

## Editorial note: Less far from Japan?

*“You’re so near to Russia  
So far from Japan  
Quite a long way from Cairo  
Lots of miles from Vietnam”  
(Michael Palin/John Du Prez 1980)*

Many of the social scientific discussions of the recent decades have revolved around the topic of internationalization. Economic activity has been decreasingly bounded by nation-state borders, and in Europe not the least, political decision-making powers have been moved from nation-states to supra-national bodies. At the same time, international migration and the intensification of transnational processes have challenged the perception of nation-states as linguistically, ethnically, and culturally homogeneous entities, a perception which prevailed during most of the 20th century. The acknowledgment and recognition of societal diversity confined within nation-states’ borders have also contributed to the problematization of national identities as bounded by state citizenship and belonging to a national community. Political, economic, and social linkages across national borders have equally proliferated cross-nationally comparative research activities. Numerous studies have aimed to seek explanations to cross-national differences from structural and political characteristics of these countries, often with the aim of informing policy-makers of the possibilities for improving existing practices. None of these developments have happened without backlashes and friction. Many identities and political legitimacies remain centered around ethno-linguistically defined nation-states, whether existing or claimed (as in the case of nationalist separatist movements). Simultaneously, challenges to nationally based decision making have fuelled the rise of protest movements and parties wanting to reclaim these powers to nation states. While economic integration offers the potential for economic growth, it can also set conditions for economic inequality within countries and spread of macro-economic risks across borders. The latter are often more readily observed than the former, which add to the potential for a backlash against these developments.

Even if Finland is located in a geographically far-flung corner of Europe, as depicted in the above quotation by the Monty Python comedians, it is not detached from it or the rest of the world. Several of the papers in this volume of *Research on Finnish Society* reflect these broad themes from their specific points of view. Based on *Paul De Grauwe’s*

Mauno Koivisto Lecture in 2013, De Grauwe and *Ji* offer an analysis of the Euro crisis and ask whether we can assume it to be over. They argue that as long as the Eurozone is not backed by corresponding supra-national political structures, the Euro crisis is not over. *Peter Kivisto* offers an outsider’s perspective to the success of the True Finns (or, as later called, The Finns), a party known for its Eurosceptic and anti-immigrant stances. This party has been the most vocal critic of any shift in powers to European-level actors, as well as of Finland’s membership in the Euro and EU itself. Their success, however, could also be seen as reflecting more general dissatisfaction with the political élites. *Maria Bäck* and *Elina Kestilä-Kekkonen* analyze how distrust in the political establishment channeled voting behavior, especially for the True Finns *vis á vis* other parties or abstention from voting.

*Stéfanie André*, *Jaap Dronkers*, and *Ariana Need* also offer an analysis of electoral participation, focusing on the turnout of immigrants in Europe. In particular, they ask which origin and destination country features are associated with immigrants’ electoral participation. *Olli Kangas* and *Jenni Blomgren* present another European cross-national analysis with their study on the macro-level correlates of socioeconomic differences in health, and emphasize the importance of health budgets when explaining why health inequalities are stronger in some countries than others. Both of these studies use data from the European Social Surveys, underlining the usefulness of this *Descartes Prize* –winning data collection endeavour, and of standardized cross-national studies more generally. Finally, *Ilari Ilmakunnas* shifts the focus from cross-national to historical comparison in his analysis of the changes in relative poverty among the working aged in Finland during the years 1971-1990. His analysis underlines the particular importance of the redistributive capacity of the welfare state in contributing first to the decrease in poverty, and later, to its increase.

With this issue of *Research on Finnish Society*, a new editorial team has taken over. *Antti Kouvo* is university lecturer of sociology at the University of Turku. His interests focus on trust, social cohesion, well-being and neighbourhoods. *Juho Härkönen* is university lecturer of sociology at Stockholm University and visiting professor of sociology at the University of Turku, and works in the areas of life course research, social stratification, and family sociology and demography. *Mari Toivanen* is postdoctoral researcher at the University of Turku, working on themes related to immigra-

tion and multiculturalism. We have also been privileged to have a wonderful apprentice, B.Soc.Sc. *Johanna Jokio*, who helped make this issue possible. Thank you Johanna for your hard work. Naturally, we also thank the authors of this issue's articles and their referees for their contributions and collaboration. Our list of authors—working, but not necessarily born, in Finland, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States—in their own way reflect internationalization, even in a journal such as this one, which essentially focuses on a single country. We are also proud that three of the authors in this issue (De Grauwe, Dronkers, and Kivisto) are honorary doctors at the University of Turku.

Since its launch in 2008, *Research on Finnish Society* has managed to establish itself and has published several interesting and important social science analyses of Finland. *Jani Erola*, *Pekka Räsänen*, and *Outi Sarpila* made a big effort to make this happen and thanks are due to them for this task. For the coming years, our aim is to build on this legacy and develop the journal further. In particular, we encourage submissions of internationally or historically comparative em-

pirical analyses of relevance for better understanding Finnish society. However, quality papers are welcome regardless of their research design and we especially welcome more submissions of empirical studies using qualitative methods and by authors from a wide range of disciplines. The Monty Python comedians quoted at the beginning sing about Finland also as “the country where I quite want to be”. Concerning our journal, we wish to see *Research on Finnish Society* as a forum where scholars interested in Finnish society, regardless of their social scientific disciplines or nationalities, would submit their manuscripts.

*Juho Härkönen*

*Antti Kouvo*

*Mari Toivanen*