

# What is the Purpose of Archives for Qualitative Sociological Research?: A Brief Introduction to SGU's Archiving Activity to Reinvent Prof. Fuse's Collection

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## 1. What is SORD?:

### Its initial purpose

Social and Opinion Research Database (SORD, also known as *Sodo*) started in 1990, when Faculty of Social Information was founded in Sapporo Gakuin University. This SORD project, promoted by researchers in sociology and information studies together, aimed to study the management of data and construct the database of social researches. By the end of 2000, SORD accumulated research information including the date of research, the method of sampling and the collection rate of questionnaires as many as 1,000 cases, which was considered to cover 20 to 40% of researches by members of the Japan Sociological Society (JSS). As a result, you can understand the actual situation of researches in the field of sociology, and search the research information on the web (Figure 1.1).

We can provide individual data sets about some of the researches, for example the national research about sex behavior and attitude of the youth, and the regional research about behavior of residents and

transmission of information in The Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake. We name the database mentioned above Japan Sociological Society Database (JSSDB) (Figure 1.2).

Gradually social science circles in Japan came to take interests in data archives. In 1996, Social Science Japan Data Archive (SSJDA) was founded in the Institute of Social Science at the University of Tokyo (Figure 1.3), and Social Research Database on Questionnaires (SRDQ) in the Graduate School of Human Sciences at Osaka University in 2003 (Figure 1.4). These archives and databases bring a tendency to secondary analysis, especially among graduate students and young



Figure 1.1 SORD's portal  
(<http://www.sgu.ac.jp/soc/sordhp/>)



Figure 1.2 report about Japan Sociological Society Database



Figure 1.3 SSJDA's portal  
(<http://ssjda.iss.u-tokyo.ac.jp/>)



Figure 1.4 SRDQ's portal  
(<http://srdq.hus.osaka-u.ac.jp/>)

researchers. Because of utility of raw data, we can analyze them from various points of view, such as time series comparison, and international comparison. In the

meantime, SORD changed its archival policy; for the Japan Sociological Society (the special committee on the qualifications for social researchers) offered us that they're ready to make the database of social researches by JSS members in 2002. Then we decided to become the regional data archives of Hokkaido.

## 2. Towards regional archives rooted in Hokkaido

Hokkaido has been the object of social researches, because it was the domestic colony before the war, and the food base, the geopolitical base and the model of large-scale development after the war. In other words, Hokkaido has the historical importance as the pilot plant of national policies, and a lot of valuable researches have been done especially in rural sociology and industrial sociology. In this way, Hokkaido Sociological Association (HSA) has the tradition of regional researches, so SORD is now making Hokkaido Sociological Association Database (HSADB) towards the model of decentralized data archives (Figure 2.1). Our subject is the sociology of knowledge about social



Figure 2.1 Hokkaido Sociological Association Database

researches in Hokkaido; we want to point out theoretical and practical problems of empirical researches about Hokkaido, and then make a picture of Japanese society by way of Hokkaido society.

At the same time, we are engaged in re-arrangement and re-interpretation of individual data sets. Different from SSJDA and SRDQ specialized in quantitative data, SORD tries to manage various qualitative data, taking account of data management and archivist cultivation. As I mention later concretely, our present task is to arrange questionnaires, coding sheets, notes and drafts in order to interpret the *épistémè* (structured framework of recognition) between sociologists and objectified societies. Now we take up the data of social research about the coalmine city Yubari, which was done by the late professor Mr. Tetsuji Fuse and 'studying group of life-course sociology' in the Graduate School of Education at Hokkaido University.

### 3. The Yubari research by Fuse group

Yubari is located in the center of Hokkaido, and it prospered as a city of coalmine from the early years of Meiji. As one of the most successful coalfields in Japan, a lot of coals were produced in Yubari. In the 1960s, Yubari Colliery and Heiwa Colliery of Hokkaido Colliery and Steamship Corporation (*Hokkaido Tanko Kisen Kabushikigaisha*, also known as *Hokutan*), and Oyubari Colliery of Mitsubishi Mining Company (*Mitsubishi Kogyo Kabushikigaisha*) were at the height, and the number of population amounted to 110,000.

However, because of the energy revolution (from coal to oil), the change of national policy about coal production and several serious accidents in collieries, coalmines in Yubari closed one after another since 1973, which brought about the depopulation of the young and the drastic aging (as you know, Yubari is now in the face of local fiscal crisis). In such a situation, Fuse group had researched in Yubari since 1973 until 1983.

Their subject was to show what were the influence of the change in national energy policy and the process of the rationalization in coal production upon the work-and-life process of people in Yubari. They researched not only the work-and-life process of coalminers, but also that of local officers, the self-employed, the unemployed, households on welfare and students and their parents in primary schools, junior high schools and high schools. The total number of informants amounted to 653 (by interview) and 1,249 (by questionnaire). Their results were made up into *Change of Regional Industry and Class: Life History of Workers in Coalmine City Yubari* (1982) (Figure 3.1 and Table 3.1).

### 4. How to archive resources/ data of the Yubari research?

Grounded on the Yubari research by Fuse group, SORD is now making the database of academic resources they referred to and digitizing the research data they made. We aim to find out a method of archiving and a direction of secondary analysis based on the peculiarity of qualitative data, and establish 'the museum of histories of social researches' (Table 4.1).



**Figure 3.1** *Change of Regional Industry and Class*

Our plan ‘the museum of histories of social researches’ has two functions. One is the function as a reference room, which means sorting and listing resources the group collected and referred to (Figure 4.1); including not only books, magazines, papers, newspaper articles and official/corporate documents but also primary sources such as operation diaries, wage scales and household account books. The other is as an archive, which means arranging and

storing data they made in research; including questionnaires, coding sheets, field notes and presentations in academic circles. In addition, this function consists of archiving of questionnaires and digitizing of research data. The former means filing questionnaires (Figure 4.2), and the latter scanning them (into TIFF image format) and inputting data (by File Maker Pro / Microsoft Word) (Figure 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5). This is the ongoing process for ‘the museum of histories of social researches’, based on the Yubari research.

What kind of secondary analysis can we do? Here I want to make a memorandum of two possibilities. The first is the pluralization and fertilization of the description of Fuse group by decoding questionnaires and research data. A critical conversation between renewed data and their original reports will make clear the objectified societies different from those of *Change of Regional Industry and Class*. Thinking this to be the secondary analysis rooted in ‘the space of questionnaires’, the

**Table 3.1** *Contents of Change of Regional Industry and Class*

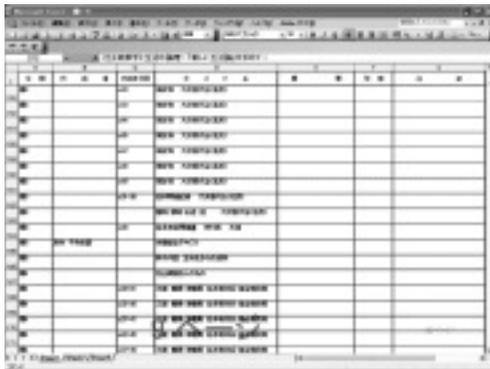
Preface	Subject and Method
1.	Development of Capitalism in Japan and Change of Coal Industry
2.	Basic Structure of Regional Community and Aspect of its Change
3.	Life Histories of Miners in Hokutan H-Colliery
4.	Life Histories of Miners in Mitsubishi M-Colliery
5.	Life Histories of the Self-Employed
6.	Life Histories of Workers in Invited Factories
7.	Life Histories of Workers in Relief Works
8.	Life Histories of Families under Livelihood Protection
9.	Life Histories of Official Workers
10.	Problems of Workers’ Family Lives
11.	Educational Expectation for Children and Life Histories of High School Students
12.	Structure of Regional Community and Seeking of its Development
Appendix	Life Histories of Workers Leaving Colliery

**Table 4.1 Framework of ‘the Museum of Histories of Social Researches’**

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<b>1. function as a reference room;</b>	sorting and listing resources the group collected and referred to
<b>2. function as an archive;</b>	arranging and storing data they made in research
<b>2-1. archiving of questionnaires;</b>	filing questionnaires
<b>2-2. digitizing of research data;</b>	scanning questionnaires and inputting data

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**Figure 4.1 Database of Resources Prof. Fuse Collected and Referred to**



**Figure 4.3 Scanned Questionnaires**



**Figure 4.2 Filed Questionnaires**



**Figure 4.4 Research Data on File Maker Pro**

second is the problem of ‘the space of research’ itself. If we inspect not only questionnaires and research data but also academic resources, field notes, presentations and drafts, we can describe histories of sociology not as the theoretical one but as histories of social researches and practices.

## 5. Provisional Conclusion

What is the contribution, if any, of these re-interpretations to the re-generation of Yubari? As an elementary step, we can relate research data to local historical materials such as photos and video, by which we can edit changing times of Yubari. But exhaustive content analysis may be difficult. With regard to the Yubari research by Fuse group, I’m afraid that



Figure 4.5 Research Data on Microsoft Word

their rigid sociological perspective which consists of both Orthodox Marxism and small group studies is so strong that we cannot fully re-interpret their research data from quite another standpoint. However, many memorandums were left in shorthand in margins of questionnaires by researchers, for example plans of the coal mine house, pay rolls and career histories of miners (Figure 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3). If we read them closely, we can think about the past of Yubari from the viewpoint of the present and the future, and vice versa.

Moreover, though it must be careful to relate research with practice, we can refer to the experience of 'Community Access to Archives (CAAP)' in UK, which aims not only to collect resources, but also to include socially excluded minorities. That is, 'Community Archives' are involved in the empowerment of ethnic minorities, transforming them into users of archives, then into formers of archives. Regional sociology does not have so much technical know-how, but through the re-interpretation of past research data, we may at least tell what kind of associations act subjectively for citizens' lives in this fiscal crisis. This aspect is the practical

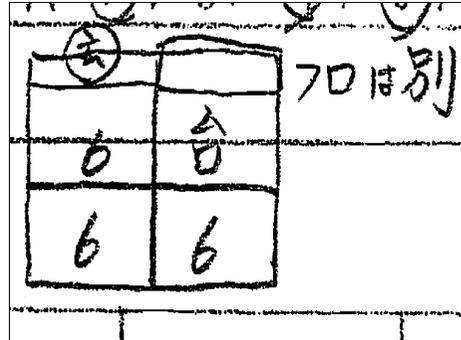


Figure 5.1 Plan of Coal Mine House

5.18. 10. 給与明細		
固定給	30720 (12P0 <sup>0</sup> × 24 <sup>0</sup> )	支給計 18018
作業給	4992	
能率給	9371	
基準内諸手当		差引支払金 137000
定額A	1000	
安全手当	1600	
早退	17412	
公休	6901	
厚生手当	9717	
有給休暇	5371	
通勤手当	3500	
北海道手当	北海道手当 3092	
臨時手当	臨時外 875	
臨時手当	1266	
一括控除金		
労付料	730	健康保険料 5760 年金 5092 税金 1171 所得税 5550 組合上 4685 (B)
厚生共 50	20944 (A)	
購買会 3600		
地産物 4820		
明治生命 4998		
組合引当 4546		
組合積立 2300		
		A + B = 43202

Figure 5.2 Miner's Pay Roll

goal of 'the museum of histories of social researches' rooted in a community.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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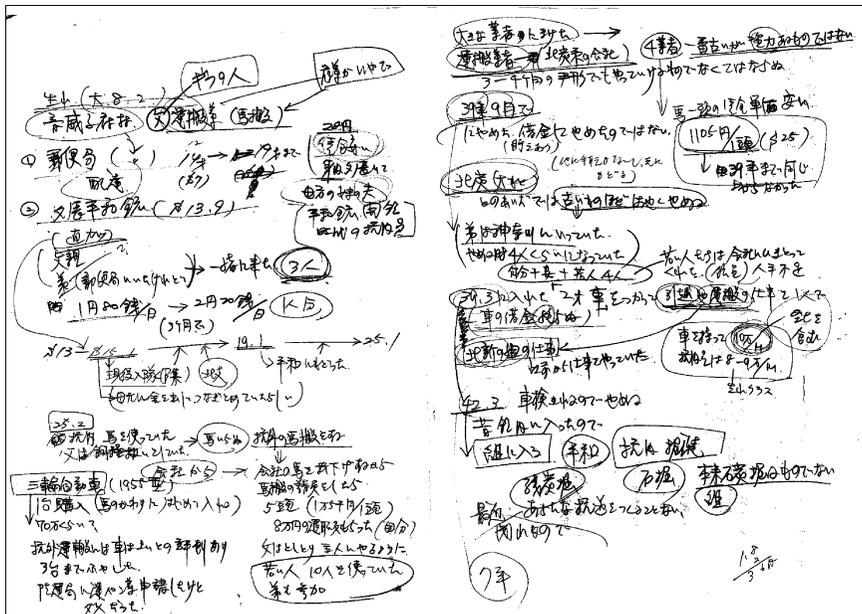


Figure 5.3 Miner's Career History

Data Archive 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Workshop on March 6, 2008. I am very grateful to Faculty of Social Information of Sapporo

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