

New forms of data for research – three examples from social science

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Denmark has a unique and comprehensive collection of register data covering many aspects of the Danish society. Altogether, data from 250 subject-areas are available for research purposes through Statistics Denmark. To facilitate register based research, Statistics Denmark gives access to de-identified micro data. The access is given as a secure remote access from the researcher's own computer through the Internet to servers at Statistics Denmark. This arrangement gives researchers a unique possibility to use micro data. SFI - The Danish National Centre of Social Research has many years of experience of using these data. The present paper briefly describes 3 examples of Danish social research projects from SFI – The Danish National Centre of Social Research that involve register data. The first study is based on a collection of labour market registers that contains information on people on transfer income, the measures used by the public authorities and a large number of data on personal characteristics and family background for individuals in the Danish population. The paper explains how these kinds of data can be used for fairly precise evaluations of the employment effect of measures used in Danish activation policy. The next study presented is an example of a research project that is based on one of the large databases that is created by Statistics Denmark. The database used in this example is the Integrated Database for Labour Market Research (IDA) that is designed to identify enterprises over time. The IDA-database contains information on the total population of people and enterprises in Denmark from 1980 and onwards. By adding these information with detailed information on hourly wages it has since the end of 1990'ties been possible to give a detailed description on factors connected to enterprises, individual characteristics and to the labour market that create wage differential among individuals. Data from Statistics Denmark can easily be linked to data from other sources, e.g. survey data or data from other governmental agencies. The last example demonstrates how a survey that examines the employment opportunities for people with disabilities gains valuable information by being connected to register data that could validate the information on changes in employment rate over time.

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