

Ilkka Heiskanen

* 23.12.1935 † 8.2.2019



PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE (emeritus) Ilkka Heiskanen, a member of the Finnish Academy of Science and Letters since 1975, died at the age of 83 in Helsinki on February 8th, 2019. He was born in Vieremä (North Savo) on December 23rd, 1935. Heiskanen studied political science with minors in sociology and philosophy at the University of Helsinki. In the 1960s, he continued his studies at the Universities of Chicago and Cornell, where he met his future wife, sociologist Veronica Stolte-Heiskanen (1934-1994).

Heiskanen defended his doctoral dissertation at the University of Helsinki in 1967 on *Theoretical Approaches and Scientific Strategies in Administrative and Organizational Research*. A neoinstitutionalist avant la lettre, Heiskanen analyzed institutions as an intermediate element between individuals and structures. He was able to reveal the processes and changes that took place, analyzing how institutional practices governed individual behavior, constraining and providing opportunities. Two years later, he was appointed assistant professor of administrative science and in 1974 professor of political science, a position he held until his retirement in 2000.

Heiskanen was a critical intellectual and a generalist scholar interested in a wide range of issues ranging from science to literature, notably the works of Ingeborg Bachmann and Christa Wolf. He introduced his students and colleagues to newest works in European philosophy and social theory and authors like Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-François Lyotard. As a teacher, he was charismatic and his influence on Finnish political science has been significant, training several generations of future professors and scholars. His numerous statements on professorships and dissertations also manifested his original style and offered him occasions to present his own ideas. Despite holding one of the most prestigious posts in Finnish political science, he was always the enemy of dogmatism and favored individual, original postures and interpretations.

Heiskanen led numerous research projects, most notably on democracy and equality (Demokratia ja tasa-arvo, DETA) that culminated in an extensive analysis of Finland's governance system, *Julkinen, kollektiivinen ja markkinaperusteinen* ("Public, Collective and Market Based", 1977). It showed how power was organized in Finnish society, how the relation-

ships between power holders were linked to one another. In 1983, he edited with Sakari Hänninen *Exploring the Bases of Politics*, the first publication of the international book series of the Finnish Political Science Association (FPSA), the president of which Heiskanen was from 1980 to 1983. This important work had a profound impact on Finnish political science as it celebrated, instead of an established and homogeneous mainstream, the plurality of perspectives and theories. In the second part of the 1980s, Heiskanen led the research project *Deviant and Unconventional Political Behavior*, drawing typically inspiration from a wide range of literature that included novels and poems as well as scholarly work. By organizing seminars with leading politicians like social-democrat Ulf Sundqvist and centrist Eeva Kuuskoski, Heiskanen also sought to link research with everyday politics.

Working closely with Ritva Mitchell, he became more interested in cultural studies and policy. An important outcome of their collaboration was *Lättähatuista punkkareihin* ("From Flat Borsalinos to Punk Rockers", 1985), a pioneering study of Finnish youth culture. Towards the end of his career, Heiskanen focused particularly on European cultural institutions, editing with Ritva Mitchell and Anita Kangas several major works such as *Taiteen ja kulttuurin kentät* ("Fields of Art and Culture", 2002), an interest that continued until his death. As a key actor in the Council of Europe's Cultural Review Programme, Heiskanen drafted in 1992-1993 the report on Finland.

At the occasion of Ilkka Heiskanen's 75th birthday, the FPSA published a festschrift *Fortunæ rota volvitur. Studies on the Writings and other Work of Ilkka Heiskanen* in his honor.

*Obituary by Niilo Kauppi
and Kari Palonen*

Translation by authors