

ABSTRACT

Finlandia Village's origin stories, along with rhetorical responses of the organization, hover as discursive enactments of the ethnic foundation of a particular long term health care organization in Sudbury, one that has been conceived "in the Finnish tradition." A rhetorical analysis of the conceptual and symbolic dimensions of the origin story for Finlandia Village Long-Term Rest Home yields a contextualized articulation of their operational enactments, illuminating just how and why ethnicity matters *matter*, but also to what degree they may not.

This analysis examines three different versions of the Finlandia origin story through the rhetorical lens of narrative criticism. A thick description involves thinking about how origin stories operate organizationally as useful metaphor and narrative paradigm. In one incarnation, the story is set in a sauna, and threaded with Finnish cultural elements, values, and symbolism. In other versions, the sauna setting is absent from the narrative. Following the examination of origin narratives, this analysis assesses closely linked artifacts of the organization's identity expressed through public rhetorical responses. The current rhetorical situation at Finlandia Village also relates to specific recent policy amendments, so through the lens of interpretative policy analysis, some underplayed, yet salient, aspects of Canadian long-term healthcare policy are considered.

The organization's 'smoothing over' of earlier divisions sets the tone for the negotiation of the new ethnic situation at Finlandia Village, perhaps serving to alleviate a potentially divisionary problematic. It may be the case that the organization's attention to ethics of care, coupled with the tradition of respecting Finnish culture, opens avenues to respecting *other cultures*. However, the numbers in line for long term care home placement are growing and bed space is at a premium – a trend that will continue for at least another decade. For this reason, the ethnically situated negotiations are provisional and continuously under revision.

Some degree of provisionality inheres in the organization' origin stories, just as provisionality inheres in its ethnically oriented rhetorical responses. Finlandia Village negotiates seemingly "incommensurable realities" (Dvora Yanow), yet significantly, through the lens of a health care, or "ethics of care," perspective. Daily interactions at Finlandia Village involve negotiating terrain of profound ethical/moral decisions, end-of-life eventualities, and more recently, competing cultural values and revisions to its origin myths.