

## **Excessive Language in Right-wing Political Discourse in Hungary**

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In my talk I want to explore the most recent junctures of hate speech in right-wing populist rhetoric in Hungary. My major claim is that making hate-speech ordinary and banal – in Billig’s (1995) sense of the term – could legitimize what the prime minister publicly launched in July 2018 by the name ‘cultural war’. My actual examples taken from the past four years of the various political speeches and the enhanced legislative activity of the government during the Covid pandemic will function to demonstrate the formation of a Foucauldian order of discourse of the regime’s war rhetoric. The various immediate figures targeted by hate speech, i.e. feminists, intellectuals, NGO activists, members of opposition, ‘Brussels’, refugees, and LGBTQI activists may come across as if the ‘same’ in so far as their potential for propaganda purposes is assessed to be equally effective in the service of totalizing discourse strategies of state power. They are intertwined into the formation of an ‘empty’ signifier – as defined by Laclau (1996) – where any actual target figure of hatred pushed to the foreground through an explicitly named constituent trope may mobilize any of the implied constituent elements, keeping the order of hate in its place. The critical analysis will explore the rhetoric of argumentation and show its ideological work of rendering the constituent figures into the ‘enemy’ of the ‘nation’. My ultimate theoretical aim is to point out that multiplicity is integral to semiosis, meaning is organized by plurality (Lury 1995). I shall demonstrate the effective ideological work of the empty signifier of the ‘enemy’ at the intersection of the various tropes and demonstrate the coercive binary of real conduct versus (linguistically formulated) opinion only when conceptualizing hate-speech and the generation of the same binary in truth versus fake news debates. I will demonstrate that it is only a performative intersectional approach to discourse and meaning that may hold out the possibility of democratic change and an effective practice of categorization beyond stigmas, securing solidarity and greater freedom for both the immediately and indirectly targeted groups – in line with Matsuda et al. (1993) relative distinction – and for imagining alternate new realities.

### **References:**

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