

Pirjo Markkola

EINO JUTIKKALA HISTORY PRIZE 2019 was awarded to Pirjo Markkola, professor of history at Tampere University who has specialized in Finnish social history. She has gained both national and international recognition as a historian who places particular emphasis on her roles as a scholar, a university teacher and a leader of research teams.

Professor Pirjo Markkola belongs to the new generation of historians who have reformed the study of Finnish history and ensured that adequate prominence is given to gender, everyday life and the welfare state. Her research career began with her doctoral thesis, published in 1994, which focused on working-class families in Tampere and the emergence of working-class homes in general. This has been followed over the decades by other themes related to gender studies and social history.

"I am one of the first major breakthrough generation of those interested in women's history, as gender studies in the

field of history were known at that time. For me, it began with my master's dissertation, and there were many of us who wrote doctoral theses in women's history during the 1990s."

"The area in which I was most at home was a combination of social history and gender history in which the focus was on social structures and the lives of ordinary people rather than on histories of individuals in high positions. This represented a new perspective, an attempt to shed light on history as people experienced it and reported it. At times this has called for a degree of resourcefulness in finding suitable material, but it has always proved possible if one knows what questions to ask of that material."

Professor Markkola has directed a number of research projects, either as project leader or as a member of the leadership team, in Centres of Excellence in the History of Society and in the History of Experiences, both financed by the Academy of Finland. She has also headed a re-

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search group in a Nordic Council of Ministers 'NordForsk' Centre of Excellence entitled The Nordic Welfare State – Historical Foundations and Future Challenges.

"I have been involved in three centres of excellence. At the present moment the three topics that we are working with in Tampere through the Centre of Excellence in the History of Experiences are lived nation, lived religion and lived welfare state. I am the leader of the last-mentioned group."

"I don't do this research by reading only government or party programmes or manifestoes, but rather I prefer to concentrate on people's experiences of everyday life. I have been interested, for instance, in the influence of Lutheranism on people's thinking and on social work. In fact until the Public Health Law of 1972, deaconesses of Lutheran parishes held an important role in health services in rural areas."

Markkola's career has been characteristically international and highly mobile.

From the beginning she set about making useful contacts and creating networks that would be of benefit to her students in Finland and the Nordic Countries. She has also made Finnish scholars and their work better known through the positions that she has held in international organizations.

Markkola's research has had a considerable impact on society at large, as can be seen from the survey of the history of children's out-of-home care commissioned from her research group by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, one consequence of which was that the Finnish government issued a public apology to those who had been maltreated as children in out-of-home care.

"The survey of failures in child welfare services has been the outstanding project of my research career so far, and I am proud and happy that my research group comprising historians, ethnologists and specialists in social work was entrusted with that task."

Pirjo Markkola has published actively in international and Finnish forums and has been editor-in-chief of the Finnish histori-

cal journal *Historiallinen Aikakauskirja*. She was invited to membership of the Finnish Academy of Science and Letters in 2014.

Eino Jutikkala History Prize is awarded every three years for distinguished scholarly work in the field of historical research.

*Photo:
Jonne Renvall / Tampere University*