Directions of Major Archives

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Let me start by giving a broad overview of the organizational structure and main services provided by the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD). Based on this description I will then close by saying a few words about new services to be developed in the coming years.

NSD was formally established in 1971 as an organ of the Norwegian Research Council for Science and the Humanities (NAVF).

NSD differs from most similar organizations in five ways:

- it is a <u>federally structured</u> facility with offices at all four universities in Norway and in the regional colleges at smaller centers across Norway. Its headquarters are at the University of Bergen;

- it has built up a <u>wide variety of data resources</u> in all fields of the social sciences: not only data from surveys, but also a large data bank for communes and census tracts, an archive of information about organizations, and a series of files on the recruitment and careers of various elite groups;

- it acts as the Census Bureau's distribution agency to the academic community;

- it has set up a special service responsible for contacts between the research community and the Governmental Data Inspectorate; and

- it has established a national service for information on current research in the social sciences.

In comparison with most other data facilities established in Europe and in the U.S. in the last two decades, NSD is probably the one giving the highest priority to book-keeping and "process produced" data. It is deliberately multisectoral and sees its primary task as to link up and to systematize data of different types; in contrast to the typical survey archive, it is not just a repository of separately documented data sets. It is even correct to say that it is only in the last few years that NSD has been active in archiving data from various research projects.

Among the larger data holdings of the NSD are:

The Commune Data Base 1769 - 1986

This data base contains statistics on all local administrative units in Norway since 1769, and is linked up with a computer cartography facility. This is the most widely used facility in the NSD and is constantly expanded and improved. A great deal of energy has been invested in developing effective solutions to the problems posed by <u>changes in boundaries and in the number of units</u>. The base includes detailed documentation of all such changes that have taken place.

Coordinate matrices for all commune boundaries have been established, and boundary segments

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are time coded to allow the production of maps for the units existing at any particular time period since 1769.

As of 1986 the Commune Data Base includes about 29,000 variables for each commune.

Census Tract data base 1950 – 1980

To allow analyses at a lower level of aggregation, NSD has also organized a system of data for the lowest level of official enumeration: the census tract. This data base includes the censuses of 1950, 1960, 1970 and 1980.

Census Data Bank 1960–1970–1980

10% of the population are followed through three censuses. The data base includes approximately 483,000 individuals.

Nordic Regional Data Base

The Social Science Research Councils of Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden have funded this data base.

Data are gathered and organised in systematic time–series for all five Nordic countries, including Iceland. The regional units of the data are counties:

    amt for Denmark
    län for Sweden and Finland
    fylker for Norway
    syslu for Iceland

Time series are created for all units from 1850 to 1980 for population census data, and the period 1945 to 1980 for other groups of data.

The data base system is composed of four elements:

- A set of data for the post–war period, consisting of 4–500 variables for each unit,

most of them organized in five–year time series:

- A longitudinal set of data based on population censuses 1850–1970/80 consisting of 100–150 variables organized in ten–year time series;

- A data set on population movements 1945–1980 consisting of an annual time series for each unit;

- A set of coordinate matrices for the boundaries of the units. This includes time–specific segments whereever there have been changes in the boundaries of units in the period from 1850 to 1970/80.

Criminal Justice Data

NSD also has an archive of Norwegian criminal justice data from 1860 to 1975.

Gallup Data

This collection is based on data from Norsk Gallup Institutt and Norsk Opinionsinstitutt. It contains their monthly surveys from 1964 to the present.

Election Studies

NSD has taken over the surveys conducted by the Norwegian Election Project. Data from the following national surveys are available from NSD: 1957, 1965, 1969, 1977, 1981.

Surveys from the Central Bureau of Statistics

Some of the most thorough surveys in Norway have been carried out by the Central Bureau of Statistics from 1967 to the present. The data from these surveys are at the disposal of academic users in Norway via NSD.

Members of Parliament

A data bank has been established containing information about all Members of Parliament and the Government. It covers the period from 1814 and includes information on father's occupation, education, early career, positions in legislative committees, etc.

Members of Official Committees

This collection includes information on all committees appointed by the various Ministries, as well as the members of such committees. It covers 1936, 1951, 1966, and every year from 1980 on.

Voluntary Associations

The file includes data on the 1300 largest voluntary associations in Norway. Data are available for the following years: 1964, 1967, 1970, 1976 and 1983.

Teaching Packages

NSD has given priority to the establishment of a set of teaching packages for both the universities and the regional colleges. In 1985, we also launched a program to establish working tools for the Norwegian high schools. The program has been accepted and is financed by the Norwegian Ministry of Education. Our first products under this program are now in use in the Norwegian schools.

Of the new NSD services established in the last five years, I will mention two:

Secretariat for Data Protection Affairs

The Norwegian Personal Data Registers Act (Lov om person-registre m.m.) came into force in 1980. In response to proposals from the Social Sciences, the Research Council in 1980 established the Secretariat for Data Protection Affairs as a part of NSD. The Secretariat was accepted as a broker between the research community (including medicine, the humanities,

etc.) and the Data Inspectorate, and was mandated to provide regular reports to the Data Inspectorate on all projects funded through the Research Council for which concession was required in accordance with the provisions of the Act. Since then, the Secretariat has been given the same mandate for all research carried out at the universities with grants from other sources than the Research Council.

Through agreements between the Data Inspectorate, the Research Council and the universities, NSD has also been given the responsibility of archiving data, provided there is reason to assume their usefulness in future research.

Information Service for On-Going Research

In 1984, the Research Council established an information service for Norwegian research, the aim of which is to improve awareness of current research; it is provisionally established for a period of five years.

The Information Service, in addition to general management, consists of one branch responsible for research in the Humanities, and one branch responsible for research in the Social Sciences. The Social Science branch is located at NSD.

The Service is active in all fields in which the Research Council is engaged, i.e. medical science, the humanities, social science and research for social planning.

The information is available in a data base for convenient access from users' own terminals. In addition there are printed catalogs for specific research areas.

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A small country with 4.5 million inhabitants and only four universities must coordinate national activities. For NSD it has meant that not only the Research Council but also the universities

and to a certain extent the regional colleges have chosen to concentrate their means for a social science infrastructure at NSD. Today, different parts of the Research Council cover about 75% of our expenses, while the universities and research projects cover the rest. We have today a professional staff of 15 and 4 clerical staff members. Including assistants etc., we estimate that about 28 full-year equivalents will be utilized in 1986.

Given our special relationships to the Research Council, the universities, the Census Bureau, and the Data Inspectorate, we have today a monopoly in the areas in which we are active.

We are striving to fulfill our responsibilities, to serve our users in the best possible way, and to make our services easily accessible to the scientific community. Until now, our data services have been made operative through local offices at each of the universities, located in the University computer centers. The network among the universities has not been seen as an alternative to direct service with our own staff present at the local university. Initiatives have, however, now been taken to make the network function better, and we expect that, within two years, some of our data holdings will be held in Bergen only, to be requested via the university network for local users at other institutions.

The services we provide today cover a broad range: from a data base with information on all social science projects and publications based on them, to our own data banks and data from all projects financed by the Research Council, to projects financed by other institutions, such as the universities and some of the ministries.

Given that researchers must deposit their data with NSD, they are informed of standards for documentation and data, which means a standardization among widely separated scholars. As the data holdings grow, there is an increased need for researchers to be kept informed of the data holdings and services. We act not only as

a distributor of data, but also as a broker of social science information.

We think that we have played an important role in giving researchers easy access to information and in introducing new technology. Through our work we have prevented duplication of data work, we have made data available free to various users, and we have stimulated cumulative research by making data from earlier projects available to new ones. Although our data have been mainly used in the social sciences, users in other fields such as history, medicine etc. are increasingly using our services. Our greatest growth potential within the researh community lies in serving these new groups. We are on our way from being a social science service to being a more general service for a broader group of users.

In the past, we have concentrated our efforts on providing service to the research community. During the last few years we have also started to serve local and federal agencies. These are now in the same position as the social science community five years ago, and they now want access to the services established for researchers. New recruits to governmental agencies often find that they, in their new position, do not have the easy access to data they had had as students. As students they were introduced to our services and now, they are still in need of access. We are discussing ways of serving both researchers and bureaucrats, and believe that we will agree on a model covering both needs. Presently we are also negotiating with the Norwegian Parliament to make our services available to both members of Parliament and their staff. By pooling resources from these different sources, all parties will have access to a much broader range of services. Our main efforts in the coming few years will be devoted to planning a shared information system for planners and researchers, and hopefully we can, within a few years, present a system serving a broader community than today.◻