

Centre for Social Data Science (CSDS)

Annual report 2020

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Executive Summary

The **Centre for Social Data Science (CSDS)** originated in 2019 as an emergent, situated and self-organized activity by staff from the disciplines of social statistics and computational methods and big data at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Helsinki. Its forerunner was the Methods Centre. Officially CSDS was established in October 2019 by a decree from the Faculty of Social Sciences. The year 2020 marks our first full year of operation as a research centre.

Social Data Science is a globally emerging field of research and teaching that formulates and begins to answer relevant questions concerning data, society, and digitalization. It deals with openness of social data, its methods of analysis, the bridging of quantitative and qualitative approaches, making use of, visualizing and interpreting data, applications in society, and the discovery of healthy societal and collaborative processes related to data and its use. Potential questions include: How can data science methods be used in planning better social and health services? What types of data do social media provide nowadays and how can we make use of them? What new services could we create with the help of data science? How can data science support evidence-based decision-making for the government, organizations and private companies? What ethical challenges are machine learning and artificial intelligence developers facing and how are they being handled? How can we foster open collaboration in solving questions about society with the help of data?

In 2020 we have grown in numbers of staff and PhD students, and in terms of courses that we teach. We have implemented new teaching in the COS (Contemporary Societies) Master's Programme and begun interacting also with cross-Faculty collaboration (in HELDIG, Digital Humanities). We have participated in infrastructure development on a national level in CLARIAH, and we are involved in the development of the new HSSH. Regarding research, we have also applied for research funding for several projects and been successful in some of the applications, and we have published a good number of articles. We have extended CSDS community activities into involving specifically our PhD students and by establishing a research discussion forum. We have been active in building structural alliances through human-level engagement with our network of societal organizations.

During 2020 we were challenged by the coronavirus pandemic and the sudden move to online teaching. We met these challenges by becoming early adopters of new technology and good practices for Zoom meetings as well as by opening faculty-level discussion among methodology teachers on good and emerging practices in digital teaching. A second external source of challenge was the change in study programmes, which resulted in an exceptionally high number of master's (and bachelor's) theses being finished in late in 2020. We managed it admirably, and many students received their degrees. A third challenge was that our Centre did not have any external funding in 2020. While this prevented us from organizing development events or acquiring external coaching services, we were able to manage in innovative ways, relying on our own skills, the premises of our network, small contributions from our research funding, and our good communal spirit and good-will.

Our core strengths include *world-class research excellence* in specific fields of social data science, which attracts also foreign students, our *teaching excellence* including being forerunners in online teaching, MOOCs and some very large courses, our *open innovative mindset and future orientation*, as well as a *heartful and friendly culture* that we have been able to establish and maintain. Regarding the community, we have built and intend to extend our strengths, and the good spirit and the relaxed and joyful atmosphere continue to support us through all the challenges from external factors.

Regarding the future, as society at large is facing a range of global, environmental and structural changes that also affect the digital sphere, including open societal data and digital practices, we continue to observe how we can best participate and join forces with others in the development of a *good society for all*.

In 2021, we foresee that the COVID-19 pandemic and the distance work will continue, and having good digital practices will therefore continue to be central. We continue to be affected by the Faculty building renovations that challenge current space allocations of disciplines and research centres. We hope to maintain our current physical location, where we have established a shared office block for our staff, and we hope to continue to develop its interior design and furniture towards an actual meeting place for students and staff, for a time when the pandemic lifts and we can all meet again in person.

For our part, **we intend to**

1. *maintain* our good, hearty spirit and open community activities aimed at ourselves, our students, the staff of the Faculty of Social Sciences as well as external visitors,
2. *fortify* our research community by building its practices, maintaining our own research efforts and continue to seek research funding that would enable social data science students to be funded when preparing their theses,
3. *continue to solidify* the newly established courses, teaching activities and our involvement in various programmes,
4. *continuously become aware of and develop* our work practices and the management and leadership of CSDS, and
5. *maintain and continue to develop* our collaborations with connected social and research institutions and infrastructures.

The online window to our activities is the **CSDS website** at

<https://www.helsinki.fi/en/faculty-of-social-sciences/centre-for-social-data-science-csds>

Overall, we consider our first full year of operation to have been a great start of our newly established research centre. This has been a notable success in the middle of challenging times. The need for social data science overall is growing, and there is enormous potential in extending to new areas in society. Our leadership, initiative and open development orientation can also help the overall progress in the context of collaboration in the midst of challenging times. We have an optimistic outlook concerning the future and of our role in it.

The CSDS agenda: What we aim for

The Centre for Social Data Science (CSDS) advocates the use of data science methods and data-driven inquiry within the social sciences. The CSDS conducts both (1) methodologically oriented basic research about research methods and (2) applied research within the social sciences when advanced methods are required.

The CSDS strongly promotes open data and open science practices; it develops and maintains infrastructure for data collection, preparation, analysis, and validation; and it aims to foster and increase the collaboration between researchers and methodology experts inside and outside academia. These initiatives are meant to improve both basic research and applied research on research methods; also with the intention to provide data analysis tools that are suitable for addressing challenges that may increasingly arise due to continuing transformation processes such as the datafication and digitalization of the society.

The CSDS has identified the clear need to consolidate, advance, and connect research and teaching in digital, computational, and data-driven social sciences in order to equip contemporary and future generations with the methodological skills necessary to understand new social phenomena proactively. The CSDS core team and its broader network aim to meet this identified need with many activities and innovative initiatives as part of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Helsinki. Many of the more important implications of the datafication and digitalization of society are best understood using the intellectual frameworks that are based on social science research. Therefore, the need to integrate thoroughly digital, computational, and data science with the social sciences is both evident and urgent.

The CSDS aims to advance the integration of data science and the social sciences; it is strongly committed to a data-driven approach that transcends the question of whether research is qualitative or quantitative; and it strives for strong collaboration with public and private organizations in both teaching and research related to Social Data Science. The CSDS acknowledges societal interaction as one of its core tasks and participates actively in various societal processes that are relevant to understanding and steering the datafication and digitalization of the society. This also involves interacting closely and frequently with the general public, media, policy makers, and stakeholders.

CSDS personnel: Who we are

As of December 2020, the CSDS consists of seven core staff members. Its broader network includes 13 Fellows, nine PhD students, nine Teaching Assistants, and five Professors Emeriti.

Core staff

[Krista Lagus](#), Professor of Digital Social Science, Director of CSDS

[Mikko Myrskylä](#), Professor of Social Data Science, Deputy Director (since Feb 2021)

[Kimmo Vehkalahti](#), University Lecturer in Social Data Science

[Maria Valaste](#), University Lecturer in Social Data Science

[Matti Nelimarkka](#), University Lecturer in Computational Social Science

[Christina Bohk-Ewald](#), University Lecturer in Applied Data Science and Demography

[Joni Oksanen](#), Research Assistant

Fellows

[Catarina Ahlvik](#), Affiliated Researcher (Management and Organization, Hanken School of Economics)

[Daria Gritsenko](#), Assistant Professor (Russian Big Data Methodology, University of Helsinki)

[Ilja Kavonius](#), University Researcher (Economics, University of Helsinki)

[Kathrin Komp-Leukkunen](#), Associate Professor (Sociology, Social Policy, University of Helsinki)

[Hanna Konttinen](#), University Lecturer (Sociology, University of Helsinki)

[Salla-Maaria Laaksonen](#), Postdoctoral Researcher (Media and Communication Studies, University of Helsinki)

[Kristér Lindén](#), Research Director (Language Technology, University of Helsinki)

[Eetu Mäkelä](#), Associate Professor (Human Sciences–Computing Interaction, University of Helsinki)

[Minna Ruckenstein](#), Associate Professor (Digital Innovations & Consumer Society, University of Helsinki)

[Reijo Sund](#), Professor (Register Studies, University of Eastern Finland)

[Mikko Tolonen](#), Assistant Professor (Digital Humanities, University of Helsinki)

[Julia Velkova](#), Assistant Professor (Technology and Social Change, Linköping University)

[Laszlo Vincze](#), University Lecturer (Quantitative Methods, University of Helsinki, Swedish School of Social Sciences)

Professors Emeriti

[Juha Alho](#) (Social Statistics), [Seppo Laaksonen](#) (Social Statistics), [Risto Lehtonen](#) (Social Statistics), [Seppo Mustonen](#) (Statistics), [Hannu Niemi](#) (Statistics), [Lauri Tarkkonen](#) (Statistics)

We are saddened to note that Professor Seppo Laaksonen passed away on 20 December 2020. His obituary, written by the Emeritus Professors Erkki Pahkinen (University of Jyväskylä) and Risto Lehtonen (Social Statistics) with Director Timo Koskimäki from Statistics Finland was published in Helsingin Sanomat on 29th January 2021 (<https://www.hs.fi/muistot/art-2000007769014.html>).

CSDS activities: What did we do in 2020

The manifold activities of the CSDS have (i) integrated data science and the social sciences in teaching and research and (ii) promoted social data science in and out the academic world.

Teaching

The CSDS core staff, fellows, and teaching assistants have offered a wide variety of courses related to Social Data Science, in English and Finnish, for students undertaking bachelor's, master's, doctoral, and post-doctoral programmes, mostly as part of the Master's Programme in Contemporary Societies (COS) and the Doctoral Programme of the Social Sciences (SOST). Some courses have belonged to the Bachelor's Programme in Social Sciences (SOSK) or have been common to most bachelor's programmes in the Faculty (VALT) or in the Open University (AYVALT). The spring term of 2020 was the last one in which the CSDS staff offered courses in the Master's Programme of Mathematics and Statistics (MAST), before absorbing those courses into the COS programme.

Kicking off the year-round *Social Data Science PhD Seminar* in autumn 2020 has been a highlight for the CSDS. This seminar is thought to be a platform for building and sharing knowledge related to Social Data Science for both UH researchers (including CSDS staff and fellows) and external visitors from research institutions and public and private sector organizations. In the autumn term of 2020, there were ten presentations, covering topics like text mining Suomi24 health discussions, modeling gambling behavior, estimating the total numbers of infections with COVID-19, and methods for measuring gaps in wealth. All presentations were given via Zoom and recorded (excluding the discussions). The videos and slides have been archived in the Moodle site of the seminar.

Many students of the Faculty of Social Sciences and other faculties at the University of Helsinki have taken one or more courses organized by the CSDS core staff and fellows during the 2020 calendar year. Almost all courses were taught in English:

Teaching period 3 of the 2019-2020 academic year:

- SOST-931b Data Science and Machine Learning for Social Science (Matti Nelimarkka)
- MAST-33009 Structural Equation Models (Kimmo Vehkalahti)
- MAST-33019 Survey Methodology and European Statistical System (Maria Valaste)
- SOSK-403 Sosiaalitutkimuksen tilastolliset menetelmät (Maria Valaste & Kimmo Vehkalahti with colleagues from SOSK Bachelor's Programme)

Teaching period 4 of the 2019-2020 academic year:

- COS-R403 Forecasting I: Introduction (Christina Bohk-Ewald)
- COS-SD302 Perspectives to Digitalizing Society (Krista Lagus)
- Summer Institutes in Computational Social Science (SICSS, Matti Nelimarkka)
- MAST-33015 Analysis of Complex Surveys (Maria Valaste)

Teaching period 1 of the 2020-2021 academic year:

- COS-D402 Co-creative Methods of Collaboration in Societal Challenges (Krista Lagus)
- SOST-930 Introduction to Computational Social Science (Matti Nelimarkka)
- SOST-930a Introduction to Programming for Social Scientists (Matti Nelimarkka)
- SOST-9151 Social Data Science PhD Seminar I+II (CSDS staff with one teaching assistant)
- VALT-103/AYVALT-103 Johdatus yhteiskuntatilastotieteeseen, osa 1 (Kimmo Vehkalahti with seven teaching assistants)

Teaching period 2 of the 2020-2021 academic year:

- COS-D405 Digital Inequalities and the Ethical Turn (Minna Ruckenstein)
- COS-D407 Scientific modeling and model validation I (Christina Bohk-Ewald)
- COS-D411 Data Wrangling and Analysis (Maria Valaste)
- COS-D413 Register Based Research and Data Analysis (Maria Valaste & Krista Lagus)
- COS-D421 The Political in Human-Computer Interaction (Matti Nelimarkka)
- COS-D422 Scientific modeling and model validation II (Christina Bohk-Ewald)
- SOST-930 Introduction to Computational Social Science (Matti Nelimarkka)
- SOST-930a Introduction to Programming for Social Scientists (Matti Nelimarkka)
- SOST-9151 Social Data Science PhD Seminar I+II (CSDS staff with one teaching assistant)
- VALT-104/AYVALT-104 Johdatus yhteiskuntatilastotieteeseen, osa 2 (Kimmo Vehkalahti with seven teaching assistants)
- PHD-302 Introduction to Open Data Science (Kimmo Vehkalahti with four teaching assistants and CSDS Fellow Reijo Sund from the University of Eastern Finland/Kuopio Campus)
- USP-302 Research Methods (Kimmo Vehkalahti with one teaching assistant and colleagues from USP Master's Programme)

Research

The core personnel of the CSDS carried out, presented, published, and disseminated research in a range of fields of Social Data Science. The research projects integrated topics such as machine learning, computational science, digital science / humanities, and statistical demography. The CSDS has also successfully received funding and submitted applications for additional funding in order to establish new and extend ongoing research activities related to Social Data Science.

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- Hu, Y., Leinonen, T. A., **Myrskylä, M.** & Martikainen, P. T. (2020). Changes in Socioeconomic Differences in Hospital Days With Age: Cumulative Disadvantage, Age-as-Leveler, or Both?, *Journals of Gerontology. Series B: Psychological Sciences & Social Sciences*, 75, 6, 1336–1347
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- Laaksonen, S-M., Haapoja, J. J., Kinnunen, T., **Nelimarkka, M.** & Pöyhtäri, R. (2020). The Datafication of Hate: Expectations and Challenges in Automated Hate Speech Monitoring, *Frontiers in Big Data*

- Lorenti, A., Dudel, C., Hale, J. M. & **Myrskylä, M.** (2020). Working and disability expectancies at older ages: The role of childhood circumstances and education, *Social Science Research*, 91, 17, 102447
- Martikainen, P., Elo, I., Tarkiainen, L., Mikkonen, J., **Myrskylä, M.** & Moustgaard, H. (2020). The changing contribution of childhood social characteristics to mortality: a comparison of Finnish cohorts born in 1936–50 and 1961–75, *International Journal of Epidemiology*, 49, 3, 896-907
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- Wood, J., Klüsener, S., Neels, K. & **Myrskylä, M.** (2020). Shifting links in the relationship between education and fertility, *Population Space and Place*, 26, 8, e2342

Funding

- **Applications in 2020 from which funding was awarded:**
 - Kone Foundation: Digital Ideologies (PI: Matti Nelimarkka)
 - C. V. Åkerlund Foundation: Kuvallisen median laskennallinen analyysi (PI: Matti Nelimarkka)
 - Nordplus Higher Education 2020. Project: NPHE-2020/10186 - Baltic-Nordic Network on Education in Survey Statistics/2020 (Maria Valaste)
 - DATALIT (SRC consortium) (PI: P. Ylikoski; Maria Valaste)
 - CLARIAH Finland infrastructure, Academy of Finland FIRI Infrastructure Roadmap call (PI: Krister Lindén, Sub-project PI: Krista Lagus)
- **Applications submitted in 2020:**
 - Digital Ideologies, Academy of Finland, September project call (PI: Matti Nelimarkka)
 - Algorithmic systems literacy, Academy of Finland, Strategic Research Council; invited to second stage but not granted (PI: Turpeinen; WP lead: Matti Nelimarkka)
 - Digital Ideologies, Google Faculty Research award (PI: Matti Nelimarkka)
 - Digital participation literature review, IBM Centre for Business of Government (PI: Matti Nelimarkka)
 - Expert for statistical analysis and demographic forecasting in DFG proposal (PI: N. Nitsche of MPIDR; Christina Bohk-Ewald)

- FLUX (SRC consortium) WP leader on forecast-based solutions for a sustainable welfare society (PI: M. Jalovaara, Sub-project PI: Mikko Myrskylä, WP lead: Christina Bohk-Ewald)
- Center of Excellence Application (co-PI: Mikko Myrskylä)
- Koronan Kirkastamat Kokemukset, Business Finland, CoCreation call (not awarded) (PI: Krista Lagus)
- CoCreating a Good Society for All, Kone Foundation (not awarded) (PI: Krista Lagus)
- Behaviour Change Science, Academy of Finland, Center of Excellence application (PI: N. Hankonen, Sub-project PI: Krista Lagus)
- Collective Sensemaking of Global Pandemics, Academy of Finland, Strategic Research Council (PI: Katja Valaskivi, WP lead: Krista Lagus)

Supervision

The core staff of the CSDS has supervised **eight Bachelor's theses** (all completed), **16 Master's theses** (13 completed, three ongoing), and **22 Doctoral theses** (one completed, 21 ongoing) related to Social Data Science.

Organizational network activities

The CSDS has actively established and fostered connections to scientific institutions and research units in public and private sector organizations (such as Statistics Finland, THL, TTL and Kela), which have resulted in a range of mutually beneficial activities. These included:

- providing paid positions for CSDS students for writing their master's thesis in those connected institutions,
- presentations in CSDS courses and attendance of external visitors and guests from those connected institutions,
- envisioning and preparing joint research projects and events of CSDS and connected institutions, and
- holding board memberships of research projects by connected institutions.

For example, in 2020 we co-organized our first public event with the HIDATA centre, and with the title "Data Science in Society", with several presenters from our collaborator organizations as well as ourselves and the HIDATA. The questions that have been addressed:

How can data science methods be used in planning better social and health services? What data do social media provide and how can we make use of it? What new services could we create with the help of data science? How can data science support evidence-based decision-making for the government, organizations and private companies? What ethical challenges

are machine learning and artificial intelligence developers facing and how are they being handled?

<https://www.helsinki.fi/en/news/data-science-news/hidata-event-on-21-january-2020-data-science-in-society>

Public engagement activities

The CSDS team was strongly committed to public engagement during 2020, including the regular and extended *Friday Coffee* meetings and other social interaction activities to make the public aware of the benefits of Social Data Science.

Regular and extended *Friday Coffee* meetings

The core staff of the CSDS has been meeting on Friday mornings to discuss and develop joint ideas related to Social Data Science. Beginning with the academic year 2020-2021, every second *Friday Coffee* has been extended by including our year-round *Social Data Science PhD Seminar*. These regular and extended *Friday Coffee* meetings have served a dual purpose.

First, regular and extended meetings have been crucial in helping us to develop a shared vision and agenda to which we commit and that we consider to be of high importance not only to the faculty and the university, but also for the broader community.

Second, the regular and extended meetings have been open to everyone, and we have actively distributed information about us being available to discuss data science with anyone who wants to show up on Friday mornings. This has been highly successful and has created a hub for planning and networking beyond our core faculty.

The *Friday Coffee* meetings have been a platform that has brought to the CSDS a network of CSDS Fellows (currently 13 scholars from University of Helsinki, other Finnish and Swedish universities, as well as Eurostat) who contribute to our teaching and supervision of students, and potentially to our research activities.

These *Friday Coffee* meetings are also an open forum for exchange with undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate students, as well as with the staff of the Faculty of Social Sciences, and even external people from startup companies, research institutions etc. This action of “Connecting People” has proved to be an effective, low-threshold approach to providing the community a data and methods service that is in high demand. Since March 2020, *Friday Coffee* has been successfully operated virtually via Zoom.

The *Friday Coffee* meetings have now become an institution within the CSDS. Every Friday we meet for the regular *Friday Coffee* with our doors wide open for everyone; every second Friday these weekly meetings smoothly transition into our extended *Friday Coffee* in the form

of our year-round *Social Data Science PhD Seminar*. The only exception is that the last Friday of the month is reserved for internal planning.

Societal interaction

During 2020, the core staff of the CSDS disseminated their research findings, announced teaching activities, and provided expertise on methodological know-how in Social Data Science in various societal areas through:

- Maintaining an active media presence, providing interviews and expert commentary to national and international media (e.g., Helsingin Sanomat, The Economist, Washington Post)
- Advising national and international organizations on best practices for forecasting (Eläketurvakeskus, United Nations Population Division)
- Participating as researchers and experts in several multidisciplinary consortia outside of academia
- Publishing interviews to promote study programmes and press releases about papers on the online platforms of the University of Helsinki
- The Society of Scientists and Parliament Members TUTKAS: research godfather (tutkijakummi) for an MP
- Presenter concerning our center in HELDIG Digital Humanities Summit
<https://www.helsinki.fi/en/helsinki-centre-for-digital-humanities/heldig-digital-humanities-summit-2020>
- Panelist in a public discussion concerning the Corona times, on 15.4. in Poikkeuslinja digital public event concerning the challenges of digital age to the mental health “Hajoaako pää? Etätyö ja digiähky”
<https://www.helsinki.fi/fi/tiedekulma/ohjelma/poikkeuslinjalla>
- Juror in the European Statistics Competition 2020 organized by EUROSTAT
<https://www.esc-2020.eu/>

Activities in the academic community

The core personnel of the CSDS have been active in the academic community in and outside the University of Helsinki.

Academic service at the University of Helsinki:

- Leadership in teaching skills evaluation committee of the Faculty
- Doctoral programme in Social Sciences, board membership
- Master's programme in Contemporary Societies, steering group membership
- Bachelor's programme in Social Sciences, board membership
- Discipline committee membership

- HIData Board membership
- Vice-board member of Helsinki Institute for Information Technology HIIT
- FCAI Society membership
- UH Digital development board
- Regular and extended *Friday Coffee* meetings for interacting with and advising students, interested faculty members, and other interested external parties on methodological issues related to Social Data Science
- First year of implementing the courses designed for a new Master's programme study track as a step towards promoting education of also the staff concerning social data science methodologies
- Design and implementation of new development activities that might serve as a test case or pilot study for the Faculty's future development activities. (For example, the pedagogical initiative *We are teaching methods in Social Sciences* has been started for method teachers at the Faculty of Social Sciences to provide a space for sharing experiences on how to teach complex methods to students in a virtual environment during the pandemic).

Academic service outside of the University of Helsinki:

- Reviewers for submissions to journals and funding applications to institutions
- Serving as reviewer of PhD theses
- Serving as a PhD thesis committee member
- Serving as evaluator for professor and associate professor appointments at other faculties or universities
- Serving as associate editors for journals or conferences
- Participating in the Finnish Social Science Data Archive (FSD) advisory board
- Serving as member of the steering committee of Baltic-Nordic-Ukrainian Network on Survey Statistics
- Responsibility of the EMOS (European Master in Official Statistics) certificate
- Chairing the Program Committee of the biennial satellite conference of the International Association for Statistical Education (IASSE)
- National board membership in *Yksityisen kopioinnin tutkimuksen neuvottelukunta*, led by the Ministry of Education and Culture
- Board member of a research consortium led by Työterveyslaitos (Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, FIOH)
- Summer Institute in Computational Social Science (SICSS) organisation
- CLARIAH Suomi, national infrastructure, board membership

CSDS development: Where we come from and how we will move ahead

History

The Centre for Social Data Science (CSDS) was founded in October 2019. It is part of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Helsinki. The CSDS represents the *discipline* Social Data Science and has the administrative structure of a research *centre* at the University of Helsinki. The founding members of the CSDS are Krista Lagus, Mikko Myrskylä, Kimmo Vehkalahti, Maria Valaste, and Matti Nelimarkka. The video of the Opening event (made by Unigrafia) is available in Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/373919329>. It includes the talks given by two distinguished professors: *Teuvo Kohonen* (Academic and Emeritus Professor of the Academy of Finland) and *Seppo Mustonen* (Emeritus Professor of Statistics).

Some of the founding members of the CSDS were previously affiliated with the former discipline of Social Statistics or with the former Centre for Research Methods at the University of Helsinki. The CSDS team has brought some of the most successful modes of work and activities of those former units into the portfolio of the CSDS.

Building a team and planning next actions

The CSDS has joined for regular internal events on the last Friday of the month in 2020 to strengthen relationships of the team members and to plan next actions related to teaching, research, public engagement, and academic service.

The CSDS team has met for a co-creative development day at the premises of Futurice in Helsinki on February 28, 2020. Krista Lagus has organized and led this event in the role of a facilitator. Following a sequence of sessions on meditating, contemplating on open questions on the individual and group level, and artwork, this meeting has eventually strengthened the team spirit and helped to identify and set work-related goals for individual CSDS members and the CSDS as a whole. The strongly-felt commitment to CSDS could not be put into stronger words than was done by one of its core members during this event: "I have 15 years before my retirement from UH, and I'm going to give everything I have to CSDS."

As a result of our open *Friday Coffee* and internal development meetings, the CSDS team has invented and implemented the now extended *Friday Coffee* meeting. Every second Friday we smoothly transition from the regular Friday Coffee meeting into our *Social Data Science PhD Seminar* which acts as a connectivity forum for students and researchers at the University of Helsinki and for external parties from research institutions as well as public and private sector organizations.

We have been active participants in the architectural meetings related to the changes concerning the renovation plans of the Faculty of Social Sciences. We have also come up with a new way to share space and have been able to negotiate a “joint room block with shared keys” on the 3rd floor of U35. This is a new practice that we will experiment with. Its results will be seen in the future when the distance work situation becomes less prominent. This joint room block activity and its actualization has been quite important to our shared spirit as a centre. As a colleague Timo Honkela passed away in 2020, we offered to host his academic library for posterity. We have obtained the books and will begin to transfer them into the “Timo Honkela Memorial Library”, located in the CSDS premises.

The CSDS team met for a *virtual Christmas party* on 18 December, 2020 to share cultural customs while eating Christmas treats. This event has been an opportunity to reflect on 2020 and to strengthen the connection of the CSDS members in an informal atmosphere.

Taken together, the development events have proved to be instrumental in the formation of a joint identity, establishing a relaxed atmosphere, trust and the feeling of partnership among core staff. They have also facilitated establishing a shared intent concerning our joint work future and facilitated creating new ways of moving forward in practice.

In 2020 we have been challenged by the coronavirus pandemic and the sudden move to online teaching, but we were also early adopters of modern technology for Zoom meetings (identified and adopted conference cameras that also permit the combination of live meetings & distance participation), as well as good practices for digital teaching in Spring 2020.

A second external source of challenge was the change in study programmes, which resulted in an exceptionally high number of master’s (and bachelor’s) theses being completed very late in 2020. We managed it admirably, and many students received their degrees.

A third challenge was that our CSDS centre did not have any external funding in 2020. That resulted in us being unable to use any external coaches, nor to organize any special planning events in outside locations. Instead, we managed development between ourselves, and due to the COVID-19 pandemic, not having even the ability to even come together in live sessions. Not having funding as a centre, for example, in the form of being able to hire a Coordinator, for facilitating our development or for helping organize public events, remains a major limiting issue also concerning future opportunities.

Our strengths regarding the community we have built and continue to extend, and the good spirit and the relaxed and joyful atmosphere continue to support us through all the challenges from external factors.

CSDS contact: How to get in touch

There are plenty of ways to get in touch with the CSDS:

- Usually, you can find the CSDS team in its UH premises located on the third floor of Unioninkatu 35 in Helsinki, Finland (*however, during the pandemic, the premises have been closed to the public*).
- You can visit our open *Friday Coffee* meetings almost each week, starting at 9 am (*so far via Zoom, see above*).
- You can get information about our regular and upcoming events at the [CSDS website](#).
- You can also contact us via email:

Krista Lagus: krista.lagus@helsinki.fi

Mikko Myrskylä: mikko.myrskylä@helsinki.fi

Kimmo Vehkalahti: kimmo.vehkalahti@helsinki.fi

Maria Valaste: maria.valaste@helsinki.fi

Matti Nelimarkka: matti.nelimarkka@helsinki.fi

Christina Bohk-Ewald: christina.bohk-ewald@helsinki.fi

Joni Oksanen: joni.oksanen@helsinki.fi

Impressions



TIEDEKUNNAN UUTISIA



CENTER FOR SOCIAL DATA SCIENCE (CSDS)

The Centre for Social Data Science (CSDS) is a new research unit of the Faculty of Social Sciences. It advocates the use of data science methods and data-driven inquiry within social sciences. CSDS conducts both methodologically oriented basic research about research methods and applied research within social sciences where advanced methods are required. [Read more.](#)

Friday Coffee

Would you like to discuss your research (data, methods, etc.) with someone? Feel free to come and have a cup of tea or coffee with us! It may have surprising consequences. [Read more.](#)



NIKU MÄÄTTÄNEN HELSINKI GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ECONOMICSIN PROFESSORIKSI

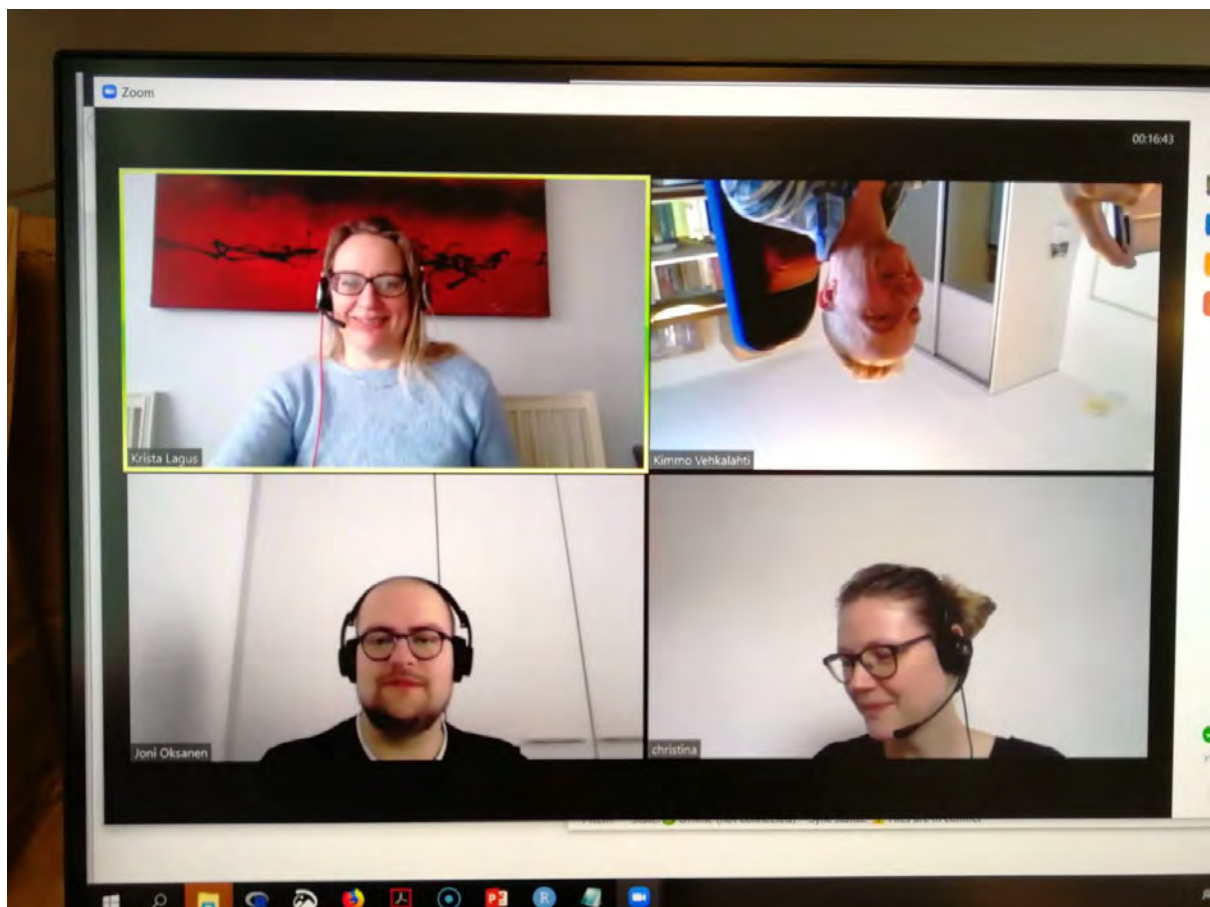
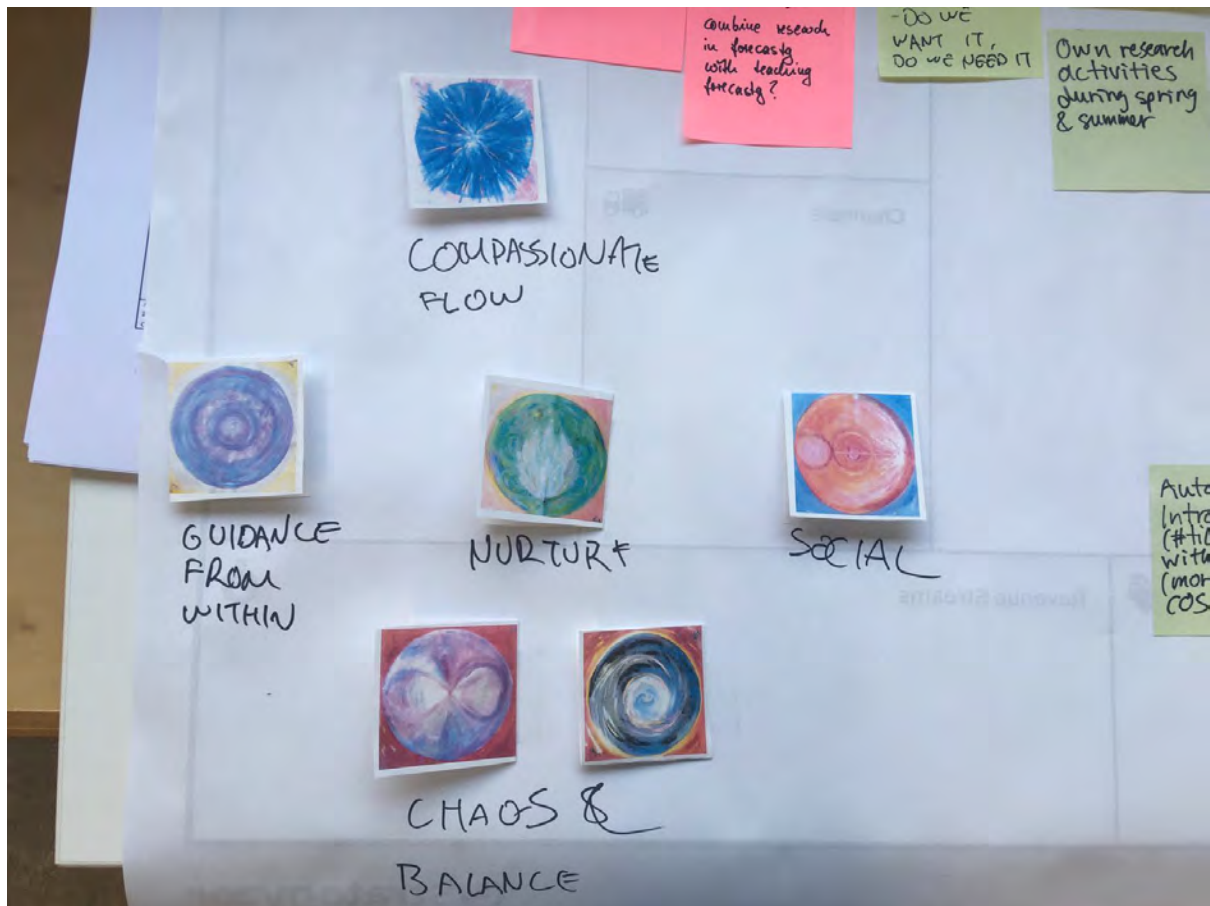
Taloustieteen tohtori (PhD) **Niku Määttä** on nimitetty Helsinki GSE:n makrotaloustieteen professuuriin. Professuuri perustuu Suomen Pankin Helsinki GSE:lle tekemään lahjoitukseen ja sijoittuu Helsingin yliopistoon. Määttä aloittaa tehtävässään 1.8.2020. [Lue lisää.](#)

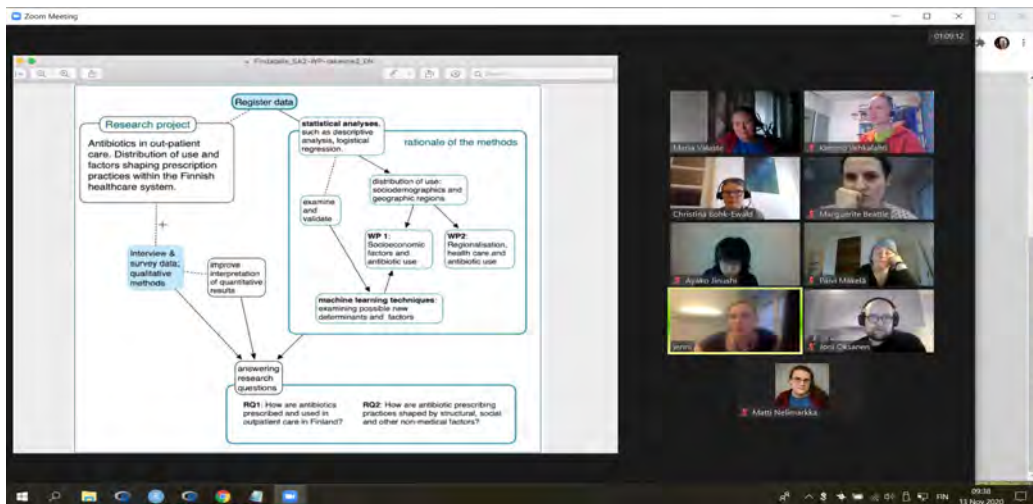


UUSI SOVELLUS MOTIVOI KÄYTTÄJIÄ TERVEELLISIIN ELÄMÄNTAPOIHIN

Helsingin yliopiston tutkijat ovat kehittäneet älypuhelinsovelluksen, joka voi auttaa ihmisiä sitoutumaan terveellisiin elämäntapoihin, esimerkiksi terveyttä edistävään liikkumiseen.







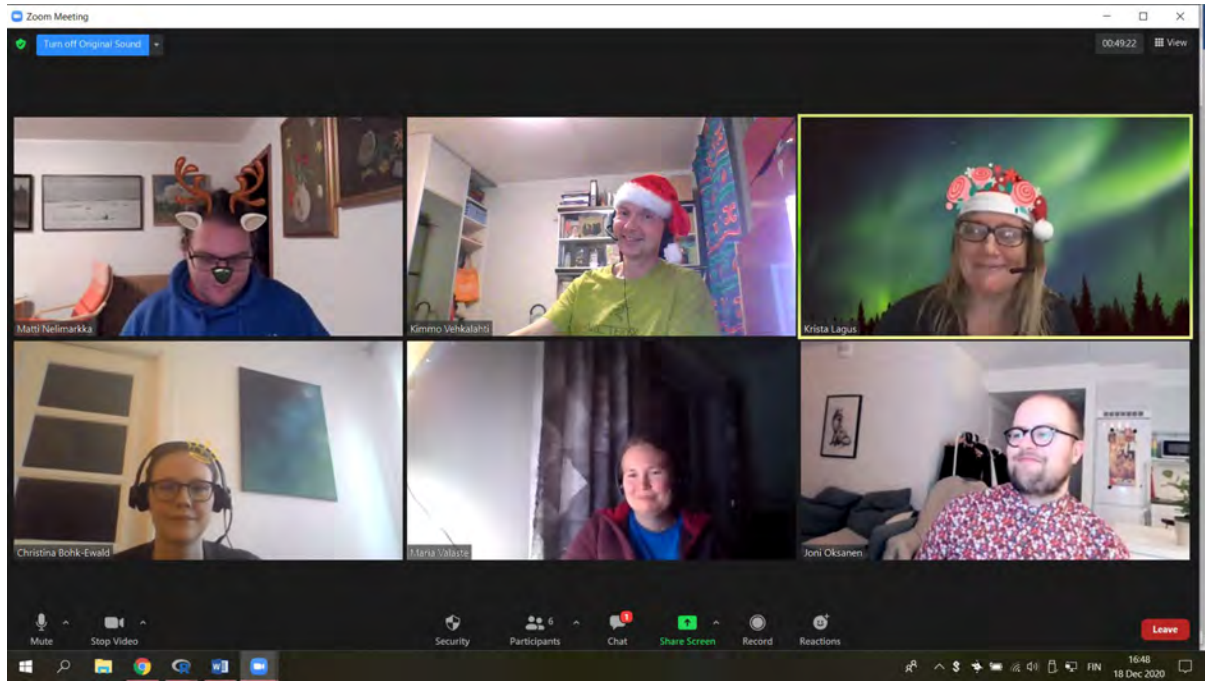
Kimmo Vehkalahti
 Social Data Scientist, Director of Master's Programme in Contemporary Societie...
 1d • 🌐

Proud of my CSDS colleagues Christina & Mikko.
 OPEN SCIENCE in practice:

- 1) Article (open access) in Int J Epidemiology (Impact Factor 7.7), forthcoming
- 2) Preprint available on medRxiv
- 3) R code available in GitHub

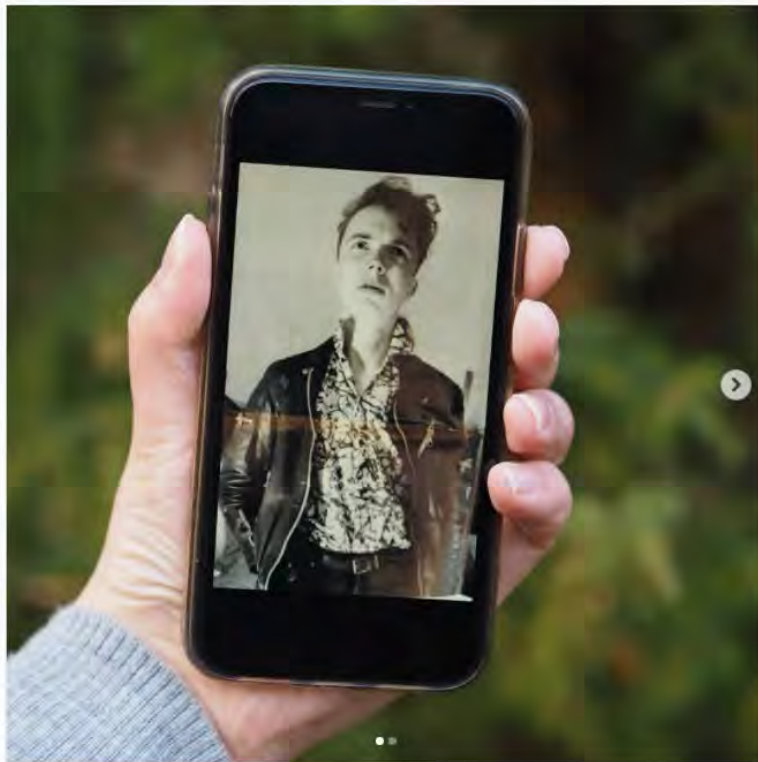
+ as a bonus, Christina's recent talk (video & slides) in our new PhD / Master's / Visitor / Research seminar (*) available in UH Moodle.
 GOOD JOB.
 (*) official name: Social Data Science PhD Seminar I and II
[#datascience](#) [#CSDS](#) [#universityofhelsinki](#) [#openscience](#)

How many Finns have really been infected with COVID-19? | University of Helsinki
 helsinki.fi • 3 min read



Instagram

Hae



universityofhelsinki • Seurataan

universityofhelsinki Meet the teacher! In 1990, Kimmo Vehkalahti was a first-year student of statistics at the University of Helsinki and an aspiring rock star. Here he is pictured on the promotional poster of one of his bands by photographer Jukka Lehtinen. Kimmo likens lecturing to hundreds of students at a time to headlining a rock concert, as both instances call for good performance skills.

Today, Kimmo is a social data scientist who teaches in the Master's Programme in Contemporary Societies. He is docent of applied statistics, a university lecturer and a founding member of the Teachers' Academy, a network of top-level



kirstilonka ja 550 muuta tykkäävät

30. LOKAKUUTA 2020

Lisää kommentti...

Julkaise

