

institutes that depend on contracts from a multitude of research buyers. They have to survive in the market-place for research. Are they more exposed to intimidation and inclined to conformity? Not necessarily. Those researchers that are most dependent upon selling their research in the market-place (whether to a research council or to an individual buyer like a ministry) may be especially motivated to preserve their objectivity and neutrality in the face of, for example, inter-ministry rivalries. If they acquire a reputation for partiality, they will be seriously handicapped in their efforts to obtain new research contracts the next time around. Of course, a properly functioning market for research is required to make this mechanism have the desired effects in full measure. Cartelisation on either the supply or demand side may pervert it.

So there are more mechanisms than is commonly acknowledged making for independence and neutrality in applied research. Perhaps some of them are just as important as the institutional safety-belts of university freedom. But since ghosts are rarely exorcised by rational argumentation, some people may very well continue to have their nightmares on behalf of applied research and large research programmes. Some even make a living out of telling ghost stories. However, if such nightmares keep an important debate alive and going, it is demonstrated, once more, that even irrationalities may serve a socially useful purpose.

Knut Grøholt, Chairman of the LOS-Committee
Tore Abrahamsen, Director, The Norwegian Research Council for Applied Social Science (NORAS), Oslo

The article 'Nordic Social Science Research and the American Nightmare' gives a useful overview over four major projects in social science in the Nordic countries. The classification of the projects with reference to four models – the Center, Contract, Network, and Department models – gives an opportunity to reflect on conditions for organizing research projects.

The author's description of the Norwegian project 'Organization and Management' (LOS) is unfortunately rather insufficient. The analysis of causes and effects of the different models is therefore questionable, at least when it comes to the Norwegian project. When describing the organization of the LOS project, it is important to bear in mind the two different ways in which the research funds are granted. About two-thirds of the means available are channeled into universities and research institutes and one-third to the LOS Centre (The Norwegian Centre for Organization and Management, set up in the city of Bergen, is an independent research centre under NORAS, with its

own board). The author is aware of this important division, but disregards it in the further description and analysis.

We also think the author would have gained by making a more thorough analysis of the connection between the organization of large-scale research projects, the infrastructure of social science research, and the organization of society within the Nordic countries. As the article now stands, it is no more than an assertion that the organization of the project influences the autonomy of research.

The LOS project is one of the government's eight priority areas in Norwegian research and is the only one within the social science area (the seven others are: Information technology; Biotechnology; Aquaculture; New materials; Offshore oil and gas technology; Health and environment; Dissemination of tradition and culture).

To single out LOS as an area of special importance for Norwegian research expresses a clear political wish for greater understanding of management issues at different levels – from the parliamentary level to management and organization in the individual enterprise.

The need for new knowledge within this area springs out of a disagreeable realization that our ability to manage and organize is not good enough.

Lack of management is partly due to an incomplete picture of the needs, the measures that have been or should be adopted, and their effects. It is also due to insufficient ability to deal with conflicts of objectives and interests.

Research can help to develop our understanding of management, organization, and administrative systems and our ability to manage and administer the society, by elucidating both existing problems in this field and the conflicting objectives and interests that cause them.

However, research should not be limited to describing and explaining today's problems. It can also help to shape alternative courses of action and, as far as possible, chart the consequences of these actions. In effect we need research that provides concrete proposals concerning how to solve societal problems. Provided that research is not used for purposes of manipulation, but serves to increase awareness by promoting public debate and insight into the problems, we need research that contributes to our conception of a good society and creates confidence in the future.

The LOS project plays an important role in this connection, partly by producing research which extends our understanding of existing LOS problems and suggests alternative solutions. A second objective is to generate a broad discussion of these problems, based on this research.

LOS includes innumerable research problems and approaches. Within the framework of LOS three kinds of research are needed:

- (1) Action- and development-oriented research relating to enterprises, public services, regions, and sectors. The main purpose is to support these

sectors' own ability to produce the knowledge necessary for action and development.

- (2) Theoretically based empirical research aimed at identifying, describing, and analyzing problems and research themes. Simultaneously with this research it is possible to draft possible measures, and clarify the consequences and the deciding criteria which may be applied in the choice of alternatives.
- (3) Normative research aimed at developing normative theories capable of discussing answers to such questions as: 'How should institutions be structured, and who should make the decisions so as to ensure fairness, effectiveness, solidarity, and democracy?'

In order to achieve this, the national committee on LOS has pointed out three objectives. The LOS project should:

- enhance the production of relevant research of good quality within the field of management and organization systems;
- create effective arenas where decision-makers, advisers, and researchers can meet to discuss and evaluate challenges relating to organization and management systems;
- communicate the results of the research to a wide range of the public.

The national LOS Committee has given priority to six topics:

- (1) Development of management, participation, and motivation systems in organizations.
- (2) Management systems and use of resources in the public sector.
- (3) Industrial policy and market development: organization, management, and motivation systems.
- (4) Reforms and lines of development in the relation between the public and private sectors.
- (5) Negotiation systems and their social impacts.
- (6) Democracy and social development: visions and fundamental principles.

These topics are closely connected. Of particular interest is research to study the interaction between them. In addition a number of sector programmes are arranged. Examples are LOS within the education system and LOS for the local authorities.

The budget of the LOS project is approximately 35 million Norwegian Kroner a year (about \$5.25 million). The project started in 1987 and will go on for ten years.

The part of the LOS project carried out in the LOS Center is obviously organized in a manner resembling the Center model. As mentioned earlier,

two-thirds of the project is organized in a manner quite like the Contract model. Research money is granted from the LOS Committee to universities and research institutes. In 1989 more than 60 research projects are being carried out. All four universities in Norway and approximately 20 research institutes outside the universities have contracts with the LOS project. Thus, the Contract model is an important parallel to the Center model within the LOS project.

One of the objectives is to bridge the gap between the different disciplines within the project. Network building among researchers with different background is therefore important. The LOS project aims to stimulate and organize networks. LOS thus has aspects of the Network model.

The starting-point of the article is C. Wright Mills's postulate about social science research becoming incorporated into the dominant power structure, being reduced more to social engineering and its theoretical content eroded. While social scientists should be aware of this possibility, it is even more important to prevent the opposite outcome, i.e. that of societal decision-makers being ignorant of the insights, criticisms, and suggestions based on social science research.

We think that one of the challenges for social science is to have the results disseminated in the society and thus made use of. Too many researchers experience that the results of their research are unknown to decision-makers. It is not necessarily incompatible to carry out independent research of high quality and for research at the same time to be very useful in changing the society.

Thus, it is explicitly one of the main purposes of the LOS project to stimulate the dialogue between social scientists and decision-makers. As a base for this communicative exchange, the researchers are invited to do action- and developmental-research as well as more traditional empirical/theoretical research. It is further made explicit that normative research is welcomed, be it critical or by the way of formulating alternatives and visions.

Very few research projects in the LOS project have been finished. It is therefore too early to evaluate the results of LOS. However, LOS will in 1989 undergo an evaluation of the process of its setting up and running in the first two years.

Hanne Foss Hansen & Torben Beck Jørgensen, The Centre for Public Organization and Management (COS), Copenhagen

The 1980s have been characterized by marked changes within research policy, the research system, and research organizations, in Denmark as well as in the