Redrawing the Boundaries of Societal Memory: Introducing a Modified Macro-Appraisal Approach at The Great-West Life Assurance and London Life Insurance Companies by Martha McLeod

This thesis examines public sector archival appraisal theories and assesses their suitability for use in the in-house corporate archives of two large Canadian insurance corporations - The Great-West Life Assurance Company and the London Life Insurance Company. Three main theories are outlined: one in which records' creators, not archivists or the public, determine a record's value; one in which research needs determine the value of records; and the macro-appraisal approach - developed by Terry Cook for the National Archives of Canada - in which an archivist appraises the importance of the function which creates the records rather than the information content of the record itself. The development of corporate sponsors, access restrictions to repositories' records, and responsibilities of the private sector to society, compel the author to conclude that a corporate archives' responsibility is primarily to the corporation not the public. A modified macro-appraisal approach - eliminating its citizen-sate component - is chosen as the most suitable appraisal method for corporate records. Histories of these corporations and the development of their archives and records management programs are offered to help to investigate the implementation of macro-appraisal and provide context. The author identifies changes to organizational structure, resources, and prevalent corporate attitudes toward archiving and records management that are needed to make macro-appraisal viable and to ensure the preservation of the corporations' archival records.