



## Introduction

When Mika Widgrén and I thought about this collection of essays we intended to honor the career and work of Hannu Nurmi and also his social skills and cultural capacity. The death of Mika on August 16, 2009, at the age of 44, added a sad dimension to this project. Mika considered Hannu as a fatherly friend and was quite aware that he had caused worries and joys for him. I was more of an uncle to Mika ever since having been the opponent at Mika's doctoral examination at the University of Helsinki. The defence took place on May 4 or 5, 1995, a date which became extremely precious to Mika because the Finnish hockey team won the final of the World Championship against the national team of Sweden in Stockholm on this very day. Those who were close to Mika know that he worshiped Finnish hockey (of course on ice) and Manchester United (or was it FC Liverpool). There was a lot to celebrate during these days.

Mika did an excellent job as editor and he is not at all responsible that this volume was not available at Hannu Nurmi's 65<sup>th</sup> birthday. Of course, his death had an impact on the time frame of this publication, but hopefully not on its quality. All articles published in this first volume and almost all in the forthcoming volume II had Mika's final approval. I think that Mika, the authors and the readers deserve that his name is listed as editor of this publication. I am sure that Hannu would happily agree to this, however, I do not think it appropriate to ask him on this issue. I miss his advice and Mika's support.

I first met Hannu Nurmi at a Public Choice Meeting in Florence in 1980. At that time, I had already edited two of his articles for the *Munich Social Science Review* (*MSSR*), both published in 1978. In fact, this journal started with Hannu Nurmi's 'On the Economic Theories of Political Institutions,' (Nurmi 1978a) as the first article of the issue. His second article in this journal was 'Power and Support: The Problem of Representational Democracy' (Nurmi 1978b). Both articles contributed to the myth of *MSSR*, but could not prevent the end of the journal after six issues.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Of course, sales were poor, but, by today's standards, not too bad as university libraries and

I do not remember how and when I came across Hannu Nurmi's work for the first time. However, I do remember that I, still a young scholar of hardly more than 30 years, was strongly influenced by Hannu's collection of six articles published as 'Rationality and Public Goods: Essays in Analytical Political Theory' (Nurmi 1977). Again and again I read this material and tried to integrate it in my daily teaching, which was difficult, and my research, which was more promising, although I never managed to understand the cusp catastrophe models and the fuzzy set logic that Hannu proposed in this volume.

Hannu Nurmi also contributed an article to the volume *Power, Voting, and Voting Power* that I edited. His article, 'Measuring Power,' (Nurmi 1982) defined much of the work that was later published in *Homo Oeconomicus*<sup>2</sup> and became programmatic to my own work and the research of many scholars.

To some extent, the *Power* volume collected material that was still on its way to be published in *MSSR*. But more important was the fact that through my editorship with *MSSR* I became a member of a scholarly network that, in the end, provided excellent contributions to the *Power* volume. In the following years Hannu, Mika and I met at many conferences and workshops. I published papers with both of them<sup>3</sup> and our cooperation, which is rather incompletely reflected in these publications, became institutionalized in the Public Choice Research Centre (PCRC), a centre of excellence financed by the Academy of Finland, with Hannu Nurmi as director and Mika Widgrén as vice-director. It is not at all an exaggeration to say that without Hannu Nurmi there would be no PCRC. Establishing such a centre of excellence is a great achievement, a result of much work, social competence and scientific recognition. To some extent, it embodies the appreciation that Hannu has earned within the scientific community over the last three decades.

The fact that it was easy for Mika and myself to find such a large number of outstanding scholars to contribute to these *Essays* is just another indicator of Hannu's status within the scientific community. Although, unfortunately, Mika and I had to reject several submissions, there are still too many pages for a single issue of *Homo Oeconomicus*. A second volume with a series of excellent contributions to the *Essays* will be published soon. There was

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private persons still subscribed to hardcopy versions of journals. *MSSR* stopped its appearance because the two English-speaking editors went back to the USA and other native speakers could not be recruited as editors.

<sup>2</sup> Publications in *Homo Oeconomicus* are Nurmi (2000), Nurmi et al. (2000) and Nurmi et al. (2007). In 2008, Hannu Nurmi became a member of the Editorial Board of this journal.

<sup>3</sup> See Holler and Nurmi (2005, 2009) and Holler and Widgrén (1999a, b).

the plan to publish all papers in a single book, once the *Homo Oeconomicus* issues are out, with a publisher of some reputation. The plan still exists, but its realization has been somewhat adversely affected by the early death of my co-editor as he was the one who worked on this project. Propositions are most welcome.

It has to be mentioned that Matti Wiberg compiled an excellent collection of papers on the occasion of Hannu Nurmi's 60<sup>th</sup> birthday (Wiberg, 2004). This publication provides, together with volume I and II of the *Essays*, a substantial overview on modern research in political sciences and public choice as well as an illustration, although incomplete, of Hannu Nurmi's profound interest in the functioning of the societies in which we live.

The person who had provoked these publications studied political science, economics and social policy at the University of Turku. In 1967, he received a Bachelor of Arts and in 1969 a Master's degree from the same University. This was followed by a Licentiate of political science in 1971. In 1974, after an extended visit to the John Hopkins University (Baltimore, Maryland) under the 'Senior Fulbright-Hays Program,' Hannu Nurmi received a PhD (Political Science) at the University of Turku. His thesis was on *Causality and Complexity – some problems of causal analysis in the social sciences*. This qualified him for an associate professorship of 'Methodology of the Social Sciences' at the University of Turku. In 1978, he visited the University of Essex on a British Academy Wolfson Fellowship. 1991-1996 saw him serve as Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Turku and he also became a full professor during this period. During 2003-2008 he had the privilege to be Academy Professor, selected by the Academy of Finland. When in 2008, the Academy of Finland nominated a centre of excellence with a focus on public choice research, located at University of Turku and Turku School of Economics, Hannu Nurmi was the uncontested candidate for its directorship. As members of the centre (PCRC) Mika and I were very grateful that Hannu accepted this challenge, and I am sure that the other members felt the same.

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