

## Cultural Studies – Experiences from Finland

*- How are culturally oriented (or cultural studies) scholars getting funding for their research there?*

The main funding for research comes from the Finnish Academy (which has different kind of individual and group applications) and Private Foundations. A good list with all the Finnish private foundations can be found here:

[http://www.saatiopalvelu.fi/fi/Saatiot\\_verkossa/](http://www.saatiopalvelu.fi/fi/Saatiot_verkossa/)

Another option is to apply at the Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies, an independent institute in humanities and social science, based at the University of Helsinki.

*- Which main current trends affect the situation for cultural research where you are?*

The main trends affecting the situation for cultural research here are connected to the Bologna process and to the increasing bureaucratic and administrative work that researcher are compelled to do. Another one is the increasing competition for permanent steady jobs in University and the precarisation of academic jobs in general, as in other EU countries (in Italy at least).

*- Which main obstacles are discussed there and/or experienced by you?*

One negative trend which could be affecting or will affect the situation of cultural research is the fact that more and more (especially in private foundations) researchers and artists are competing for the same money. Art/applied research/performance is more and more evaluated together with scientific research in cultural matters. This is also connected to the fact that Universities of Applied Sciences, of Performing Arts, Theatre and Dance Academies and Design Institutions are creating Graduate Schools.

*- Are there efforts to make publication measurements more relevant to humanities research?*

Reference points are taken into account in evaluations

*- How do universities and other research funders look upon success in attracting external funding?*

It is continuously encouraged. In case of research financed by the Finnish Academy in a very positive way, as the money is then handled through the university. In case of private foundation funding (which has normally no overhead and goes directly and only to the researcher / research group) it really depends on the institute.

*- Is there any debate on (or good solutions for) how to handle interdisciplinary applications fairly in a funding system that often respect disciplinary boundaries?*

If there is, I am not aware of it (because of my personal lack of language skills in Finnish mainly). I experience that as a huge problem when sending out a research proposal, because I don't exactly know who is going to handle it. If I write 'sociology' it could be

handled by a statistician or by someone into strict quantitative methods and it would be badly evaluated. The same if I write something like art research and linguistics (as they are often put together) and it falls into the hands of a linguist or language historian. It happened just once that a box I could think was labelled 'cultural studies'. Otherwise it varies continuously and if you think more than one box reviewers may be confused.

In the case of the Finnish Academy and Collegium, the application goes normally into the field of 'History of art, literature, musicology' and as second research branch 'Sociology, social psychology, social work'. Both not really fitting.

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