

## Editorial note: Wrapping up the past volumes

When *Research on Finnish Society* was established in 2007, Professor Markus Jäntti, then Director of the publishing association Social and Economic Research Association of the Turku Universities (Yhteiskunnallistaloudellinen tutkimusyhdistys), made a future prediction: “Our new English-language journal may survive if you can get through the five first volumes”. With this current volume of RFS at hand, we have already gone beyond that goal. In this respect, we can already make a justified prediction that our journal will survive far longer than the following five volumes.

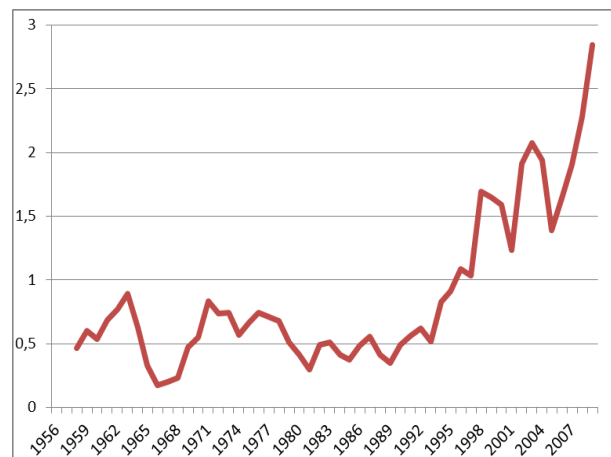
In our first editorial note back in 2008, we outlined the following aims for our journal: to publish cross-national and longitudinal research papers that have a strong Finnish orientation, as well as to establish a discussion forum for researchers across the conventional disciplines and academic boundaries. We acknowledged that there were other Finnish journals targeting certain areas of social sciences, such as cultural studies, demographics and economics. At the same time, however, we stressed that the approach adopted in RFS is “cross-social scientific”, which means that the aim of RFS was to take a broader research perspective compared to many of the existing journals.

There was another agenda as well: to make Finnish social scientific research more accessible to the international readers, as well as to provide a low threshold platform for young Finnish scholars. Now, before handing the editorial responsibility to our followers in the next volume, it is time to reflect these aims – how well have we managed to reach the goals set up early on?

From the beginning, RFS was planned as low volume but high quality journal. This has meant a rather eclectic approach to selecting manuscripts; more than half of the submissions have never made it to the journal. Finding the best manuscripts has been easy because of the high quality editorial advisory board that has also provided a high quality pool of reviewers. Taking the articles in this volume into account, there are now a total of 26 quality articles and discussions published. We may also point out that articles published in RFS have also been included in at least seven doctoral dissertations in Finland. For us, this suggests that the journal has been successful in setting up a publication venue that is considered as valid and trustworthy.

How, then, have we managed to help the authors to reach the international audience? In our second editorial note in 2009, we discussed at length about the problems of national publishing. In other words, we discussed how the readership

Figure 1. Social scientific output by Finnish scholars in English divided by output in Finnish (Source: Johdatus sosiologian perusteisiin [ed. Erola, J. & Räsänen, P.], Gaudeamus, forthcoming).



of the Finnish social scientific journals published in Finnish was declining. At the same time, it is important to observe that international publishing has increased considerably over the past decades in Finland. Figure 1 gives proportions of scientific output of Finnish social scientists in English compared to output in Finnish. The figures are drawn from International Sociological Abstracts database. The scientific output shares cover articles, PhD studies, and scientific conference presentations per year. Although this comparison does not focus on published articles alone, the trend described tells us how rapid the change has been.

In our earlier editorial notes, we have noted that the Finnish universities have already started to use the amount and impact of research publishing as a criterion to allocate funds. Perhaps more importantly, we argued that the amount and quality of publications are a key criteria in order to succeed in academic career. International publishing appears to be the key criterion for wider readership, which means that most influential journal articles are published in English. Having in our mind, we can examine how well RFS has done compared to other national journals in social sciences. We used citation information from *Harzig's Publish or Perish* program, which analyses *Google Scholar's* raw citations, to make such comparison. Citation searches were conducted on November 29, 2013

Between the years 2007–2012 *Sosiologia*, one of the oldest and most established social scientific journals in Finland had published a total of 105 articles, research papers or discussions, with on the average 1.9 citations to each. The most cited paper published in the journal has acquired 13 citations since its publication in 2007. This is not a very high figure for the leading journal of one of the largest disciplines in social sciences. Correspondingly, the national journal of social policy association, *Janus*, has 117 similar publications, which yield 2.7 citations on the average. The most widely-spread Finnish-language social scientific journal, *Yhteiskuntapolitiikka*, had published more than 600 papers in 2007-2012. Over that time period it had acquired more than 800 citations, the average cites per paper being around 1.3.

The average citation number for articles published in RFS was 3.5 during the same period (with a total of 23 articles and discussions). The article with the highest number of citations had a total of 22 references. These numbers clearly indicate that publishing in RFS makes it easier for a Finnish

researcher to reach broader academic audiences than publishing in some of the more established national journals.

The aim of *Research on Finnish Society* is to keep on publishing high-quality articles dealing with a variety of social, economic and cultural phenomena. We would like to thank our readers for the past years and wish you all the best for 2014. Added to that, we wish the best of luck to the new editorial staff of RFS, Juho Härkönen (University of Stockholm), Antti Kouvo (University of Eastern Finland), and Mari Toivanen (University of Turku).

*Jani Erola*

*Pekka Räsänen*

*Outi Sarpila*