

Editorial note

Still a place for small national journals?

This autumn has once again increased the pressure on academic publishers to move towards greater open access to both journal articles and scholarly monographs. Plan S is the proclamation and strategy of 16 European science funders, including 13 national funders to make scientific knowledge openly and immediately accessible (Coalition S, 2018). Among these funders are the Academy of Finland and the European Commission, including the European Research Council. While the move towards open access has much to be lauded, several critical points have also been raised against the current plans. Some aspects of the Plan S strategy are also worrying from the point of view of this journal.

One of the criticisms raised against the strategy is that it endangers researchers' rights to choose the appropriate journal for their research because it prevents publishing in approximately 70–90 percent of existing journals (Science alert, 2018; Carlington et al., 2018) and has very strict guidelines for a proper open access journal (Coalition S, 2018; Think Open, 2018). Currently many journals operate with a hybrid open access policy, which means that researchers can pay (relatively costly) fees to have their article (or book) published as open access, whilst the remainder of the articles are available only by subscription or an article fee paid by the reader. Open access publishing fees in hybrid journals have previously been covered by many of the science funders part of Coalition S but publishing in these journals will no longer be allowed once Plan S is fully adopted.

While the ultimate aim of Plan S is naturally to increase the proportion of fully open access journals, where the publication itself is openly accessible directly (gold open access) or a final author-approved version is accessible without an embargo period from an archive (green open access), the big question is to what extent this will happen. One relevant question to ask is whether the incentives for publishers are large enough to change their publishing models under Plan S. All the currently participating funders in Coalition S are European. However, by no means are all European funders supportive of Plan S, and naturally a large proportion of research won't be restricted by what Plan S stipulates even in the countries where the major national science funder is part of Coalition S. If publishers don't find it profitable enough to change their publishing model, then Plan S will not only restrict many talented European researchers from publishing their research in the top international – or maybe even national – journals but it may also endanger co-operation between countries and projects because different funders have different rules to follow.

Another possible consequence is that the processing costs of journals will rise because journals have to cover their publishing costs (Carlington et al., 2018). Thus the cost of open access may increasingly be up to researchers (or their institutions) to pay, not the readers and subscriptions as it is currently. This means that the inequality will not disappear, it only changes its form. While many researchers will have their institutions' backing for these processing costs – and if libraries no longer have to pay costly subscription fees then money will be freed up for this – not all researchers will. Maybe cash-strapped universities will also start to monitor which researchers and which pieces of research receive this kind of financial backing? Many journals are also published on behalf of academic associations and can be significant sources of revenue for these associations. For example, the American Sociological Association received 35 percent of its revenues in 2014 from its nine journals (ASA, 2015). *Acta Sociologica* accounted for almost 60 percent of the revenue for the Nordic Sociological Association in 2017 and over 80 percent in 2016 (NSA, 2018). Another pertinent question to ask is therefore what will happen to these sources of revenue under Plan S?

But what about the fate of *Research on Finnish Society* under Plan S? In the future many researchers will no doubt look for new journals in which to publish and they will focus on journals that are already open access. This may be expected to be good for us. However, even we do not meet the criteria of proper

open access publication in Plan S because currently we tend to publish too few peer-reviewed articles per year. In order to meet the requirements of Coalition S funded research we would need to approximately double the number of yearly published article – and thus also of submissions. Therefore, although we currently still have a place in the academic publishing landscape, it is also a slightly precarious one. One of our key selling points, namely open access, needs more work to fully secure in the future and possibly quite quickly: Plan S takes place very soon, those who receive funding must publish in open access journals from 1.1.2020 onwards (Coalition S, 2018). The continued aim of *Research on Finnish Society* is to publish high-quality articles on Finnish society that cover various social, economic and cultural phenomena. We will strive to grow enough in the future to meet the requirements of Plan S if they go through as planned – and naturally we encourage you all to submit your relevant research to achieve this.

This year we have three wonderful regular articles, one descriptive findings article and one discussion article. The first article by Kathrin Komp-Leukkunen studies the working-age life-courses in Finland. One of her main findings is that the gender differences in life-courses decreased between the baby boom generation and Generation X, mainly due to increasing female labour force participation. The second article is by Lasse Nurmi and Tommi Meskanen and they examine parliamentary elections results in Southwest Finland. By using maps to visualize the results, they show that there are distinctive areas of political competition in the area. The third article is by Timo Toivonen on inter- and intragenerational influences on children's reading. Using time use data, he documents both a parental – notably paternal – influence but in particular a strong sibling influence on time used on reading. In the descriptive findings article Chiara Comolli demonstrates how fertility has responded to macroeconomic changes in Finland and presents possible explanations for contradictory trends over time and between Finland and other countries. Lastly, we have a discussion article by Pasi Saukkonen. He discusses multiculturalism and nationalism in Finland from a historical perspective, examining the reasons for the somewhat paradoxical situation in Finland where extensive multiculturalist policies coexist with strong nationalism.

We would like to thank all our readers, authors and anonymous reviewers and wish you a great year 2019. Added to that, we would like to welcome docent of economic sociology Outi Sarpila as a co-editor starting from January 2019.

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