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FROM A FEW TO ALL

LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES IN FINLAND

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"This book is an important contribution to history of water and environmental history of Finland in general. Hopefully, it will promote more work of value for eager readers." Martin V. Melosi Professor University of Houston

This book describes the evolution of urban and rural water supply and sanitation in Finland over the past 150 years. In addition to technology development, it explores various institutional issues related to the water sector. In addition to technology development, book explores various institutional issues related to the water sector such as legislation, utility management, human resources development, research and development, professional associations, sector enterprises including consulting companies and contractors, and exporting activities. Though Finnish utilities are mostly publicly owned, they today adhere to commercial principles. Planning, construction, operation, and maintenance services are often bought from the private sector. The services have been, and still are, covered by direct consumer payments, while government subsidies have been small. Rural water supply is organized through consumer-managed water cooperatives. Water supply and sanitation systems and services have expanded gradually. Sometimes old treatment methods have been reintroduced. In the future, there will be more focus in the sector on increasing customer orientation, intermunicipal cooperation of utilities, and international cooperation. The gained long-term experience will be a cornerstone of future water policy and strategy development.

Professor Timo Myllyntaus (p.11-13): "...a British research team investigated water resources of 147 countries evaluating the quality and quantities of available water, the number, spread and accessibility of these resources. The result was that the team ranked Finland first. Consequently, that country should suffer less from water-related problems than many other countries. In Finland, annual rainfall is reasonable and an evaporation rate is low. It also has significant water resources spread over the country's thousands rivers and 188,000 lakes. The following articles by a group of eight contributors, however, show that the Finns have some times had to work hard to sort out their water problems... Petri Juuti and Tapio Katko claim in their article From Polluted to Swimmable Waters that abandoning its groundwater project and instead choosing surface water of a nearby lake, the City of Tampere gave an unsustainable model to many other cities. The authors find the reliance on surface water as unfavourable path dependence because dozens of lakes cannot provide high quality drinking water for various cities and towns. Sometimes their problems have been lethal. ... In their article, Jari Kaivo-oja, Tapio Katko and Osmo Seppälä claim that discontinuities between the past, the present and the future have caused problems for the Finnish water supply and water protection. Infrastructure investments are long-term strategic decisions that should be based on the ample knowledge on the past experience, present possibilities and future predictions. Despite the significant development of the 20th century, challenges of the future will be demanding, as well. A lesson provided by the contributors is that those challenges can only be coped with multidisciplinary cooperation and joint efforts of both public and private stakeholders."

KEYWORDS: Water Supply, Sanitation, Environmental History, Water history, Innovation, Policy, Finland.

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