



Parties, Governments and Voters in Finland: Politics Under Fundamental Societal Transformation

Lauri Karvonen

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Finland's modern, technologically advanced welfare state is, in fact, a fairly recent creation. The social changes through which these post-industrial structures were introduced occurred much later than elsewhere in the West; once underway, they took place with unprecedented rapidity. This book is the story of what happens to parties, governments and voters when the fundamental features that conditioned party formation and voter alignments undergo a rapid transformation. It is this perspective that makes the Finnish case interesting in an international comparison. To the largest extent possible, this book therefore examines Finland in a comparative perspective. Karvonen's study is based on a wealth of new primary evidence. It demonstrates that Finland is indeed a special case in certain respects, especially when it comes to the attenuation of ideological rivalry and the recurrent waves of populist protest. 'This is an outstanding analysis of the political and social history of Finland since it gained independence from Russia in 1917. Supported by ample empirical data, Lauri Karvonen explains the "late-but-rapid-syndrome" and why Finland, as a former part of Sweden and of Russia, has been a special case in a comparative Nordic and European perspective.' Stein Kuhnle, University of Bergen 'There remains a great deal of interest in the Nordic or Scandinavian political "model" these days, but this interest usually focuses on Sweden or, possibly, Norway and Denmark. The politics and policies of Finland, which in fact present a fascinating case for study, are too often left out. This is due in good part to the absence of an up-to-date, comprehensive analysis of Finland. Fortunately, with the arrival of Professor Karvonen's latest book, this is no longer the case. This excellent volume will be of great interest and use to both specialists and comparativists - and, indeed, to interested citizens.' Henry Milner, University of Montreal

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