

Ghana National Forum on Data Roadmaps for Sustainable Development

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Data are important

- ***‘What we measure affects what we do. If we have wrong metrics we will strive for the wrong things’***

(professor Stiglitz – on data for wellbeing)



But can everybody have their own gold mine of administrative data?



Advantages of basing statistics on administrative data (1)

- The benefits of administrative registers are vast – registers are mainly used by the administrative systems but also a huge asset for statistics
 - National ownership of the process
 - Statistical needs were never a driving force behind administrative registers in Denmark
- Low costs
 - Census in China – 10 million census workers
 - Census in USA – 0.5 million census workers
 - Census in Denmark – 2 census workers (and can be conducted on a daily basis)
- Wide coverage and continuity
 - Continuity, coherence and comparability of statistics – visible results
 - The much sought ambition of disaggregation by age, gender, income, geography etc. – also in relation to the SDGs.



Advantages of basing statistics on administrative data (2)

- Source for evidence-based policy-making and research
 - Research (SD Research Service is 27 years old; globally known)
 - Policy analysis (ministries use microdata to design and quantify effects of new legislative initiatives, before and after introduction)
- Comes often with geospatial dimension
- And last but not least, administrative data can be linked to other types of data



Preconditions for administrative registers and their use in statistics (1)

- Main: political courage to enforce unique identifiers for individuals, enterprises and fixed property – but a gradual approach is definitely a possibility;
- Appropriate legislation;
- Statistical office has a right to be heard when changes are made to administrative registers;



Preconditions for administrative registers and their use in statistics (2)

- System of unique identifiers (very important but not strictly necessary);
- Cooperation among administrative authorities;
- Public approval;
- Not a huge technological challenge – in Denmark the system was launched in the 1960s and 70s



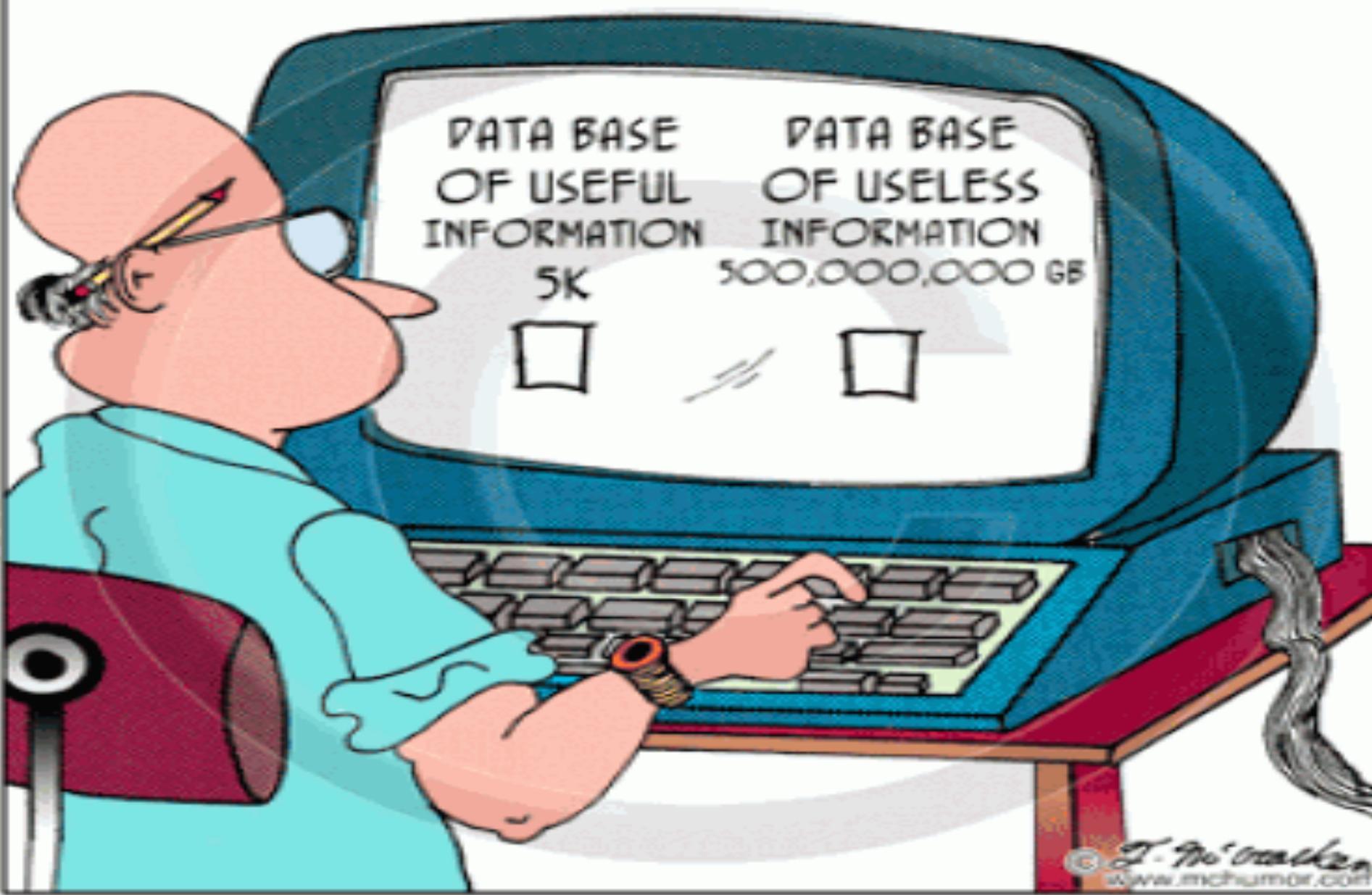
Risks associated with administrative registers and their use in statistics

- Risks include:
 - Pressure for administrative use of statistical data
 - A hard line not to provide microdata may have to be accompanied by a pedagogical effort
 - Risks associated with security glitches
 - Not just breach of confidentiality in itself (bad as it is), but could jeopardise the whole "business model"
 - Both outside and inside security threats need to be guarded against
 - Changes in administrative procedures – erosion of data coverage
- With due attention, and at a cost, these risks can be managed

Improving the data basis – we do not have to start from the scratch

- Wide context – a unique opportunity for improving statistical coverage and disaggregation in relation to the SDG and national statistics in general through a well-targeted capacity-building;
- Possible to base statistical production on registers not connected to each other by a unique identifier;
- Many countries have registers that can be used in statistical production.
 - Ecuador – statistical access to population data
 - Vietnam – 2015 - adoption of Statistical Law giving access to administrative data for statistical use
- Understanding the role that administrative data can play in statistical production could be one of the important elements of harnessing the data revolution.
- Nevertheless a top-down approach – political support is a prerequisite.

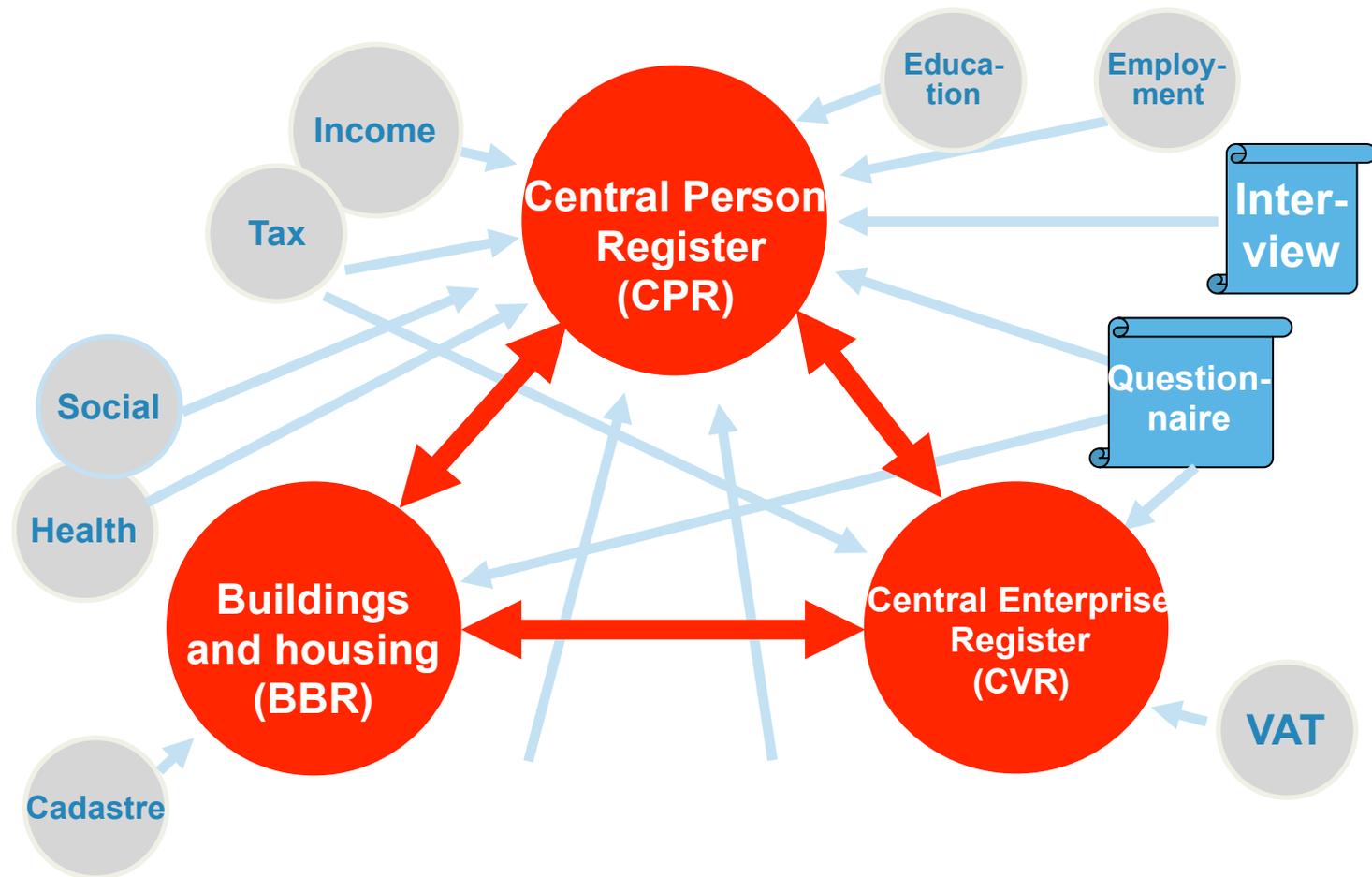




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The statistical information system in Denmark



Demographic data – Information from late 1970's and forward

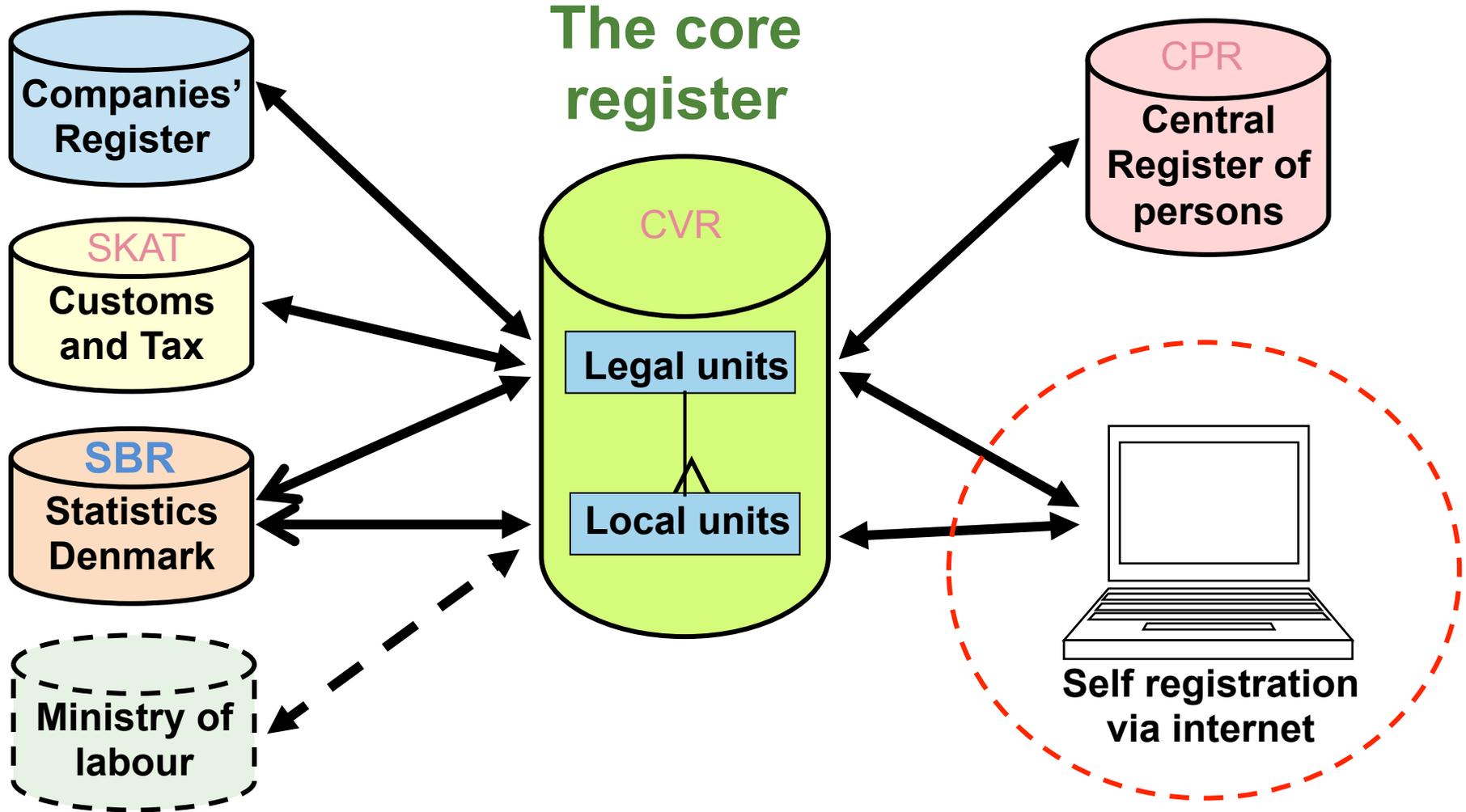
In Denmark it all began with the population register

Static information	Dynamic information
Dates of birth and death	Place of residence
Gender	Marriage and divorce
Place of birth	Migration
Biological parents	Citizenship
	Children
	Family

The Danish Adm. Business Register set-up

Primary providers:

Secondary providers:



Example of VAT data – primary source

- Data provided by the tax authorities
- Monthly statistics on total turnover
 - 80 per cent of domestic sales is reported t+25 days
 - Most exports are also reported t+25 days
 - A few products are exempt from VAT
 - Passenger transport, news papers, health services
- Important source for quarterly national accounts
- Micro data is made available via business register
- Future plans:
 - Production index for services

Example of VAT data – supplementary source

- Replacing survey data
 - 20 pct. of the industrial production index sample is based on VAT data
 - Considering using quarterly VAT data for enterprises reporting only one Prodcom product.
- Imputation when survey data is missing
 - Foreign trade, Prodcom
- Error detection – confronting data
 - Industry level – quality control
 - Micro level – validation of outliers

Some points for consideration

- Is a wider use of administrative data in statistical production a desirable solution for your country?
 - What initiatives could target this goal?
- What is the awareness of decision-makers and is there anything you can do
 - Absolutely essential – statistical community is active in raising this awareness, what else can be done in this respect?
- How is the cooperation between institutions and what could improve it
 - What can be done to improve data cooperation between institutions
- Use of basic administrative registers in statistics can provide major leaps for data disaggregation
 - How do we reach the most vulnerable in other ways – keeping costs in mind?
- Technological approach
 - Often a simple mobile phone is enough – need for support
- On which terms can NSOs get access to free and continuous use of Big Data?
 - Is free data in large amounts from the business sector a possibility?
- Competences – need for training

