Abstract title: Towards Qualitative Data Preservation and Re-use – Policy Trends and Academic Controversies

Submitting Author: Zoran Slavnic
Position: Associate Professor
Affiliation: Institute for Research on Migration, Ethnicity and Society (REMESO)
Department of Social and Welfare Studies (ISV)
Institute address: Linkoping University, SE 60174 Norrkoping, Sweden
E-mail address: zoran.slavnic@liu.se
Country: Sweden

Other authors:

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Abstract:
The paper considers actual policy trends and academic controversies related to qualitative data preservation and re-use. In the first part of the paper the epistemological/ methodological, ethical/legal, ideological/political, and practical/technical aspects of the ongoing British debate about data archiving and re-use have been presented and commented. In the second part of the paper, the Swedish case has been briefly described and considered in light of the academic concerns that have been raised by the British debate. The situation in Sweden may tentatively be summarised in three points: First, there are many signs that the infrastructure for qualitative data archiving and re-use is being developed without the active participation of sufficient representatives of the qualitative research community; Second, there are many signs that developing the infrastructure takes as a point of departure neo-positivistic or foundational epistemology, treating qualitative data in the same way as quantitative data, with all the methodological problems resulting from this; and third there are very few, if any, signs that serious academic debate has started in relation to all the issues that have been raised by the corresponding debate in Britain.