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The Politics of Fear: Playing the Anti-immigration Card in Public Discourse of the Law & Justice Party in Poland

1. Introduction

October 2015 saw a major political change in Poland, marked by a landslide victory in parliamentary elections of the strongly conservative Law & Justice (L&J) party, which took over the legislative and executive powers after the eight-year-long rule of liberal government. The resulting policy changes have been enormous, including a dramatic growth of economic interventionism and central planning, serious constraints on the constitutional freedoms and independence of the judicial sector, as well as state control over the public media, among many others. No less radical have been the changes in foreign policy, reflecting the essentially anti-European disposition of the new government, whose nationalistic stance has been provoking continual tensions between Warsaw and Brussels (such as the 2016 vote over the renewal of Donald Tusk's presidency of the Council of Europe).

Alongside with these changes, L&J's government has been redefining Poland's position with respect to the most critical issues surrounding Europe and the EU, such as the Eurozone crisis, Brexit and, of course, the ever-growing problem of refugee migration into Europe. Regarding the latter, L&J and the new government have refused to implement the refugee distribution arrangement agreed on by the former cabinet, arguing that it realizes a 'German plan' at the cost of Poland's national interests. As of today, L&J's government not only challenges that arrangement, but openly refuses to participate in virtually all EU initiatives to manage the immigration crisis. While this kind of policy finds little understanding with most European partners, it enjoys relatively high popularity on the home front, among Polish people. This is due to a skillful rhetorical campaign, which not only legitimizes that policy, but also, and consequently, plays a key role in legitimizing the new government as a whole.

This paper is a critical, predominantly qualitative study of Polish government's discursive management of the refugee and immigration crisis, pinpointing the main strategies whereby L&J and their cabinet justify not only Poland's lack of political involvement but in fact their essentially negative attitude to the issue of immigration and even immigrants as such. The analysis demonstrates that migration of refugee groups into Europe, from mainly Syria, but also other countries of the Middle East as well as East Africa, is consistently conceptualized as a growing threat to Poland's national security. The threat is construed in ideological as well as physical terms, involving a strategic interplay of abstract and material fear appeals. The construal of the threat rests on forced conceptualizations of a destructive impact of the apparently distant entities (immigrant groups from external territories – a symbolic 'THEM') on the home entities (Poland, and other European countries – a symbolic 'US'). The ominous vision of such an impact serves as a pre-requisite for legitimization of the anti-immigrant stance on the European arena as well as anti-immigrant policies at home.

The paper is structured in three main parts (sections 2-4). Section 2 discusses the main theories – cognitive-linguistic, evolutionary, psychological – of threat construction and threat communication in political discourse and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). I start from general issues of dichotomous (US vs. THEM) representations in political discourse, and go on to focus on how the external (THEM) parties are discursively constructed as threat elements endangering the central, or home (US), entities. In this vein, I present Proximization Theory (Cap 2013, etc.) as arguably the most viable model to capture the US vs. THEM opposition and conflict. In Section 3 I apply the proximization framework to analyze fragments of 2015-2017 speeches by top politicians of the Polish ruling government and the L&J party. The data include public addresses and comments made by Jarosław Kaczyński (the L&J party leader), Beata Szydło (the Prime Minister in the L&J government), Witold Waszczykowski (the Minister of Foreign Affairs) and Mariusz Błaszczak (the Minister of the Interior). In the final Section 4 I synthetically summarize findings from the analysis. It is argued that the threat construction pattern pursued in the speeches draws upon a unique combination of ideological and material elements, whereby the initially abstract threat turns gradually into a tangible, physical danger. It seems from the analysis that a deeper theoretical account of this regularity may reveal not only empirical, but also methodological benefits, adding to the explanatory potential of Proximization Theory and CDA as a whole¹.

¹ I elaborate on these theoretical points in another paper (Cap, forthcoming), where I provide a comprehensive assessment and comparison of Proximization Theory with other/earlier discourse space models of conceptual opposition and conflict, such as Paul Chilton's [2004] Discourse/Deictic Space Theory. In the present paper, the theoretical discussion is concise and meant to describe and justify research tools used in subsequent analysis. Although it includes, naturally, some critical points and evaluations, they remain secondary to the empirical aims of the paper.

2. Discourse Space: Cognitive representations and the forcing of worldviews

Issues of threat construction based on discursive representation of conflict between the home group (US) and the antagonistic or enemy group (THEM) have been among the most popular themes of CDA since at least van Dijk's [1998] book classic – until today, when publications on mental models and polarized ideological discourse appear regularly [see e.g. van Dijk 2017, for an overview]. This seems to be a direct consequence of CDA's growing interest in mechanisms of spatial cognition and conceptualization, underlying numerous interdisciplinary studies of ideologically motivated construals of meaning within different discourse domains [Cienki, Kaal & Maks 2010; Hart 2010, 2014; Dunmire 2011; Kaal 2012; Filardo Llamas 2010, 2013; Filardo Llamas et al. 2015; etc.]. The cognitive-linguistic approach to CDA offers a disciplined theoretical perspective on the conceptual import of linguistic choices identified as potentially ideological. It thus affords a new and promising lens on persuasive, manipulative and coercive properties of discourse, worldview and conceptualization which have hitherto been beyond the radar of CDA [Hart 2014; Hart & Cap 2014].

Crucially, the cognitive-linguistic approach in CDA presupposes the fundamental role of spatial cognition in *relativization* and *subjective representation* of processes/attitudes that involve a deictic point of view to 'anchor' ideas [Werth 1999; Gavins 2007;² Kaal 2012; Filardo Llamas et al. 2015]. All language use, and therefore also discourse, involves the (re-)construction of a mental space which functions as a conceptual frame for the representation of geographically, culturally and ideologically bounded social realities. These assumptions are operationalized in CDA in models which link thought patterns in the mind to their linguistic and discursive representations, revealing ideological meanings. Such models fall, roughly, into two groups. On the one hand, there are (cf. 2.1) theories which account for the US/THEM relation in the basic, 'center-periphery' arrangement of the Discourse Space (DS) [Levinson 2003; Chilton 2004, 2005; Gavins 2007]. These theories can be regarded as 'formative' in the development of the cognitive approach to CDA³. On the other hand, there are (cf. 2.2) more recent models such as Cap [2013] and Hart [2014], whose focus is not just the basic, or initial, DS arrangement, but crucially, the dynamic re-arrangement of the Space, involving a discursively construed movement of the THEM-peripheral entity toward the US-center entity. As is claimed below, the latter seem to be better equipped to capture the threatening nature of such a movement.

² While neither Werth nor Gavins can be described directly as 'CDA scholars', their work on 'text worlds' lies at the core of discourse space models (such as DST), which have been amply applied in CDA (see below).

³ In addition to a group of theories focused specifically on conceptual metaphor [e.g. Goatly 2007; Charteris-Black 2005; Musolff 2004, 2016].

2.1 Discourse/Deictic Space Theory (DST)

Among the ‘formative’ cognitive-linguistic approaches to CDA, the Discourse/Deictic Space Theory (DST) of Paul Chilton [2004, 2005, 2010, 2014]⁴ is arguably the most elaborate model, paving the way for later developments. In Chilton [2004: 57] a central claim is made that in processing any discourse people ‘position’ other entities in their ‘world’ by ‘positioning’ these entities in relation to themselves along three axes in three dimensions, ‘spatial’, ‘temporal’, and ‘modal’. This arrangement presupposes the primacy of the spatial dimension as the remaining dimensions involve conceptualizations in spatial terms. Specifically, time is conceptualized in terms of motion through space (‘the time to act has arrived’) and modality is conceptualized in terms of distance (‘remotely possible’) or (deontic modality) as a metaphoric extension of the binary opposition between the close of the remote. The origin of the three dimensions is at the deictic center, which includes the symbolic Self, i.e. *I*, *we*, etc. All other entities and processes exist relative to ontological spaces defined by their coordinates on the space (*s*), time (*t*) and modality (*m*) axes (Figure 1). This makes it possible, Chilton argues, to conceptualize the ongoing kaleidoscope of ontological configurations activated by text.

Figure 1. Discourse/Deictic dimensions in DST [adapted from Chilton 2004: 58]

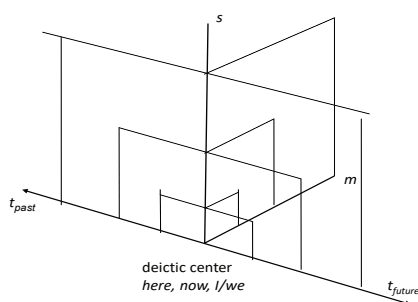


Figure 1 represents the basic interface of cognition and language shared by most of the cognitive models trying to account for the construal of discourse. At the heart of the account is the concept of deixis and, what follows, deictic markers. The spatial markers, such as *I/we* and *they*, ‘located’ on the *s* axis are the core of the linguistic

⁴ Chilton’s model was originally proposed in 2004/2005, as ‘Discourse Space Theory’. In later years, the author has often used the word ‘Deictic’ to replace ‘Discourse’ [e.g. Chilton 2010, 2011]. Finally, throughout his 2014 monograph, Chilton calls his model ‘Deictic Space Theory’ [Chilton 2014]. I have speculated on possible reasons for this change in Cap [2013, 2014, 2015]. Interested reader is also referred to Cap (forthcoming), which contains a comprehensive evaluation of DST.

representation, which is a representation in terms of binary oppositions extending into all three dimensions. Typically, entities and processes construed as 'close' in the spatio-temporal dimension are assigned positive values within the deontic modal dimension, while those construed as 'distant' are at the same time (or as a result) assigned negative values. In models other than Chilton's, the central status of the spatial deixis is reflected at theoretical and terminological levels, where 'us-good/ THEM-bad' is more of a conceptual than linguistic dichotomy (cf. Text World Theory in Werth [1999] and Gavins [2007]).

Over years, Chilton has applied his DST model in a number of critical studies of political discourse, many of which involved issues of threat construction and fear generation [Chilton 2004, 2005, 2010, 2011, 2014]. As I have argued before [Cap 2013, 2014, 2015], the value of these studies and the theory, for CDA and beyond, is great and undeniable. Altogether, Chilton's DST offers some excellent insights in the representation of entities in political discourse space. First, it recognizes the fundamental role of distance from the 'Self' entities (in the deictic center) in conceptualizing other entities and events in political/public discourse. Obvious as this may seem, it is a vital prerequisite for any further inquiry in linguistic ways of construing distant objects and happenings as close to the deictic center. Second, it acknowledges that the distance is relative and that it is symbolically represented through discourse. This in turn makes possible further explorations in how the symbolic representations can be evoked strategically, for pragmatic effects and, crucially, threat construction. Third, DST shows that 'distance' involves a number of mutually interactive dimensions, which make mental representations of entities and events arise from a combined activation of different cognitive domains such as spatial, temporal and modal.

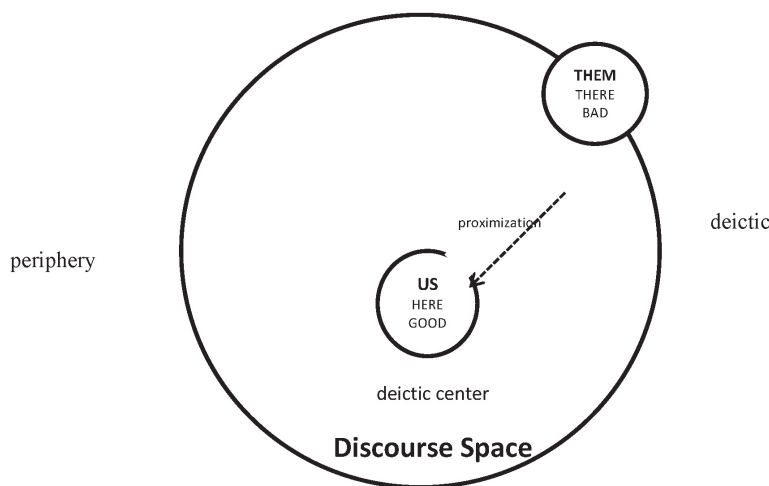
Still, there are some clearly unattended issues. Just like other 'formative' cognitive-linguistic models of discourse, DST can be considered a theory of general, initial, 'fixed' organization of entities in political discourse space. Its aim is to show how people's mental representations are generally positioned with respect to three cognitive dimensions. It is clearly *not* to show how *people are made to establish representations* that would suit the accomplishment of specific discourse goals pursued by political speaker. The reason is that DST does not offer a systematic account of quantifiable lexico-grammatical items responsible for locating entities and events at different distances from the deictic center marking the intensity of pragmatic powers of these entities/events. While it recognizes ideological, legitimizing, coercive, etc. discourse roles of certain words and expressions, it arbitrarily assigns them a static position on one of the three axes, in fixed distance to/from the deictic center. This can be seen in all studies in which Chilton applies DST to provide a critical analysis of (political) discourse. For instance, in his study of discourse of the Kosovo war, Chilton [2004: 142] provides a complex three-dimensional representation which includes a number of heterogeneous *us* and *THEM* geopolitical entities ('Asia', 'Middle East countries', 'Kosovo', 'Bosnia', 'Sarajevo', 'our allies', 'Europe', etc.) located on the Space axis. While the abstraction of these entities from discourse raises no doubt, and their position-

ing looks perfectly accurate, the analysis stops there – there is no attempt to account for conceptual shifts which are forced discursively to construe the movement of the **THEM** entities from Discourse Space periphery to the center. This is because DST, as a *discourse*-analytic model, has not really developed a systematic way to determine which *linguistic* choices, in what numbers, and within which dimension, are the most effective in forcing a worldview conceptualization upon the addressee. As I have argued in more detail elsewhere [Cap 2013, 2014, 2015, forthcoming], DST's representation of Discourse Space can be described as quite conventional; it indexes entities and events by primarily nominal phrases and pronouns. At the same time, the role of verbal forms, a core element in the conceptual shifts between the remote **THEM** and the **US** central camp, is clearly underappreciated. This is a huge disadvantage when it comes to analysis of the threat element emerging from these shifts.

2.2. Proximization Theory (PT)

Notwithstanding the above problems, Paul Chilton's [2004, 2005] DST can be considered the most important reference model for several later works [Cap 2008, 2010, 2013; Hart 2010, 2014] trying to revise and redefine the original account of DS conceptual operations in strictly linguistic (lexical and grammatical) terms. Most of these works employ the concept of *proximization* to determine specific linguistic items construing conceptual shifts in the service of forcing worldviews.

Figure 2. Proximization in Discourse Space (DS)



In its broadest sense, proximization is a discursive strategy of presenting physically and temporally distant entities, events and states of affairs (including 'distant' i.e. adversarial ideologies) – a symbolic **THEM** – as increasingly and negatively consequen-

tial to the speaker and her addressee (us). Projecting the THEM entities as gradually encroaching upon the us territory (both physical and ideological), the speaker seeks legitimization of actions and/or policies which she proposes to neutralize the growing impact of the negative, 'foreign', 'alien', 'antagonistic', entities (see Figure 2).

The term 'proximization' was first proposed by Cap to analyze coercion patterns in the US anti-terrorist rhetoric following 9/11 [Cap 2006, 2008, 2010]. Since then it has been used within different discourse domains, though most commonly in studies of state political discourses: crisis construction and war rhetoric [Chovanec 2010], anti-migration discourse [Hart 2010], political party representation [Cienki, Kaal and Maks 2010], construction of national memory [Filardo Llamas 2010], and design of foreign policy documents [Dunmire 2011]. Findings from these studies have been integrated in Proximization Theory (PT) proposed in Cap [2013]. PT follows the original concept of proximization, which is defined as a forced construal operation meant to evoke closeness of the external threat, to solicit legitimization of preventive means. The threat comes from DS-peripheral entities, THEM, which are conceptualized to be crossing the Space to invade the us entities, the speaker and her addressee. The threat possesses a spatio-temporal as well as ideological nature, which breaks the proximization model down into three parts. 'Spatial proximization' is a forced construal of THEM entities encroaching *physically* upon us entities (speaker, addressee). Analogously to DST, the spatial aspect of proximization is primary as the remaining aspects/strategies involve conceptualizations in spatial terms. 'Temporal proximization' is a construal of the envisaged conflict as not only imminent, but also momentous, historic and thus needing an immediate response and unique preventive measures. Spatial and temporal proximization involve fear appeals and typically use various kinds of analogies (including metaphors) to conflate the growing threat with an actual disastrous event in the past, to endorse the current scenario. Lastly, 'axiological proximization' involves construal of a gathering ideological clash between the 'home values' of the DS central entities (us) and the alien and antagonistic THEM values. As will be shown, the THEM values are not merely abstract entities; they possess a crucial potential to eventually materialize within the us territory.

Though following up on DST in many of its conceptual underpinnings, Proximization Theory makes a distinctively new contribution at two levels, cognitive-pragmatic and linguistic, or more precisely, lexico-grammatical. At the cognitive-pragmatic conceptual level, PT revisits the ontological status and pragmatic function of deixis and deictic markers. Traditionally, deixis has been viewed as a merely technical necessity for the possible interpretability of all communication [Levinson 1983; Levelt 1989]. Within the proximization approach deixis goes beyond this 'primary' status and becomes, eventually, an instrument for legitimization, persuasion and social coercion. The concept of deixis is not reduced to a finite set of 'deictic expressions', but rather expanded to cover bigger lexico-grammatical phrases and discourse expressions. As a result, all proximization operations, spatial, temporal and axiological, their intensity as well as their changes, can be described linguistically in terms of the interplay of var-

ious lexico-grammatical items drawn from these three domains. To abstract the items, PT uses three distinct frameworks – spatial, temporal, axiological – which classify the items in conceptual categories reflecting the US-THEM arrangement of the Discourse Space (cf. Table 1 depicting the spatial framework). This allows a quantitative analysis yielding the intensity of a specific kind of proximization (and thus the intensity with which a worldview is forced) in a specific discourse timeframe.

Table 1. Spatial proximization framework in the proximization model [abridged – cf. Cap 2013 for a full version]

Category	Lexico-grammatical items and phrases
1. Elements of the deictic center of the DS (US)	Noun phrases (NPs) marking US
2. Elements on the periphery of the DS (THEM)	Noun phrases (NPs) marking THEM
3. Conceptualizers of movement of THEM toward US	Verb phrases (VPs) of motion and directionality (<i>head, come, move, arrive, get close...</i>)
4. Conceptualizers of the anticipated impact of THEM on US	Abstract nouns and noun phrases (NPs) (<i>threat, danger...</i>)
5. Conceptualizers of the actual impact of THEM on US	Verb phrases (VPs) of action (<i>hit, flood, destroy...</i>)
6. Conceptualizers of the anticipated effects of the THEM impact on US	Abstract nouns and noun phrases (NPs) (<i>catastrophe, tragedy...</i>)

The general function of the three frameworks of proximization – spatial, temporal, and axiological – is to provide a linguistic representation of both the initial arrangement of the Discourse Space and its dynamic re-arrangement, following the impact of the THEM peripheral entities on the US central entities. Thus, for instance, the spatial framework above is supposed to capture not only the default architecture of the DS (categories 1, 2), but also (and crucially) the shift leading to the THEM vs. US clash (3, 5) and the (anticipated) effects of the clash (4, 6). The third category, central to the entire design of the framework, sets the ‘traditional’ deictic expressions such as nouns and pronouns to work *pragmatically* together with the other elements of the superordinate VP. As a result, the VP acquires a deictic status, in the sense that on top of conventionally denoting the default DS entities (marked by (pro-)nominals), it also indexes their movement, which establishes the target perspective construed by the speaker. As a result, one can account for discursive sequences which represent both the THEM entity in its initial static position and, later, its growing encroachment on the US camp. For example, Cap [2013: 86] analyzes G.W. Bush’s [2003] warnings about the global terrorist danger in the aftermath of 9/11, such as: ‘Al-Qaeda and other terrorist networks have set their course to confront us and our civilization’

(<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-and-releases/02142003>). The analysis shows that the nominal deixis ‘Al-Qaeda and other terrorist networks’ combines with the following verb phrase to form a complex deictic structure marking both the antagonistic entity and its movement toward home entities in the deictic center.

The part of the proximization model that is the most relevant to today’s anti-immigration discourse in Poland is PT’s handle on ideological rhetoric. Specifically, PT contains the ‘axiological proximization framework’ [Cap 2013], whose task is to account for ideological discourse choices and, crucially, the relation between the lexical items marking abstract entities versus those marking physical entities (see Table 2).

Table 2. Axiological proximization framework in the proximization model [Cap 2013]

Category	Lexico-grammatical items and phrases
1. Values of elements of the DS deictic center (US)	Noun phrases (NPs) marking US values
2. Values of elements on the DS periphery (THEM)	Noun phrases (NPs) marking THEM values
3. Linear logico-rhetorical patterns construing materialization of the antagonistic ideology of them in the form of THEM’s physical impact on us: a) <i>remote possibility</i> scenario followed by b) <i>actual occurrence</i> scenario	Discourse sequences comprising: VP1 containing category 2 NP followed by VP2 containing an NP marking THEM’s impact on us

As can be seen, axiological proximization is related to spatial proximization in its recognition of the bipolar, US vs. THEM arrangement of the Discourse Space, as well as potential impact of THEM entities on US entities. The difference is, of course, the nature of the impact – while spatial proximization construes an essentially physical invasion, axiological proximization forces a conceptualization which involves, at least initially, a ‘merely’ ideological encroachment. This is because the US/THEM agents are defined, in contrast to the spatial framework, as not physical entities but the associated values, norms, and ideological postures. Naturally, a lasting conflict of values may lead to a material clash, thereby fitting into the analytic categories 4, 5, 6 of the spatial framework.

They key part of the axiological framework is thus its third category, which accounts for a conceptual transition. It describes, in lexical as well as grammatical terms, a subtle transformation of the nature of threat posed on US entities by THEM entities. Initially remote and abstract in its conceptual appeal, the threat is gradually construed as imminent and, most crucially, material. This change is captured, at the linguistic level, in a specific sequence of verbal and nominal elements included in the category.

That way, the third category of the axiological framework can successfully isolate and account, both qualitatively and quantitatively, for some of the most important language items and formulas which make up the L&J anti-immigration discourse⁵.

3. Threat construction in the L&J discourse: from ‘cultural unbelonging’ to ‘terrorist risk’

3.1. The corpus for analysis

The data for this study come from a corpus of 124 addresses, statements and comments by the most prominent L&J politicians: Jarosław Kaczyński (the L&J leader), Beata Szydło (the Prime Minister in the L&J government), Witold Waszczykowski (the Minister of Foreign Affairs) and Mariusz Błaszczak (the Minister of the Interior). Their timeframe is the 17-month period between November 1, 2015 (a week after the L&J electoral victory) and March 31, 2017. The speeches have been made at various public appearances of the politicians, such as parliamentary sessions, press conferences, media debates and interviews. Importantly, I have included only the addresses/statements/comments devoted solely to the issue of immigration and not dealing with any other issues at the same time. This has been done to make sure that all discourse items present in these speeches can be analyzed as integral elements of the (anti-)immigration narrative. The focus of analysis has been consistent with the idea and design of the PT model and, in particular, its axiological framework. Accordingly, my first goal was to account for elements of the *us*-central camp, then elements of the *them*-remote camp, and finally (and most importantly) for the threat construction patterns involving a symbolic invasion of entities of the latter camp on the former.

3.2. The *us*

A substantial part of L&J's anti-immigration discourse includes the description of *us* – Poland, Polish people, current Polish government – in deeply conservative, ideological-religious terms. References to traditional Polish values are plentiful, and they are construed as warrants of personal and economic well-being, as well as personal and national security. The discursive segments carrying such construals, seemingly unrelated at places to the main immigration theme, are vital for conceptual consolidation of the *us* camp and instilling a sense of social belonging and solidarity in the face

⁵ As this paper is predominantly qualitative in scope, it cannot possibly demonstrate the full linguistic/lexical powers of the axiological proximization framework, nor those of the other types. Interested readers are referred to Cap [2013, 2014, 2015], which are all balanced qualitative-quantitative studies. For instance, in Cap [2015] lemma counts (raw and percentage) from the axiological framework are provided for different-time discourse corpora, to document changes in the lexical intensity of axiological proximization over time. That article also includes an extended discussion of the relationship between axiological and spatial proximization.

of an outside threat. In addition, they reinforce trust and credibility of the rhetoric and its authors, by addressing commonly accepted, uncontroversial issues:

- (1) The *safety* of Polish *families* is this government's priority. Polish people deserve it. They deserve *equal rights* and *social justice*. They deserve to feel masters of their own house. They deserve to feel *secure*. They deserve *peace, stability* and *economic progress*. This is the true meaning of *freedom* and *independence*. We derive it from our *Christian heritage*, the values to which our nation has been committed for centuries and to which we are committed today. We stand firm by these values and our *national sovereignty*. We do not take foreign orders. (Jarosław Kaczyński, May 9, 2016)⁶.
- (2) We refuse to sacrifice our *freedom* and *security* for *political correctness*. From the very beginning we have said that this issue [of immigration] should be resolved by assisting refugees outside the EU. We are staunchly against the European Commission proposal, which would force EU member states to pay millions of euros⁷ per refused refugee. Such a decision would abolish the *sovereignty of EU member states*. We do not agree to that, we have to oppose that, because we are and we will be in charge in our own country. (Witold Waszczykowski, June 12, 2016).
- (3) As *Christians*, we are raised to be *tolerant* and *respectful* of other cultures. But we ask the same kind of *respect* from others. It is our right to decide whom we welcome to our own house. Because there are cultures, there are *values, which simply cannot coexist*. (Beata Szydło, September 5, 2016).
- (4) We must reject the cheap slogans of '*multiculturalism*' and '*enrichment*'. We must reject *political correctness* and call things by their true names. Rather than shedding tears like [Federica] Mogherini or organizing marches that solve nothing, authorities should ensure the *safety* of citizens. Here in Poland, our predecessors⁸ were on track to commit the same mistakes as other Western countries. But the new government sets the priorities right. Our main responsibility is to uphold the *freedom* and *security* of our people. This has been our election promise and we will keep it. (Mariusz Błaszczak, July 20, 2016)^{9,10}.

The dominance of US markers in examples (1)-(4) is quite conspicuous. Virtually, the only THEM markers are those which conceptualize immigration from outside the EU as a phenomenon or a broader issue ('multiculturalism', 'enrichment'), rather than referring to any persons or groups. This is because the main aim of the claims in (1)-(4) is to consolidate the US camp in the common commitment of its members to some universally shared values – such as 'freedom', 'peace', and 'security' – which stem

⁶ In examples (1)-(8) the markers of US and THEM appear in bold/italic and bold, respectively.

⁷ In fact, the EC proposal included the figure '€250,000'.

⁸ The Civic Platform party, ruling Poland between 2007-2015.

⁹ This statement was made 6 days after an Islamic terrorist attack, in which a truck was deliberately driven into crowds celebrating Bastille Day on the Promenade des Anglais in Nice, France, killing 84 people and injuring 434.

¹⁰ These and forthcoming translations by P.C.

from a common cultural and religious background. Such a consolidation is a natural pre-requisite to reject alternative socio-political visions and projections, including the conception of multiculturalism and multicultural integration and, eventually, the admission of non-EU immigrants into Poland. At the heart of L&J's rhetoric lies a strong appeal to the sense of 'independence', which serves to invoke core elements of the national heritage in order to define and legitimize the current and future responsibilities. As suggested in Kaczyński's argument in (1), Poland's 'national sovereignty' is and has always been dependent on the commitment of its people, whose dedication now calls for further active involvement and, possibly, sacrifice. While apparently posing an obligation, such an argument also fosters the spirit of exceptionalism, sanctioning claims of national uniqueness and the particular rights that go with it ('they deserve...'). Overall, Kaczyński's argument, as well as claims in the other examples, reflect the rhetorical principle of consistency in belief. The consistency principle [Festinger 1957, etc.; Jowett & O'Donnell 1992] says that the best credibility and thus legitimization effects can be expected if the speaker produces her message in line with the psychological, social, political, cultural, predispositions of the addressee [Jowett & O'Donnell 1992]. However, since a full compliance is almost never possible, it is essential that the novel message is at least tentatively or partly acceptable – then, its acceptability and the speaker's credibility are going to increase over time. In L&J's rhetoric, the consistency principle lies implicit in the calls to, on the one hand, remain loyal to Poland's legacy and thus actively partake in protecting the 'own house', and on the other, accept state policies which are meant to protect it institutionally. Both obligations are shown to follow directly from the ideals, values, and norms which have been found largely unquestionable throughout the Polish history, especially the commitment to national independence and sovereignty.

As can be seen from examples (1) and (3), L&J's discourse benefits a lot, at lexical level, from non-literal construals of the concept of *HOUSE*, especially the *STATE IS HOUSE* conceptual metaphor. The most direct benefits are of course the ability to assign the 'inhabitants' of the *HOUSE*, i.e. the nation, family values [Musolff 2016], and thus discursively strengthen the bond of solidarity and common belonging. But there are also less direct yet equally important conceptual advantages. In addition to connoting positive values and triggering positive, bond-tightening emotions, *HOUSE* is readily conceptualizable in terms of a 'container', and even more particularly, as a 'rupturable container' [Hart 2010, 2014]. This means that the construal of state in terms of a house involves also a presupposition of damage, or destruction, from an external impact. The existence of such a presupposition is indeed crucial to the conceptual setup of the *US* camp, as it helps instill the aura of threat from a possible invasion of the *THEM* camp in the discursive process of proximization. Thus, even though the L&J's rhetoric in the examples above is mainly focused on the *US* group and mobilization of that group to accept the L&J leadership and the communicated policies, it simultaneously contains important technical elements, conceptual and linguistic, for the buildup of the threatening proximization scenario.

Finally, from the perspective of Rhetorical Structure Theory [Mann & Thompson 1988], the discourse in (1)-(4) can be considered a macro-structural thesis in a thesis-antithesis macro-discursive sequence, aiming to pave the way for the negative interpretation of the 'antithesis' based on the enhanced appreciation of the preceding 'thesis' [Mann & Thompson 1988: 11]. In less technical words, the more is accomplished by the speaker with regard to acceptance of her messages as well as her visions of the functioning of the us group, the more probable, later, an automatic rejection of any alternative visions. In this vein, by reinforcing the common principles and values, and recalling even those elements of life which have come to be taken for granted (as in '[Polish people] deserve peace, stability and economic progress'), the speakers in (1)-(4) seek to arrange for the later visions and scenarios to get immediately abhorred.

3.3. The THEM

In L&J's anti-immigration discourse THEM is construed as culturally, socio-politically and ideologically alien and potentially antagonistic to the us party. Specifically, immigrants are construed to possess socio-cultural, religious, and even biological characteristics which preclude their inclusion in Poland and Europe as a whole, thus generating frustration and anger. Many of these characteristics stand in sharp contrast to conservative values of the us camp, particularly the traditional family values as discussed in examples (1)-(4) above. Importantly, the incompatibility of the THEM values is endorsed discursively in analogies to previous events and previous or current states of affairs in Europe, which are construed as costly *lessons* (though the word 'lesson' is never used explicitly, at least in the corpus). The events recalled in these *lessons* serve to exhibit the link between mass immigration, especially Muslim, and terrorist or other criminal acts:

- (5) We say no to those young healthy men **who selfishly leave behind their wives and children** to improve their own lives. We say no to those **who choose to escape rather than fight for their country**. (Beata Szydło, January 14, 2016).
- (6) We are not going to have the problems that Brussels or Stockholm have. We are not going to have districts where sharia law or any law other than Polish law reigns. Where there are **no-go zones for police**. And **where every few weeks something explodes**. (Mariusz Błaszczak, March 2, 2017).
- (7) Can someone tell me why, after 1,000 women were assaulted in Cologne on New Year's Eve, Mrs. Merkel is still supporting the Muslim immigration in Germany? Didn't they have enough to see that Muslims do **not integrate because they don't want to**? (Witold Waszczykowski, April 23, 2016).
- (8) Have we forgotten that, in the past, migrants brought **diseases like cholera and dysentery** to Europe, as well as **all sorts of parasites and protozoa**, which while not dangerous in the organisms of these people, could be dangerous here. (Jarosław Kaczyński, December 19, 2015).

In contrast to the previous set, the examples (5)-(8) reveal a dominant proportion of THEM-related phrases. The specific values in these phrases are not communicated directly; they must be inferred from larger units involving nominals, and notably, extended modifiers (such as relative clauses). Thus, the most salient values associated with THEM include: selfishness ('who selfishly leave behind...'), cowardice ('who choose to escape...'), chaos and lawlessness ('no-go zones'), and ultimately, terror and fear ('where every few weeks something explodes')¹¹.

While the four voices above may differ in their radicalism, as well as plain rationality, they all contribute to a simple and consistent picture of immigrants and their postures. As has been mentioned, immigrants are construed as unpatriotic, greedy, and guided by their individual economic interest. The areas they colonize quickly turn into lawless ghettos breeding crime and terror, as in 'Brussels or Stockholm' (example 6). They refuse to integrate, sometimes for ideological and cultural reasons, and sometimes out of sheer calculation. It is even their different physical, or rather biological, constitution that poses a threat, as Kaczyński's (in)famous words in example (8) suggest.

Construed in these terms, immigrants make up a compact out-group, whose physical characteristics and ideological predispositions contribute some excellent conceptual premises for the construction of threat in the mechanism of proximization. There is, first of all, a massive and potentially growing THEM entity, whose outlines are unclear and movement unpredictable. The entity is inherently antagonistic and its antagonism had provoked confrontation and conflict (and often destruction) before. Finally, the THEM entity reveals determination to develop and progress. We have seen in example (6), above, that such a characterization efficiently supports construals of an emerging threat which only grows if undealt with. There are two more examples to follow, which we take a closer look at.

3.4. The THEM against US proximization scenario

As has been mentioned, the discourse sequences construing proximization of the THEM impact on the US entities belong to the third category of the axiological proximization framework, which serves as an analytic handle on the interplay between discursive constructions of a potential threat and the actual materialization of that threat. Qualification in this category of the particular discourse items is subject to rigorous linguistic criteria, such as specific order of verb phrase elements and the presence of nominal phrases marking respectively the US and THEM entities (cf. Table 2 above). That said, it is quite amazing to see in the L&J rhetoric so many discursive sequences that indeed qualify. The following two excerpts have been taken from a pool of 79 discourse structures which belong in the category. The particular

¹¹ The apparent variety of lexico-grammatical forms carrying THEM-related characteristics in the Polish anti-immigration discourse begs consideration of the conceptual heterogeneity of the 2nd category in the axiological proximization framework. I discuss this theoretical issue elsewhere [Cap, forthcoming].

noun and verb phrases responsible for the transition from the ‘remote possibility scenario’ to the ‘actual occurrence scenario’ (cf. Table 2) are highlighted in examples (9)-(10)¹²:

(9) Our position has been clear from the beginning. The issue of immigration from the Middle East should be resolved where it has originated. By advancing freedom and democracy in Syria and Iraq, we help end a cycle of ***dictatorship and radicalism*** that ***brings millions of people to misery and frustration***, and ***brings danger*** and, one day, ***tragedy, to our own people***. (Beata Szydło, October 3, 2016).

(10) To those who are happy to welcome immigrants at our doors, I have a suggestion: go and see the Suruç camp¹³. See the gangs and the riots. See the young Muslim criminals. See the ***anger, violence, and terror***. It is there and ***is ready for export***. This evil might not have reached us yet, but it ***is well in sight***. And there is ***no-one in Brussels who can protect us when it comes***. (Mariusz Błaszczak, February 13, 2017).

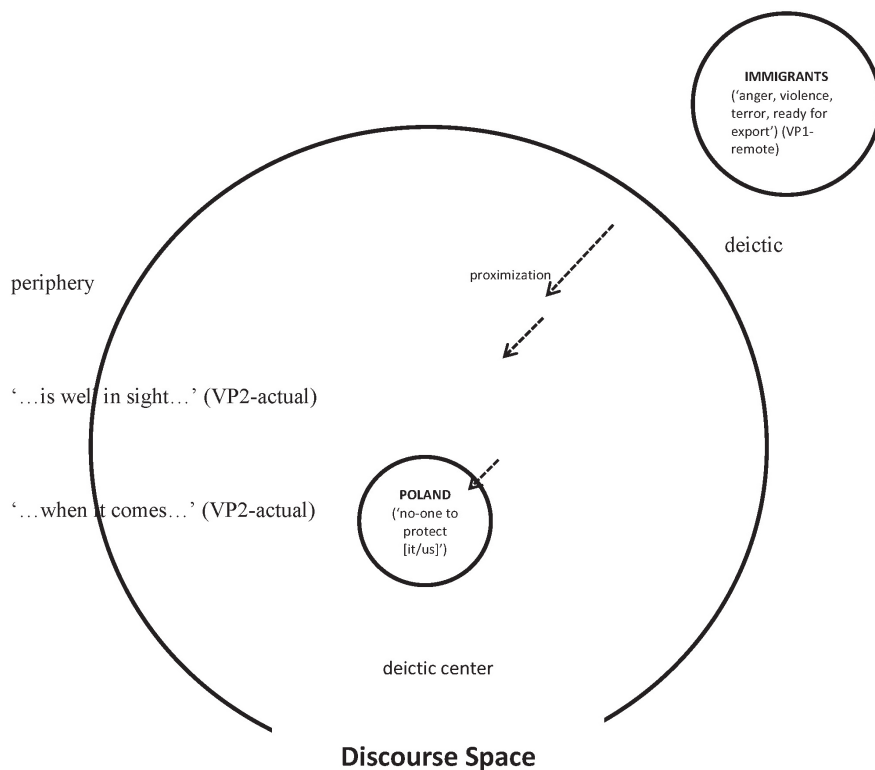
In example (9) Poland’s Prime Minister Beata Szydło sets up an explicit link between the social and political conditions which underlie lives of potential immigrants in their home countries (‘Syria and Iraq’), and the socio-psychological effects (‘misery and frustration’) which may bring about disastrous consequences later on, after the immigrants’ arrival in Poland (‘one day, tragedy, to our own people’). This argument helps Szydło legitimize the anti-immigration stance and policies of the L&J government, by strengthening the rationale for handling the immigration issue far away from EU/Polish borders. The argument unfolds in a linear manner, connecting the apparently remote visions with, eventually, closely happening events. At the lexico-grammatical level, nominal phrases are used to denote the US vs. THEM (ideological) opposition (‘our people’ vs. people living in ‘dictatorship and radicalism’), and verbal phrases (‘brings millions of people’, ‘brings danger’) are applied to proximize THEM’s anticipated impact. Altogether, the argument and the discursive transition from the ‘remote possibility scenario’ to the ‘actual occurrence scenario’ involve two nominal chunks and two verbal ones, as the axiological framework in Table 2 has it.

The same arrangement holds in example (10), where transition between the two scenarios involves a change in the modality of the text. While the first verbal chunk (VP1, in terms of the axiological framework) construes conditions for a possible/probable impact (‘is ready for export’), the second chunk (VP2) construes this impact as under way and already visible from the us camp (‘is well in sight’). The dynamics of such a two-step conceptual proximization can be illustrated in the following way (Figure 3):

¹² The ‘remote possibility’ phrases are marked in bold/italics, and the ‘actual occurrence’ phrases in bold.

¹³ A refugee camp in Turkey, run by the UN Refugee Agency.

Figure 3. Proximization in Discourse Space (DS) in example (10)



Still, in comparison with example (9), the argument in (10) reveals some differences. Specifically, the origin, or source, of the threat is markedly different, in geographical and geopolitical terms. The (Muslim) immigrants are geographically closer, and they are construed as inherently evil, rather than negatively affected. The US/THEM opposition is thus more acute, the conflict more ominous ('anger, violence, and terror [are there] ready for export'), and the envisaged effects more destructive, partly because of the characteristics of the invader, and partly because of the vulnerability of the home camp ('no-one in Brussels who can protect us when it [evil] comes'). Such a radical stance can be seen in multiple speeches and statements of L&J politicians, and is often reinforced by examples of Western countries' negligence leading to tragic events. Błaszczak's comments in (10) come from a parliamentary debate on immigration and are a direct follow-up on a comment from another L&J MP, about identifying the perpetrator of the Nice terrorist attack (cf. note #9) as a Muslim refugee. This rhetorical strategy, concentrating upon the apparent lack of political responsibility of Poland's opponents in the European Union, complements the simple fear appeals that rest in descriptions of previous criminal acts committed by immigrants, such as in (6).

As has been mentioned, the analyzed corpus includes as many as 79 such complex discourse structures, in which specific lexico-grammatical items occur in a linear order to construe, within the space of 1, 2 or maximally 3 sentences, a subtle conceptual transformation of initially remote and largely abstract danger, into a concrete threat involving tangible consequences. This means that, in the entire corpus (124 texts), the structures in question occur with the frequency of 0.78 instance per text. This ratio may be staggering already, but there are further striking observations. In the L&J's anti-immigration discourse, threat element is construed only partly in micro-discursive structures, such as (9) or (10). In many cases it emerges from much longer, macro-discursive narratives, involving entire texts or even sequences of texts. There, far more space is devoted, first, to characterization of the home group (as in examples (1)-(4)), then the antagonistic group (as in (5)-(8)), and only finally to conceptualization of the emerging conflict and clash.

Finally, it can be observed that threat construals in L&J's discourse differ in intensity over time, perhaps relative to the party's popularity with voters. This can be seen from the analysis of the monthly occurrences of the above micro-discursive proximization scenario (Table 3)¹⁴.

Table 3. Monthly occurrences of discourse sequences included in category 3 of the axiological framework

Month	Number
November 2015	1
December 2015	0
January 2016	2
February 2016	4
March 2016	2
April 2016	3
May 2016	3
June 2016	3
July 2016	5
August 2016	3
September 2016	5
October 2016	5
November 2016	9
December 2016	7
January 2017	9
February 2017	8
March 2017	10
Total in corpus	79

¹⁴ The corpus (124 speeches) includes between 6-8 speeches per month.

Apparently, the intensity of threat construals rises steadily in response to L&J's losses in opinion polls. While the L&J government used to enjoy a record-high support of 47% at the beginning of their rule in November 2015, its current (March 2017) popularity is at the level of 29%.¹⁵ This results in a continual radicalization of the L&J anti-immigration discourse. It seems that L&J leaders are trying harder and harder to play the immigration card to avert negative trends at the polls and restore public trust and support.

4. Conclusion

The L&J's anti-immigration discourse does not pose peculiar analytic challenges – it is far from subtle and its strategies are quite straightforward to identify. Technically, they involve recurring patterns of threat construction which link negatively-charged characterizations of the out-group, to possibilities of the out-group's growth and migration, and then to physically disastrous consequences for the in-group, that is Poland and Polish citizens. This scenario relies on the discursive narrowing of the conceptual distance between the two camps which occurs in the process of proximization. Most frequently used is the strategy of axiological proximization, since it allows for a unique combination of ideological and material elements of coercion, due to which the initially abstract danger turns gradually into a tangible, physical threat. The threatening scenario thus involves, linguistically speaking, the presence of nominal and verbal phrases (as in examples (9)-(10) and Figure 3) which increase, step-by-step, the salience of happenings following the initial projection of the external impact. Such a construal is a handy pre-requisite for enacting strong and legitimate leadership, whereby the political leader undertakes to prevent the threat or at least offset its negative effects.

Finally, from a more methodological standpoint, the apparent applicability of the proximization model to anti-immigration discourse encourages further empirical studies to endorse the explanatory power of Proximization as a theory. Recently, such explorations have been conducted in a number of domains beyond state political discourse, for instance health and climate change (Knapton 2016; Cap 2017). It seems that the main analytic strength of Proximization is, as was shown in this paper too, its ability to elucidate the dynamics of the THEM entity in the bipolar, US vs. THEM discourse configuration. This is due to the linguistic underpinnings of the model, such as the axiological framework, which make possible – viz. Figure 3 – the abstraction of specific lexical choices responsible for different conceptual projections.

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¹⁵ According to *Centrum Badań Opinii Społecznej – Public Opinion Research Center (CBOS)*.

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The Politics of Fear: Playing the Anti-immigration Card in Public Discourse of the Law & Justice Party in Poland

Abstract: The present paper analyses the anti-immigration discourse in Poland in terms of Proximization Theory (PT). PT [Cap 2008, 2010, 2013, 2017; among others] is a cognitive-critical model that accounts for the ways in which the discursive construction of closeness and remoteness can be manipulated in the political sphere and bound up with fear, security and conflict. It reveals how top public actors construe closeness of an external threat, to claim leadership and solicit legitimization of preventive measures to offset the effects of the thre-

at. The present paper applies PT in the domain of state political discourse in today's Poland, outlining strategies whereby anti-immigration stance and policies are legitimized by discursively constructed fear appeals and other coercion patterns. It demonstrates how the 'emerging', 'growing', 'gathering' threats – physical as well as ideological – are construed by the Polish right-wing government, who thus claim their right to oppose EU immigration agreements and pursue strict anti-immigration measures.

Keywords: immigration, anti-immigration discourse, Poland, Law & Justice, proximization, threat construction