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## ENTERTAINMENTALISED POLITICS

### **A CASE STUDY OF THE POLITICAL ACTIVITIES OF FINNISH SOCIALISTS IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY**

The fusion of entertainment and politics has been considered to be a late modern phenomenon, which has been connected to post WW II media and especially to television. It has been argued that the process of politics becoming more entertainment oriented corrupts the field of politics by moving its focus from significant political issues to persons, emotions and nonsense. The phenomenon has been linked to the forms of making late modern identities and citizenship. In this article we argue that this view of the 'entertainmentisation' of politics is misleading because of the weak grounding of the argument in history. We show in the case study investigating Finnish socialists' activities in the early 20th century that the connections between entertainment and politics were manifold. We have analyzed aspects of entertainment in socialist politics by looking at a variety of materials: the socialist comic paper *Kurikka* (by concentrating on issues published in 1904–1906), *Ihanneliitto's* (the Union of the Ideal) political and pedagogical activity (1903–1912) and other socialist publications and forms of activity. Even though the socialist movement was suspicious of "popular recreations" and 'commercial' entertainment, the elements of entertainment were in many ways consciously appropriated in the forms of political action. The analysis shows that politics was 'entertainmentised' a hundred years ago. This combination of politics and entertainment had several different functions: entertainment was used to engage more supporters, it strengthened the commitment to socialist politics and made people familiar with the principles of organized political activity and promoted the socialist ideology.

**Erkki Karvonen**

## POLITICIANS AS CELEBRITIES.

### **ON THE ENTERTAINING MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF POLITICIANS IN FINLAND**

This article examines recent trends in the media intrusion in the private lives of politicians in both Finland and abroad. Politics has become personified and celebritized and as a result the media seems to handle politicians like entertainment celebrities. The media has significant agenda setting power to make the intimate affairs of politicians into the most important debates and focal points of the society.

The article asks is this type of publicity something trivial that weakens democracy and undermines citizenship, or, on the contrary, is it something that strengthens democracy. The traditional approach emphasizes the negative aspects of entertainmentisation, whereas the newer, postmodern approach highlights the

positive aspects of this phenomenon. The article analyzes both these positions. The new approach is seen as an antithesis to the older approach and, as such, too one-sided. The article first creates a general view of the celebritisation of politicians by contextualizing the phenomenon historically and internationally by investigating the changes in the relationship between the media and politics and by assessing the postmodernisation of culture. The celebritisation of politicians is conceptualized by discussing the entertainmentisation and popular-culturalization of journalism. Celebritisation can be regarded as one form of the “popular-culturalization” of journalism. The research looks into this phenomenon by taking into account the perspectives of both politics and journalism.

**Sanna Karkulehto**

## **THE GREATEST FINN IN A MEDIA WAR.**

### **UNRULY SEXUALITY IN THE RECEPTION OF A FINNISH PUPPET ANIMATION URALIN PERHONEN / THE BUTTERFLY OF THE URALS**

The image of the probably most well known and certainly most worshipped person in Finnish history, President C. G. Mannerheim, who was the commander in chief in the Winter War between Finland and the Soviet Union during the Second World War and who has been voted by the public the Greatest Finn, was recently heavily debated by the Finnish media. The Finnish puppet animation *Uralin perhonen* (2008, *The Butterfly of the Urals*), directed by the Finnish animation maker, Katariina Lillqvist, represented Mannerheim firstly, as a slaughterer of the “reds” in the Civil War in Finland in 1918. Secondly, he was represented as a transvestite who dressed himself in a purple corset and had a homo- and bi-sexual relationship with his male servant whom he had brought to Finland from the other side of the Ural Mountains.

The reception of the film became a passionate media war in Finland. Recent and former politicians, representatives of the Finnish Army and war veterans declared an open war against the director who was forced to defend herself and the freedom of art in public. This article investigates the details of this media war especially in terms of sexuality. In addition, the article discusses the reasons and backgrounds of the reception; the cultural debates over freedom of speech and art, and censorship.

The reason why the film was condemned was the topics with which it subversively rethinks and retells Finnish history and the history of sexuality. A lonely man wearing a corset being penetrated by his male servant from Kyrgyzstan did not correspond to the dominant Finnish idea of the Greatest Finn. Consequently, the homosexuality of President Mannerheim, represented in the animation, and its possible connections to real history were constantly denied by the film’s critics. This public denial of homo- or bisexuality, combined with the hostile and restricting reception, becomes intriguing when studied in the context of the history of culture wars. In terms of sexual politics the public media discussion on Mannerheim’s sexuality did, in fact, challenge the cultural boundaries of sexuality.

Aini Linjakumpu

## **QUEER COMMUNITIES AS AN ALTERNATIVE VOICE OF ISLAM**

The aim of this article is to discuss the role of sexual minorities (homosexuals, lesbians, bisexuals and transsexuals) in the public sphere of Islam, especially in the context of the Internet. Public spheres in the Internet reproduce existing social and political structures, but, on the other hand, they also create their own realities and thus expand the boundaries of “the ordinary life”. The empirical focus of this article is on the global, transnational expressions articulated on the Internet by Muslims belonging to sexual minorities. In other words the article focuses on the English speaking, transnational public sphere. Homepages, portals, blogs and discussion boards will be under study. The article discusses the construction of queer communities on the Internet and comments the questions of governance in Islam, the challenge to the internal social order of Islam and the possibility for a political reform.

Tapio Häyhtiö & Jarmo Rinne

## **CIVIC WATCH**

### **THE POLITICS OF DISCLOSURE IN COMPUTER MEDIATED COMMUNICATION**

In this article we study the recent phenomenon of individualised civic watch emerging on the Internet. “Civic watch” from below allows people to monitor elites and organizations in order to make their actions more transparent, fair and accountable. The use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) increases the ability of people to publish information on the unethical behaviour or mishandling of governments, civil servants, public office holders, the police etc. We study the individualised civic watch facilitated by Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) in the frame of reflexive political action. Reflexive politics refers to politicised personal matters and it departs on the basis of individualised responsibility-taking, offering viewpoints that challenge ‘official truths’ on political campaigns and gain access to more personalised information than ever before, which may even reach a global audience. With regard to this we study the individualised use of the Internet that makes the political action on the Net more fluid and contingent. It is a powerful tool in gathering coalitions and organising mobilisation of any kind. However, it is also transforming political styles, forms and the organisational structuring of political activities. Among such innovative forms of action are, for instance, Web blogging and multidirectional narrow-/broadcasting through YouTube.

Keywords: Internet, reflexive politics, civic watch, blogging, YouTube, public spheres