

The Existence of the Rule of Law Depicted in Editorial Cartoons in Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

The Rule of Law is one of the essential elements in democratic governance. However, in Sri Lanka, the rule of law has been subject to criticism from time to time due to political interference. In this context, this paper attempts to understand how editorial cartoonists depict the existence of the rule of law in the Sri Lankan context since editorial cartoons are an influential mode of critique. This study used critical content analysis of editorial cartoons to examine how cartoonists depict current discourse related to political interference to the rule of law in Sri Lanka. Editorial cartoons from mainstream news sources in Sinhala and English are used as primary sources in the study to critically analyze editorial cartoonists' perspectives on political influence on institutions that uphold the rule of law. Here selected political cartoons are analyzed under symbolism, labeling, exaggeration, analogy, and irony to examine different depictions of the rule of law by Sri Lankan cartoonists. Symbols of the rule of law are often used and, mainly, politicians are depicted as controllers of the institutes that are responsible for maintaining law and order. And also here cartoonists symbolized that politicians are used these institutions according to their will. Satiric caricatures have been used to raise the voice against increasing political interference, and cartoonists play an important role as representatives of their respective societies. However, this study was conducted based on the Sinhala and English newspapers, and this may have led to missed perspectives from the Tamil editorial cartoonists.

Keywords: Rule of Law, political interference, editorial cartoonist, symbols

About the presenter:

Ashawarie Karunanayake is a graduate of the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka with a first-class honors degree in Political Science and Public Policy. She has completed her Master of Arts in Political Science at the University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka. Currently, she works as a Lecturer at Department of Public Policy, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Ruhuna, Sri Lanka. As a researcher, her interests range from political communication, gender studies, and human rights, to multiculturalism.

