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Tiivistelmä-Referat-Abstract <p>This research forms a discursive analysis of almost two decades of key statements delivered by Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, secretary-general of the Lebanese nationalist militia and political party, Hezbollah. The statements, sourced primarily from a translated compilation edited by Nicholas Noe and published by Verso (2007), reflect the continually evolving populist strategies of a party which has, against many odds, gained a large and impressively cross-sectarian support base in Lebanon and the surrounding region.</p> <p>The aim of the study is two-pronged. It hopes to offer an insightful analysis into the pragmatic politicking of a democratically elected, yet demonstrably lethally armed political party which is possessed of the potential to greatly influence peace and conflict in the region. It also seeks to promote an alternative theoretical perspective to research which continually seeks to locate similar such case studies on an ideologically loaded matrix of 'terrorism vs. freedom fighter'.</p> <p>The theory outlined in Ernesto Laclau's 'On Populist Reason' (2005) functions as the framework for analysis. This non-pathological theory of populism provides an excellent lens through which to more objectively examine the way in which popular support is mobilized by what may be essentially democratic, yet highly controversial political movements.</p> <p>After analyzing constructions of 'the enemy', 'the people' and the role of the signifier of resistance over three separate chronological time periods, the research concludes that the politicking of Hezbollah has witnessed a significant discursive shift away from the rhetoric of extremism and towards that of political moderation. This analysis is noteworthy at a time when dominant western political discourses proclaim the dangers of openly 'fundamentalist' or extremist discourses as a threat to the ideals of global liberal democracy.</p> <p>It is concluded that political research should not underestimate the intelligence and pragmatism of groups who build, mobilize and maintain their support as powerful, armed and potentially dangerous non-state actors. A theoretical approach which allows for the insightful analysis of discursive phenomena, within the context of important socio-political factors, retains more likelihood of offering genuine insight into the popular political as it relates to a volatile regional and potentially global context.</p>			
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