The Complex Metaphor of Political Animals in Media Political Discourse: a Cross-Linguistic Perspective

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Abstract. The present study aims at reconstructing and contrasting the complex metaphor of POLITICIANS ARE RATIONAL ANIMALS in Lithuanian and British media political discourse. The research material consists of the analytical articles retrieved from the electronic archives of the www.economist.com and www.politika.lt websites in the time span of five years (i.e. 2002–2007). The method applied to investigate the collected data is that of content analysis in the theoretical framework of cognitive linguistics and conceptual metaphor theory. The research findings reveal that the complex metaphor of POLITICIANS ARE RATIONAL ANIMALS is represented by the following source domains: STRENGTH and BUSINESS. Their use gives evidence of Pragmatic Morality shaping the system of political beliefs and expectations in Great Britain and Lithuania. In this view, morality is understood as a human invention explicitly devised to control combative and selfish tendencies in a society. The use of violence and force is thus seen as a constituent part of political activities. Moreover, moral politics is associated with coercive and forceful behaviour. The key concepts underlying pragmatic politics are STRENGTH, FORCE, CONTROL, ORDER, STABILITY, RULES etc.