

Appraisal Practice: Comparing England, Finland & Germany



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Structure

- Research process
- Definitions of appraisal
- Comparison: „Life“ of a document
- Comparison of appraisal practice
- Conclusion
- Recommendations
- References

Research Process

- Questions:
 - Who is involved in appraisal?
 - When does it take place?
 - Which tools exist in each country and how do they compare?
 - Are there special guidelines for electronic records?

Research Process

- Difficulties/Limitations:
 - No common vocabulary
 - Little English resources
 - Only information on participants' countries available
 - Limited research into realities of practice; only anecdotal evidence
 - Little experience of appraisal in practice

Research Process

- Scope of research:
 - Only compared England, Finland and Germany
 - Mainly focused on national archives
 - Idealized version of practice: limited to information taken from tools
 - Limited to elements of practice comparable across all three countries

Definitions

Appraisal

- **UK:** “Appraisal is the process of distinguishing records of continuing value from those of no further value so that the latter may be **eliminated**.”
(TNA, Appraisal Policy, 2004).
- **Germany:** Appraisal identifies records of **archival value** amongst those offered for transfer by an **agency**. (Menne-Haritz, Schlüsselbegriffe der Archivterminologie).
- **Finland:** “The **creators** of archives must specify the periods and methods of retention ... determine the preservation value of the documentary information already when it is created. This is called **appraisal in advance**, with the archival plan as a main tool.” (NAS).

Life of an English Record

DIGITAL AND
HYBRID
RECORDS BY
CREATORS
AND TNA

DEPARTMENT
TOGETHER
WITH TNA

TNA

CREATION

1st REVIEW

2nd REVIEW

THE NATIONAL
ARCHIVES (TNA)

ACTIVE PERIOD

Appraisal based on
future business use
+ awareness of
historical value

Appraisal based on
historical value

**INACTIVE
PERIOD**

**ORGANISATIONAL
BODY**

**DEPARTMENTAL
RECORDS CENTRE**

**ARCHIVAL
REPOSITORY**

Life of a Finnish Record

ORGANIZATION
TOGETHER
WITH NAS

FILLING IN
THE
METADATA TO
ERMS +
APPRAISAL

CREATING AMS

CREATING THE
DOCUMENT

ORGANIZATION'S
ARCHIVE OR
DISPOSAL

NATIONAL ARCHIVE
OR OTHER OR
DISPOSAL

RETENTION
PERIOD,
CONFIDENTIALITY,
FUNCTIONAL
CLASSIFICATION

**ACTIVE
PERIOD**

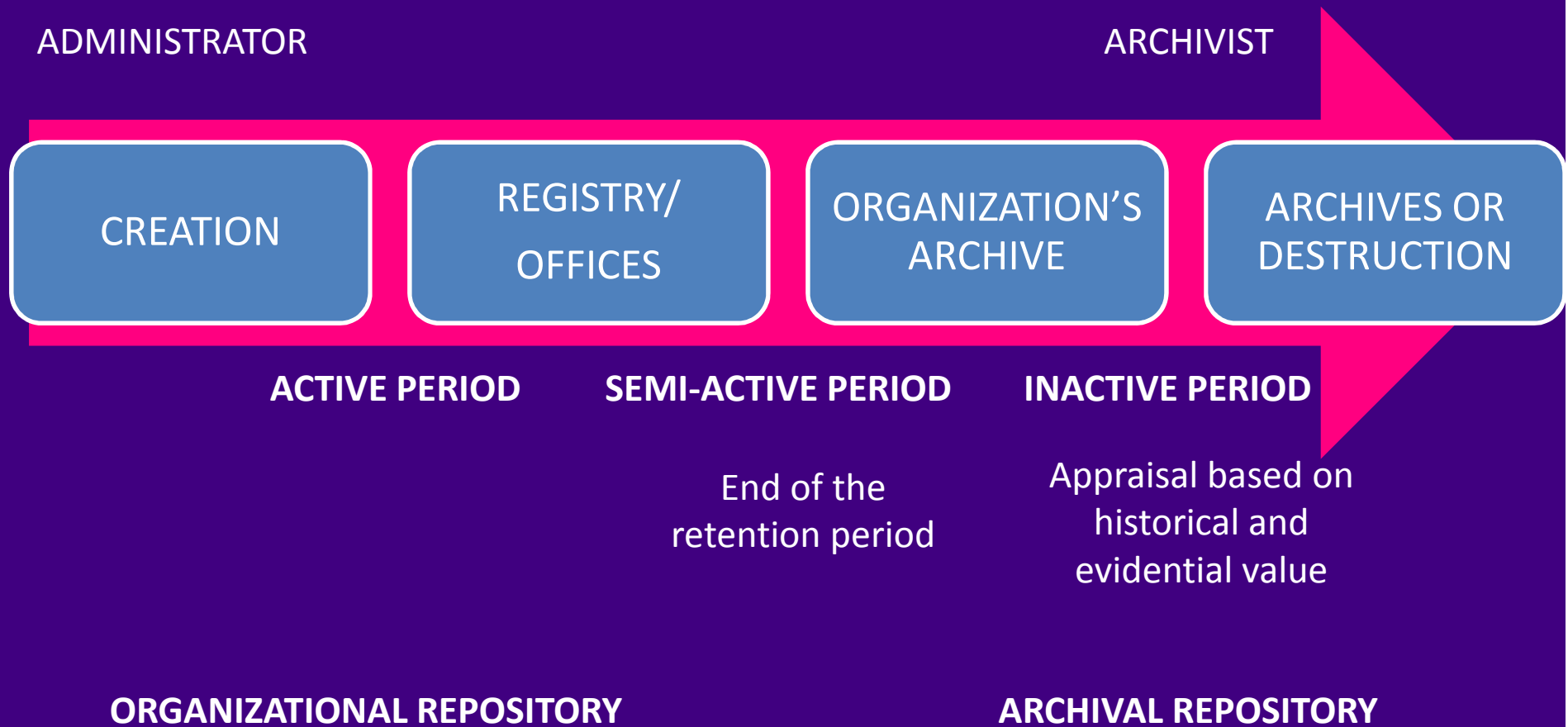
**SEMI-ACTIVE
PERIOD**

**INACTIVE
PERIOD**

ORGANIZATIONAL REPOSITORY

**ARCHIVAL
REPOSITORY**

Life of a German Record



Comparison of the Lives

- When is appraisal conducted?
 - England: 1st review 5 years, 2nd review 25 years
 - Finland: at the creation
 - Germany: at the end of the retention period
- Who conducts appraisal?
 - England: 1st review creator, 2nd review archivist
 - Finland: creator
 - Germany: archivist

Comparison of the Lives

Who has the most influence on appraisal?





Determined in advance	Not determined in advance	Determined in advance
Active	Passive	Active
Archivist absent	Archivist present only at appraisal	Archivist present
Framework created by archivist	Archivist + creators	Framework created by archivist
Comprehensive	Not comprehensive	Comprehensive
Detailed	Generic + non-specific	Detailed
One document	Many documents	One document
Records creator + NAS	Consultation TNA + department	Archivist (+ record creator opinion)
Legislation more precise	UK law general	Archivist must conduct appraisal

Comparison of Practices

Cultural differences

	Finland	Germany	England
Is there a difference between archives and RM in theory?	N	Y	Y
“ in practice?	N	Y	Y
“ in job roles?	N	Y	Y

Comparison of Practices

Law, organization and authority, part 1

	Finland	Germany	England
Is there a legal basis for appraisal?	Y	Y	Y
What % is kept permanently at state level?	10-15%	1% (target) <10% (reality)	4-5%
Are there any policies for appraisal of electronic records?	Y	Y	Y
Are there any strategies for appraisal of electronic records?	Y	N	N
Is there co-operation for appraisal with other repositories (across sectors)?	Y	Y	Y
Is there a minimum review period for appraisal policy?	Continual	N	Some

Comparison of Practices

Methods

	Finland	Germany	England
Is appraisal based on function?	Y	Y	Y
Is appraisal based on content?	Y	Y	Y
Is it recommended to document appraisal?	Y	Y	Y
Is there a minimum level for appraisal?	Document	File	File

Conclusions

- Comparisons were difficult, but we managed to establish the following points:
 - All countries have a legal basis for appraisal
 - Both functional and content-based approaches are used
 - Important differences between systems: stance on the continuum
- Comparable tools
 - Retention schedules
 - Strategies for local and central archives

Conclusions

- Other issues:
 - Many different approaches exist, but education is focused on national practice

Recommendations

- More research needed in practice
- Further comparative study
- More translations

References

- National Archives Service of Finland [NAS], Julkishallinnon Asiakirjatietojen Seulonta
- NAS, Ams-opas
- The National Archives [TNA], Acquisition and Disposition Strategy
- TNA, Appraisal policy
- Strategiepapier Bewertungsgrundsätze (Dokumentationsprofil) des Bundesarchivs für Unterlagen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland
- Arbeitshilfe: Erstellung eines Dokumentationsprofils für Kommunalarchive

Thank you for listening!

Any Questions?