

In this number

JERE KYYRÖ

The Positions in Finnish Parliamentary Parties' Political Platforms on Religions and Worldviews, 1999–2019

This article uses content analysis to explore the positions in Finnish parliamentary parties' political platforms (including for general and special elections) on religions and worldviews and to identify differences between the parties. The dominant stance has been that of benevolent neutrality towards religion in general. The Christian Democrats have referred to religions and worldviews the most, emphasizing Christian identity and personal faith. The major parties (National Coalition Party, Center Party, and Social Democrats) have highlighted the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church's role as a social, especially third-sector, actor, which is also the most prominent theme across the platforms studied. The Finns Party has emphasized Christianity as a cultural identity, without explicitly mentioning the Lutheran Church or voicing support for any particular religious group. The Green League, Left Alliance, and Social Democrats have approached religion from a position of neutrality, emphasizing equality of worldviews, but have also criticized the privileged position of the Lutheran Church. This privileged position is supported primarily by welcoming it as a third-sector partner and only secondarily by associating it with Finnish culture.

TUOMAS ÄYSTÖ

References to Christianity in Finnish Parliamentary Speeches, 1999–2019

In this article, I analyze the speeches held in the Parliament of Finland between 1999 and 2019 that referenced Christianity ($n = 622$). I pay special attention to the ways in which the different parties construct Finnish society in relation to Christian notions, using qualitative and quantitative content analysis to classify the speeches as positive, neutral, or negative in their attitude towards Christianity. The results of this study show that references to Christianity are rare but mostly positive in tone. Proportionally, most references are found in speeches held by MPs belonging to the Christian Democrats, the Finns Party, and the Green League. I discuss these results in light of research from the political sciences, the sociology of religion and the study of religion, suggesting that it is

useful to theorize the different societal visions found among the parties as sacred orders. This categorization draws attention to the fact that the largest gap in relation to religion in the Finnish parliament is not between the political right and left but between social liberals and conservatives, those who defend the particular sacred order they deem proper for society.

TALVIKKI AHONEN

Religiously Motivated Political Attitudes in the Platforms of Christian Parties in Finland

This article evaluates the values and other explicitly expressed sources of religiously motivated political attitudes in the political programs ($N = 82$) of the Christian parties of Finland—namely, the Finnish Christian League and its predecessor, the Christian Democrats. I analyze the sources of political attitudes by distinguishing four different categories: 1) self-understanding as political actors, 2) sex, family, and bioethics, 3) Christian upbringing and education, and 4) religious self-understanding and relation to other faiths. According to the results, the main sources of political attitudes have remained constant throughout the time period studied, even as parties have adapted to societal changes and trends.

TITUS HJELM

The "Return" of Religion in Parliamentary Politics: Desecularisation or Methodological Fallacy?

The recent rise to prominence of several vocally religious MPs—especially belonging to the Finns Party—has raised the question of whether religion has "returned" to Finnish parliamentary politics. This article discusses two prominent cases, MPs Päivi Räsänen and Mika Niikko, concluding that, while Niikko's speeches in parliament do differ from those in the secularised mainstream, treating this as proof of the "return" of religion would be a methodological fallacy. Instead, the article argues that individual instances of religious discourse do not in themselves reflect the larger efficacy of religious arguments. Only by accounting for the matrix of intelligibility created in a sequence of discourses would one be able to speak of a "return" of religion. According to this methodological approach, Finnish parliamentary politics today remains decidedly secular.