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DISENTANGLING THE MORAL RIGHTNESS OF SECURITIZATION: DATA MINING OF THE PROCESS OF FRAMING AND SHAPING OF POLAND-UNITED STATES RELATIONS

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Abstract

Since the democratic transition, Poland-United States relations have been framed by the Polish authorities as a strategic threat-management tool in the securitization process of Poland's geopolitical position, particularly concerning the Russian Federation. We analyse the process of securitization regarding Poland-US relations through latent topic modelling of Polish parliamentary speeches in the years 1991–2017. We demonstrate that the discourse on Polish-US relations is heavily dominated by security topics, narrowly understood as military security. Furthermore, even when economic issues are discussed, they are frequently linked to military operations.

Based on Floyd's (2011, 2019) model of the moral rightness of securitization, we argue that the close relationship between securitizing moves (debates on Poland-US relations) and security practices (security events) suggests the basic sincerity of the securitizing actor, while the historical context reflected in the Polish collective memory strongly influences the audience's frame of reference and strengthens the power of the securitizing actor. However, although the case fulfils Floyd's (2019) criteria of morally right securitization, we have shown a historical disparity between the scope of securitizing moves with security practices and the existing level of threat. This demonstrates that the securitizing agent has been abusing securitization by exceeding the 'least harmful option', particularly due to the large asymmetry of power of the participants in the relationship, the securitization process stretched over a long period and the threat severity varying over time.

Keywords: Poland, United States, Russia, securitization, topic modelling, parliamentary discourse

Introduction

In 2018, Poland celebrated 100 years of independence following the historical era of partitions. From the very beginning of its independence, Polish politicians emphasised the unique nature of the relationship between the Republic of Poland and the United States. This trend, at the dawn of the reborn Polish state (1918), was strengthened by the fact that US President, Woodrow Wilson (1918), mentioned Poland in his Fourteen Points (14th point), expressing support for Polish independence. Since then, with the obvious exception of the communist period, the USA has been treated by Polish society and decision-makers as a beacon in international politics, most of all in the sphere of security policy. Moreover, due to the fall of the communist regime in Poland after 1989, the perceived importance of the USA rose even further to the rank of a symbol of the free world and a model Poland should strive towards.

Regaining full independence after 1989 marked a new opening, with great hopes among Poles for reintegration with the Western world. Integration with the European Union and NATO became the strategic goal of every Polish government following the democratic transition, reflecting a universal consensus across the political establishment, independent of ideological affiliation. At first, Western European countries and the USA were not so eager to accept post-communist countries into NATO – mainly because of the fear of antagonizing the newly formed Russian Federation. Nevertheless, it appeared that a new era of 'return to Europe' had come for the post-soviet camp. Accession of Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries to NATO and the European Union marked the end of their allegedly 'unjust' separation from the (Western) civilizational source of identity, prosperity, and security (Szczerbiak, 2011).

Since the democratic transition, the Polish-American alliance was presented as essential in the securitization process of Poland's geopolitical position vis-à-vis the threat from

the Russian Federation. The risk of an armed conflict caused by the Russian Federation has been indicated as the main threat to Poland both by the state authorities (Ministry of National Defense, 2016; Republic of Poland, 2020) and by the public in surveys (Vice, 2017; Smura, 2018). At the same time, Poland's presence in NATO and close relations with the United States were indicated as the main guarantees of Poland's security (Republic of Poland, 2014; 2020; Ministry of National Defence, 2016; Smura, 2018; 2019; Lanoszka, 2020). We argue that ultimately, the very process of framing the desired relations with the USA may be interpreted as a paramount and overarching security practice. Consequently, it informs and influences the specific, subordinate decisions of the Polish political establishment.

Throughout this article, framing is defined as a process of constructing, presenting, and imposing the perceptions and interpretations made by discursive practices (see Goffman, 1986). Framing refers to presenting a given idea or issue to the audience in such a way that it limits the possible understanding of that issue. The limited (framed) perception of an issue naturally restricts the choice of possible actions, which is why framing is essential in the realm of policymaking (Campbell, 1998). Considering the intersubjective, discursive, and selective nature of securitization, it is inescapably closely related to framing. As Entman (1993) noted, 'framing essentially involves selection and salience. To frame is to select some aspects of perceived reality and make them more salient in the communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation for the item described. (...) Frames, then, define problems (...) diagnose causes (...) make moral judgements (...) and suggest remedies'.

Accordingly, we argue that in the case of Polish-US relations, the discourse is restrained by the security perspective, and the majority of speech acts may be interpreted as securitization moves. Concurrently, by shaping relations we mean the process of actualizing, pursuing, and affecting the desired form and direction of international relations. This objective is achieved through specific decisions, policies, and actions that often take the form of security practices (such as the acquisition of the US weapon systems), or emergency solutions (like the consent for using so-called enhanced interrogation techniques by the CIA on Polish territory) (see Gasztold, 2021). Therefore, the securitization process moves the Polish-US relations 'beyond the established rules of the game and frames the issue either as a special kind of politics or as above politics' (Buzan et al., 1998, 23).

In the following section, we present a historical background of Polish-US relations focusing on the period since the first partly free elections in Poland in 1989 and describe the genesis and development of Poland's perception of the United States as a guarantor of its security. Next, after presenting the key aspects of the securitization theory related to the research problem, we track the dynamics of the narrative on Poland-US relations in Polish parliamentary debates in 1991–2017. We expand the methodological toolbox of analysis of the Poland-US relations by using latent topic modelling to examine how the mutual relations of two states can be decisively shaped by the process of securitization.

Therefore, we see the value added by the article in two areas. First, we refine the concept of the moral rightness of securitization by showing how securitization moves and security practices may deviate from the observed threat level, especially with the asymmetry of power between partners and when the securitization process is stretched over a long period and the threat severity varies over time. Second, we extend the scope for analysing

cases of securitization by demonstrating the application of a quantitative method that has not been widely used in this context. It provides a useful means of analysing large and long-term collections of textual data.

Poland-United States relations from the historical perspective

Relations between Poland and the USA have a long and significant tradition in the Polish historical narrative. It is full of symbolism, usually telling a story of two freedom-loving nations that had quickly become close allies. The relationship allegedly began before the United States came into being as an independent political system. Tadeusz Kościuszko and Kazimierz Pułaski, who fought in the American Revolutionary War as well as against the powers involved in the partition of Poland, became the most prominent 'Polish-American heroes'. Therefore, relations between the two societies were formed under the motto 'for our freedom and yours'¹.

The beginnings of mutual relations were promising, but their scope was limited to the Founding Fathers in the USA and a few Polish leaders, mostly political emigrants. On top of that, Poland effectively ceased to exist for over 100 years. In 1918, when official relations between Poland and the USA were established, the USA had already experienced a large immigration wave of Poles. In the years 1870–1914 around 1.5 million Poles emigrated to the USA, mainly from Prussia (Hillstrom & Hillstrom 2005, 185). This considerable Polish community became an integral part of US political life. It was one of the main reasons why Paderewski's advocacy for the Polish case was successful, and President Wilson (1918) stated in his address to the Congress: 'An independent Polish state should be erected which should include the territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations (...) whose political and economic independence and territorial integrity should be guaranteed by international covenant'.

Despite initial declarations and quick recognition of the Second Republic of Poland by the USA in April 1919, relations between the two states remained weak and distanced, mostly due to the policy of isolationism pursued during the interwar period by the United States. The US government withdrew from European affairs and did not intervene officially, even in the Polish-Bolshevik war of 1920 and the turbulent process of establishing a border between Poland and Germany (Pease, 1986). Consequently, relations were effectively limited to Poland's ties with the Polish community in the USA and humanitarian aid via the American Relief Administration which directed around 20% of its whole budget to Poland (Adams, 2009).

During World War II and the Nazi German occupation of Poland, the US government continued to recognize the Polish government in exile in London. The situation changed when the Soviet Union joined the Allies in their fight against the Axis powers. The fact that the Soviet Union invaded Poland in September 1939 was largely omitted by western Allies, including the USA, to maintain good relations with the USSR. Because of the Soviet Union's plan to take over control in Central Eastern Europe, it was an either/or situation: either support for exiled governments, including the Polish one, or good relations with the Soviets. The collaboration with the USSR, with its manpower and military potential, was essential to the Allies in defeating the Third Reich. The interests of the Polish government in London had to give way (Smith, 2008). In the end, the US government was quick to recognize the Soviet-backed puppet government in Poland in July 1945.

Poland-US relations during the communist regime in Poland were inevitably marked by the Cold War tensions between the USA and USSR. That does not mean that there were no ups and downs throughout more than 40 years. The beginning of Stalin's reign in the USSR was freezing, but the situation moved towards détente during Gomułka's rule in Poland (1956–1970) until the Six-Day War in 1967. Then, the Polish government was forced to align its foreign policy with the anti-Israeli and even anti-Semitic stance of the USSR, which worsened its relations with the USA (Frister, 2019). Relations improved when Gierek succeeded Gomułka as the First Secretary of the ruling Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR). Gierek needed financial support from the West to save the failing economy, therefore rapprochement was necessary, and he became the first First Secretary to visit the USA, in 1974. Another downturn in mutual relations came in the 1980s, with the rise of the Solidarity movement in Poland and a crackdown launched on it by the communist regime. The US administration under President Ronald Reagan adopted a two-way policy: on one hand, it imposed sanctions against the Polish government while on the other hand, it supported the Solidarity movement, including its clandestine operations (MacEachin, 2000).

The tables turned entirely after 1989, which saw the first semi-free Polish elections in the whole Soviet-controlled region following the World War II. The communist regime collapsed, and the Cold War ended. Official relations between Poland and the United States became warm and close. All Polish governments until today have emphasized that the United States is a guarantor of Poland's safety and a stabiliser on the global scale (Łukasiewicz, 2016; Republic of Poland, 2014; 2020; Ministry of National Defence, 2016; Smura, 2018; 2019; Lanoszka, 2020). It suffices to list just a few elements showing the importance of this relationship: Polish accession to NATO; cooperation between military industries; intelligence cooperation and joint covert operations; Polish participation in US-led military campaigns in Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq; cooperation vis-à-vis Russian aggression in Ukraine; constant Polish support for the presence of US military units in Poland; cooperation between NGOs and civilian experts. Most of these issues fall within the scope of *hard security* (Nye, 2003), primarily concerning the military and external security of the state. However, as we show in the analytical section, the causal and temporal relationship of these actions with the actual threat level is ambiguous.

Securitization theory and moral rightness

The dominance of security issues in Poland-US relations is also reflected in the public discourse in Poland. The theoretical concept offering a coherent explanation of this phenomenon is securitization theory (Buzan et al., 1998, 24–25), which came to prominence as a theoretical perspective after the end of the Cold War. The understanding of security began to widen to include elements other than hard power, interpreted as military power and economic potential (Nye, 2003), expanding it to concepts like ideas, culture, and identity. Security ceased to be merely the responsibility of the state and now included non-state actors, mainly citizens. Feminist theories of IR were crucial in pointing out women's perspective in international relations (Sjoberg, 2009), successfully elevating the issue of women's security in times of conflict to the agenda of the United Nations (United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, 2000). The sectorializing of security broadened its very concept by economic, societal, political, or environmental aspects. Military issues remained one of the most important elements of security, but security was contextualised,

de-reified and stripped of autotelic value (Stankiewicz, 2008). In essence, securitization theories have deconstructed traditional ways of perceiving and understanding security, and have provided IR scholars with an explanation of the mechanism by which issues are labelled as security issues and reproduced within society.

As Balzacq et al. (2016) summarize, the main issues addressed using the theory of securitization are migration, environment, and health. Lately, due to the rapidly changing political situation in the world, topics of gender, religion, energy, identity, and recently the Covid-19 pandemic, have been added to a list of topics on the agenda (e.g., Warner & Boas, 2019; van Baar et al., 2019; Szulecki, 2020; Gray & Franck, 2019; Saeed, 2016; Stott et al., 2020). The majority of studies are conducted using qualitative methods, mostly discourse analysis, with a growing tendency to include methods such as ethnographic studies, and the currently popular process-tracing or content analysis methods (Balzacq et al., 2016). In recent years, more works using quantitative methods have appeared, but their number is still small (e.g., Andžāns & Sprūds, 2021; Lamour, 2018). Additionally, most of the studies are flawed by case-selection bias – authors tend to choose only examples of successful securitization processes (Ruzicka, 2019).

Securitization is defined as ‘the discursive process through which an intersubjective understanding is constructed within a political community to treat something as an existential threat to a valued referent object and to enable a call for urgent and exceptional measures to deal with the threat’ (Buzan & Wæver, 2003, 491). In that way, the process of securitization is equivalent to an act of speech (Wæver, 1995), meaning that a certain issue, to become a security threat, has to be named as such, most often by the government officials responsible for national security (a securitizing actor) which have the most power to shape the discourse. If the securitizing actor is successful in its endeavour and manages to convince the public (referent object of securitization) that the given issue is a threat to national existence, then the public is more willing to accept the implementation of extraordinary measures in the name of security. National security in this approach is not an objective and static concept, but rather a fluid, negotiated effect of the political process. In this sense, the securitization theory reconciles realism and constructivism in International Relations (Williams, 2003) as the constructivist assumption that meanings shape policy is met with the realist premise that the principal concern in politics is national security.

Public support, gathered by the securitizing agent through persuading the public that there is an existential issue, is necessary for the government to be able to use extraordinary means and resources to solve the problem of the security threat. The classic theory of securitization is not concerned with potential, or actual, differences between ‘subjective’ and ‘objective’ threats – it studies the issues that are constructed as security issues (analytical problem) but does not examine which type of issue should be constructed that way (normative problem) (Buzan et al., 1998, 30). Subsequently, the theory has been enriched by the problem of objectively existing existential threats (‘brute threats’ by Balzacq, 2005, 181) and, thus, the idea of a normative approach to securitization (Huysmans, 2002). According to Floyd (2011, 428), there are three criteria determining the moral rightness of securitization:

‘(1) there must be an objective existential threat, which is to say a threat that endangers the survival of an actor or an order regardless of whether anyone has realized this;

(2) the referent object of security must be morally legitimate, which is the case only when the referent object is conducive to human well-being defined as the satisfaction of human needs; and

(3) the security response must be appropriate to the threat in question, which is to say that (a) the security response must be measured in accordance with the capabilities of the aggressor and (b) the securitizing actor must be sincere in his or her intentions’.

There are two main assumptions presented here. First, actual objective existential threats exist, which should be dealt with in ‘security mode’ instead of ‘normal mode’. Second, a securitized subject is not always an objective threat to national security. The most extensively cited example of this last case is terrorism. Terrorism is globally perceived as one of the most dangerous threats to national security although the number of victims of terrorism in the world is several hundred times smaller than the number of victims of road accidents (see Kuper, 2015). Traffic incidents rarely get into the agenda of national security, because they have not been securitized. As a result, the resources mobilized to combat terrorism and traffic accidents are incomparable (Cordesman, 2018). Consequently, many security practices introduced as reactions to terrorism, especially after 9/11, hardly fulfil all the above criteria of morally right securitization (‘just securitization”).

Floyd (2011, 428) argues that by framing an issue in security mode ‘the securitizing actor does something as far as he or she issues a *warning* to the aggressor and/or *promises* protection to the referent object of security. A securitization is complete only if the warning/promise made in the speech act is followed by a change in relevant behaviour by a relevant agent (the securitizing actor or someone instructed by the same) that is justified by this agent with reference to the declared threat. Floyd calls this second step a ‘security practice’ and builds the following equation: securitization = securitizing move + security practice. As she explains, ‘one advantage of this revision is that it makes it possible to examine whether a securitizing actor is sincere. That is, do particular actors genuinely intend to safeguard the referent objects of security they have themselves identified or did they securitize the given objects for different reasons altogether? The key to uncovering sincerity is to examine whether the rhetoric of the speech act is matched by subsequent security practice. In other words, an inexplicable discrepancy suggests insincerity, while continuity suggests sincerity’ (Floyd, 2011, 429).

In further works, Floyd (2019) introduced three sets of principles of morally rightful securitization, covering: 1) just initiation of securitization – transition from politicisation to securitization based on just reason (an objective existential threat), just referent (referent object needs to protect basic human needs), right intention (sincerity in intention to protect the referent object), proportionality (greater expected good than expected harm from securitization) and chances of success (greater chances of success in comparison with less harmful options); 2) just conduct of securitization, concerning security measures of proportionality and necessity (appropriate and effective measures of addressing the threat, causing the least amount of overall harm possible) and discrimination (respecting relevant human rights during the execution); and 3) just desecuritisation, covering timing (when the threat has been neutralised), action (immediate desecuritisation moves and practices) and long-term aim (restorative measures undertaken).

However, despite various problems with the interpretation of these principles and their real-world applications pointed out by several authors (Sahu, 2021; de Londras, 2022; Roe, 2022; Wolfendale, 2022; see Floyd, 2022 for a reply to critics), one issue has not been clarified so far. The just securitization theory mainly refers to short-term securitization actions that, after achieving (or failing to achieve) the success, according to the theory, should undergo a just desecuritization process. In this context, the theoretical approach to situa-

tions in which both the threat and securitization are of a long-term nature and the level of threat varies over time, becomes problematic.

In cases such as the Poland-US relations described by us in the article, if there exists ‘an objective existential threat to a referent object, that is to say a danger that – with a sufficiently high probability – threatens the survival or the essential character/properties of either a political or social order, an ecosystem, a non-human species, or individual’ (Floyd 2019, 19–20), and the response of the securitizing agent to the threat goes more or less beyond the boundaries of ‘normal politics’, however the threat itself has an unknown temporality. The threat, although for a long time it may not escalate into an active conflict phase, still exists, and is never finally neutralised. Therefore, the required conditions do not arise for the de-securitization process to begin. Moreover, management of future risks, unspecified in relation to time, is further complicated by the asymmetrical relationship between countries. For this reason, this requires Poland, as the weaker partner, to constantly take care of good relations with the USA and maintain steady deterrence which reduces the chance of a threat and at the same time constitutes a potential response to a threat should it occur.

Research design and hypotheses

In this article, we state that the Poland-US relations after 1989, observed through the lenses of Floyd’s securitization theory, are framed and shaped predominantly using security discourse. The USA is constantly framed by the Polish authorities as an indispensable element of the security policy of Poland (‘securitizing moves’). This leads to ‘security practices’, defined as concerted and prolonged efforts to engage the USA in guaranteeing Polish security by various means. These ‘security practices’ are costly in financial, political, and human terms and involve some ‘extraordinary actions’. This includes taking part in military invasions (legal in Afghanistan and illegal in Iraq), agreeing on illegal prisons and the use of torture against prisoners by the CIA in Poland, and uneconomically favouring American arms dealers. The fact that every single government after 1989 has stressed the importance of the USA for the security of Poland shows that this perception is deeply rooted in the Polish political establishment and universally accepted as an axiom of Polish reason of state (Baranowski & Cichowski, 2015; Kupiecki, 2016; Smura, 2019; Lanoszka, 2020). We therefore expect to confirm that:

- *H1: The USA is present in Polish parliamentary discourse mostly in terms of security, narrowly understood as military security.*

We also argue that all three sets of factors described by Balzacq as essential to understanding the process of securitization (audience, context, and securitizing actors) perform here in concert, supporting the overall phenomenon. As Balzacq (2005, 193) noted, ‘every securitization is a historical process that occurs between an antecedent influential set of events and their impact on interactions’. In the case of Poland, the securitization process of Poland’s geopolitical position vis-à-vis the threat from the Russian Federation entails constructing the permanent interest and involvement of the US in Polish security. Relations with the US are aimed to be an efficient deterrent and the only plausible solution, which is strengthened by the historical context reflected in the Polish collective memory. Thus, the history of Russian-Polish relations, including the contemporary Russian Federation’s aggressive policy towards its neighbours (context), strongly influences the security discourse and security environment in Poland by shaping the audience’s frame of refer-

ence (the widely accepted belief of Polish society that Russia is an existential threat) and strengthening its level of trust in public officials (securitizing actors) that use a particular kind of ‘threat rhetoric’; this further reinforces the audience’s readiness to be convinced by securitization moves (‘speech acts’).

We may repeat, after Balzacq, that relevant aspects of the zeitgeist strengthen the persuasive power of securitizing actors. Under these kinds of circumstances, the third set of factors, involving ‘the capacity of the securitizing actor to use appropriate words and cogent frames of reference in a given context, to win the support of the target audience for political purposes’ (Balzacq, 2005, 192), is less critical for influencing the referent object. In fact, ‘speech acts’ of this kind may be commonly perceived in Poland as a case of ‘preaching to the choir’, irrespective of the overall level of trust in the political establishment. As Balzacq (2005, 193) noted, ‘if the external context provides potent clues for the existence of a security hazard, the importance of the speaker’s knowledge (...) would decrease’.

In very recent history, since 2015 and the rule of the Law and Justice (PiS) right-wing party in Poland, the assumptions mentioned above have been reinforced even further. The narrative of the Polish government and president makes it clear that, without question, only the USA can guarantee Poland’s security (Graf & Palowski, 2018). And indeed, even though the Polish political scene and society are extremely polarized, virtually no relevant social or political force disputes the need for an increased US military presence in Poland. Critical voices questioning some elements of military relations, including president Duda’s idea of the so-called Fort Trump² or a declaration to buy F-35 aircraft from the USA, were rejected by the Polish government as undermining Polish national security. The arguments pointing out that the deployment of additional US forces could actually lower the level of national security by drawing more attention from the Russian military (Stratfor, 2019) or that F-35s are not useful for defensive warfare (Szopa, 2019) are not taken into account. They go against common perceptions and conventional wisdom, influenced and stabilized by sustained securitization moves which utilize common frames of reference rooted in historical experiences, recent aggressive behaviour, and the sustained imperial rhetoric of the Russian Federation.

The compatibility between the audience, context, and aims of the securitizing actor and the lack of any relevant opposition to the privileged position of the USA in relations with Poland fosters temporal consistency between securitization moves and security practices. Therefore, we expect to find a close relationship between securitizing moves (parliamentary debates on Poland-US relations) and security practices (security events related to activities of the Polish authorities aimed at continuing or increasing the involvement of the USA in ensuring the security of Poland), which – according to Floyd (2011) – suggests the basic sincerity of the securitizing actor):

- *H2: Polish parliamentary speech acts on security in Polish-US relations are closely followed in time by security events: there is no discrepancy between securitizing moves and security practices which could suggest insincerity of the securitizing actor.*

However, focusing on the protracted, variable, and temporarily unknown threats and accompanying long-term securitization processes, we argue that even in cases when ‘the expected good gained from securitization [is] greater than the expected harm from securitization’ (Floyd, 2019, 128) and all other principles of the Floyd’s model of the moral rightness of securitization are satisfied, the methods of threat management chosen by the

securitization agent may temporarily exceed the gravity of the threat and, therefore, abuse the ‘just’ securitization. We demonstrate that the moral rightness of conduct in securitization is difficult to evaluate, especially when the securitization process is stretched over a long period and when both the threat severity and the intensity of response varies over time. For this purpose, we formulate the following hypothesis:

- *H3: The intensity of security debates on the Poland-US relations and accompanying security practices does not reflect observable changes in the level of the threat from Russia to Poland’s security.*

The research was conducted on a selection of debates from the full corpus of plenary debates in the lower chamber of the Polish Parliament (Sejm, www.sejm.gov.pl) in years 1991–2017, covering parliamentary terms 1–7 and more than half of the 8th term.³ The choice of debates for analysis was based on a quantitative criterion: the occurrence of keywords referring to the United States⁴ in the whole body of speeches. Keywords defined in this way occurred 18034 times in 8588 speeches in the years 1991–2017. For topic modelling, due to the presence of general debates in the corpus, during which various, often unrelated issues are discussed, we decided to include only those debates in which more than ten references to the United States were used and only those speeches within chosen debates in which reference to the United States is made directly. Thus, to remove the information noise and focus only on the subject of the study, we applied a double threshold – at the level of debates and the level of speeches. Additionally, from the introductory speeches during debates (usually authored by the Speaker of Sejm), in which various thematic threads are taken up – only the paragraphs falling between the first and last direct reference to the United States were selected.

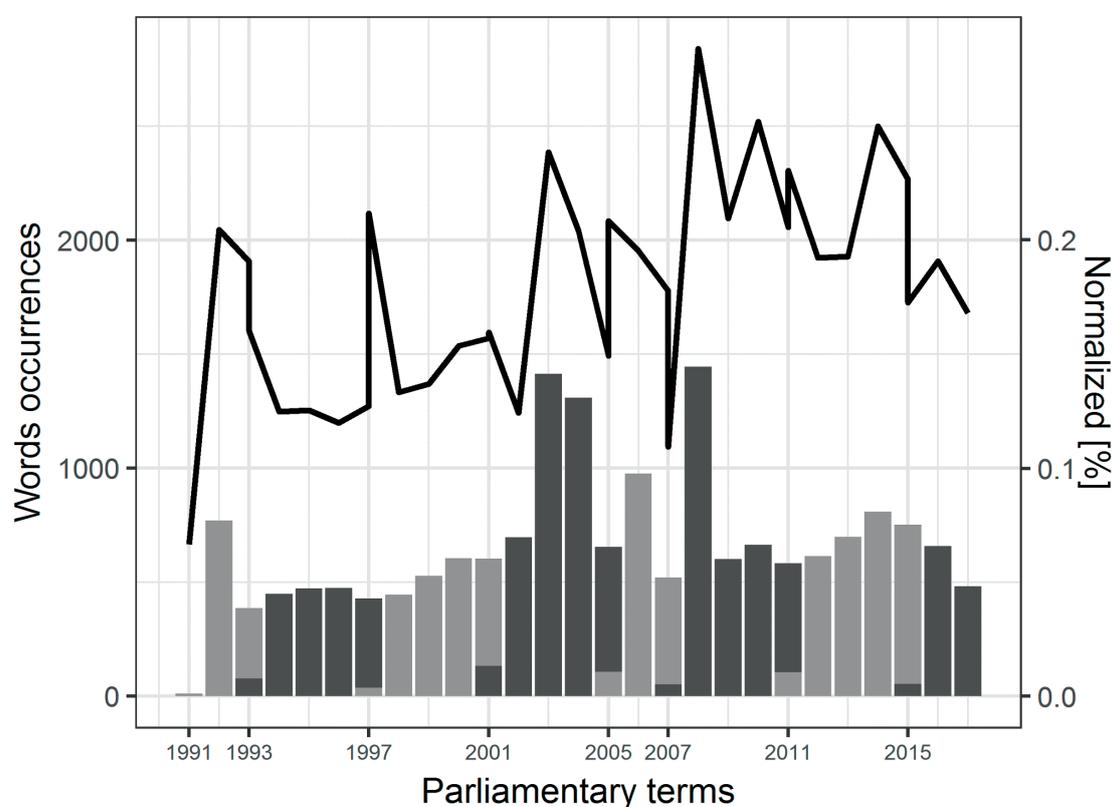
Following the initial descriptive inquiry, we conducted an automated analysis of a selected corpus of transcripts aimed at identifying the key dimensions in Poland-US relations represented in parliamentary debates. After standard pre-processing of the texts (including removal of stop words, the most common parliamentary procedural words and punctuation and subsequent word lemmatization), we used a generative topic-modelling method, which infers latent topics from parliamentary speeches based on word co-occurrence. Topic modelling methods are a group of unsupervised methods that have been widely shown to produce meaningful results in multidimensional topic analysis for automated inference of dimensions (Zirn & Stuckenschmidt, 2014). Specifically, we used the Structural Topic Model (STM) method (Roberts et al., 2019), which is a variant of Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) extended to incorporate document-level metadata. Inclusion of time and political affiliation as metadata in the model enabled their influence on the distribution of discovered topics. Then, the most distinctive statements for the identified topics were individually analyzed and interpreted.

Results

Poland-US relations are constantly present in the Polish parliamentary discourse, although some periods are characterized by an increase in references to this country. Figure 1 presents the frequency of keywords occurrence in the debates, with a breakdown per year. The key dates showing a higher intensity of debates related to the USA in 1992, 1998, 2003–2004, 2006, 2008 and 2013–2014 reflect the major security events taking place during these periods. The years 1992 and 1998 are relevant mostly within the framework of the

accession process of Poland to NATO. In March 1992, NATO Secretary General Manfred Wörner stated that the doors of NATO were opened for Poland. In April, defence ministers and chiefs of staff of candidate-states took part, for the first time, in a meeting of the NATO Military Committee. At the end of 1997, Poland signed the NATO accession treaty, and 1998 was the time when the Polish parliament was discussing the implementation and possible effects of this decision. The rise of the US presence in debates since 2003 is attributed to the American-British invasion of Iraq in which Poland, among others, took part. Additionally, Polish accession to the EU in 2004 spurred discussions about the place of Euro-Atlantic relations *vis-à-vis* Poland's membership in the EU.

Figure 1. References to the United States in Polish parliamentary debates



Note: The bar chart illustrates nominal values, and the continuous line represents the values normalized to the overall volume of debate in the parliamentary term (the total count of words in a given year of a term). The parliamentary terms are marked with alternating hues.

The year 2006 is important in the context of energy security and the Nord Stream agreement signed by the Russian Federation and Germany that year. It triggered serious concerns about Polish energy security, both among the population and decision-makers. The year 2008, in turn, was dominated by the question of strategic military security when the US and Polish governments declared that they wanted to reach an agreement on deploying part of the European Interceptor Site (anti-missile defence system) in Poland. Finally, the increase in mentions in 2013–2014 is related to the Euromaidan protests and the Russian military invasion of Ukraine, resulting in the annexation of Crimea and the

occupation of eastern regions of the country. It caused, arguably, the biggest perceived military threat at the time for Poland since 1989 and the USA appeared once again as the most important guarantor of Polish security. These findings support the second hypothesis stating that the Polish parliament discusses Poland-US relations (securitizing moves) mostly around the time of the major security events related to the USA involvement in the security of Poland taking place (security practices).

Overall, there were 240 debates in Sejm in which more than ten references to the United States were made, which we considered the threshold for classifying the debate as related to the United States and qualifying it for more detailed analyses. Typically, the majority of debates in the Polish parliament are discussions on proposed bills (Dudzińska, 2015). From this perspective, it is interesting to note that debates on Poland-US relations constitute an exception as they concern to a similar degree the function of parliamentary control over the executive as the legislative function of the parliament. After the removal of debates on general topics⁵, 33% of debates refer to various forms of parliamentary scrutiny over the government actions, including parliamentarians' inquiries to the government or individual ministers and debates on the annual reports of the Public Finance Committee on the implementation of the state budget and the budgetary discharge for the government. Additionally, a form of parliamentary control over the executive is also obtaining and discussing information from representatives of the government and other executive organs of the state, including discussions on information presented to the Parliament by the Council of Ministers or Prime Minister (19%), the Minister of Foreign Affairs (11%), or other governmental agencies or executive bodies (9%).

Only less than half of the debates on Poland-US relations (45%) are legislative debates in which draft laws are discussed. However, even in this case, the legislative initiative of the government or the president (25%) prevails over the number of projects submitted by parliamentarians or parliamentary committees (20%). Additionally, a quarter of legislative debates are aimed at a parliamentary control of the government (resolutions on the acceptance of a governmental budget report, resolutions on a vote of confidence or no confidence in the government) and not on the enactment of a genuinely new law. On this basis, it can be concluded that relations between Poland and the United States are shaped at the level of executive bodies, while the legislature performs mostly scrutiny function. This falls in line with the constitutional assignment of foreign policy to the executive.

With very few exceptions, the debates with the highest number of references to the United States concern joint military actions of Poland and the United States, including: deployment of the American missile defence system in Redzikowo (376 references to the US), support for the Polish troops stationed in occupied Iraq (187), participation of the Polish military contingent in the international coalition enforcing Iraq's compliance with the UN Security Council resolution (179) and the governmental bill on ratification of the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Poland and the US Government on the status of the US armed forces on the Polish territory (162). The non-military exceptions with the highest numbers of references to the USA covered: a project on Poland's access to the Visa Waiver Program (105), a youth exchange program (98) and a convention for the avoidance of double taxation and prevention of tax evasion (86).

For further analysis, the Structural Topic Modelling (Roberts et al., 2019) was applied to derive latent topics. The selected model consisted of 15 topics, 2247 documents (speeches), a 18411-word dictionary and was optimized for semantic coherence and exclusivity

(Mimno et al., 2011; Roberts et al., 2019) and interpretability of topics. After the removal of technical and auxiliary topics, not directly related to the issue studied, 13 topics remained. As a topic specification, we provided a list of words with the highest frequency-exclusivity (FREX) score (Bischof & Airoidi, 2012), i.e., the high-probability words in a given topic that are also not highly probable in other topics. As a measure of topic prevalence, we supplied the mean relative frequency of topics scaled to all analysed speeches in a particular term. Next, we interpreted the content of each topic based on its most typical speeches.

In general, the majority of the topics cover foreign relations, military, and security issues, as presented in Table 1. This finding supports the first hypothesis that the USA is present in the Polish parliamentary discourse mostly in terms of security, narrowly understood as military security. The most prominent topic concerns Polish relations with Russia, especially during parliamentary terms 2 (1993–1997) and 3 (1997–2001). As described earlier, Polish relations with Russia are full of mistrust, and Russia is perceived by Polish society and decision-makers as a threat because of historical reasons. Polish-Russian relations have had their good times and bad times during the last three decades after the democratic transition, with short improvement after the crash of the Polish presidential plane in 2010 in Smolensk (Russia), but hit an all-time low following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2014 (Smura, 2019).

The topic of Russia in USA-related debates appears mostly in the context of Poland's accession to NATO, hence its highest intensity in the parliamentary terms preceding and concurrent to this event. In parliamentary speeches, several aspects are emphasised: objections raised by Russia towards Polish membership in NATO, international security brought by joining the Alliance as well as the need to maintain good relations with Russia regardless of membership in the NATO and the European Union. After Poland's accession to NATO and then to the EU, the prevalence of this topic diminished. The remaining speeches mostly contain criticism of Polish foreign policy as a result of Poland's membership in NATO and the EU, which led to the deterioration of relationships between Poland and bordering Eastern European countries, and consider the possibility of NATO enlargement towards the east, with a focus on the Polish-Ukrainian partnership.

The next topics, in order of prevalence, include the installation of an American anti-missile defence system in Poland and joint Polish-US military operations. Speeches on the anti-missile shield dominate primarily in the 6th and 7th terms, which is associated with the signing and implementation of the 2008 intergovernmental agreement (with further amendments) regarding deployment of the missile defence system – European Interceptor Site (EIS). There was almost a full agreement in parliamentary speeches regarding the benefits of the contract, and the discussions concerned only the details of its implementation. However, the plan was cancelled in 2009 and replaced with the Aegis Ballistic Missile Defence System, planned to be operational till the end of 2022 (Lopez, 2021).

Such an agreement across political divisions is lacking for the next topic: participation of Polish soldiers in US-led military operations. Polish governments have supported many American military campaigns, even if they took place outside the framework of NATO, were not supported by the UN Security Council, and were opposed by some members of the European Union (Smura, 2019). The main authors of speeches on this topic are the deputies of small, anti-system parties (primarily the Self-Defence of the Republic of Poland (SRP) and the League of Polish Families (LPR)), which is a distinctive feature of this topic. They criticize government policies in their statements, referring to the illegality

Table 1. Latent topics in parliamentary debates on Poland-US relations

Label	FREX	Relative frequency in terms (%)								
		All terms	Term 1 (1991-1993)	Term 2 (1993-1997)	Term 3 (1997-2001)	Term 4 (2001-2005)	Term 5 (2005-2007)	Term 6 (2007-2011)	Term 7 (2011-2015)	Term 8 (2015-[2017])
Russia	foreign, Russia, diplomacy, politics, Belarusian, exposé, diplomatic, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, diplomat, neighbour	12.3	10.1	24.8	15.9	11.2	13.7	10.5	7.2	12.5
anti-missile shield	shield, anti-missile, rocket, missile, agreement, ratification, visa, patriot, battery	11.9	5.3	4.7	3.0	5.5	16.3	21.1	21.5	10.5
military operations	Iraq, Iraqi, resolution, terrorism, stabilization, terrorist, Islamic, United Nations, war, send	11.4	2.1	3.0	4.6	25.5	18.3	6.8	5.6	5.8
Central Eastern Europe	dialogue, cooperation, region, strive, central, membership, Baltic, partnership, regional, eastern	9.1	8.9	16.3	10.3	6.2	8.1	9.3	8.9	11.3
finance	inflation, central bank, bank, rate, monetary, deficit, interest, budget, banking, pay-out	8.9	6.1	7.4	7.7	7.3	5.8	16.4	7.2	6.6
legal compliance	patent, tax, tax relief, topography, bill, subject, taxation system, law, customs, legislation	8.5	27.7	13.1	12.6	5.3	4.7	5.0	7.6	7.9
EU	Europe, sovereignty, convent, euro, Ukraine, association, EEC, community, vision, geopolitical	8.3	13.5	5.0	8.7	6.7	4.0	4.9	16.7	10.3
armament	Ministry of Defence, province, equipment, military, helicopter, armament, combat, aircraft, armed, Afghanistan	8.0	3.6	2.9	6.0	7.2	12.0	10.3	6.9	14.0
trade agreements	offset, smelter, offset obligation, technology, plant, industry, enterprise, production, tobacco, restructuring	7.4	9.2	11.5	11.5	11.8	6.4	2.4	1.5	6.6
fossil fuels	geological, gas, shale, conference, field, emission, energy, coal, concession, energy	7.2	7.9	4.6	11.8	4.5	5.5	8.8	9.1	5.4
immigration	reparation, citizenship, Polonia, Jews, German, Potsdam, Soviet, compensation, colonel, monument	7.0	5.3	6.8	7.9	8.8	5.2	4.5	7.7	9.1

Note: The results of the STM model with the parliamentary term and parliamentary club included as metadata.

of some military operations, their absence of net benefits for Poland, and increasing the potential terrorist threat to Poland. In turn, government MPs in their speeches on this topic justify the decisions by referring to the threat of international terrorism and the importance of Polish-US relations.

The last military topic is focused on the modernization of the Polish army, including supplying soldiers with the military, technical, and medical equipment and cooperating with other participants of the joint military missions, primarily with the USA. This topic has the highest prevalence during the period of the most intensive involvement of Polish troops in military missions in Afghanistan and Iraq, above all in the 4th and 5th terms (2001–2007). The debates consisted primarily of discussions between government representatives and MPs from opposition parties, who accused the government of neglecting the safety of soldiers and their supplies.

Military cooperation between Poland and the USA is tightly connected with the political orientation of Poland towards the USA as the most important security partner, as described earlier. All Polish governments advocated for years (especially since 2014) for an American military contingent in Poland (Hunzeker & Lanoszka, 2018; Lanoszka, 2020). It finally happened as a part of the NATO initiative to secure the eastern flank of the alliance, *vis-à-vis* the aggressive actions of Russia, especially after the invasion of Ukraine and annexation of Crimea. After the 2014 NATO summit in Wales, the administration of President Obama decided to increase financing of the European Reassurance Initiative (ERI), which allowed for a more permanent presence of American soldiers in the eastern flank and more exercises in Poland with the participation of NATO member states.

Therefore, it is no surprise that the US military-industrial complex is always present when Poland announces its plans to modernize equipment and almost always wins procurements. Among the most significant and far-reaching contracts between the two sides was the acquisition by Poland of F-16 fighters (2006/08, contract signed in 2003), together with offset investments, but without significant technology transfer, and the takeover of the PZM Mielec aerospace manufacturer in 2007 by the Sikorsky Aircraft Corporation. Both of these contracts showed systemic asymmetry between the USA and Poland, and both were criticized for uncompetitive prices, with the exploitive stance of American negotiators on one hand, and the submissive stance of the Polish government on the other (Pochylska & Terlikowski, 2015, 7–8). These contracts show clearly that the decisions of the Polish military industry are strongly influenced by the political agenda and correspond with the perception of the USA as a security guarantor.

Besides military-related topics, there are three other key areas discussed in the Polish parliament concerning the USA: economic cooperation, European relations with a focus on EU/CEE relations, and the status of Polonia (the Polish diaspora) in the USA. Economic issues dominated in the initial decade after the democratic transition until 2001, then experienced a gradual decline. Among them, four main areas can be distinguished: financial issues, taxes, legal compliance, fossil fuels, and trade agreements. Within the group of economic issues, the financial ones were discussed the most. The debates mainly concerned the annual reports on the implementation of the state budget and other state accounts. On this topic, issues related to the monetary policy of the state were debated, including economic differences between the United States and the euro area, and comparisons between Poland and the USA regarding elements of the state economic policy, for example, interest rates and returns on government bonds. Mentions of the USA in

financial debates resulted also from using the US dollar as a universal conversion agent. This topic is mainly addressed by the presidents of the National Bank of Poland acting as guest speakers in parliament.

The topic of legal compliance is focused on adopting bills modelled on American laws or resulting from agreements on international cooperation signed between Poland and the USA. The speeches within this topic contain references to specific legal solutions operating in the USA, including patent protection of inventions, rules for the protection of intellectual property, taxation of undisclosed income, rules for exercising political lobbying and controlling such activities. Some of them are related to issues arising from the presence of American soldiers in Poland, such as the need for technical approval of American vehicles or the legal possibility for US soldiers to pass their driving tests in Poland.

However, even issues classified as economic ones cannot be separated from military themes. This problem is strikingly apparent in the case of the topic of trade agreements between Poland and the USA. The main focus of parliamentary speeches on this topic is on the offset agreement signed between Poland and Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Company in 2003 for the sale of the F-16 aircraft, which included a 6.3-billion-dollar package of investments in Poland. Despite the economic nature of this agreement, it was the consequence of a commercial contract for military equipment, and therefore is of military origin. Overall, a significant part of the economic cooperation between Poland and the USA takes place within the arms trade.

The last economic topic concerns shale gas resources in Poland and concessions for American companies interested in its extraction, and, to a lesser extent, other concessions and licenses. This topic should also be treated as a form of security strategy against the threat posed by the Russian Federation, namely Poland's dependency on energy resources imported from Russia. Russia has weaponized energy in the past years, mostly to blackmail Ukraine, and has used monopolistic practices to influence the policy of Eastern members of the EU (Bocse, 2020). Therefore, diversification of supply was planned to give Poland and the EU autonomy from Russian imports to ensure energy security – the most notable example being the PM Donald Tusk's plan for an energy union in 2015. The USA was to play a pivotal role in this process as it could export liquefied natural gas to the LNG terminal operating in Świnoujście in Poland (Paszyn, 2016).

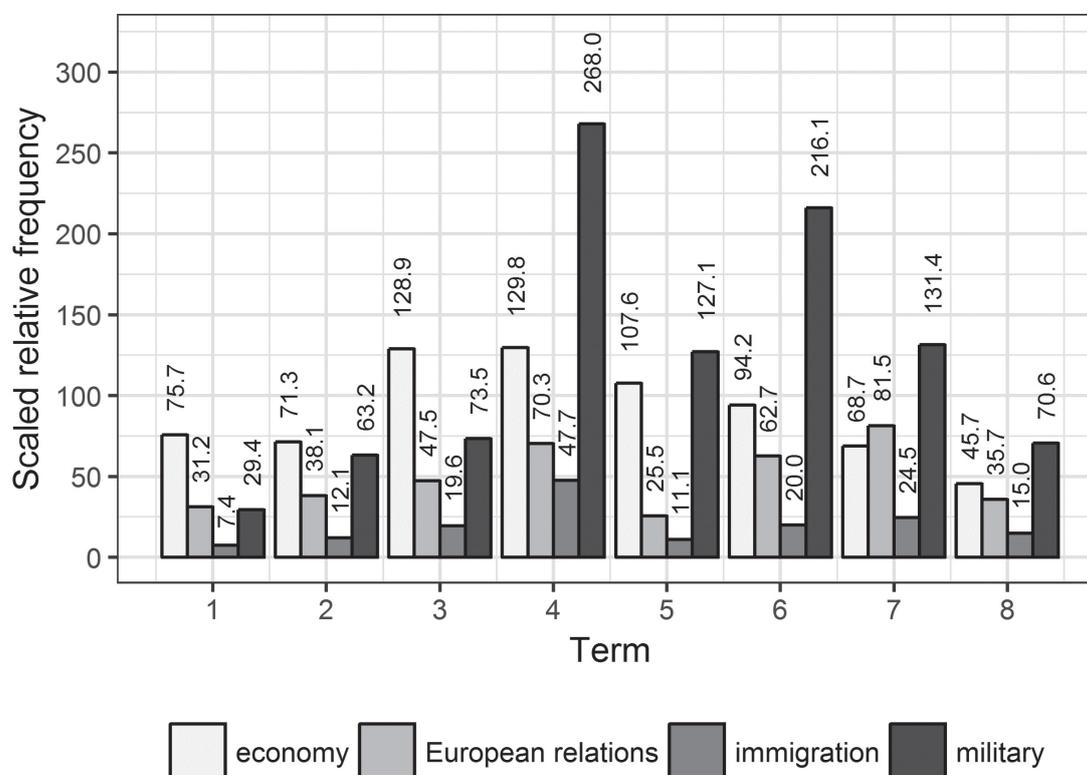
The topic of European relations, most frequently referred to during the 4th and the 7th terms, covers the European Union as the second pillar (see Longhurst, 2013; Cadier, 2021) of Polish foreign and security policy besides membership in NATO. Discussions on this subject were taken up first of all during the first decade of Poland's integration with the European Union. The debates within this topic subsequently decreased in frequency but did not disappear in later parliamentary terms, when ongoing reforms and the further strengthening of European integration were discussed.

Further, the topic covering relations within Central and Eastern Europe focuses primarily on the integration of CEE countries with Western European organizations (NATO, the EU) and economic cooperation in the region. The content of the topic, however, consists almost exclusively of the discussions on the annual presentation of the Information of the Minister of Foreign Affairs on the main directions of Poland's foreign policy and does not appear in other types of debate. Finally, the remaining topic of Polish immigrants covers issues related to the Polish diaspora in America, in particular related to the significant Polish anniversaries and commemoration of national heroes.

Summarising these findings, the Polish parliament discusses Poland-US relations primarily in the context of security issues. The majority of debates are directly related to actions aimed at assuring the international security of Poland: joint military operations with the USA, the significance of the USA for the relations between Poland and Russia, and security in the region of Central and Eastern Europe in general. Furthermore, even when economic issues are discussed, they are often related to military issues. Framing of the Poland-US relations as an indispensable deterrent tool in the Polish security environment further strengthens the asymmetrical, dominant position of the United States in this relationship. This is exceptionally well exposed by the unfavourable military and trade agreements that have been regularly entered into by Poland. However, persistence in a subordinate position in this relationship is rarely criticized in Poland due to the prevailing belief that it is an indispensable tool of threat management.

Altogether, the prevalence of military-related topics in Polish parliamentary debates concerning the USA (including relations with Russia, armament, military operations, and an anti-missile shield), has changed over time. Figure 2 compares the frequencies of military topics over time with other main thematic fields, divided into parliamentary terms. In the early years after the political transition, military topics were not at the forefront in Poland-US relations, but their importance grew with time. The salience of military issues gradually increased, reaching a peak in the 5th parliamentary term (2005–2007, the first Law and Justice government), during which they accounted for almost half of all debates related to the USA, then slowly began to decline.

Figure 2. Prevalence of thematic fields in debates on Poland-United States relations



Note: Figures scaled to the overall number of statements for each parliamentary term.

Considering hypothesis 3, it is crucial to note that the intensity of discussions on security issues in Polish-US relations and the consequent security practices do not reflect real changes in the level of threat to Poland's security. Counter-intuitively, initially, after the democratic transition, the repertoire of Poland's relations with the United States was much broader and was dominated by economic issues. Paradoxically, it is only since the 4th term (2001–2005), after Poland achieved greater security by joining the NATO (in 1999) and the European Union (in 2004), that military topics have begun to dominate the parliamentary debates on Polish-US relations. Even more notably, despite Russia's aggression against Ukraine in 2014, an event regarded as a major threat in all neighbouring countries, there has been no rise in the share of military issues in debates afterwards. Hence, we argue that these results support hypothesis 3 that the observed level of threat is not closely reflected in the intensity of the securitizing moves and security practices undertaken.

Conclusion

Since the democratic transition, Poland-United States relations have been framed by the Polish authorities as a strategic threat-management tool in the securitization process of Poland's geopolitical position, particularly in relation to the Russian Federation. To capture and explain this process, we tracked the dynamics of Poland-US relations in Polish parliamentary debates in 1991–2017 using descriptive text analytics and latent topic modelling, which enables the automated analysis of large corpora of texts by extracting its main themes. Based on securitization theories, we aimed at discussing the problems with the evaluation of the moral rightness of securitization (Floyd, 2011; 2019), particularly caused by the large asymmetry of power of the participants in the relationship, varying level of external threat, and the securitization process being stretched over a long period.

First, we demonstrated that the Polish discourse on Polish-US relations is heavily dominated by security topics. The USA is referred to in Polish parliamentary speeches mostly in terms of security, especially hard, military security. Not only are military topics the most frequently used thematic group, in addition, many topics related to economic cooperation, European and EU-CEE relations, and energy management also have a military basis. In particular, a large part of trade between Poland and the United States relates to the modernization of the Polish army and the purchase of American military equipment. Additionally, Poland's regular involvement in military operations abroad conducted by the United States, in many cases against the interests of the state as well as trade agreements signed with the United States – often suboptimal for Poland due to the type of equipment, maladjustment to the conditions of the Polish army, or due to the inflated prices in comparison with other vendors – indicate the asymmetry of Polish-US relations.

Further, by tracing the intensity of debates on Poland-US relations and actions taken by the Polish authorities, we confirmed the close relationship between securitizing moves (the Polish parliament discussing Poland-US relations) and security practices (security events taking place). The USA is framed as the only viable solution to the Polish geopolitical dilemma that is commonly perceived by the political elite (the securitizing actor) and society (the referent object of security) as the main source of existential threat to the state sovereignty and society identity. Its involvement in Polish security is consistently presented in securitization moves (speech acts) as being critical for Polish existence, and

the rhetoric of those speech acts is indeed – as Floyd (2011) postulates – matched by subsequent ‘security practices’, which would suggest the basic sincerity of the securitizing actor.

Through the theoretical lenses of securitization theory in its revised, normative variant, the securitization process – involving efforts ensuring USA engagement in Polish security, understood as a ‘security practice’ – may be treated as complete, since ‘the warning/promise made in a speech act is followed up by a change in relevant behaviour by a relevant agent (...) that is justified by this agent with reference to the declared threat’ (Floyd, 2011, 428). All three sets of factors that, according to Balzacq (2005), shape the process of securitization (political agency, context, and audience) favour and strengthen the dominant perceptions, discourses, and ensuing security practices. In practical terms, the case of Poland-US relations supports this point. With some historical background (Kościuszko’s and Pułaski’s participation in the Revolutionary War, Wilson’s support for Polish independence after WWI) and present practices (support for the political opposition during the communist rule, support for Polish accession to NATO), the idea that the USA is the indispensable guarantor of Polish security *vis-à-vis* the Russian threat has become a self-evident and justified practice.

Nevertheless, such framing and shaping of the Polish-US relations have led to many actions unfavourable for Poland, including costly and unnecessary trade agreements, participation of Polish troops in the military operation in Iraq, and finally, to accepting in 2003 illegal CIA prisons in Poland. Therefore, the assumption about the role of the USA in Poland’s security was driven by ‘context-dependent practical imperatives’ (McCourt, 2016, 475). The current political situation in Poland under the Law and Justice government has delivered interesting research material in terms of deliberate instances of presenting Poland-USA relations inside a ‘hard security’ framework, with concurrent attempts at constructing EU-Poland relations as less vital or even threatening in some ways, especially in terms of cultural identity and sovereignty. The Polish ruling right-wing coalition continuously emphasises that only solid transatlantic relations with the USA can guarantee the security of Poland. At the same time, it tries to present the EU as incapable of defending its member states (Jakubowski, 2019).

Moreover, in Polish-US relations we can observe a diachronic consistency of Polish governments in the securitization process. Along with the fact that Poland depends geopolitically on the US military umbrella, securitizing agents have not used securitization only as a power-grabbing tool. Although the empowerment of a government elite is listed by Wæver (2011, 469) as one of the inevitable negative effects of any securitization, in the analysed case securitization has been seen both by the Polish political elite, and society, as an objective process of safeguarding Polish security. Therefore, to paraphrase Guzzini’s (2011, 336) words: the dominant paradigm of Poland-US relations is effective and well understood against the background of existing foreign policy discourses and is embedded in the Polish collective historical memory.

For these reasons, it could be argued that our case fulfils Floyd’s (2011, 428) criteria of morally right securitization: there is an objective existential threat, endangering the survival of the actor; the referent object of security is conducive to human well-being (defined as the satisfaction of human needs) and, therefore, morally legitimate; the security response is measured in accordance with the capabilities of the potential aggressor and the securitizing actors are sincere in their intentions. Furthermore, there exists an agreement within the political elite and society that ‘the expected good gained from securitization

[is] greater than the expected harm from securitization' (Floyd, 2019, 128). Thus, although the very act of securitization is a social construct, and in this case was fuelled by the dominant perception of Polish society and decision-makers, it would be difficult to argue that this instance of securitization has been strictly instrumental and subjective.

However, as we prove in the article, the moral rightness in terms of 'just conduct in securitization' proposed by Floyd (2019) is elusive and hard to diagnose. Examples of abuses of securitization despite the fulfilment of the conditions of moral rightness described earlier in the literature cover include justification by states of an unjust attack by rationalization for a dire necessity or use of the greater good principle to violate minority rights (Sahu, 2021). By analysing the Poland-United States relations in 1991–2017, we have shown a historical disparity between the scope of securitizing moves and security practices and the existing level of threat. Despite Poland's increasing security in the international arena, especially after joining NATO in 1999 and the European Union in 2004, the greatest intensity of securitization moves and security practices took place in the 2000s. Moreover, the armed attack of the Russian Federation on Ukraine in 2014, which shook the sense of security of the entire region of Central and Eastern Europe, was not reflected in the increase of intensity of the securitizing moves and security practices undertaken.

We argue that in the case of Polish-US relations the abuse of the just securitization by not adapting the range of securitization moves and security practices to the observable threat level is a result of the securitization process being stretched over a long period with the threat severity varying over time. In addition, the securitizing agent is strongly supported by a historically determined context and the audience's frame of reference. Consensus regarding the position of the United States as the crucial actor for the security of Poland, encompassing the majority of the political elite, except for small, anti-systemic parties, means that reaching for extraordinary measures in the name of security is rarely contested. In combination with the large asymmetry of power of the participants in the relationship, transgressing the borders of ordinary politics in the process of securitization may go beyond the 'least harmful option' proposed by Floyd.

Notes

1. It is the unofficial motto of Poland, coined after the November uprising (1830–1831) by soldiers who had to leave territories of former Poland. As they scattered around the world, many of them joined different revolutions, mostly the revolutions of 1848, spreading this idea. Even though the motto was created long after Kościuszko, his struggle for the freedom of the USA and Poland are incorporated in this tradition.
2. 'Fort Trump' is a phrase president Duda used while visiting President Trump. Duda asked for a permanent US military base in Poland to substitute the rotational presence of US soldiers in Poland (Diamond 2018).
3. We analyse debates in the Sejm because the upper house (Senate) is significantly less important in the legislative process and with regard to its influence on public discourse.
4. Including 'US' and 'America' and all grammatical forms related to these words, excluding mentions to Central America, Latin America, South America, and the United Mexican States.
5. 14 sections with MPs' statements on various issues were removed.

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