The Discursive Manufacturing of Iranophobia and Global Preemptive Collaborations in Donald Trump's Discourse

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Abstract

Over the past years, Iran's reputation has been defined with fear-generating terms and resources in connection with extended nuclear programmes. A critical investigation of the discourse of Iranophobia in the recurrent political discourse of the USA reveals the spatial nature of this discourse. The aim of this paper is towards an analysis of Donald Trump's 2017-2018 speeches which have their focus on Iran/the Iran Deal. Applying Proximisation Theory (Cap 2013) shows that he conflates spatial and temporal proximisation strategies while conceptually construing Iran as a strong and ubiquitous regional and global threat to the world. Furthermore, we shall indicate how the discourse of Iranophobia legitimates the US withdrawal from the Iran Deal and imposing heavy economic sanctions as preemptive measures. The analysis also shows that Trump's discourse on Iran endeavours to establish a global consensus against Iran by using lexico-grammatical markers and pragmatic tools in order to influence the international political and strategic behaviour of Iran.

Key words: Iranophobia; Iran Deal; Proximisation Theory; Spatial and Temporal Proximisation; preemptive policies

It is one thing to know the members of our [American] embassy's staff have been seized and that we seem powerless to free them; it is quite another to watch this story unfolding night after night on prime-time television. We have reached a point where we need to evaluate critically the meaning of the 'Iran story' as it has been called, to understand its presence in our lives rationally and dispassionately. We must start to take stock of what Iran has been to us, how it has been looked, how it has been literally re-presented to us by the news media day after day.

Edward W. Said (1980: 23)

1. Introduction

For many years, Iran's right to authorise its access to nuclear technology has given rise to a plethora of domestic and international political complications and heated negotiations. In this regard, the prevalent assumption in Iran's socio-political atmosphere involves a politically nourished spectacle that the right of researching and utilising pacifistic nuclear technology has always been overlooked by the leading Western nations and, in particular, the U.S. Evidently, Iranian authorities' position *vis-à-vis* nuclear programmes bespeaks a non-materialistic, but spiritual, value of this critical issue. The ideologically imbued value of its nuclear ambition, then, has gone far beyond its technological and economic applicability. It is, thus, constructed by the Iranian government to be a consecrated affair that brings about divine rewards, for example in a speech by the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic, Ayatollah S.A. Khamenei (2006, authors' translation, emphasis is added):

> Nowadays, the fourth and fifth generations of centrifuges have been produced. If Allah wills it, you will exceed them. I say to you: any movement of yours has *got unparalleled divine and spiritual rewards than any material value*. You are providing the fundamentals of permanent *independence* and grandeur of a nation.

Ever since the nuclear programmes were re-initiated in the post-revolutionary era, Tehran's (ideologically-enriched) insistence upon the pursuit of the right for nuclear technology, proclaimed as *the absolute right*, has been tagged with international economic sanctions, industrial breakdown, mounting predicaments and hardship for the people, and isolation for Iran's international status. During these years, the U.S., with the Western allies alongside, have always acknowledged Iran's nuclear project as a cumulative threat for the regional and international stability. This is because Iran has always been vociferously accused of pursuing the production of nuclear weaponry; a commitment Tehran has incessantly refused to admit.

Thus said, this paper provides a critical discourse analytical investigation of discursive manufacturing of Iranophobia in Trump's 2017-2018 speeches regarding Iran's nuclear affair. Primarily, it aims to indicate that the discourse of Iranophobia is frequently reverberated as a result of the so-called nuclear ambition of Tehran, its military capacity and activities in the region. We shall

also clarify that the construal of Iran's threat in terms of lexico-grammatical means persuades the speaker to legitimise certain preemptive measures in order to change Iran's behaviour in the Middle East. Concerning the preemptive measures, we shall introduce the notion of Global Preemptive Collaboration (GPC) as a discursive strategy, aimed at making a global/regional/group consensus for the immediacy and inevitability of a presumed threat. It suggests that making a global invitation for Preemptive collaboration contributes the inviter to discursively aggrandise the range and consequences of the alleged enemy's impact.

In what follows, first, an abridged review of the history of Iran-America relationship is provided as a background. The second part reviews some literature that outlines the rudiments of terror politics and communicating threat through Us/Other polarisations. Moreover, it discusses works on Iranophobia that claim it to be a corollary of Iran's multifarious empowerment in the region. As a theoretical framework, we present the Proximisation Theory (PT) (Cap 2013), and, in the third part, we apply it to analyse speeches of Donald Trump regarding Iran. The data set involves his presidential commentaries in 2017 and 2018. The final section summarises and discusses the findings of the study, which indicate that placing greater emphasis upon the conceptualisation of threat in terms of the concepts of physical threat may picture Iran's appearance as a serious global threat, and, consequently, convince the target audience to give voice, bolster, and legitimise harsher and more coercive preemptive measures. Arguably, deeper deliberations of the regularity of the incidence of such a threat construal strategy may contribute to the methodological and explanatory capacity of PT.

1.1 Once Allies, Now Enemies: Iran-America Relationship

Years before the burst of the 1979 Islamic Revolution, Iranian-American international relations and miscellaneous ties were at their prime. Surprisingly enough, the relations of the two countries were looked upon as a paragon of a bilateral peaceful relationship in the field of international affairs. There were, perhaps, no two countries like Iran and America that had warmly embraced each other in a great variety of affairs (Polk 2009). However, the tightly-knit Iran-U.S. relationship failed to stand still at the zenith of friendship during and after an epoch-making political metamorphosis in Iran: the birth of the Islamic Revolution.

What triggered this political transfiguration was when, in the fall of 1979, the Carter administration accepted the de-crowned Shah of Iran, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, into the United States for medical treatment of cancer (Blight et al. 2012. In the aftermath, Tehran, regarded America's decision as proof that the U.S. would never go along with the newly-burgeoned Islamic Republic and would make every effort to destroy it (Blight et al. 2012). In response, radical Muslim students, reinforced and inspired by the Iranian leadership, seized the American embassy, taking 52 American hostages for 444 days (Mousavian and Shahidsales 2014). The story of the antagonistically-tailored gown of the Iran-U.S. post-revolutionary relationship does not end there. The heated space between the two was further agitated by a series of activities conducted

by the U.S., seeking 'regime change' policies within Iran. According to Polk (2009), these activities included:

1. Founding organisations such as The Front for Liberation of Iran in 1982

2. Destroying half of the Iranian fleet in the Persian Gulf in 1988

3. Attacking an Iran Air passenger flight, killing 290 passengers in July 1988

4. Recruiting propaganda against Iran's nuclear programme

Furthermore, Iran's nuclear programme had been recognised as an inevitable problem for the international community since the presidency of Bill Clinton. At that time, a group calling themselves non-conservatives reverberatingly proclaimed, and still does, that Iran is working surreptitiously to manufacture nuclear weaponry that is a critical danger to America and Israel (Polk 2009). Despite the fact that Iran has always campaigned its nuclear programme as a pacifist project, the international community, especially the U.S., does not take it to be so (Kinch 2016). Ergo, in order to halt Iran's nuclear programmes, Iran's case, besides utilising diplomacy and mostly economic sanctions, was brought to the Security Council under Chapter VII in 2006 (Parsi 2017). This meant that Iran's nuclear programme had been recognised as a threat to world security and stability (Parsi 2017).

Having negotiated less fruitfully for some years, during the administrations of Sayed Mohammad Khatami (1997-2005) and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (2005-2013), the administration of Hasan Rouhani reached an agreement with 5+1 countries in 2015 during the Obama administration. In terms of this agreement, that is known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), Iran agreed to stop installing new centrifuges, halt production of 20 percent enriched uranium, and stop the heavy-water reactor in Arak (Parsi 2017). In response, the 5+1 guaranteed to lift sanctions that had been imposed due to Iran's nuclear activities, and promised not to launch new economic or any kind of sanctions in association with Iran's nuclear activity. Immediately after the deal was made, the anti-deal campaign in the U.S began to concentrate upon Iran's ballistic missile testing, human right abuses, and its aggressive role in Yemen, Iraq and elsewhere in the Middle East (Jett 2018).

Unlike the Obama administration, Donald Trump argued that the JCPOA had not included Tehran's ballistic missile programme, its support for extremist groups, and other activities mostly ascribed to the Islamic Republic Guard Corps (or Sepah-e Pasdaran-e Enghelab) in the Middle East. Despite European nations, Russia, and China's attempts to convince Trump to stay in the pact, he withdrew the deal on May 8, 2018 and re-launched the sanctions, the majority of which are targeting Tehran's economic and oil exporting capacity.

2. *Politics of Terror and Iranophobia*

Politics of terror, as Booth (2008) notes, inflicts dread and fear towards the lives, values, and properties of people. It seeks to attract worldwide attention in order to explain, react, and justify certain objectives, including political, economic, and social phenomena (Hodges and Nilep 2007; Kellner 2004). In addition, politics of terror dramatises an extensively promulgated and constructed perception that social control has been broken down, and, consequently, higher security control is drastically required to halt consequential situations or events such as terrorist attacks (Altheide 2006). According to Lazar and Lazar (2004: 225), since the catastrophic attack in 9/11, politics of terror and the discourse of 'war on terror' have redressed the reminiscent order of the 20th century, and have constructed a 'New World Order'. At the heart of the politics of terror, there is a taken-for-granted implication of the exclusion of minorities, often recognised as groups that are intrinsically different from a presumed interest group (Hoskins and O' Loughlin 2007; Wodak 2015). According to Badiou (2009) the world is a place which is ruled and governed by democrats and the Western people. In stark contrast with this world, Badiou (2009) maintains that the outer world is a reminiscent of life, and is a region characterised by wars, walls, miseries, and illusions. It is assumed that the constructed 'barbarity' (Pohl and Wodak 2012), 'parasitic' (Musolff 2012), and uncivilised characteristics of these groups may ruin 'our' democratic, liberal, and prosperous land.

Many critical discourse studies address the variety of exclusionary and fear-generating discourses, such as racism and xenophobic discourses (Cap 2018; Cheng 2013; KhosraviNik et al. 2012; Martin 2003; Musolff 2012; Pohl and Wodak 2012; Polat 2018; van Dijk 2012; Wodak 2011; amongst others) as well as political discourses that (re)generate and refresh the fear appeal (Cap 2013; 2017; Fetzer 2013; Wieczorek 2009, 2014; Writh-Koliba 2016). These studies endeavour to deconstruct and de-objectify the articulations that reinforce the domination of the privileged few and dichotomised 'Us-Others' world. Iranophobia, a politically and strategically infused discourse, can be considered as a singular example instantiating the operationalisation of terror politics. Delineated rather historico-culturally, Iranophobia partly orates the story of the West's failure to articulate the Orientally constructed world in terms of 'its own allegories' (Dabbashi 2015: 233). This implies that the exercise of *resistance* against the tide of westernisation has ploughed the political and cultural grounds that germinate the seeds of Iranophobia. There is a rich repertoire of academic studies, particularly in Iran's academia, that have investigated the rationales lying behind the rise of Iranophobia. Accordingly, the discourse of Iranophobia can be deemed as a plausible production of at least two counteractive inclinations: on the one hand, Iran strives to become a hegemonic regional power and to rearticulate the regional order (Jamalzade and Aghaei 2015; Ramazani 1992); whereas, on the other hand, the West and, particularly, the U.S., seek to consolidate the existing dominant world order (Dara and Babaie 2016). The process of Iran's empowerment and the programmes to follow its ambitions in the Middle East are realised in an array of strategic hegemony-evading actions, such as:

supporting and bolstering Shiite adherents in Iraq and Lebanon (Nauer 2007) Hezbollah in the northern borders and Hamas in Palestine, as well as endorsing predominantly Israeli threatening discourse in Iran's political spaces (Ram 2009), insistence on nuclear programmes (Kadkhodaee and Ghasemi Tari 2018), rearranging the regional order (Shariatinia 2010), and promoting the ideology of exporting the Islamic revolution to the neighbouring countries (Mottaghi 2012). According to Bill (2001), Iran's political behaviour, independent of the global hegemonic web, has bestowed a fertile alibi upon the West to amplify the interpellating voice of Iranophobia. In so doing, the West and the U.S. have long been making efforts to enforce certain political and preemptive measures on Iran in order to restrain the process of Iran's empowerment. In a similar vein, Mahdizade and Mirhosseini (2017) believe that these strategic obstacles are materialised through financing Israel's security, inaugurating Arabian NATO, surrounding and isolating Iran internationally, and selling arms to Arabs.

Looking from a historical angle as another deep-lying motivation, the 1979 revolution metamorphosed in a radical manner the previous macro structures of the political discourse (KhosraviNik 2015b) that tied Iran and Israel more tightly together in the process of self-de-orientalisation (Ram 2009). The failure to take a hold of this mutual project of Euro-American enterprise 'jeopardized the theoretical edifice upon which the Jewish state was constructed as the West' (Ram 2009: 62). Put differently, Iran's Islamic-oriented revolution as a movement back to the Orientalistic spaces on the one hand and the offcuts of the old days' *love affair* on the other would lead Israel away from proving itself as the West. Hence, constructing Iran as a world threatening entity and vociferating Iranophobia are intended to 'reaffirm its self-image as a modern, secular, and Western society and to justify its utter isolation from the cultural zone of the Arab and Muslim Middle East' (Ram 2009: 63).

Of all Iran's programmes aimed at imposing new order to the region, the much debated nuclear programme has provided a reliable ground for the West in general, and the U.S. in particular, to practice and reproduce the protracted discourse of Iranophobia (Kadkhodaee and Ghasemi Tari 2018). It is assumed that the West and the U.S. have long endeavoured to represent the Islamic Republic as planning to proliferate nuclear weaponry through large-scale media propaganda and political-diplomatic arrangements (Nor Mohammadi et al. 2013). More to this, Israeli academia, media, and politicians consistently introduce Iran's nuclear programme as an 'apocalyptic ambition' that will result in another *Holocaust* (Ram 2009: 50). Therefore, as a corollary of the phobia construction of Iran's nuclear projects, it is said that not only will Israel enjoy exclusive access to nuclear technology in the Middle East (Dara and Hami 2013), but also the costs of regional power transition to Iran will be substantially increased (Shriatiniya 2010). On these perceptions, Malek and Davoodi (2013) conclude that there is a direct relation between the range of Iranophobic campaigns in the West and security policy in the Gulf States, in that, whenever the discourse of Iranophobia gets vociferously drummed by the West, the Arab countries increase their arms purchases.

To conclude, much of the literature on Iranophobia, including the ones we have reviewed here, pay particular attention to descriptions of macro topics such as Iran's nuclear programme, ideological practices and stance taking in the region, ambition of becoming a regional hegemony, and supporting paramilitary groups in Iraq, Lebanon, and Syria, amongst others. Allegedly, these issues have functioned as strong incentives for the birth of Iranophobia. Furthermore, the literature discussed here carries the belief that Iranophobia is an outcome of a clash between two entities: one is a global power and the other is a regional power seeking to become hegemony through manifesting rough resistance against the former. However, albeit that the works above take Iranophobia as a discursive construction, they have not dealt with the topic in terms of a discourse analytical approach. Placing greater emphasis on general political prompts of Iranophobia, a linguistic-pragmatic approach can reveal how the conceptualisation and construal of Iran as a threatening entity is verbalised and communicated in the relevant political spaces. The present study therefore focuses on the lexico-grammatical properties of proximisation in Trump's discourse of the Iran Deal that tend to legitimate a certain array of preemptive policies that follow from the enforced conceptualisation of Iran as a physically and tangibly threatening entity.

3. *Proximisation Theory*

First proposed by Cap (2006; 2008; 2010) to study the patterns of coercive rhetoric in the U.S. political interventionist discourse (Cap 2017), he defines proximisation as '...a discursive strategy of presenting physically and temporally distant events and affairs (including 'distant' adversarial ideologies) as increasingly and negatively consequential to the speaker and her addressee' (Cap 2018: 97). This spatial construal supports the speaker in soliciting legitimisation for certain actions and/or policies to neutralise the cumulating threat of the deictically peripherised (distant) entity (Cap 2013; 2017; 2018). In that sense, Proximisation Theory (PT) builds on cognitive deictic-space theory (DST) (Chilton 2004, 2014), involving imaginary attention spaces with entities inside- (IDC) or outside-deictic-centre (ODC). Cap (2013) notes that Deictic Space Theory (DST) puts forward certain essential theoretical premises that lie deep at the bedrock of the Proximisation Theory. DST, for instance, associates the distance from the deictic centre with the representation and conceptualisation of the entities and events. It also recognises the relativity of distance and its symbolic representation along with 'its mutually interactive dimensions' (Cap 2013: 21). What is more, the term 'position' is a pivotal concept that finds quite an unnegotiable locus in DST. Through their discursive representations, people symbolically *position* events and entities on *relatively-distanced* conceptual points in relation to themselves, or another social deictic centre, along spatial, temporal, and modal axes (Chilton 2004). This is a potentiality that facilitates people to represent their epistemological standpoint and make judgments about certain propositions (Chilton 2014). Regarding the relativity of distance, Chilton (2014) maintains that mere linguistic, semantic, and pragmatic repertoire does not suffice as the only benchmark to measure, or expose, the distance of

the located-on-vector events and entities from the deictic centre, but rather there are certain kinds of conceptualisation that functions independent of language and represents discourse referents as relatively proximal or distal. According to Cap (2013), the inadequacy of lexico-grammatical inventory to measure the relative distance in DST is a limitation and he argues that indexical cues could be used systematically in (political) discourse to measure the distance, shifts, and movements on the axes. Bent to make up for this gap between language use and the construction of meaning, Cap (2013) develops lexico-grammatical frameworks for each of the three proximisation strategies in order to show how a (political) speaker construes proximisation, shifts, and movements of the entities and events. The problem both theories face is that such distances cannot be measured with a yard stick because their meaning is imaginary, experiential and cultural. However, distances can be gauged and scaled on a modal axis (Chilton 2014; Werth 1999).

PT holds that the threat comes from the entities at the periphery of the discourse space, known as ODCs (foreigners, enemies, evils, they, Others). It is conceptualised to be crossing the conceptual spatio-temporal as well as ideological centre-periphery distance to invade the speaker-addressee territory: the IDC of friends, allies, good, Us (Cap 2018). Construed to be socially and/or individually consequential, the movement and proximity of the distant entity (ODC) to the central one (IDC) in the discourse space is systematically organised in terms of a three-dimensional deictic conceptualisation of Spatio-Temporal and Axiological axes (STA). This means that proximisation is enacted in terms of the conceptual axes. Spatial proximisation involves a forced construction in which distant entities (ODCs) encroach physically upon the central entities of the discourse space (Cap 2013). Temporal Proximisation (TP), in Cap's own terms, is a 'forced construal of the envisaged conflict as not only impending, but also momentous, historic and thus needing immediate response and unique preventive measures' (Cap 2018: 97). By using analogies, spatial and temporal proximisation conflate the present cumulating threat with the actual past catastrophic events to reinforce the threat construal and (re-)gain legitimisation for some preemptive/preventive policies and/or actions. Axiological Proximisation (AP) is a forced construal and embodiment of the ideological mismatches, conflicts, and/or collisions between the constructed values of the home (IDC) values and the values of the constructed peripheral entity (ODC) (Cap 2013). As a compensatory discursive tool, thus, AP seeks to maintain the legitimisation of the enacted/under-negotiation pre-emptive agenda in the absence or breakdown of the other two strategies, namely spatial and temporal proximisations (see Cap 2013).

Proximisation strategies and seeking legitimisation subsume strong and undeniable correlations, i.e., proximisation strategies involving threat that motivate to give legitimation to preventive/pre-emptive arrangements so as to keep the deictic space (DS) safe and secure from the presumed destructive and catastrophic impact of the ODC. The STA (Spatial, Temporal, and Axiological) proximisation strategies contribute to fostering fear appeal in order to solicit legitimisation for the benefit of some preemptive or preventive policies. Preemptive/preventive policies, put simply and generally, refer to a set of measures forethought to halt or neutralise the construed threat of an 'enemy',

'foreign', 'antagonistic' (ODC) entity encroaching destructively upon the home entity (IDC). According to Mueller et al. (2006: 1) the doctrine of preemption in the US National Security Strategy (NSS) involves 'defending oneself by attacking an enemy before it strikes, instead of seeking to deter attacks or striking back if deterrence fails.' What makes preemptive actions incontrovertible, according to George W. Bush administration, is the transition from a traditional era wherein 'visual mobilization of armies, navies and air forces preparing to attack' (NSS 2002: 15, as cited in Payne 2005: 2) to the time in which 'terrorists are prepared to strike without warning against innocent civilians' (Payne 2005: 2).

Back to our main concern, the discourse of Iranophobia involves mechanisms of threat-based legitimisation. The pragma-cognitive equipment of Proximisation Theory along with its theoretical toolkit concerning the dynamic relations between legitimisation and fear appeals enables it as an apt theory to study discursive constructions that represent Iran as a global and regional threat in political discourse of the U.S. The lexical and grammatical frameworks of STA proximisation make a crucial contribution to gaining access to a vintage point over the severity of the construal of Iran's threat and how such construals would manipulate audiences' mental spaces. This theory also illuminates how heavy economic sanctions are imposed upon Iran and how they are legitimised. However, Proximisation Theory is not alone in giving due attention to legitimisation strategies. van Leeuwen (2007), for example, has outlined legitimisation strategies in terms of four categories, including authorisation, moral evaluation, rationalisation, and mythopoesis. The priority of Proximisation Theory, thus, over van Leeuwen's frameworks lies in the function of fear appeals as a pivotal legitimisation strategy and, more importantly, a lexico-grammatical toolbox and pragma-cognitive facilities that can make explicit how threat is constructed and fear is generated(see Cap 2013; 2017).

4. Data and Analysis

The data for this study is a selection from a corpus of white house addresses, statements and comments by Donald Trump from 2017 to 2018. The selection was limited to 9 speeches (27185 words) whose major focus embraced Iran affairs/deal. The rationale behind choosing this corpus is to investigate how Trump's discourse concerning Iran induces assumptions of constructing Iranophobia. The analysis focuses on relevant lexico-grammatical aspects and discursive moves that contribute to the construction of Iranophobia in terms of proximisation strategies (Cap 2013). It involves an investigation of the strategies that Donald Trump used to characterise Islamic Republic as a threatening entity.

The mechanism of Iran's characterisation in Trump's speeches is manufactured in terms of construing particular negative features and actions. Involving negative ideological implications, the employment of the following attributes (1)-(10) as coordinates of 'Iran' may cause Trump's discourse to

induce more or less full-fledged picture of the peripheral entity of the discourse space (ODC).

(1)   The rogue regime

(2)   The Iranian dictatorship

(3)   Sponsor of terrorism

(4)   This radical regime

> (Trump, 13 October 2017)

(5)   Leading state sponsor of terror

(6)   A corrupt regime

(7)   Iranian regime

> (Trump, 12 January 2018)

(8)   A regime of great terror

(9)   A murderous regime

(10)   The dictatorship

> (Trump, 8 May 2018)

The identifying characteristics in (1)-(10) serve to conceptually aggrandise the threat of Iran towards the deictic centre membership (IDC) and produce Iranophobia by emphasising and drawing upon the lexical items such as 'terrorism', 'terror', 'radical', 'dictatorship', and 'murder'.

Meanwhile, the picture of Iran's characterisation becomes rather complicated when it comes to construe the characteristic negative actions which articulate Iran's overall identity via physically consequential actions. The actions are construed in terms of physical threats to a deictic centre (IDC) that is inclusive of 'the Middle East' and 'Syrian people' (11-13). The complication, therefore, rises because of two major reasons. First, the illustration of Iran's actions in the region depicts Iran as monopolising various geographical and geopolitical spots. The expansion of Iran's threat seems to contribute to the speaker's construal of Iran as a ubiquitous and pervasive threatening entity in the proximity of the home inhabitants. Second, it involves the conflation of spatial and temporal proximisation that emphasises the continuity and steadfastness of Iran's threatening activities through the use of temporal component.

(11)   It [Iran] has *funded*, *armed*, and *trained* more than 100000 militants to *spread destruction* across the Middle East

> (Trump, 12 January 2018)

(12)   ...causing instability and turmoil in the Middle East

(Trump, 8 May 2018)

(13)   Iran *has been complacent* in his [Assad] .....against the Syrian people

(Trump, 11 May 2018)

Lexico-grammatically, the construal of Iran's identity through actions and policies in the Middle East, as a major zone of the realization of Iran's threats, is performed in terms of verb phrases (VP): ['Iran has funded, armed, and trained militants...' (11), '...spread destruction' (11), '...causing instability and turmoil' (12), 'being complacent with Bashar Assad' (13)]. They construe Iran as having relative control and domination over security-related unrest in the region. Temporally, the use of perfect tenses in (11) and (13) signifies the presence, stability and continuity of Iran's so-called threatening actions at the present time of the speaker. The continuity springs from the actions which are located in the past temporal point and they are construed as such to denote that their impacts have continued to influence the present state of affairs. Additionally, the imperfective aspect in (12) suggests that Iran is preoccupied with 'causing instability' in the extended temporal deictic centre which is the now of the speaker. Spatial and temporal proximisation of Iran's threat is manifested in other instances in Trump's discourse too:

(14)   *Beginning in 1979*, agents of Iranian regime illegally seized the U.S embassy in Tehran and had more than 60 Americans hostage during 444 days of crisis

(15)   The Iranian backed terrorist group Hezbollah twice bombed our embassy in Lebanon- once in *1983 and again in 1984*

(16)   In 1996, the regime directed another bombing of American military housing in Saudi Arabia, murdering 19 Americans in cold blood

(17)   The *regime harbored high-level terrorists* in the wake of *9/11 attacks*, including Osama Bin Laden's son

(18)   In Iran and Afghanistan, groups supported by Iran *has killed hundreds of American military personnel*

(Trump, 13 October 2017)

In these examples, the construal of the threatening entity's (ODC) past activities, along with the present time threatening policies and actions, adds to the speaker's fear appeals by representing the ODC as an innate evil capacity, and expounding the present critical status as a corollary of negative past actions. The innateness of the construed evil capacity of Iran is represented via the phrase involving temporal point, 'Beginning in 1979 ...' (14), implying

that the macro policy of Islamic Republic was to expand terror and threat in the world from the very beginning. More to the point, referring to the original temporal point of the birth of Islamic Republic (1979), Trump's construal shows that all the evil actions of Iran initiated from the time Islamic Republic gained political power and it has continued to the present. In Trump's discourse, the history of the Islamic Republic's actions is periodised by specific temporal points (1979, 1983, 1984, 1996, and 9/11). Proximised to the vicinity of the present of the speaker, each of these historical points is characterised with a significant catastrophic event. On the one hand, this construal conceptualises the continuity and persistence of Iran's threat to the world by the chronological ordering of tragic events stretched to the proximity of the present. On the other hand, it sets the scene to legitimise the withdrawal from the Iran Deal and necessitate the primacy of undertaking certain, possibly unpopular, measures to stop Iran.

In Trump's discourse, the negative actions and policies of Iran are not limited to the Middle East. Rather, Trump also locates Iranian people who are allegedly suffering in their own territory:

(19) Within Iran, the Supreme Leader and his Islamic Revolutionary Guard Force *use mass arrest and torture* to *oppress* and *silence* Iran's people

(Trump, 12 January 2018)

(20) Iran's ruling elite has *their citizens go hungry* while *enriching themselves* by stealing Iran's national wealth

(Trump, 12 January 2018)

(21) The Iranian regime has funded its long reign of chaos and terror by plundering the wealth of its own people

(Trump, 8 May 2018)

In these examples, the proximisation of the Iranian government towards its people involves economic and tangible physical threats: '...use mass arrest and torture', '...have their citizens go hungry', '...has funded long reign of chaos'. At the lexico-grammatical level, the excerpts (19-21) give a picture of the centre/periphery distinction in an independent discourse space belonging merely to Iran. It locates 'Iran's people', 'Iran's national wealth' and 'the wealth of its own people' as entities of a deictic centre (IDC) and 'the Iranian Supreme Leader' along with 'Islamic Revolutionary Guard Force' (IRGF) and 'the ruling elite' as entities in the periphery of the discourse space (ODC) looming adversarially over the IDC. This is observable by the infinitive clause (19), gerund phrase (20) and prepositional clauses (20 and 21) that respectively construe the intention of the Iranian government in regard with its people (...'to oppress and silence Iran's people' (19) and '...enriching

themselves' (20)), and, moreover, represent the strategies/actions intended to fulfill their policies and intentions ('...by stealing Iran's national wealth' (20) and '...by plundering the wealth of its own people' (21)). The construal of threats, intentions and fulfilling strategies of the Iranian government construct it as an incremental threat and enemy of its own people, whom Trump here includes in his IDC.

> (22) We stand in total solidarity with *the Iranian regime's longest-suffering victims*: its own people
>
> (Trump, 13 October 2017)

As a legitimisation practice, Trump's empathy with Iranian people ('we stand in total solidarity...' (22)) can be assumed to justify a campaign for withdrawal from the deal as a way that would result in a radical shift in Iran's regional and global behaviour '...to reevaluate its pursuit of terror...':

> (23) We hope that these new measures directed at the Iranian dictatorship will compel the government to reevaluate its pursuit of terror at the expense of its people
>
> (Trump, 13 October 2017)

4.1 The Construal of the Impacts of Iran's Threats

Thus far, we have indicated that Donald Trump's discourse of Iran and the Iran Deal mostly relies on the manifestation of tangible consequences of Iran's growing threat to the central entity of the discourse space (IDC). Accordingly, his discourse involves two major constructs: (a) a threat to Israel and the Middle Eastern allies (as well as to its own people), and (b) globalisation of Iran's threat. The former construct may sanction an implication that the regionalised threats of Iran consecutively may find some materialisation in global measures thus feeding Iranophobia. These spaces will be discussed in the next section.

4.1.1. A threat to Israel and the Middle Eastern allies

The impact of Iran's proposed threat to the Middle East and the American allies in the region is construed by invoking territorial extensions of central and peripheral entities. The symbolic extension of the IDC camp calls attention to the potentially global or the massive range of the ODC over IDC territory (Cap 2013). This indicates that Iran's physical and maximal spatial proximisation have brought about a destructive and threatening impact over the regional entities, as shown in examples (24-31):

(24) The *security challenges* faced by *Israel* are *enormous*, including the threat of Iran's *nuclear ambition.*

(Trump, 15 February 2017)

(25) It develops, deploys, and proliferates missiles that threaten American troops and our allies

(Trump, 13 October 2017)

(26) It [Iran] *enables Hezbollah*, *Hamas*, and *many other terrorists* to *sow chaos* and *kill innocent people.*

(27) It has *funded, armed,* and *trained* more than *100000 militants* to *spread destruction across the Middle East.*

(28) It props up the murderous regime of Bashar Al- Assad and helped him slaughter his own people

(Trump, 12 January 2018)

(29) Spreading an arc of death and destruction across the Middle East.

(Trump, 10 May 2018)

(30) In Yemen, Iran has escalated a civil war and used Houthis to attack other nations

(31) Iran enables *Hezbollah* to build an arsenal of weapons that *threaten Israel*

(Trump, 11 May 2018)

The configuration of the U.S.-led camp (IDC) subsumes lexical items 'Israel' (24 and 30), 'American troops and our allies' (25), 'innocent people' (26), 'his own people (=Syrian people)' (28), 'the Middle East' (27 and 29), and 'other nations' (30). The IDC-inclusion pattern of the US relatively follows a consistent cliché in Trump's discourse. The pattern conjoins the entities which are located in the periphery of the ODC discourse space whose deictic centre is monopolised by Iran. This reminds the old aphorism saying 'the enemy of my enemy is my friend'. The camp of 'home' entities (IDCs) in Trump's discourse finds specific, strategically contemplated, plans of extension. Likewise, the enemy's site (ODC) is symbolically construed as an extended camp that features threatening and disastrous impacts upon equally wide-ranged borders of the territory of IDCs. The ODC zone in Trump's discourse is characterised to have a destructive nuclear intention ('Iran's nuclear ambition' (24)), and conjoins Jihadi groups and organisations ('Hezbollah' (26 and 31), 'Hamas' (26), and 'Houthis' (30)), terrorists ('many other terrorists' (26)), as well as the Syrian President ('Bashar Al Assad' (28)). These entities are construed to be active participants in the deictic centre of Iran's discourse

space. Such a reciprocal expansion of both camps may contribute to playing a strategic trick so as to construe impact and its consequences of Iran's alleged threat. Thus it lends itself to augment the enormity, severity, and roughness of the consequences of the wide-bordered impact of the organised ODC upon the equally expanded IDC camp.

The construal of Iran's impact also emerges from Iran's spatial proximisation towards the IDC campground. The tangible and physical threat of Iran is introduced via a noun phrase 'Iran's nuclear ambition' (24), and threatening impact construal includes verb phrases '... develops, deploys, and proliferates missiles...' (25), '... enables Hezbollah, Hamas, and many other terrorists' (26), '... has funded, armed, trained more than 100000 militants' (27), ... props up murderous regime of Assad' (28), 'In Yemen, Iran has escalated a civil war and use Houthis...' (30), 'Iran enables Hezbollah...' (31). Furthermore, so far as the temporal proximisation is concerned, the aspectual structure of threat construal points to the imminence and continuity of the ODC threat. The use of simple aspect in (25), (26), (28) and (31) indicates that threatening policies are routine, persistent and omnipresent phenomena in the organisation of Iran's domestic and regional policies. The very aspect in (24) puts forth the idea that Israel confronts with an incessant continuity of Iran's threats and 'security challenges'. The size of this threat is construed to be significantly large ('the security challenges ...are enormous...' (24)). The perfective aspect in (27) and (30) also indicate that the threats have got their roots in the past and are stretched to the present time and there is no indication of the terminating point.

The representation of the ODC impact over Israel and the American allies in the Middle East is realized in pragma-linguistic structures. In (24), the impact of Iran's threat (nuclear ambition) is construed to result in 'security challenges' for Israel. Pragmatically, it is topicalised in order to emphasise the enormity of the threat and to express the speaker's empathy with Israel. Likewise, illustrating the impact of Iran's threats ('missiles' (25), 'arsenal of weapons' (31)) through relative clauses in instances (25) and (31), Trump construes the U.S. and Israel, as well as their allies, as real victims of Iran's ballistic missile programme. This and other construals of threat support Trump's rationalisation and legitimation of America's withdrawal from the J. C. P. O. A. In addition, the disastrous capacity of Iran's impact is explicated via to-infinitive clauses. Analogous to (24), (25), and (31), in examples (26), (28), (27), and (30) the impact of Iran's threat is construed by means of lexico-grammatical structures that address physical threat and destructive spatial proximisation: '...to sow chaos and kill innocent people' (26), '...slaughter his own people' (28), '...to spread destruction' (27), and '...attack other nations' (30). The construal of the impact through pragmatic and lexico-grammatical properties denoting physical threats may reduce the spatial/physical, conceptual distance between IDC and ODC, and consequently, escalate terror perception in the relevant social spaces.

4.1.2. A globalisation of Iran's threat

The discourse of Donald Trump does not restrict the scale of the impact of Iran's threat solely to the Middle East region. Rather, the construct of the global impact of Iran's threat contributes to the propagation and solidification of the Iranophobia as a legitimacy-provoking discursive and political practice, as illustrated in examples (32-36).

(32) It [Iran] harasses the American ships and threatens freedom of navigation in the Arabian Gulf and in the Red Sea

(33) It [Iran] launches cyber-attack against our critical infrastructures, financial system, and military

(Trump, 13 October 2017)

(34) The regime's *destructive missiles* threaten neighboring countries and *international shipping*

(Trump, 12 January 2018)

(35) Iran continues to use surreptitious means to exploit the international financial system to fund their malign activities and terrorist proxies

(Trump, 11 May 2018)

(36) No matter where you go, no matter where is the problem. There is Iran right behind it.

(Trump, 17 May 2018)

The construal of the vastness of the ODC impact in Trump's speeches involves the manifestation of proximisation of Iran's extended threat upon international and American interests in the Middle East. The strategy that is employed to construe Iran's threat as a global phenomenon works through expanding the IDC territory and enlarging its inclusive capacity. The logic of the proximisation strategy is that the bigger the IDC territory becomes in Trump's discourse, the more parts of the world would experience Iran's physically destructive impact. Annexation in the IDC involves inclusive noun phrases that refer to countries ('neighboring countries' (34)) and critical underpinning power facilities and interests ('American ships' (32), 'freedom of navigation' (32), 'our critical infrastructure' (33), 'international shipping' (34), 'international financial system' (35)). The globality of Iran's threat is clearly depicted in (36), in the form of a verb phrase: 'No matter where you go, no matter where is the problem'. It conveys the ubiquitous sense of Iranophobia in every geographical and geopolitical spot where there is an emblem of Iran.

These instances not only convey the global impacts of Iran's threat, but also imply the temporal perpetuity of the threat. The recruitment of simple aspect in instances (32-36) speaks for the steadfastness, durability, and permanence of Iran's construed de-stabilising impact. The sense of perpetuity, by its very own nature, intensifies the interpellating voice of threat construction in connection with Iran. The sense of the threat globality carries an intertextual tie with the U.S. then president G. W. Bush who called Iran and the two other countries, Iraq and North Korea, as the *Axis of Evil* (37):

(37)   States like these [Iran, Iraq, and North Korea] and *their terrorist allies* are *an axis of evil*, arming to *threaten the peace of the world*.

(Bush, 29 January 2002)

5. *Blame Construction and Politics of Preemption*

The predominant anti-American and anti-Israel tendency in the discourse on Iran's nuclear programme (KhosraviNik 2015a) as well as its macro policy may be said to provide major motivations for preemptive policies to be launched against Iran. Trump's so-called destructive capacity of Iran's actions and policies is construed to be partly because of the Obama administration's reluctance to control Iran's destabilising movements in the region and partly as a result of its pursuit of ballistic missiles and nuclear weaponry. In Trump's discourse of Iran, Obama's weak position against Iran on the one hand reduced the relative low physical distance between the IDC and ODC threat realisation, and, on the other, compressed the temporal distance of the re-materialisation of disastrous past events in the present time and their projection to the future. Moreover, from Trump's perspective, Obama's compromising policy emboldened Iran to develop its nuclear programme that threatens the world and its neighboring countries, and more importantly, Israel (examples 38-48):

(38)   The previous administrations lifted these *sanctions*, just before what would have been *the total collapse of the Iranian regime.*

(39)   The nuclear deal threw Iran's dictatorship *a political and economic lifeline*

(40)   The deal allows Iran to continue developing certain elements of its nuclear program

(Trump, 13 October 2017)

(41)   He [Obama] turned a blind eye as Iran built and tested dangerous missiles and exported terror

(42) He carried favor with the Iranian regime in order to push through the disastrously flawed Iran nuclear Deal

(43) The enormous financial windfall the Iranian regime received because of the deal...*served slush fund for weapons, terror and oppression.*

(Trump, 12 January 2018)

(44) The deal allowed Iran to continue enriching Uranium and overtime reach the brick of a nuclear breakout

(45) The deal lifted *crippling economic sanctions* on Iran in exchange of very weak limits on the *regime's nuclear activity*

(46) Iran's military budget has grown by almost 40 percent. The dictatorship used its new funds to build nuclear capable missiles, support terrorism, cause havoc throughout the Middle East and beyond

(47) If I allowed this deal to stand, *there would soon be a nuclear arms race* in the Middle East

(48) The Iran deal is *defective* in its case. If we do nothing, we know what exactly will happen.

(Trump, 8 May 2018)

Trump casts a series of blame-speech on Obama in terms of construing his actions as if they were intended to make a deal with Iran. Thus he targets Obama's said negligence and inertia concerning his policies towards Iran by saying: 'the previous administration lifted sanctions...' (38), 'he turned a blind eye ....' (41), 'he carried favor with Iranian regime...' (42). In the meantime, the construal of past negligence also involves the portrayal of the consequences of IDC (Obama's administration) negligence, by which the ODC (Iran) might have obtained a strategic opportunity to destructively encroach upon the IDC camp. The construction of the blame for the past negligence and inertia can also get escalated by the 'macro-legitimatory arguments' of Iran's discourse on nuclear programme which propagates Islamic Republic's 'eternal confrontation with the West/ U.S.A (KhosraviNik 2015a: 63). More particularly, the repercussion of Obama's so-called negligence subsumes verb-phrases that manifestly bespeak of Iran's square tangible threat: '...threw Iran's dictatorship a political and economic life line' (39), '...continue developing certain elements of its nuclear programme' (40), '...built and tested dangerous missiles and exported terror' (41), 'served slush fund for weapon, terror, and oppression' (43), '... to continue enriching uranium...' (44), '...Iran's military budget has grown...' (46), '... to build nuclear capable missile, support terrorism...' (46).

These construed repercussions support the speaker's legitimation of certain preemptive policies to push Iran into a safer, danger-free zone from the deictic centre and its surrounding sphere. In so doing, and also to redress Obama's claimed inertia, Trump unveils his administration's economically-oriented

preemptive policies. In so far as the data supports the claim, he thinks these measures can weaken Iran's economically-motivated military and political capabilities that make its proxies strong enough in the region to carry on destabilising policies, as shown in examples (49-55).

Thus far, we have shown that Iran is represented as a threatening and destructive entity in the periphery of the U.S.'s discourse space (ODC), as well as encroaching destructively upon the IDC zone. Much of the momentousness of Iran's threat springs from its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes. This is clearly manifested in Trump's blame rhetoric towards Obama, wherein the repercussions of Obama's political attitude are construed to bring about breakthroughs in Iran's nuclear programmes (see ex. (40)-(46)). On this account, the only solution to make up for the past inertia seems to legitimate tough preemptive policies against Iran. Importantly, albeit the construal of Iran's adjacency to the deictic centre involve pragma-linguistic moves pinpointing to physical and tangible threats to the IDC, President Trump makes preferences for economic responses as his preemptive policy: ('...impose new sanctions...' (49), '...imposing tough sanctions...' (51), '...cutting off money flow...' (52), 'we have sanctioned...' (53), '...installing ...highest level of economic sanctions...' (54), '...placing pressure...' (55)).

The rationale behind this prioritisation may be sought in the nature of the fountain out of which Iran's threat had sprung, according to Trump. For Trump, the Iran deal and its defective parts, by means of which Iran obtained financial gain, are seminal sources that galvanised Iran's hegemony-evading actions and policies (see (38-48)). The economic sanctions, thus, are thought to be preemptive enough in order to make Iranian top actors radically rethink their international policies and abandon the nuclear project. Looking from the lexico-grammatical angle, this primary outcome of economic sanctions is described via the infinitive clauses denoting the purpose of a policy or set of actions: ('... to prevent Iran from ever developing nuclear weapon' (49), '... to halt its nuclear ambition and to stop its campaign of violence' (55)).

(49) My administration imposes new sanctions on Iran, and I will do more to prevent Iran from ever developing nuclear weapon**.**

(Trump, 15 February 2017)

(50) Until Iran regime is willing to be a partner for peace, all nations of conscience must work to isolate Iran.

(Trump, 21 May 2017)

(51) The execution of our strategy begins with the long-overdue step of imposing tough sanctions on Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

(Trump, 13 October 2017)

(52)   We are cutting off the regimes money flows to terrorists.

(53)   We have sanctioned nearly 100 individuals and entities involved with Iranian regime ballistic missile program.

(Trump, 12 January 2018)

(54)   We will be installing the highest level of economic sanctions.

(Trump, 8 May 2018)

(55)   I also emphasized the importance of placing pressure on Iran to halt its nuclear ambition and to stop its campaign of violence.

(Trump, 10 July 2018)

In an attempt to gain the utmost amount of legitimisation for the preemptive measures, Trump resorts to depicting a utopia-like future to which his preemptive policies would give birth. At lexical level, this future is articulated by means of general, abstract nouns 'peace', 'stability', and 'prosperity' (56) that may ease the rough way of legitimising the preemption. In order to shed more light on the scene, these abstract nouns receive detailed descriptions in terms of verb phrases (56 and 58) and infinitive clause (57) that bespeak the processes through which the future would incarnate its distinguished identity: ('...bring about a future of peace, stability, and prospering in the Middle East' (56), '...to reduce its pursuit of terror' (57), '...grow in a world free from violence, hatred, and terror' (58)).

(56)   We hope that our actions will help bring about a future of peace, stability, and prospering in the Middle East.

(57)   We *hope* that these new measures directed at the Iranian dictatorship *will compel the government to reduce its pursuit of terror*.

(58)   We *pray for* a future where young children ... can grow in a world free from *violence*, *hatred*, and *terror*.

(Trump, 13 October 2017)

This future-sketching rhetoric decorates the suppressive nature of preemptive measures and embellishes them to look like a pleasant and subtle remedy for Iran's threats. Simultaneously, however, the verbs of the main clauses ('hope' (56 and 57) and 'pray for' (58)) imply the seriousness and enormity of Iran's threat. This is construed through giving way to foster an implication that the absence of a peaceful and thriving Middle East lies behind the constructed fact that Iran's thus far peace-killing policies have been strong enough that have hindered the bourgeoning of peace and stability in the region. To put a terminating point to this status and also accelerate the maximum unfolding

process of IDC ideals, Trump brought *Global Preemptive Collaborations* into picture (59-62).

> (59) I also call on our allies to take stronger steps with us to confront Iran's other malign behaviors
>
> (60) They should join us in constraining and stopping its proliferation of missiles
>
> (61) They should help us deter Iran's aggression against international shipping
>
> (62) They *should not do business with groups* that enrich Iran's dictatorship

(Trump, 10 May 2018)

Global Preemptive Collaborations (GPCs) can be defined as a political agenda particularly aimed at calling on/unifying the allies and other potentially allied states to partake in neutralising a construed growing threat. The rhetoric of global preemptive collaborations carries the cardinal built-in prerequisite implication that the vastity of the presumed evil entity targets certain threats at the equally great size of the construed members of the 'home' group (IDC). To foreground the enormity and vastness (or globality) of threat, the rhetoric of GPCs contributes to mobilising global coalition and galvanise public approval to gain legitimisation in order to confront the threat. Instigated particularly by political, economic, and religious (or ideological) powers in a global and/or regional arena, preemptive collaborations find a binding nature in practice, albeit they may formally suggest only liberal and free-to-abort collaboration and cooperation. So far as its practical facet is concerned, due to the influencing and defining authority of political, economic, and religious leadership in global socio-political spaces, the content of GPCs obliges the members of coalition to abide by the invocation as delineated; otherwise, the GPC-avoiding entity may be duly penalised. Thus said, Trump warns that his administration will sue the in-coalition countries that continue to do business with Iran after the re-imposition of the sanctions: 'those who fail to wind down such activities with Iran [doing business] by the end of the period will risk sever consequences' (Trump, May 8, 2018).

The GPC in Trump's discourse exhibits no radical difference from the prototypical preemptive rhetoric (see ex. 49-55). The principal shared objective in both versions seeks to maximally curb and neutralise the assumed threat of an adversarial entity (ODC). However, what makes it distinct from the prototypical counterpart is the focus that GPC places on the participation of allies and construing the vastity and enormity of Iran's said threat which functions as a prerequisite for invoking certain collaborative preemption.

To indicate how GPCs are articulated in discourse, we need to give a due account to pragmatic, lexical and grammatical aspects of their persuasive rhetoric. It thus subsumes construing the vastness and enormity of the threat,

geographical and geopolitical size of the IDC and ODC territory, and the urgency of partnership in the preemptive action against the threat.

The collaborative aspect of founding a coalition to collaborate preemptively in Trump's discourse is pictured via the main verbs 'join' (60) and 'help' (61) which denote an optional and voluntary gathering of the agents to render the preemption project less severe. However, the call on collaboration is modalised by deontic 'should' which may signpost the necessity and urgency of attending the rally against Iran. In this scenario, Trump's discourse funds a leadership role for the US. It is thus construed in terms of presenting the US as the chief actor in charge of initiating GPCs ('*I* also call on our allies' (59)) and also a nodal point with which the allies should consociate ('*they* should join *us*' (60), '*they* should help *us*' (61)). Importantly, the leadership in the rhetoric of GPC subsumes a striking 'they-we' dichotomisation ('*they* should join *us*', '*they* should help *us*', '*they* should not do business...') between the U.S. (we), as the leader, and other member of the coalition (they). The fundamentals of such dichotomisations may be built on the amount and range of the influential political, economic, and military power to which the U.S. has access. It opens the avenue to the assumption that this dichotomisation assigns the role of saviour to the US whose in-born duty is to rescue the world by waging war on Iran. This reminds of G. W. Bush's address at the Camp Lejeune, North Carolina who assigned the role of liberator to the U.S.: 'overcoming evil is the noblest cause and the hardest work. And the liberation of millions is the fulfillment of America's founding promise' (Bush, 3 April 2003).

6. Discussion and Conclusion

The use of lexical and grammatical choices in Trump's discourse on Iran symbolically characterise the Iranian government as an embodiment of evil values as well as the agent of threatening and destructive actions. In addition, temporal continuity as well as physical consequentiality of Iran's threats accentuates the severity of threat and escalates the force of fear appeal in relevant social spaces. These conceptualisations of fear provide reliable and credible prerequisites to gain legitimisation for certain preemptive measures.

In this study, albeit no quantitative analysis has been made, the prototypical proximisation strategy to construe Iran's threat seems to be predominantly spatial. This is in line with the findings of the national political discourse of the U.S., where spatial proximisation is found to be a prototypical strategy to construe threat (Cap 2013; 2017) and galvanise public anxiety to acquire legitimisation to act preemptively. However, our analysis introduces unprecedented findings that open more or less new territories to PT. The economic and global outfit of Trump's preemptive rhetoric introduces new patterns of preemption politics. These two patterns demonstrate that the choice of a specific type of preemptive policies is mainly determined with respect to the source(s) of the ODC's impacts (*The enormous financial windfall* the Iranian regime (...) *served slush fund for weapons, terror and oppression* [43]). Our findings suggest that different public and political

discourses may recruit different preemptive policy due to the construed source of the ODC's impact. Therefore, the seemingly direct connection between the ODC impact sources along with the type of its impacts and impact consequences in different public and political discourses may enable the audience (or an analyst) to prophecise what preemptive policies would be employed, what consequences they would bring about and to what extent they would result in better outcomes.

Considering the analytical capacity of PT, these findings suggest that systematic studies of the ODC impact source(s) and their determining influences upon devising appropriate preemptive policy further strengthens PT's potentiality to investigate the patterns of threat construction and fear generation in different discourse domains. This provides a vantage point to unravel how top actors give rise to social anxiety and then social involvement in order to solicit legitimisation and exert new forms of domination. Furthermore, the notion of GPC puts forth a scalar approach to PT. This approach contributes to scalarising the relative remoteness and closeness of the located entities and events on the spatial, temporal, and axiological (STA) vectors. As an underpinning implication, scalarisation of relative distance opens a gate to measuring the gradability of the relative distance. In this approach, the construed events and entities on the STA axes would best be identified by means of particular conceptually constructed and linguistically encoded ideological/political/cultural episteme that would denote relative proximity or remoteness. Each of the scales, therefore, will bespeak a certain threat with particular scale-specific amount of vastness and enormity. The lexico-grammatical markers, modal properties and pragmatic tools exploited to construe the threat then will delineate the specification of each scale. GPC, in its own right, thus, contributes a great deal to elaborating this approach. As shown above, GPC occurs when the presumed threat is construed to be immediately materialisable and would bring about significant global impact and repercussions. With its specific lexico-grammatical and conceptually constructed epistemological specifications, GPC provides a reliable starting point for defining a specific scale of proximity.

Finally, besides the theoretical and methodological implications, various preemptive measures, in general, and GPC, in particular, promise to lead the field of political discourse studies much forward to dedicate substantial amount of space and opportunity to analytical frameworks that would seek to reveal new forms of domination.

Acknowledgment

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