

## Editorial: the last printed issue

Our world is unarguably undergoing rapid changes. Modifications are taking place in nature as well as in human societies at a rate perhaps faster than ever before in human history. Climate change and globalisation are in the forefront of these transitions, and humankind is attempting to manage them using the mechanisms at its disposal (witness the recent COP-15 climate negotiations in Copenhagen). In recent years, academia has also been involved in dramatic changes governed by both external and internal forces. Global competition between academic institutions, scientific publishers, and to some extent even individual scientists is a strong contemporary tendency. However, many find it rather difficult to imagine that universities in one country would in real terms be competing with universities elsewhere. The idea of competition has been introduced by (largely domestic) funding agencies, who carefully follow various recently established ranking lists of universities and thereby give a monetary push or pull to the institutions depending on their ranking. Current thinking widely nurses the idea of improving competitiveness by marrying academic research with business. In practice, science nowadays seems to be on a leash held by those who seem to be in thrall to economic forces at the exclusion of all else. We may, of course, consider that competition is a positive phenomenon making us work harder and better. Although this may be the case, competition also brings about negative elements of looking for loopholes and – at worst – bending the rules. Academia should be well above these matters or at least aspire to honesty and a critical perspective on society.

Echoes of this great academic transformation eventually reach faculties and individual disciplines, geography included. In many countries and universities, rather small departments of geography have been merged with other disciplines and/or split between human and physical geography. This is again a controversial tendency. On the one hand, one may argue that we should not take any discipline for granted as being untouchable, but be open for innovations and new perspectives. Therefore, should geography prove to be surplus to

needs then let it go. On the other hand, academic disciplines do have generations-long traditions, which should not be sacrificed lightly at the mercy of short-sighted expediency, for example to effect cost savings in an economic recession.

Another controversial trend is the move towards interdisciplinary research practices, which geographers appear to be particularly well-equipped to tackle, as they have for long been working tightly together with other disciplines, while geography itself is also multidisciplinary across natural science, social science and the humanities. Here geography, whatever the type of formal organisation into departments, schools and faculties, might prove more valuable than ever given its approach of attempting to understand complex spatial systems on various scales. Indeed, geography is currently being re-invented in many different fora, for example in climate change studies, where human societies and natural environment are studied together. The key issue in the survival game of disciplines is that geographers succeed in demonstrating their importance and position in the field of learning. This we can only accomplish by high-quality and relevant research and by research-based teaching and supervision of students. The fact that geography still has a strong position in many countries' school system is also backing up our educational role.

As part of the academic transformation, scientific publishing is also witnessing vast changes. New, often trans-disciplinary or applied journals have emerged, published by large, professional publishing houses. Citation indices are being used ever more widely in the assessment of research. Small independent journals struggle for survival. Indisputably, *Fennia*, too, has been in turmoil in this respect, and we have had to look for alternative options of how to avoid extinction. We believe that we have found a successful strategy: this issue will be the last printed one, as from now on, *Fennia* will only be issued digitally in an Open Access (OA) environment. Hence, from now on, *Fennia* can be found at <http://ojs.tsv.fi/index.php/fennia/index>. Although this final step may look like a sudden leap, the transformation from a standard print-

ed journal to a digital one has been carefully considered over a few years' time by the publisher, the Finnish Geographical Society.

*Fennia* has been published since 1890 – a proud 120-year heritage that would be churlish not to acknowledge and applaud. But legacy alone does not legitimise the existence of a scientific journal. It has to be read widely and must attract high-quality, interesting manuscripts; in the long run, the two go naturally hand in hand. Importantly, we should remember to label and justify our piece of research as geography in the publications we prepare, and continue to publish in geographical journals.

Another driving force towards OA has been the growing argument that scientific publishing should become less commercially-orientated and more readily accessible to a wider audience, for example, researchers in developing countries. Turning to OA is an efficient way of improving visibility and granting free access to scientific results, and cutting down printing and mailing costs. In the contrary, however, by turning to OA the Society will lose its former source of income from subscription fees. Financial balance has now been achieved by a restructuration and marginal rise of the Society's membership fee. For an Open Access publication, there has to be a platform where the journal will be managed and published. In Finland, a platform for OA journals has been established by the Federation of Finnish Learned Societies. The platform is based on a Canadian freeware, Open Journals System (OJS), and currently there are some dozen journals on the system. There are many benefits of OA, for example, online submission of manuscripts. It would be wonderful if we could transform all printed issues since 1890 into digital form and make them available online. This would require a serious scanning exercise, but we shall definitely investigate this possibility in the future.

Another major change in *Fennia* has taken place this year: the Editorial Board has been rejuvenated. The old Board had been serving for many years and it was time to release the members from the duty and thank them for their services over the years. The new Board consists of eight members covering a wide range of disciplinary expertise, who serve for a fixed three-year period, 2009–2011.

**Tom Allen** is a geographer specializing in coastal environmental analysis, GIS, and remote sensing. His diverse research interests include coastal

and estuarine landscape change, environmental hazards and geovisualization, medical geography, and remote sensing of the environment. Previously, Tom has worked extensively in montane and alpine environments and has enjoyed international collaborations with Finland (Fulbright Scholar to University of Turku) and working with new adopters of GIS, ranging from environmental planners, coastal conservationists, public health and mosquito control technicians, and emergency managers. He is Associate Professor of Geography and Director of the Renaissance Center for Coastal Systems Informatics and Modeling at East Carolina University, USA.

**Jørgen Ole Bærenholdt** is Professor in Human Geography in the Department of Environmental, Social and Spatial Change, (ENSPAC), Roskilde University, Denmark. Formerly, he served as Professor at the Department of Planning and Community Studies, University of Tromsø, Norway. Jørgen Ole belongs to the cross-disciplinary research unit 'Space, Place, Mobility and Urban Studies' (MOS-PUS) at Roskilde University. Research interests include culture, tourism, mobility, regional development and design research. Among his 11 books are *Performing Tourist Places* (2004 with Haldrup, Larsen and Urry), *Coping with Distances* (2007, habil.) and *Mobility and Place* (2008, co-edited with Granås).

**Michael Bradshaw** is Professor of Human Geography at the University of Leicester, UK. His research is currently organised around two major themes: the territorial cohesion of the Russian Federation, and global energy dilemmas. These themes involve the interrelationships of issues such as energy security, globalization, economic transformation, regional change, sustainable development and climate change. Michael has co-edited several books and is Editor-in-Chief (human geography) of *Geography Compass* and contributing editor of *Eurasian Geography and Economics*.

**Timothy Carter** is a Research Professor at the Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE), Helsinki with 30 years of research experience in the field of climate change impacts and adaptation. A geographer, he obtained a B.Sc. from the University of London and Ph.D. from the University of Birmingham, UK. He has worked on climate change and agriculture, methods of impact and adaptation assessment, including scenario development, and climate change adaptation. He was a Co-ordinating Lead Author in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Second, Third and Fourth Assess-

ment Reports, and currently serves as an Editor of *WIREs Climate Change* and a Review Editor of *Climate Research*.

**Bruce Forbes** is Research Professor at the Arctic Centre, University of Lapland, in Rovaniemi, Finland. Bruce has a background in applied ecology and geography in permafrost environments, with a PhD in biogeography from McGill University, Canada. His research encompasses both the natural and social sciences. His experience over the past 25 years is circumpolar having conducted field studies of human impacts on vegetation and soils, with special emphasis on the consequences of petroleum development, in the boreal forest and arctic ecosystems of Alaska, Canada, western and eastern Siberia, and Fennoscandia. Recent research has focused on management of arctic ungulates and linked social-ecological systems employing both western and local or practitioners' knowledge in cooperation with Nenets and Sámi reindeer herders.

**Hill Kulu** was trained in geography and demography and received his PhD from the University of Helsinki, Finland, in 1997. Since then Hill Kulu has occupied academic positions in Estonia, USA and Germany. Since 2008, Hill Kulu is Senior Lecturer in Population Studies at the University of Liverpool. Hill's major research areas are family, fertility and migration studies; he has applied multi-level and multiprocess event history models in demographic research. His current research focuses on the spatial aspects of family and fertility dynamics in various European countries, particularly in Northern Europe. He is co-editor of *European Journal of Population*.

**Helle Skånes** is Assistant Professor in Ecological Geography at the Department of Physical Geography and Quaternary Geology, Stockholm University, Sweden. She has a PhD in Geography, especially Physical Geography, from Stockholm University. Her research experience covers the dynamical interface between physical geography, human geography and ecology using remote sensing techniques, GIS and cartography. The main focus of her research is on spatio-temporal changes in the rural landscape and their implications for biodiversity on a landscape level.

**Anssi Paasi** has been Professor of Geography at the University of Oulu in Northern Finland since 1989. He serves currently as an Academy Professor in the Academy of Finland (2008–12). His theoretical and empirical research has dealt with political boundaries, territoriality, regionalism, region-building processes, and spatial identities. He has published on these topics extensively in international geographical and political science journals and edited book collections. He has been the editor of the Political Geography section in the *International Encyclopaedia of Human Geography*, and is co-editor of *Progress in Human Geography*.

This team of Board members has already proved to be proactive and effective, and it is with excitement and great expectations that we now close the era of printed versions for *Fennia* and step into the digital world with open access to the publication. We hope to see you there!

Jukka Käyhkö  
Editor