

Balancing of politics and the political:

The (de)political nature of COVID-19 preventive measures established by the Finnish government on 16.3.2020

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Modern management can be seen as having strong depoliticizing features. Depoliticization research maps out several different processes by which the topic is either moved out of political arenas or framed as non-political. Depoliticization processes may thus target the operational space of politics (for example, in relation to administration and management) or the space of the schmittian political. To illustrate this division, I use Max Weber's and Carl Schmitt's different ontological approaches to politics and the political. This article focuses on the corona measures outlined by the Finnish government in spring 2020 and examines their political nature. The government aimed to take action to curb the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic that had broken out early 2020. The political nature of the actions is highlighted in this article through the ontological framework, but also through a contrafactual analysis that enables further inspection of the relevant political and jurisdictional frameworks. The corona measures appear to fit into a schmittian framework where politics actively uses its power, both in the realm of politics as well as the political. The depoliticization framework illustrates the need to examine the space of the political, the room to move and operate, at a time when it is easy to identify trends that aim to limit it on several different fronts.

Keywords: the political, depoliticization, space for politics, COVID-19 pandemic

The Best and on the Brink of Collapse?

A Rhetorical Analysis of the School Shopping and Segregation Debate
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In this article, we analyse the rhetoric of the public debate regarding school segregation and school choices in early 2023. The two-month long discussion began in January 2023 following the publication of the Bildung Review by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The data consists of texts published by Helsingin Sanomat, and is analysed using rhetorical analysis. According to our findings, the discussion on school choices and the differentiation of education is connected to a broader discussion on equality. Finnish education and the concepts of equality connected to it are in transition, and the debate is characterized by contradictions. The Finnish school is presented simultaneously as top-class and failing in its mission. Another key result is that Helsingin Sanomat directed the discussion with its editorial choices. Based on the results, we argue that principles and values guiding Finnish school system are re-negotiated, which may have implications for future political choices.

Keywords: school segregation, education policy, rhetorical analysis, equity

Humor in Plenary Sessions of the Finnish Parliament

JANNE ZAREFF

This paper investigates the humor used in Finnish parliament in plenary sessions 21.6., 22.6. and 27.6.2023. During these sessions parliament discussed the government programme of prime minister Petteri Orpo's government. Findings of the paper include that all political parties tend to use different forms of humor in parliamentary speech. The main part of humorous comments (N=283) in the material consists of derogatory humor between representatives of government and opposition parties. The populist right party Perussuomalaiset, which was in government, was clearly one of the main targets of humor, surpassing all other parties by far. The centrist party keskusta was the most usual target of humor in opposition. Of these notions a conclusion is drawn, that certain contradictory actions may expose a political actor to the humor of rivals.

Keywords: humor, sarcasm, parliamentary speech, Finnish parliament