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POPULISM AND NAME CALLING: WHEN IS IT PURE POPULISM, AND WHEN IS IT A COMPONENT OF POLITICAL PROPAGANDA?

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Abstract

Panel proposal: It is a common phenomenon in the media and political communication to accuse one's opponents of populism and pandering to the masses. Propaganda uses the labeling technique, which often attaches negative connotations to opponents. Populism is one of them. It is enough to label someone a populist, and information provided by such a politician, person or media outlet is evaluated with great skepticism. Anything positive is no longer delved into. On top of that, any message originating from this source is framed as a populist effort to please the masses. On the other hand, in the absence of critical evaluation, one can drown in populist promises. A decrease in the importance of traditional media means that it is possible to present many proposals that are interesting at a first glance to the public space. However, they cannot be implemented due to lack of resources or some other reasons. They are provided to please the masses, yet not to be realized. The purpose of the report is to discuss the intersection and overlap of populism and propaganda through the propaganda theory, while taking into account the context of culture wars. We may wonder how we can define populism and label it at a theoretical level. As the traditional media has been receding in popularity and ceding the primary source of public news to social causes, this issue becomes particularly relevant. In society, in politics, and even in the media, there is a competition between alternative 'truths'. There is 'your' point of view and the facts you present, and there is 'our' point of view and the facts we deliver. In this context, everything is relative. There is no longer an opportunity for a constructive public dialogue. Finding the difference between populism and labeling, at least on a theoretical level, could further construct the path of high-quality public communication.

Biography of the presenter

The field of the scientific interests of Assoc. Prof. Mantas Martišius is information warfare and propaganda. The author is denoted by experience in both academic and media regulatory work.