
Debating Politics and/or the Political today: on metapolitical conflicts in mediatized public debates

Abstract

This conceptually oriented paper focus on the metapolitical dimension of discourse in society-wide debates. I will make my case for an increased focus on metapolitical aspects of contemporary debates with reference to analyses of debates on issues such as the right to strike and controversies linked to anti- racism, migration and integration. In metapolitical struggles conflicting modes and models of politics clash. Metapolitical debates have the potential to reshape the structure of the public realm as well as the entities, borders and processes that constitute it. Such debates do not necessarily have to be waged at the explicit level. They can be democratic as well as anti-democratic but implicit assumptions about what politics is and what it should be are always at play. I argue that if critical discourse analysts are to come to terms with the - often populist - attempts to restructure established modes of politics and political subjectivity across the political spectrum, they need to pay more attention to the implicit and explicit concepts of politics that inform contemporary controversies in the public sphere. In order to develop such a mode of analysis one needs to distinguish the use of the term metapolitics proposed in this paper from other conceptualizations of the term developed most notably in New Right and Alt Right political discourse and in philosophy. Before concluding this paper, I will suggest three perspectives that may illuminate the way metapolitical projects and struggles are structured: studies of governmentality, political rationality and the poststructuralist logics approach.

Keywords: discourse theory, CDA, political discourse analysis, metapolitics, Alt Right, anti, racism, migration, public sphere, poststructuralism