



Institute for Advanced Social Research

Risto Heiskala, Director's Report

for the Last Anniversary, 18 November 2020

Content

It is a pity that this could not be done in a face-to-face gathering as was our original plan. However, now that the Covid-19 situation has forced us to cancel the Anniversary event for the third time, we think that it is time to believe that this event was not meant to happen “in flesh”.

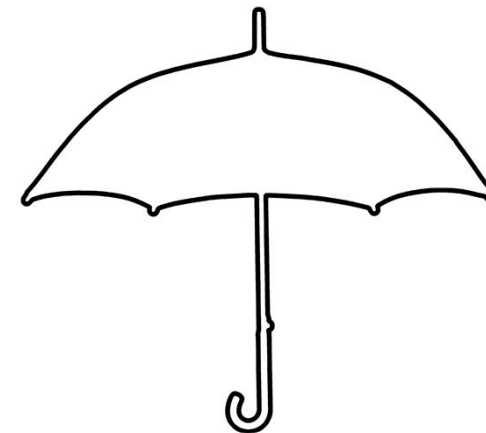
In this PP, on the basis of which I would have given my opening talk, I will try to repair the damage as much as possible and give you some of the content of the event. Those who are interested in getting more are advised to follow this link: <https://research.tuni.fi/iasr/academic-freedom-in-the-iasr/>

It will take you to the website on which you will find some of the presentations prepared for the panel on academic freedom. The buffet, drinks and socialising, I am afraid, must in the current pandemic situation be postponed to another occasion.

First, I will present the 10 slides on the basis of which I introduced the institute and the alternative choices for its future in the meeting of Science Council on 20 May 2019, which was the last time I was allowed to participate in an administrative meeting making decisions on the Institute.

Second, I will close with only 2 slides which outline the plans the management of Tampere University now has for advanced study in Tampere and also share with you the serious worries and disappointment we in the IASR have in regard to these plans.

IASR – A hub for excellent interdisciplinary social research



- **An advanced study center** focusing on excellent interdisciplinary and international social research.
- Fellows come from various disciplinary backgrounds in the human sciences to learn from each other in **an interdisciplinary collective**.
- Three categories: Professorial Fellows (1-year terms), Senior Research Fellows (2-year terms), and Postdoctoral Research Fellows (2-year terms) [differs from Helsinki and Turku where terms are usually 3 years]
- **An international institution:** One half of the fellows come from abroad and another half are Finns.
- **An elite institution:** A competitive application process with international experts (access rate below 4%).
- **An oasis:** Finally time to complete previous projects (fair because access is based on achievement).
- **A dynamo:** An interdisciplinary collective making it able to learn new things and test ideas.
- **A hedge fund:** Provides returns on the investment made by the university in facilitating ambitious new applications for external funding.
- **A crown jewel of the university:** Member of the University-Based Institutes of Advanced Studies (UBIAS) network and a sign that the host university is a genuine science university.

IASR – Activities

- January: Annual Call for Applications, on the basis of which a group of international experts and the Science Council make the proposal for the Fellows to be recruited (postponed in 2019 for the time of preparation of the research organization of the new university).
- February: Winter Seminar of one week with an annually changing fellow institution. In 2018, jointly with the European University Institute, Florence, and in 2019 with the University of Lisbon and the New University of Lisbon.
- From January to May and September to December: Speakers Series of bimonthly public lectures of Fellows and guests in this lecture hall, weekly internal Article Seminar on fellows' pre-circulated article or book chapter or application drafts, and different *ad hoc* events with or without guests.
- August/September: A two-day kick-off seminar where the new and the established Fellows introduce their projects to the group, which are discussed (briefly in this occasion but to be followed with longer sessions later).
- All fellows have a double affiliation to the IASR and to one of the faculties. All teach 5% or more at the PhD education level.

IASR – Who are we?

Permanent Fellows (honorary position, not salaried through the IASR):

- Pertti Alasuutari, Academy Professor and former Director
- Risto Heiskala, Director, former Professor of Sociology
- Pirjo Nikander, Research Director of the Doctoral School
- Jorma Sipilä, Professor Emeritus of Social Work, former Rector and Chancellor

Professorial Fellows

- Frans Mäyrä: *Empowerment and Exclusion – Meaning and Agency in Contemporary Game Cultures*
- Tarja Väyrynen: *Corporeal Peace. Bringing Feminist Theory to the Study of Peace*

IASR – Who are we?

Senior Research Fellows

- Laura Ahva: *Dispersed journalism: Practice-theoretical Investigation of Journalism Outside Traditional Newsrooms and Professional Roles*
- Aaron Goings: *Finnishing Western American Labour History: Work, Gender, and Radical Politics in the Finnish-American West, 1890-1945*
- Heikki Heikkilä: *Banal Surveillance and the Privacy Paradox*
- Mahmut Mutman (Scholars at Risk with Kone Foundation): *A Genealogy of Islamism*
- Andrew Newby (Kone Fellowship for the study of the Baltic Sea Region): *“Psychological Proximity” and Overseas Aid during Finland’s Great Hunger Years c. 1856-68*
- Hanna Ojala: *Biopolitics of Ageing Male Body in the Global North*
- Benedikt Schoenborn: *German Nuclear Restraint: Foundations and European Significance*
- Meyda Yeğenoğlu (Scholars at Risk with Kone Foundation): *Armenian Genocide, Turkish Nationalism and Kurdish Testimonies*

IASR – Who are we?

Postdoctoral Research Fellows

- Leonardo da Costa Custódio: *Potential and Limitations of Digital Media for Anti-racism Activism. Comparing Activist Experiences in Brazil and in Finland*
- Barbara Gaweda: *The ‘Double-beating’ of Gender Equality: Colluding Nationalist and Neoliberal Discourses in Eastern European Politics*
- Mervi Kaukko: *Educational Research Through the Eyes of a Refugee Child*
- Jukka Könönen: *Political Anthropology of Migration. The Subjective and Political Consequences of the Migration Governance*
- Saara Pellander: *Family Reunification and the Intimate Geographies of Bordering*
- Johanna Vuorelma: *Moralising Impulse in the Language of Foreign Policy and its Analysis*

So, it is all perfect – or is it?!

- **YES**, and this was also confirmed by an international evaluation group, which visited the Institute in June 2018. They found that the results of the IASR are on the scale from 1-5 on level 4 in publications and research environment and on level 3 in internationality. Considering the fact that level 5 characterizes Princeton and Stanford 4 is an excellent result, and rating 3 on internationality was mainly based on the short history of recruiting international fellows to the IASR, which was until 2013 open only to faculty members of the University of Tampere.
- **YES**, also in the sense that the evaluation group recommended channelling significantly increased resources to the Institute and extending its scope in addition to social research also to the other focus areas of Tampere University, i.e., study of health and technology.
- **NO, HOWEVER**, for the time being because in year 2019 we lost 44% of our resources because the new university is still evaluating its existing research and preparing new organization of its research for the future, and all new investments were halted for that time. – This is difficult for all parts of the research organization. For our Institute, which works on the basis of 1- and 2-year contracts, it is especially hard.

Institute for Advanced Social Research Development of the Number of Fellows

(at the turn of October and November each year; excluding Permanent Fellows with salaries from elsewhere).

Fellows	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
27					PRext						
26					PRext						
25	---	Target	set	in	PRext	2010	to	25	Fellows	---	---
24					PRext						
23					PRext						
22					PRext						
21					PRext						
20				PRext	PRext						
19				PRext	PRext						
18			PRext	PRext	PRext		PRext				
17			PRext	PRext	PRext	PRext	PRext				
16			PRext	PRext	PRext	PRext	PRext		PRint		
15			PRext	PRext	PRext	PRext	PRint	PRint	PRint		
14		PRint	PRext	PRext	PRext	SReXt	PRint	PRint	SReXt		
13		PRint	PRext	PRext	SReXt	SReXt	SReXt	SReXt	SReXt		
12	PRint	PRint	PRext	SReXt	SRint	SRint	SReXt	SReXt	SRint		
11	PRint	PRint	SReXt	SRint	SRint	SRint	SRint	SRint	SRint		
10	PRint	SReXt	SRint	SRint	SRint	SRint	SRint	SRint	SRint		
9	SRint	SRint	SRint	SRint	SRint	SRint	SRint	SRint	SRint	SReXt	
8	SRint	SRint	SRint	SRint	SRint	SRint	SRint	SRint	SRint	SReXt	
7	SRint	SRint	SRint	PDint	PDint	PDint	SRint	SRint	SRint	SRint	
6	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	SRint	
5	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	SRint	
4	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	SRint	
3	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	
2	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	
1	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	????
Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020

Institute for Advanced Social Research, Tampere University. Development of the Number of Fellows (at the turn of October and November each year; excluding Permanent Fellows).

Code:

PRext = Professorial Fellow, externally financed (Foundations' Professor Pool)

PRint = Professorial Fellow, internally financed

SRExt = Senior Fellow, externally financed (Kone Foundation)

SRint = Senior Fellow, internally financed

PDint = Postdoctoral Fellow, internally financed

Fellows	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
27					PRext						
26					PRext						
25	---	Target	set	in	PRext	2010	to	25	Fellows	---	---
24					PRext						
23					PRext						
22					PRext						
21					PRext						
20				PRext	PRext						
19				PRext	PRext						
18			PRext	PRext	PRext		PRext				
17			PRext	PRext	PRext	PRext	PRext				
16			PRext	PRext	PRext	PRext	PRext		PRint		
15			PRext	PRext	PRext	PRext	PRint	PRint	PRint		
14		PRint	PRext	PRext	PRext	SRExt	PRint	PRint	SRExt		
13		PRint	PRext	PRext	SRExt	SRExt	SRExt	SRExt	SRExt		
12	PRint	PRint	PRext	SRExt	SRint	SRint	SRExt	SRExt	SRint		
11	PRint	PRint	SRExt	SRint	SRint	SRint	SRint	SRint	SRint		
10	PRint	SRExt	SRint	SRint	SRint	SRint	SRint	SRint	SRint		
9	SRint	SRint	SRint	SRint	SRint	SRint	SRint	SRint	SRint	SRExt	
8	SRint	SRint	SRint	SRint	SRint	SRint	SRint	SRint	SRint	SRint	SRExt
7	SRint	SRint	SRint	PDint	PDint	PDint	SRint	SRint	SRint	SRint	
6	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	SRint	
5	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	SRint	
4	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	SRint	
3	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	
2	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	
1	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	PDint	????
Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020

The turbulent decade explained

- In 2010, the organizational structure of the University of Tampere was reformed. As part of it, a large research unit of some 100 researchers called the Institute for Social Research was split into the IASR, Doctoral School, and three sectorial research units in SOC (Tapri, TaSTI, and WRC). Part of the reform was a decision to increase the number of fellows in the IASR to 25.
- In years 2010-14, that plan was realized. However, the realization took an unexpected direction because what was called the Foundations' Professor Pool was established and because the University of Tampere was especially successful in getting grants from it. Yet the grants covered only some 45% of the grantees' salaries. Therefore, the University of Tampere decided to channel the resources of the 4 Professorial Fellowships in the IASR to cover part of these expenses and affiliate all the grantees to the IASR.
- That was rational at the time, especially because it was agreed that after the Professor Pool expired in 2015 all the resources used for it would be channelled to the IASR. However, that never happened.
- In years 2015-18, the government of Finland cut the financing of universities by 5%. In its search for savings, the new rectorate cut the financing of the IASR by 40%. In the end of its term it reversed this policy and started to increase the funding of the IASR again but did not have enough time to repair all the damage done.
- In 2019, the new university started and cut the IASR an extra 44% so that in autumn 2019 there will be only 9 Fellows in the Institute. However, a decision of the new organization of research in Tampere University will be made during that same autumn. We do hope that sufficient resources will then be channelled to the IASR.

Alternatives for the future

- **Abolish the Institute?** – Not advisable because would damage the brand of Tampere University as a genuine science university, discourage the academic staff in the faculties by removing an important instrument providing time and an inspiring environment for interdisciplinary research and make Tampere University less resilient as a university by removing one important smithery of new interdisciplinary proposals for the European Research Council (ERC) and other funders.
- **Keep it focused to social research.** – A perfectly reasonable alternative either with or without a link to the New Social Research Programme. The ideal size without the NSR is 20-30 fellows with 1- and 2-year terms. Could be combined with a more visible public role with more visitors & seminars and other public events, if so wanted.
- **Expand it to all the three focus areas of Tampere University.** This is what the evaluation panel suggested and it would obviously fit well to the efforts to brand the new university. Problems to be solved in this model: financing (twice or even three times more expensive than the previous alternative) and development of smoothly working conception of interdisciplinarity between scholars studying society, health, and technology (but note that there are model institutes of that kind in Germany (FRIAS, Heidelberg, Munich ...) and elsewhere (Princeton, Collegium Helveticum in ETH ...)). – Could return the investment.
- **Note that both of the latter alternatives create an institute which is a possible source of external funding** not only for scholars but for the university itself. Now, 2 fellowships financed by Kone, the plan to apply for a joint EU Cofund Programme with the collegiums of Helsinki and Turku; Erkko Foundation once turned our application down due to the lack of sufficient ambition but it would be possible to rise the ambition level if the university's own financing would be on sufficient level. Thus not an expense but an investment!

The reality now 1

That ends the slide set for the Science Council in May 2019 and we are now back at the present moment and can go through what has happened since then.

The management has decided to **run down the IASR** and the last fellows are leaving in the first half of year 2021. This is why this is the last anniversary.

The management has also decided to **establish a new advanced study institute extending its field in addition to the study of society to the study of health and technology**. That is in principle a leap forward but we are seriously worried about the way the institute is planned to be realized. **Problems included are:**

1. Available resources will be about the same. That means that the size of the institute is too small for such an extensive field of activities and two thirds of the resources previously allocated to the study of society will be channelled to the study of technology and health. – Not fair in the light that the former University of Technology had a distinct international postdoctoral program and the Faculty of Medicine in the University of Tampere received the same amount of financing as the IASR and used it for its research in a different way.

2. The level of ambition will be below advanced study requirements. The model of the new institute is not the IASR or any other advanced study institute but the international postdoc programme of the former University of Technology. That means that global call for applications is only organized for postdocs while Senior Fellows and Professorial Fellows are recruited internally with only faculty members eligible. No plan for an established international advisory board with a decisive say in the recruitment of fellows has been presented.

The reality now 2

3. Terms of fellows will be too short. Only postdocs are planned to have terms of two years and the terms of the other two groups are planned to last only for a few months. That cannot form a solid basis for an interdisciplinary exchange capable to change the fellows' thinking and thus their future line of research.

4. The institute will not have its own premises. Instead, the fellows will be spread around the university in the faculties. In the IASR, all fellows have had their own offices in the Atalpa Building, a seminar room and a coffee room with a coffee machine which have formed a lively and daily site of exchange of views. This is where ideas are born (and sometimes die). Therefore, the existence of such shared premises is one of the membership criteria required by the Network for European Institutes for Advanced Study (NETIAS). – The IASR was just about to start membership negotiations with NETIAS at the beginning of year 2019 when the new management of Tampere University started to erode it. Now it seems that that window of opportunities will be closed permanently.

In our eyes this is like a madman's rambling. Why run down a well-working advanced study institute and replace it with something far less ambitious? And if that really is the target, why do more damage to the Tampere University brand and call it an advanced study institute at all because nobody else outside the Tampere Region will ever do so?

Here, I am afraid, I will have to rest my case. However, I do hope that the deciding bodies will not yet let the case rest. In May this year, the Consistory already made some improvements to the plan, which in between the lines of a marvellously seductive description of the new institute revealed its harsh reality. Maybe it is now the time of the Board of Tampere University to show that it actually is interested in developing an ambitious research university by correcting the four above problems. – That is at least what we hope. Actually, it is our last hope!

References

For a covering overview of the nature and spread of advanced study institutes in the world, please see:

Padberg, Britta (2020). The Global Diversity of Institutes for Advanced Study. *Sociologica* 14(1), 119-161. <https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.1971-8853/9839>