a quantitative research approach with qualitative methods. In the second, qualitative analysis, their purpose is to identify and analyze how the four most frequent words – “record”, “information”, “document” and “data” – were used to make

⁴⁶ Alvesson & Sköldböck 2008, p. 460-466.

sense of what the words meant in the studied texts.⁴⁷ Their analysis and their findings are very interesting to this study since the general context (e.g. legislative, cultural, economical) in which their source material and this study's source material were written is the same. One major difference is that Borglund and Engvall analyze higher-level policies while this study studies local policies and directives on Open Government and Open Data.

Borglund and Engvall argue that the information construct used in both of these discourses actually is records, even though it is communicated in different ways. From their perspective, public information is public records. However, they argue, it is clear that it is "data" and "information" that is communicated in the official Swedish texts on Open Data and not "public records". In the archival discourse for instance, "information" is used almost as frequently as "record". Moreover, it is actually "records" that are being referred to, not "information" as such. Regarding the Open Data discourse, the discourse this study is examining, "data" is most frequently used while "record" is rarely found. "Information" is however quite common. As I stated earlier Borglund and Engvall argue that the Open Data discourse tend to be more reckless in the use of "data" and "information". In fact, the terms are sometimes used interchangeably. However, according to the authors, this uncertainty in the usage of the two concepts suggests some uncertainty as to which term is best. This problem would have been naturally solved "if the term records had been used instead". Thus, the two discourses have the concept "record" in common, although they do not use that word in their communication.⁴⁸

2.3. Power, knowledge and archives

While discourse analysis indeed is a functioning tool for analyzing Open Data and Open Government, a broader theoretical discussion on the nature of the power of records and their relation to knowledge is needed.

For, as Eric Ketelaar previously stated, public agents do not merely describe reality, instead, they shape people into entities that will fit their categorizations and that are

⁴⁷ Borglund & Engvall 2014, p.164-169.

⁴⁸ Borglund & Engvall 2014, p.170-175.

recordable. This social reification entails that there are “virtually no other facts than those that are contained in records”. Records are not only a “reflection of realities as perceived by the ‘archiver’”. They constitute these realities and they exclude other realities. Records, according to Ketelaar, might thus be used as an instrument of power, as well as an instrument for empowerment and liberation.⁴⁹

Yet power, as Joan M. Schwartz and Terry Cook argues, has largely been absent from the archival perspective. In fact, archival practice seems to perpetuate a “central professional myth” that the archivist is an “objective”, “neutral”, “passive” “keeper of truth” while other academic disciplines ironically is trained on the power of the archive.⁵⁰ But according to Schwartz and Cook archives both reflect and constitute power relations:

Archives have always been about power, whether it is the power of the state, the church, the corporation, the family, the public, or the individual. Archives have the power to privilege and to marginalize. [...] They are the product of society’s need for information, and the abundance and circulation of documents reflects the importance placed on information in society. They are the basis for and validation of the stories we tell ourselves, the story-telling narratives that give cohesion and meaning individuals, groups, and societies.⁵¹

According to Michel Foucault discourses are governed by various relationships of power. A discourse should here be seen as “numerous statements and events [...] of a given era [that] coalesce to form an archive, that is, a tentative grouping of statements in accord with the contingent regulates and connection that link them to another.”⁵² Power exists throughout society, but does not exist other than when it is performed. It thus appears in countless micro-situations dealing with an array of issues, where the cumulative effect of these micro-situations is a given regime of power.⁵³ According to Foucault knowledge cannot exist without power – there is no knowledge independent of power in the same way that there is no power without knowledge. However, he wasn’t interested in who has power, but rather *how* power affected its subjects. The subject, the

⁴⁹ Ketelaar 2002, p.222.

⁵⁰ Schwartz & Cook 2002, p.5.

⁵¹ Schwartz & Cook 2002, p.13.

⁵² Bevir 1999, p.348.

⁵³ Bevir 1999, p.349.

archive, and historical change, all arise as effects of power-knowledge, or, “the will to power masquerading as truth”.⁵⁴

It is important to note that this definition of power should be seen as a *productive* force. Indeed, power, Foucault argues, is something that produces rather than forbids:

We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it ‘excludes’, it ‘represses’, it ‘censors’, it ‘abstracts’, it ‘masks’, it ‘conceals’. In fact power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production.⁵⁵

He famously used the idea of the panopticon, a type of institutional prison building wherein a single watchman can observe all inmates of the institution without the inmates being able to tell whether or not they are being watched, as a metaphor for modern disciplinary societies (i.e. panopticism). Discipline cannot be equated with an institution or an agency; it is a type of power, or rather a way for power to be used.⁵⁶ Foucault argues that not only prisons but all hierarchal structures like schools, hospitals, and factories have evolved through history to resemble the panopticon.⁵⁷ Ketelaar argues that the power relationships essential to recordkeeping may be discussed using Foucault’s panopticism metaphor. Indeed, according to Ketelaar, the panoptical archive disciplines and controls through knowledge-power. This knowledge is embedded in the records, their content, form, structure, and context. Moreover the physical ordering of archives in the paper world and the logical ordering of digital archives express knowledge-power.⁵⁸

2.4. Analysing the source material

Policies, directives and other strategies are therefore interesting to analyze using discourse analysis. Because even if the policies themselves are not a true reflection of “real life” they, in the words of Foucault, provoke a “whole series of effects in the real”. According to him programs and plans expressed in policies “crystallize into institutions, they inform individual behaviour, they act as grids for the perception and evaluation of

⁵⁴ Bevir 1999, p.349.

⁵⁵ Foucault 2003, p.195.

⁵⁶ Foucault 2003, p.216.

⁵⁷ Foucault 2003, p.229.

⁵⁸ Ketelaar 2002, p.234.

things” even if they are not a true reflection of reality. In other words, real panopticons have seldom been built, yet the concept has inspired not only prisons, but schools, libraries and even archives.⁵⁹

There are several reasons for choosing an existing, written material. Another study might use interviews or questionnaires, i.e. creating fresh research data. This study on the other hand uses material that was not created by or for the investigator. Although written materials such as policies are often used in a supporting capacity within archival research they can according to Glenn Bowen nonetheless form the principal matter of interest.⁶⁰

Like any other analytical method this analysis requires that data is examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding and develop empirical knowledge. The analytic procedure entails finding, selecting and making sense of data contained in policies and other directives. This analysis yields different kinds of data from interviews, but data nonetheless, such as excerpts and quotations that are then organized into themes and categories. According to Bowen, it involves skimming (a superficial examination), reading (a thorough examination) and interpretation. The iterative process thus combines elements of content analysis and thematic analysis.⁶¹

Combining Bowen’s methodology with discourse analysis this study aims to analyze and interpret the policies by identifying discursive statements in the policies. This means investigating the context in which the various truths expressed in the policies are established. The identification of these truths is performed through a comparison of terms connected to Open Government and Open Data. That is, a form of coding is performed in which certain themes related to Open Government is made. These themes are all related to the to the research questions and therefore aims to understand how the rationale behind the initiatives function. By investigating and comparing these terms such as “information”, “data”, “records” in various themes such as “e-strategy”, “archives” and “open government” it is possible to examine how they are used to express certain truths (i.e. discursive statements).

⁵⁹ Foucault 1991, p.81.

⁶⁰ Pickard 2013, p.259.

⁶¹ Bowen 2009, p.32.

Bowen states that there are both advantages and limitations to document analysis. First of all it is less time-consuming and therefore efficient method since it requires data selection instead of data collection. But documents are also “unobtrusive” and “non-active”. They are thus in a sense unaffected by the research process.

Therefore, document analysis counters the concerns related to reflexivity (or the lack of it) inherent in other qualitative research methods. With regard to observation, for instance, an event may proceed differently because it is being observed. Reflexivity—which requires an awareness of the researcher’s contribution to the construction of meanings attached to social interactions and acknowledgment of the possibility of the investigator’s influence on the research—is usually not an issue in using documents for research purposes.⁶²

Documents are almost always created for other purposes than research. Consequently, they might not provide sufficient detail to answer a research question. This is naturally a disadvantage. However, Bowen argues that the question should not be “How many documents should I look at?” but that the concern should be about the quality of the documents and the evidence they contain.⁶³

To summarize, Bowen argues that document analysis is not “a matter of lining up a series of excerpts from printed material to convey whatever idea comes to the researcher’s mind”. Instead, it should be seen as a “process of evaluating documents in such a way that empirical knowledge is produced and understanding is developed”. The researcher should therefore maintain a balance between objectivity and sensitivity in the research process.⁶⁴

2.5. Selecting the source material

As mentioned earlier, this study will to a certain degree follow the frameworks provided by Anneke Zuiderwijk and Marijn Janssen as well as Maxat Kassen. Zuiderwijk and Janssen state that contextual information is vital in understanding Open Data policies; therefore each section in the investigation will begin with a brief analysis of the political environment.⁶⁵ Kassen’s aforementioned framework includes an analysis of the legal basis, an analysis of the political and economic environment and an

⁶² Bowen 2009, p.31.

⁶³ Bowen 2009, p.33.

⁶⁴ Bowen 2009, p.33-34.

⁶⁵ Zuiderwijk & Janssen 2013, p.22.

evaluation of the Open Government development itself.⁶⁶ The investigation will however focus on the latter parts, since the legal basis – such as the provisions concerning local government for the municipalities – is very much the same for Swedish municipalities.

Policies are, as Zuiderwijk and Marijn Janssen argue, usually relatively broad and provide leeway for implementation since they relate to the intended outcomes and try to refrain from including how these outcomes are realized. This enables organizations to implement the policies in an efficient and effective manner given their situation:

As the operating context of lower-level organizations differs, their tasks, processes and systems typically differ as well. Hence, differences and similarities between the open data policies can be expected at the various levels of government and within the different government pillars.⁶⁷

A fundamental question for this study is hence to understand the rationale the initiatives through the policies and to study any similarities and differences between the municipalities. Indeed, what are the specific objectives, motives and goals that the municipalities want to achieve?

The 290 municipalities of Sweden are the country's lower-level local government entities. Local self-government is a longstanding tradition in Sweden and of fundamental constitutional significance. The principle of local self-government has been enshrined in the Swedish Constitution as an integral part of democratic government in Sweden. Local self-government at local and regional level is exercised by "kommuner" [municipalities] and "landsting" [county councils], which are responsible for vital public services in a variety of welfare sectors. Municipal responsibilities include basic schooling, childcare amenities and caring services for the elderly. Recreational and cultural activities are also important municipal concerns. Municipalities are also responsible for water supply and sewerage, rescue services and refuse disposal. County council responsibilities are on the other hand centred mainly on public health and

⁶⁶ Kassen 2013, p.509.

⁶⁷ Zuiderwijk & Janssen 2013, p.22.

medical services, but county councils also have other important duties, e.g. in connection with public transport and regional cultural institutions.⁶⁸

Provisions concerning local government archives are however not contained in the law concerning municipalities – Kommunallagen 1991:900 [Local Government Act] – but in the law regarding archives – Arkivlagen 1990:782 [Archives Act]. It states that *kommunstyrelsen* [the Municipal Executive Committee], the executive branch of local government, is responsible for the municipal archive and all principal questions regarding recordkeeping.⁶⁹

It should perhaps be mentioned that the municipalities in question indeed publish Open Data. Indeed, according to *PSI-datakollen* [PSI Data-check] a website used to scan and envisage the degree to which public organizations meet the e-Government Delegation's recommendations all three municipalities are complicit.⁷⁰

The three municipalities in the study have not been chosen arbitrarily, Uppsala Municipality and the City of Västerås have been selected based on their similar size in population, i.e. mid-sized Swedish municipalities that provide Open Data. The City of Stockholm has been chosen due to the fact that it single-handedly accounts for about one-third of all the data sets that has been made available in Sweden so far.⁷¹ Originally the study aimed to analyse only two similar sized municipalities (Uppsala and Västerås) but in order to better compare the findings in accordance with the research questions it was necessary to add a third, larger municipality. One could argue that a smaller municipality might be also interesting to analyse, but since Swedish municipalities only recently have begun to publish Open Data the choice was made to select a larger municipality that already had made Open Data available.

The policies were searched and collected using the municipal websites and other governmental websites. In accordance with Swedish legislation municipalities and

⁶⁸ Svensk Författningssamling 1991.

⁶⁹ Svensk Författningssamling 1990, § 8.

⁷⁰ So far 137 of 652 Swedish public organizations, boards and departments meet the recommendations in the e-Government Delegation guideline. For more information see: <http://www.psidatakollen.se/>

⁷¹ pwc 2014, p.32.

counties must make such policies and directives accessible to citizens. That is however not always the case, when selecting the municipalities it became clear that other municipalities had difficulties meeting the requirements, documents were either blocked or could not be found (i.e. 404 error). The policies selected were firstly all the policies or directives that had the words *öppen data* [open data], *digital* [digital], *e-strategi* [e-strategy], *e-arkiv* [e-archive] et cetera in the title. Secondly, all of the policies that were referred to and somehow related to Open Government and Open Data in these policies were studied.

2.6. Disposition

The study begins with Uppsala municipality and its various policies regarding Open Government. The second chapter investigates the policies written by the City of Västerås. The third chapter focuses on the City of Stockholm. Lastly a summary of the findings and their relation to archival science will be discussed in a chapter called “Discussion and conclusion”.

3. Investigation

3.1. Uppsala Municipality

Uppsala kommun [Uppsala Municipality] is Sweden's fourth most populated municipality with roughly 204 000 citizens. The municipality is located in eastern central Sweden, approximately 63 kilometres north of the capital Stockholm. It is currently governed by a red-green coalition, which has 42 of the 81 seats in the Municipal Assembly.⁷² Uppsala is often considered part of the Stockholm region, which is Sweden's largest labour market region; economic growth therefore is occurring rapidly, and the demand for housing is high. The region holds one-third of Sweden's overall jobs and stands for 40 per cent of the country's GDP.⁷³

In Uppsala Municipality the central archive is *Uppsala stadsarkiv* [Uppsala City Archive], which has the general responsibility for recordkeeping in the municipality and serves as a repository for municipal records. It also supervises the archival care of the municipal administrations.⁷⁴

3.2. Uppsala Municipality – Policy

The overall policy, or program, for Uppsala Municipality in the near future, approved by the municipal assembly on the 10th and 11th of June 2013, is a document called *Inriktning, Verksamhet, Ekonomi 2014–2017* [Direction, Operation, Economy 2014–2017]. The document initially states the municipal vision, by which all subsequent work ostensibly should be guided:

Uppsala is a municipality where all people are equal, inherent vigour and creativity are respected and utilized so that each one will be able to influence their own lives in a

⁷² The coalition is formed by the Swedish Social Democratic Party [Sveriges socialdemokratiska arbetareparti], the Left Party [Vänsterpartiet] and the Green Party [Miljöpartiet de Gröna]. For more information see <https://www.uppsala.se/organisation-och-styrning/Sa-fungerar-kommunen/>

⁷³ Uppsala kommun 2013a, p.12.

⁷⁴ See <https://www.uppsala.se/organisation-och-styrning/Organisation/kontor/uppsala-stadsarkiv/?year>

sustainable environment characterized by positive dynamics, transparency and shared responsibility.⁷⁵

Subsequently, the policy shares some of the models of governance and specific conditions for development in the municipality; labour and finance market, economic conditions, urban development, climate issues et cetera. It specifically states, in a section called “Policy for long term development” that “long-term thinking for long term development” should permeate all municipal operations:

Uppsala Municipality's policy for sustainable development should permeate all municipal operations and companies. The policy has an integrated approach as a starting point. The overall target, with specific goals in each board, shall secure the work for a sustainable development in Uppsala municipality in the coming IVE-period.⁷⁶

A number of goals based upon this long-term policy are then announced in the document. These goals however connect to a variety of issues, such as to decrease alienation, to increase cooperation and to ensure equality:

- The citizens of Uppsala are involved in the development of society and have confidence in democracy.
- The citizens of Uppsala have employment, and exclusion decreases by promoting growth and economic re-launch zones.
- Uppsala has a strong civil society.
- The citizens of Uppsala feel safe.
- The citizens of Uppsala are assimilated by the terms, inclusion, and accessibility is the same for everyone.
- The citizens of Uppsala live healthy and climate.
- Uppsala has a good business climate conducive to growth.
- Uppsala operating according to EU2020.
- Uppsala working for the regional development strategy.

⁷⁵ Uppsala kommun 2013a, p.6.

⁷⁶ Uppsala kommun 2013a, p.21.

An important step in achieving these goals is according to the policy e-governance; it is through e-governance that cooperation between the municipality and the citizens of Uppsala should take place:

It should be easy for citizens to have contact with Uppsala. More e-services that provide good benefits for Uppsala residents and a well-developed, effective e-government which supports municipal processes, contributes to this. More and more citizens can carry out their business through municipal websites.⁷⁷

This “constant dialogue“ between citizens and the municipality is according to the policy the key element of local democracy while developing and enhancing municipal operations. It states that this dialogue could take place in both “new and traditional channels” but the policy makes it clear that in reality “digital is norm”.⁷⁸

Uppsala municipality has made some data sets available through Kolada, the national database that publishes key figures from Swedish municipalities and counties. On the municipal website some of these key figures from the municipality are published together with municipal records such as policies, reports and other various documents.⁷⁹ The website, which was opened on 16th of December 2014 is according to a press release supposed to make it easier to understand how the municipality is governed (i.e. to increase transparency).⁸⁰ According to the developers the United Kingdom public sector information website gov.uk served as inspiration for the municipal website during development:

Take a look at beta.uppsala.se. Then go to gov.uk. Go back to our beta. Isn't it similar? It is because we in big loads copy, steal and are inspired by the British government. Because they are right now sharpest when it comes to public services and information on the web.⁸¹

The policy above does not discuss Open Data or archives in general (the only time the term archive is used is when a municipal grant for Uppsala City Archive is

⁷⁷ Uppsala kommun 2013a, p.25.

⁷⁸ Uppsala kommun 2013a, p.51.

⁷⁹ See <https://www.uppsala.se/psidata>

⁸⁰ Uppsala kommun 2014d, [No pagination].

⁸¹ See <https://uppsalabeta.wordpress.com/2014/05/22/vi-%E2%99%A5-gov-uk-och-gds/>

approved). However, it is rather clear that the concept of “constant dialogue” between citizens and municipal government and development through cooperation is influenced by the Open Data discourse. Indeed, when proposing a strategy for Swedish governmental agencies work on e-governance, the e-Government Delegation states that a “simplified contact between government and citizens characterized by accessibility and usability” is a fundamental basis for said strategy.⁸² This “simplified contact” between government and citizen is in fact a turnaround from a previous development towards a so called “24-hour agency” where the citizens in principle would only need to visit *one* portal. This project was based upon an international trend that pointed to a "whole-of-government approach". The strategy was thus dominated by the large central initiative with joint solutions for the entire administration; in Sweden this was called Sverige.se, which had little success in the much-decentralized Swedish governmental model.⁸³

One of the main goals of the e-Government Delegations work on e-governance is that it should be “as simple as possible for so many people as possible to exercise their rights and fulfil their obligations, and to take part of the governmental service”. It is also partly the name of their official report on the “future of e-governance” to the government: *Statens Offentliga Utredningar 2010:62 Så enkelt som möjligt för så många som möjligt. Under konstruktion – framtidens e-förvaltning* [Swedish Government Official Reports 2010:62 As simple as possible for as many people as possible. Under construction - the future of e-government]. One of the key points is that it should be easier for individuals and agencies to find and share their files and other information.⁸⁴ The Swedish National Archive has therefore concluded a side project called “e-Arkiv och e-Diarium” [the e-Archive and e-Diarium project]. The objective of the project was mainly to develop common specifications for government agencies for transferring digital records between records management systems and to an e-archive. Another project called “My pages” was at the same time executed by the Swedish Social Insurance Agency.

⁸² Statens offentliga utredningar 2009, p.25.

⁸³ Statens offentliga utredningar 2009, p.33.

⁸⁴ Statens offentliga utredningar 2010, p.15.

Uppsala Municipality did its own study on a municipal e-archive in 2011. The report, which is signed by two archivists, states that an e-archive is a “prerequisite for an effective e-government in which citizens, companies and other organizations acquires long-term access to information about municipal case management and operations in order to use their democratic right and to be able to make the right choices in different situations” and that a functioning e-archive is a prerequisite for the municipality’s need to have a "My Pages" function on the web where individual citizens can see their cases. The study specifically refers to the Swedish National Archive’s e-Archive and e-Diarium project and is firmly anchored in the archival discourse. It discusses the long-term preservation of records regardless of medium, migration, appraisal, authenticity, reliability et cetera.⁸⁵ The municipal e-archive should thus – using the Swedish National Archives definition – be a “system för långsiktig informationsförsörjning” [system for long-term information management] that will be an active part of the organizations information services and support that information can be retrieved, provided, administered, reused, and in some cases deleted over time. To achieve maximum benefit for Uppsala Municipality, the study states that the e-archive has to be a municipal wide system that manages *all* municipal information.⁸⁶ Unfortunately the study does not discuss Open Data or records *made available* on the Internet. One appendix named *Stadsarkivets anvisningar 2011:4 Hantering av webbsidor och sociala medier* [City Archive’s instructions 2011:4 Management of web pages and social media] does offer information about the management of municipal web pages, however this policy basically only discusses the capture of information on web pages and social media (through screenshots “two times per year or upon larger changes” for instance).⁸⁷ That is, it does not discuss information that is made accessible on the Internet.

In fact, according to an interview with an archivist at Uppsala City Archive in a 2014 study that compared various e-archive solutions in Swedish municipalities, Uppsala City Archive has only published “some” information on the municipality’s internal website “Insidan” [The Inside/Intranet] and has only received “a couple of

⁸⁵ Uppsala kommun 2011a, p.5.

⁸⁶ Uppsala kommun 2011a, p.7.

⁸⁷ Uppsala kommun 2011b, p.2.

records, such as excel files” digitally, but that they besides that had not received or made available any digital material.⁸⁸ The e-archive study makes the situation clearer, it states that “some organizations” within the municipality “preserve electronic information” by printing the electronic record and scanning the print document thus “taking a detour through paper”.⁸⁹

Open Data is however thoroughly defined and examined in a later series of documents and policies written from an IT-perspective.

In the Municipal Executive Committee plan for 2013 one of the goals was to create a digital strategy for services in Uppsala municipality. The draft, which later was approved as the municipal digital strategy on the 9th of April 2014, states that the national digital agenda *IT i människans tjänst – En digital agenda för Sverige* [IT in the service for people – A digital agenda for Sweden] and the national strategy *Med medborgaren i centrum: Regeringens strategi för en digitalt samverkande statsförvaltning* [With the citizen in centre: The Government’s strategy for a digital collaborative public administration] as well as the digital policies and strategies from SALAR and Uppsala county, together with an situation assessment written in 2013, formed the basis of the municipal digital strategy. Both the draft and the digital strategy are signed by the municipal e-strategist.

The draft states that although the municipality had been working with e-governance for a longer period of time, the amount and intensity of that work had varied between different offices and administrations and relied on “personal commitment and interest”. The “digital is norm” objective, which according to the assessment was left rather undefined, resulted in various personal definitions of the objective. As a result a number of e-services that focused on “citizen input of information” and not on “process efficiency” were developed. A strategy that truly defines the “digital is norm” objective is according to the assessment a vital challenge.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Sjöberg 2014, p.35.

⁸⁹ Uppsala kommun 2011a, p.6.

⁹⁰ Uppsala kommun 2014e, p.4.

The focus of the digital strategy itself is on what the municipality wants to achieve with e-governmental work. With effective e-government, it is argued that Uppsala Municipality can:

- Increase the accessibility and service to citizens.
- Freeing administrative and business resources by streamlining internal processes.
- Streamline processes by letting the electronics do the job that does not require a manual intervention.
- Assure the quality of information by regulations are built into the solutions.
- Make it easier for external parties when contacting Uppsala.⁹¹

It further states that although there is an uncertainty what the future might hold the authors can see the following tendencies in society:

- Internet will play an even greater role in our lives.
- Social media will be even more developed.
- Public databases will mainly be open.
- Internet will be even more accessible.
- Citizens will place greater demands on service.

These “tendencies” are however ostensibly quoted from a magazine article and not from any higher-level governmental policy.⁹²

Both the digital strategy and the draft list three separate goals with e-governance development. They are all based on goals listed by SALAR but distinct for Uppsala municipality. Although they are phrased differently in each document the content of each goal is more or less the same; however, the draft is more elaborative and explains to a further degree the challenges with development of e-governance in Uppsala municipality.

⁹¹ Uppsala kommun 2014c, p.3.

⁹² See Offentliga Affärer 2010.

The first goal is to “help to give citizens a simpler life and quicker official feedback” through the municipality’s digital services. This goal is clearly based upon the topics that are discussed by the e-Government Delegation and SALAR. That is, to increase transparency and improve cooperation between government and citizens:

Development of the digital services should be based on user needs. By creating digital services that are easy to find, easy to use, similar and coordinated with other public actors, citizens contact the municipality is simplified. The municipality's digital services should be available wherever the users are, whether it's at home, at work or elsewhere. The services will be available in the digital channels that are most appropriate based on the nature of the services and target audience [...] Allowing citizens to follow their cases creates a transparency that reduces ambiguity, uncertainty, and results in more efficient handling of cases.⁹³

Whereas the first goal had transparency and cooperation in mind, the second goal more noticeably wants to promote opportunities for innovation in the municipality: “Objective: the municipality is to promote a more open management that supports participation and provide opportunities for innovation”.⁹⁴ One of the ways to reach this objective is to release municipal information as Open Data: “The municipality's data should as much as possible be made available and opened to increase the opportunities for innovation and development of services provided by external actors”.⁹⁵ The release of municipal records via the web page uppsala.se is according to the draft one example of this development, the possible release of municipal geodata another.⁹⁶

The draft does mention the importance of archival principles in e-government. It states that to achieve an effective e-government it must be assured that there is digital support for the entire business process including archiving of information. Essentially it is problems generated with a paper-based system for a largely digitalized work environment that is addressed:

⁹³ Uppsala kommun 2014c, p.5.

⁹⁴ Uppsala kommun 2014c, p.5.

⁹⁵ Uppsala kommun 2014c, p.5.

⁹⁶ Uppsala kommun 2014b, p.7.

It takes time to print and package paper documents, and work seems pointless for information stored in IT systems where the information was created and handled digitally right up until the time for filing.⁹⁷

The establishment of a municipal-wide e-archive “which supports the entire process” is therefore vital according to the draft.⁹⁸ This entire section is for some reason missing from the digital strategy, although the digital strategy states that two focus areas are “processororienterad verksamhetsutveckling” [process oriented organizational development] and “digitala tjänster som ger stöd för verksamhets processer” [digital services for organizational processes].⁹⁹

The third and last goal is the advancement of quality and efficacy in the municipality through digital services. According to the draft, the two problem areas are lack of cooperation between municipal organizations and a lack of competency in the municipality:

There is a lack of adequate skills to operate and manage e-government efforts in the municipality. This has led to different solutions in different offices. Responsibility and commitment to the field of mixed among economists, IT-resources and public information officers. Many are self-taught and have not had the opportunity to pursue issues in a good way.¹⁰⁰

However, the document does not mention archivists even though many of the challenges presented indeed relate to archival principles.

The Municipal Executive Committee also passed a policy document called *Anvisning Öppna data i Uppsala kommun* [Direction Open Data in Uppsala Municipality] on the same day as the digital strategy. This rather short document, signed by the same e-strategist as the digital strategy together with an it-strategist, is more or less an explanation on what Open Data is and some fundamental criteria for Open Data, i.e. Open Data should be complete, accessible, free, et cetera. Record is said to be used

⁹⁷ Uppsala kommun 2014b, p.7.

⁹⁸ Uppsala kommun 2014b, p.7.

⁹⁹ Uppsala kommun 2014c, p.6.

¹⁰⁰ Uppsala kommun 2014b, p.10.

as it is defined in the PSI-law. However, the term information is also used as a synonym for record. That is, the policy makes to distinction between record and information.

The last two paragraphs are also important. The policy states that since “e-archiving takes place from operational system to an e-archive” the municipal e-archive “can contribute to the publication of Open Data”. However, Open Data that is published from the operational system directly to the web is “a question of web publishing, and not archiving”. The policy argues that since “the webs are archived” it should be clear “which Open Data has been published”.¹⁰¹ No further information on how this recordkeeping function takes place practically is given but as we’ve seen earlier the web is seemingly archived through screenshots “two times per year or upon larger changes”.

3.3. City of Västerås

Västerås Stad or *Västerås Kommun* [The City of Västerås] is Sweden’s fifth most populated municipality with 143 702 citizens. Although the City of Västerås calls itself “city” there isn’t any real difference between city and municipality other than in name. Indeed, in legislative issues they are bound to use the term municipality.¹⁰² The municipality is located roughly 100 kilometres west of Stockholm. It is governed by an unusual coalition of red-green-centre-right parties, which together has 31 of the 61 seats in the municipal assembly.¹⁰³ Although the City of Västerås is also part of the growing Stockholm region it faces, according to the latest budget, “big challenges” economically the years to come. The costs are estimated to be too high; the urban management office’s assessment is that action required equivalent to 1.5 per cent of the financial

¹⁰¹ Uppsala kommun 2014a, p.3.

¹⁰² The nation-wide Kommunalreformen [Municipal Reform] of 1971 removed all differences between cities, municipalities and “köpingar” [market towns]. Currently 14 municipalities in Sweden, including Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö, call themselves “cities” although they are municipalities. For more information see *Sveriges Författningsamling* 2007:229 Tillkännagivande om länens indelning i kommuner [Swedish Code of Statutes 2007:229 Announcement Regarding the Division of Counties into Municipalities].

¹⁰³ Namely the Swedish Social Democratic Party, the Green Party, the Centre Party [Centerpartiet] and the Christian Democrats [Kristdemokraterna].

framework in 2016 to reach a balanced budget corresponding to the city's financial goals.¹⁰⁴

The central archive in the municipality is Västerås stadsarkiv [the Västerås City Archive]. It naturally has the same general responsibility for recordkeeping in the municipality as the Uppsala City Archive has in Uppsala Municipality since they are compelled by the same legislature.

3.4. City of Västerås – Policy

Like Uppsala Municipality, the City of Västerås publishes data via Kolada. In fact, the City of Västerås was one of the municipalities that helped develop the publication of municipal Open Data through Kolada.¹⁰⁵

The City of Västerås' long-term municipal vision, which stretches until 2050, is in comparison with Uppsala Municipality's policy more heavily based on an environmental approach. This idea permeates the entire policy, whether it is urban development, tourism or commerce that is in focus. The proximity to Mälaren – Sweden's third largest and historically most important lake – and rising water levels due to global warming is undoubtedly a major cause; but, one also gets a sense that the politicians and policy-makers in Västerås, historically an industrial city, wants to rebrand the city as a “green” and “eco-friendly” municipality:

The overall goal is to make Västerås attractive and ecologically, economically, socially and culturally sustainable. The interaction between urban and rural areas is important. People and their activities and needs are central.¹⁰⁶

In fact, twelve specific strategies for municipal development (to be an “attractive regional city”; to offer a “creative commercial climate”, to offer “affordable housing for all citizens”, et cetera) are all based on the fundamental goal of a “sustainable and climate-smart Västerås”.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ Västerås stad 2014a, p.1.

¹⁰⁵ Rådet för främjande av kommunala analyser 2015, [No pagination].

¹⁰⁶ Västerås stad 2012d, p.12.

¹⁰⁷ Västerås stad 2012d, p.16.

The 173-page long vision doesn't however address Open Government or Open Data specifically or even records, data and information in general. It briefly considers IT-infrastructure, such as the necessity of high-speed Internet in rural areas outside of Västerås city, but states that the municipality in comparison to the rest of the country has an advanced digital infrastructure.¹⁰⁸ Overall, it seems to be based upon an environmental discourse that discusses the importance of ecological solutions to municipal efforts rather than an Open Data discourse that speaks of transparency, cooperation and democracy.

The vision above is a continuation from a previous vision called *Västerås 2026 – Staden utan gränser* [Västerås 2026 – The City without borders]. Similar to the long-term vision, this rather short presentation is not based upon an Open Government discourse like the municipal vision presented by Uppsala Municipality. Rather it is based upon the same environmental discourse as the long-term vision. The proximity to Mälaren and the industrial heritage are combined to showcase Västerås unique prospects: “the physical development of Västerås is famous since, among other things, we successfully combined modern architecture with the human need for closeness to water and nature”.¹⁰⁹

However, although the policy above does not address either Open Data or recordkeeping, it nevertheless “forms a basis” for the municipality’s current digital strategy *e-strategisk handlingsplan för Västerås stad 2012-2015* [e-strategic Action Plan for the City of Västerås 2012-2015]:

The purpose of the e-strategic action plan is for the city to have a common tool to develop the city's e-policy, which is based on the city's vision Västerås 2026 – city without borders.¹¹⁰

The digital strategy above is however also based on a “general strategic plan” for the municipality called *Strategisk plan för Västerås stad 2012-2015* [Strategic Plan for the City of Västerås 2012-2015], but this plan does not discuss Open Data or recordkeeping either; however, it does shortly state that since municipal digital services are increasing, and the municipal web-page is “perceived as one of the best in Sweden”,

¹⁰⁸ Västerås stad 2012d, p.66.

¹⁰⁹ Västerås stad 2011, p.2.

¹¹⁰ Västerås stad 2012a, p.4.

cooperation between citizens and policy-makers are “on the right track”.¹¹¹ Unfortunately, the strategic plan does not mention what those services are, how they increase, or in what way the municipal web page is considered one of the best. “Information” is, nevertheless, considered vital to achieve cooperation and transparency: “The information must be presented so that it can be accessible to all [citizens]. The citizens of Västerås should feel satisfied with the information they receive about the city's operations”.¹¹²

The fundamental idea behind of the digital strategy is therefore twofold. The City of Västerås should be a municipality imbued with “accessibility, equal treatment and transparency through interaction, dialogue and democracy” and a municipality that is “built upon sustainable patterns of life and work and lifelong learning that is driven by the symbiosis between man, technology and information”.¹¹³ The higher-level governmental policies that influenced the strategy also differ from the policies that were used in Uppsala municipality. While both municipalities state that the governmental *IT i människans tjänst – En digital agenda för Sverige* [IT in the service for people – A digital agenda for Sweden] and SALAR’s *Strategi för e-samhället* [Strategy for the e-society] were used in the creation of the strategy, the City of Västerås’ digital strategy also state that *IT-för en grönare förvaltning – agenda för IT för miljön* [IT for a greener government – agenda for IT for the environment] has “influenced” and “inspired” the strategy.¹¹⁴

The policy also states that it has a “holistic view” and that it therefore does not describe specific “IT-parts” but “a whole”. That whole clearly is the “sustainability” found in the long-term visions and general strategic plan. Indeed, in the beginning of the strategy it is stated that since one of the goals in the general strategic plan is to be “Sweden’s best eco-municipality”, the strategy helps to meet this goal by being “infused

¹¹¹ Västerås stad 2012c, p.8.

¹¹² Västerås stad 2012c, p.8.

¹¹³ Västerås stad 2012a, p.4.

¹¹⁴ Västerås stad 2012a, p.6.

with a sustainable approach”.¹¹⁵ It should serve as a framework for subsequent work with Green IT:

To work actively with the Green IT means that sustainable processes and practices are promoted. E-government work is a natural part of a sustainable work through its focus on e-services and digital approaches that reduce paper consumption and the need for travel but also focuses on sustainable work practices in a broader perspective. By allowing e-government work to be characterized by a sustainable approach gives Västerås the opportunity to be at the forefront of low-carbon work and to serve as a model for other municipalities.¹¹⁶

Indeed, this approach does permeate the entire strategy. For instance, when the topic “cooperation and sustainable development for good living” is described in the digital strategy one of the goals of said topic is to ensure that every citizen in the City of Västerås should ”have access to healthy water and natural areas”.¹¹⁷

Making the municipality’s information accessible for further use is stated as necessary to “allow for more actors to develop new services for the benefit of citizens and businesses”. However, the strategy does not discuss Open Data, Public Sector Information or the PSI-law, but it does shortly discuss the importance of Public Records “to ensure an increase in efficiency and to satisfy the need for a demand-driven information management”. In all, the strategy lists four goals to support development in this area:

- To create an e-archive for rational management and preservation of the municipality's public records
- Create tools for demand-driven digitization and publication
- Implement measures aimed at reducing the growth rate of the used digital storage space
- To make municipal information available for further use based on the municipal guidelines.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ Västerås stad 2012a, p.6.

¹¹⁶ Västerås stad 2012a, p.6.

¹¹⁷ Västerås stad 2012a, p.11.

¹¹⁸ Västerås stad 2012a, p.9.

Since the term information isn't defined in the strategy – the term data isn't used at all – is it impossible to know what type of information is to be made available for further use. The term record is clearly used to mean Public Record (since it is used with the Swedish prefix “offentlig” and “allmän”, both meaning public, twice) and therefore a distinction is made – whether or not wittingly – between information and record.

In 2014 the City of Västerås concluded its study on a municipal e-archive. The study states that a municipal e-archive is a prerequisite both for e-government activities, control and management as well as of citizens' trust in e-government. It also emphasizes that the organizational benefits are in focus and that an e-archive is “not only about long-term, passive storage”. Information – used as a synonym for the term record – is seen a resource that must be able to be “re-searched, attained, administered and re-used by different interests”.¹¹⁹

The study is based – together with “the vision of an effective e-governance” which undoubtedly refers to the policies above – on a previous analysis made in accordance with something named the PENG-model, a Swedish innovation that stands for “Prioritera Enligt Nyttogrunder” [Prioritize According to Commercial Grounds]. The analysis was written by municipality's chief archivist, an IT-archivist, an e-strategist, and several others. It states that an e- archive is an “integral part” of an organization's entire IT-architecture and is the “foundation” of the IT infrastructure. While the study states that there are several important benefits such as a common solution for information management in the municipality, an easier access to the information in the archive, both for citizens and governmental workers, is seen as the most important benefit.¹²⁰

The current situation, in which electronic records are kept in various systems throughout the municipality, which means that there are activities and operations systems that have never supplied information to the City Archives, is perceived as problematic.¹²¹ However in comparison with several other municipalities the City of

¹¹⁹ Västerås stad 2014b, p.1-3.

¹²⁰ Västerås stad 2012b, p.3.

¹²¹ Västerås stad 2014b, p.9.

Västerås is according to the study well prepared for the introduction of an e-archive since “many internal routines and activities” already are in place.¹²²

3.5. City of Stockholm

Stockholms stad or *Stockholms kommun* [The City of Stockholm] is a municipality in Stockholm County, the most populous municipality in Sweden with circa 914 000 citizens, as well as the capital of Sweden.¹²³ Geographically, Stockholm Municipality comprises the central part of the capital (the inner-city) as well as the southern and western suburban parts *Söderort* [South Stockholm] and *Västerort* [West Stockholm]. *Statistiska Centralbyrån* [Statistics Sweden] defines Metropolitan Stockholm as all of the twenty-six municipalities in Stockholm County while the Stockholm urban area is usually defined as the ten central municipalities around the City of Stockholm together with the City of Stockholm itself.¹²⁴ Like the City of Västerås, The City of Stockholm is legally a municipality with the official proper name Stockholm Municipality, however the Municipal Assembly has decided to use the name City of Stockholm whenever possible. The municipality is governed by a Municipal Assembly with 101 members. The political majority is composed of a left-green coalition together with the feminist party *Feministiskt Initiativ* [Feminist Initiative].¹²⁵

The City of Stockholm is Sweden’s financial centre as well as the centre of the economic region called Stockholm Region. Stockholm is home to Sweden's foremost stock exchange, the Stockholm Stock Exchange, international companies such as Ericsson and H&M as well as numerous Swedish banks. Despite the latest economic recession Stockholm has continued to develop positively; indeed according to the latest budget industry and commerce in the City of Stockholm has continued to grow even stronger compared to the rest of the country during the last couple of years.¹²⁶

¹²² Västerås stad 2014b, p.18.

¹²³ Statistiska Centralbyrån 2015, [No pagination].

¹²⁴ Statistiska Centralbyrån 2005, [No pagination].

¹²⁵ The other parties in the coalition are the Swedish Social Democratic Party [Sveriges socialdemokratiska arbetareparti], the Left Party [Vänsterpartiet] and the Green Party [Miljöpartiet de Gröna]. For more information see:

<http://www.stockholm.se/OmStockholm/Politik-och-demokrati/>

¹²⁶ Stockholms stad 2015a, p.19.

Stockholm stadsarkiv [Stockholm City Archives] manages and preserves records from the City of Stockholm, as well as Stockholm County on behalf of the National Archives.¹²⁷

3.6. City of Stockholm – Policy

In the municipal vision *Vision 2030* [Vision 2030] the cooperation between citizens and government via digital services is emphasized:

In Stockholm there is access to a public service of the highest quality [...] The people of Stockholm have great potential to influence the design of service and may be supported by well-developed web solutions to choose from a variety of caregivers and schools, both municipal and privately administered. The city provides information, is available, the opportunity to choose for yourself is available around the clock.¹²⁸

That is, according to Vision 2030, the citizens' needs, interests and choices should influence the overall development of Stockholm. The municipal organizations should therefore be adjusted to meet their needs and expectations. Much like the other municipal visions it does not discuss Open Government in very specific terms. The municipal e-strategy, written in 2009, does however extend the approach and more clearly defines the goals for the municipal developments in regards to Open Government. Indeed, the strategy summarizes the approach of the vision in the following overall objectives, expressed as the “basis of modern e-government”:

- The City of Stockholm will offer a wide range of services in the form of electronic services for the benefit of residents and business owners to provide more quality and efficient service.
- The City of Stockholm, in collaboration with other municipalities in the region, counties and external suppliers and providers will offer service based on the resident's life situation.
- The use of IT will improve the efficiency of Stockholm's organizations and act as a tool for business development and offer opportunities for effective collaboration within the city and in relation to other municipalities, counties and others where the cooperation affects citizens' profit.

¹²⁷ See <http://www.stadsarkivet.stockholm.se/om-oss/>

¹²⁸ Stockholms stad 2015b, p.8.

Practically, this is to be achieved in four different areas: “a focus on residents' and business' needs”; ”service and collaboration throughout various organizations”; “development of modern e-governance”; and “technical requirements and IT standardization”. The first of these areas relates to an increased cooperation between citizens and government. A number of goals are listed as important, including a new interface for the website Stockholm.se and the possibility for citizen’s have a so-called “My Pages”:

The city's website should provide a clear overview of the city's support and services, and open the opportunity for dialogue, transparency and activity [...] The city's website will develop opportunities for interaction with the city and make it easier for residents and businesses once applications, notifications and notices can be handled electronically.¹²⁹

That is, not only should cooperation between citizens and government increase, transparency is considered equally important. Indeed, the strategy states that: “political decisions and matters should be easy to find and follow” and that the way to achieve this is trough ”Web-based tools” that ”will be offered for the storage and retrieval of information and records”. The strategy states that while it should be “easy to take part in political decisions” these cases and their associated records must be permitted by *Offentlighets och sekretesslagen* [Public Access to Information and Secrecy Act] and *Personuppgiftslagen* [Personal Data Act].¹³⁰

The other goals focus on the need for service and collaboration throughout various organizations within the municipality and other municipalities and counties. The basis for the development of a common IT-support is joint work with processes, IT-architecture, rules and regulations and adherence to established standards. The fundamental goal is to increase efficiency trough digitalization and standardization. The

¹²⁹ Stockholms stad 2009, p.7.

¹³⁰ Stockholms stad 2009, p.9. The Public Access to Information and Secrecy Act contains provisions that supplement the provisions contained in the Freedom of the Press Act on the right to obtain official documents, for example provisions on the obligation of public authorities to register official documents, appeals against decisions of authorities, etc. See Justitiedepartementet 2009. The Personal Data act is aimed at preventing the violation of personal integrity by the processing of personal data. See Justitiedepartementet 2006.

strategy argues that “e-government means business development in public administration that takes advantage of information and communication technologies combined with organizational change and new skills” and that the municipality's transition from a “*förvaltningsorganisation*” [public administration] to a “*serviceorganisation*” [public service organisation] is becoming clearer.¹³¹

When the e-strategy was approved in 2009 an e-archive project was already underway. This project, called *Navet* [The Nave], was initiated in 2007 when the Stockholm City Archives requested a study on the advantages of an e-archive for the municipality. The final report for *Navet*, released in 2011, quotes three goals from the e-strategy as important ideas for the project. Firstly that IT should facilitate access to municipal information and services:

The city's residents and other partakers should have easy access to quality assured information and employees should have access to well functioning and interacting IT support that facilitates and streamlines the daily work. The goal is to make it as easy as possible for as many people as possible.¹³²

The last sentence is as previously noted taken directly from the e-Government Delegation report and summarizes their idea of the future of e-governance as a place where citizens fully can exercise their rights and responsibilities and take part of governmental services through the Internet. The second goal is to “prioritize rational and standardized information management”. By creating efficient and cost-effective information management, with a comprehensive regulatory framework, the idea is to release information from the then-current systems and make it secured for future needs. The third and final goal is to coordinate governmental procurement and development in the IT-sector by increasing standardization, structures and formats. The *Navet* project thus involved the creation of an e-archive for long-term storage of information and to identify and develop common information standards, conceptual models, policies and metadata directories. As a result, two separate “tracks” were followed. One was the creation of an e-archive and the other was called GIF, or “*gemensam informationsförsörjning*” [common information management] for the whole

¹³¹ Stockholms stad 2009, p.11.

¹³² Stockholms stad 2011a, p.6.

municipality.¹³³ It thus successfully combines the goals from the e-strategy into an archival discussion. As we will see later on, the policy on Open Data is similarly successful in discussing Open Data in an archival discourse.

Since 2009 the City of Stockholm has made large amounts of Open Data available. According to the firm PwC, who on behalf of Vinnova made a study of the demand for Open Data in Sweden, the City of Stockholm accounts for about one-third of all the data sets that have been made available in Sweden so far: 206 out of 655. In fact, that is approximately twice as many data sets as all other Swedish municipalities have made available together.¹³⁴ The policy document that defines the use of Open Data in the City of Stockholm is a document called “*Vidareutnyttjande av öppen data från Stockholms stad*” [Re-use of open data from the City of Stockholm]. According to the document, the Municipal Executive Committee decided to delegate the creation of an action plan for the implementation of the intentions in the PSI-directive to “*stadsdirektören*” [the City manager]. The purpose of the document is thus to present an action plan for implementation of the PSI-law and “*lagen om geografisk miljöinformation*” [law concerning geographical environmental information] in the City of Stockholm. This would, according to the policy, create a possibility for the municipality to enable use for the citizens and businesses in the municipality by making the municipality’s information accessible in digital form.¹³⁵

The background section of the policy solely discusses the Swedish Freedom of Information Act and its definition of the term record.¹³⁶ That way, it is clear that all subsequent work must be based upon that legal definition of records. (It actually adds

¹³³ Stockholms stad 2011a, p.6.

¹³⁴ pwc 2014, p.32. The report does state that of out 655 data sets around 47% per cent are municipal data sets, the remainder are data sets made available by government boards and to a lesser extent private corporations. The municipal data sets are according to pwc made available by twelve municipalities including the City of Stockholm, however SALAR state that over 50 municipalities use the municipal database Kolada. See Sveriges Kommuner och Landsting 2014, [No pagination].

¹³⁵ Stockholms stad 2011b, p.3.

¹³⁶ Stockholms stad 2011b, p.3-4.

that a computer program can be considered a record, even though that is not the case according to the so-called PSI-law.)¹³⁷

Unlike the Open Data policy made by Uppsala municipality, which basically only lists a number of criteria for Open Data, this document fully explains Open Data, its relation to Swedish legislation and the higher-level policies governing it. It also proposes an action plan for the continued release of Open Data via an open portal online, which is then linked to then City Archives e-archive.¹³⁸ In other words, the policy does offer a form of implementation of Open Data release.

The first step is to make an inventory of “existing Open Data in the city”. The purpose is to make “these data” available in “digital form” for external use and reuse. The policy states that the municipality has large amounts of policies, documents and plans “which can also be published”. The second plan is to create a checklist for review so that the publication itself does not violate any laws or standards – all data must therefore be reviewed before publication online. The third step is to create an Open Data portal as mentioned above.¹³⁹ The fourth step is to create rules for access, methods, and file and document formats for each data set. The policy states that the so-called Five Stars Open Data should be used to the largest extent possible.¹⁴⁰ The Five Stars Open Data was created by Tim Berners-Lee and can be used to assess the degree of reusability of Open Data. The stars are awarded accordingly from one to five stars:

- Available on the web (whatever format) *but with an open licence, to be Open Data.*
- Available as machine-readable structured data (e.g. Excel instead of image scan of a table).
- As (2) plus non-proprietary format (e.g. CSV instead of Excel).
- All the above plus, Use open standards from W3C (RDF and SPARQL) to identify things, so that people can point at your stuff.
- All the above, plus: Link your data to other people’s data to provide context.¹⁴¹

¹³⁷ Svensk Författningssamling 2010, [No pagination].

¹³⁸ Stockholms stad 2011b, p.8-9.

¹³⁹ That portal has since then been released. See <http://open.stockholm.se>

¹⁴⁰ Stockholms stad 2011b, p.8-9.

¹⁴¹ Berners-Lee 2006, [No pagination]. Italics in original.

That is, the highest star awarded is to provide context by linking data. The policy also states that it is necessary to “determine the digital source” of the data. The fifth step in the municipal policy is to make an inventory of “which possible data and records the city has” and to make a list or register in the form of a “net list” for municipal organization. The sixth and final step is to investigate the criteria for fees for published data.¹⁴²

3.7. Discussion and conclusion

Geiger and von Lucke argue that transparency, participation and collaboration are the main issues of the integration of citizens in the paradigm of Open Government.¹⁴³ Indeed, when analyzing municipal policies these three issues are often the main objectives. However, the motives, aims, and goals of open government are rather different in the three municipal visions and digital strategies. The policies regarding Open Government and Open Data thus vary to an extent. Uppsala municipality focuses on increased cooperation between citizen and government through a “constant dialogue” between the citizens and the municipality. This is to a large extent based upon the ideas expressed in the Open Data discourse, by the e-Government Delegation official reports for instance. The benefits and challenges of Open Government are not discussed to this extent in the archival discourse as apparent in the municipal study on e-archives; rather it discusses the benefits of a municipal-wide archive for the various municipal organizations. Indeed, when Annika Sjöberg, in her study on e-archive solutions in Swedish municipalities, asked the municipal archivist at Uppsala City Archive whom the new e-archive would benefit the most, the answer was quite clearly “the internal user, that is the organizations themselves” and not the citizens (as other municipal archivists in Sweden apparently answered).¹⁴⁴

The City of Västerås is likewise divided between an archival discourse that views the e-archive is an integral part – perhaps even the foundation – of the municipality’s entire IT-architecture and another discourse that – with its “holistic view” – does not

¹⁴² Stockholms stad 2011b, p.9.

¹⁴³ Geiger & von Lucke 2012, p.265.

¹⁴⁴ Sjöberg 2014, p.41.

seem to see any specific benefits with Open Government and Open Data at all except to “ensure municipal sustainability”. Indeed, as Borglund and Engvall have previously noted, political ambitions regarding reuse of public records are greater than the legal obligations.¹⁴⁵ That is perhaps one of the reasons why the policies vary to such an extent. Zuiderwijk and Janssen noticed similar differences when analysing Open Data policies in seven Dutch governmental organizations. Key motivations, mission types, social and political context varied, which influenced the organization's attitude towards the development of an open data policy. The only real similarity concerned legislation. They argue that some organizations “are truly motivated to become more open by creating an open data policy, whereas others seem to view the creation of an open data policy more as an obligation”.¹⁴⁶

This seems to be the case in Sweden as well; the City of Stockholm has by far the most advanced municipal Open Data project in Sweden and, not surprisingly, the most developed policy for Open Data release. While all municipalities in the study has made data sets available to some extent, the City of Stockholm seems to be the only municipality that has a true motivation behind the release. As Conradie and Choenni argue when reflecting on the motivation behind Open Data release, it is clear that the aim should not be merely the release of data for its own sake. Rather, the ambition of Open Data release policy is to contribute to transparent government, innovation and increased public participation. That is, according to the authors, however easier said than done.¹⁴⁷

Another problem is naturally that the municipal policies generally do not speak of the implementation of Open Data. Indeed as Zuiderwijk and Janssen has noted much emphasis in policies is placed on the enforcement of European and national directives and legislation and on the publication of data, but less emphasis is placed on how this publication should create impact and public values. Since there are no clear guidelines how to implement open data policies, this may lead to less attention in becoming truly

¹⁴⁵ Borglund & Engvall 2014, p.171.

¹⁴⁶ Zuiderwijk & Janssen 2013, p.22.

¹⁴⁷ Conradie & Choenni 2014, p.516.

open and more heavily focus on the risks and the obligation to create an open data policy.¹⁴⁸

Because the field of open data is relatively new, and because many open data policies have only recently been developed and are still evolving considerably, evaluation of the impacts of open data policies and the extent to which they result in public value is complicated and does not yet provide many concrete results.¹⁴⁹ Without a more developed research method (e.g. interviews or surveys) I can not see to what extent the policies have had any “real” impact on the recordkeeping specialists working in the municipalities, but that is not the purpose of this study. Instead, the purpose of this study is to examine three Swedish municipalities’ e-governance developments by studying differences and similarities in the municipal policies and to question the rationales behind said policies. Because, as previously mentioned, the directives from higher levels of government are putting pressure onto local governments to find answers to such pressing questions in relation to open data. These questions might include what the challenges, potentials, barriers and impact of open data are.¹⁵⁰ Policies at this level has not really been examined before¹⁵¹ and while their impact (or lack of impact) on recordkeeping specialists might be important, I would argue that the policies still might produce a “whole series of effects in the real” using Foucault’s terminology. That is, even if they are not directly implemented they still have the possibility to inspire and inform individual behavior and crystalize into institutions. That is especially true for the municipal visions which, even though they do not often speak of archives or information technology, still inspire and motivate the municipal e-strategies for governance.

Returning to the issue of trust towards governmental institutions – which Yeo argues is waning in many western countries¹⁵² – Angela Evans and Adriana Campos states that a lot of the work in open government has emphasized data and information technologies supporting their access and usability but that “this data-driven focus has not been

¹⁴⁸ Zuiderwijk & Janssen 2013, p.22.

¹⁴⁹ Zuiderwijk & Janssen 2013, p.28.

¹⁵⁰ Conradie & Choenni 2014, p.510.

¹⁵¹ Zuiderwijk & Janssen 2013, p.17.

¹⁵² Yeo 2013, p.218.

proven to significantly increase citizen understanding of the complexities of issues and policies or their participation in relevant policy deliberations”¹⁵³.

If the primary goal of open government is to engage citizens, then current initiatives must be re-evaluated and new approaches explored – shifting beyond data delivery. Releasing volumes of data on a Web site without background on why and how it is collected, how it is organized, and its intended use, leaves citizens with herculean tasks of determining its relevance and reliability.¹⁵⁴

That might very well be the case in Sweden as well. Similarly, Harlan Yu and David Robinson argue that Open Government policies have blurred the distinction between “technologies of open data” and “politics of open government”. According to them Open Government and Open Data can each exist without the other:

A government can be an open government, in the sense of being transparent, even if it does not embrace new technology (the key question is whether stakeholders know what they need to know to keep the system honest). And a government can provide open data on politically neutral topics even as it remains deeply opaque and unaccountable. [...] The Hungarian cities of Budapest and Szeged, for example, both provide online, machine-readable transit schedules, allowing Google Maps to route users on local trips. Such data is both open and governmental, but has no bearing on the Hungarian government’s troubling lack of accountability. The data may be opening up, but the country itself is “sliding into authoritarianism.”¹⁵⁵

I believe that a greater deal of cooperation between archivist and other information specialist such as e-strategist would help to ensure that records made available as Open Data are authentic, relevant and reliable – and thus establish trust in both digital records and government. At this moment, archival questions about the authenticity and reliability of records are not really discussed in relation to Open Data except in Stockholm Municipality, which to some extent discusses the degree of reusability. Only the legislative issues related to Open Data are defined in the municipal policies. Issues related to authenticity and reliability, such as provenance, traceability and context are therefore to a large extent only discussed in the archival discourse.

¹⁵³ Evans & Campos 2013, p.172.

¹⁵⁴ Evans & Campos 2013, p.172.

¹⁵⁵ Yu & Robinson 2012, p.181.

To better understand Open Government initiatives and how they affect recordkeeping principles more research is needed. One way to achieve this is to do a more comprehensive study with a more developed methodology. Interviews with archivists and other recordkeeping specialists are naturally important, but the views of politicians and other policy-makers on Open Government and Open Data development are equally important since the public sector plays a vital role in the sustainability of the both the Open Government and the Open Data initiative. Personally I also believe that the *user* of Open Data is an equally important field of research. Without a good understanding of the users of Open Data and other e-governance developments, i.e. their interests and needs, the opportunities and benefits of Open Data might be unexploited.

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