Word Choices in Post-9/11 Speeches and the Identity Construction of the Other

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Abstract

(to be added later)

1.   Introduction

This paper (which should be read as a working paper) contains the initial results of a work in progress, a comparative study of a large corpus of post-9/11 speeches given by four Western leaders: U.S. President George W. Bush, British Prime Minister Tony Blair, Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and French President Jacques Chirac. After the attacks on the World Trade Centre, these four leaders (as well as many others) gave numerous speeches and made many statements distributed over a similar timeline and linked by a common

theme, the so-called 'war on terror'. The aim of the comparative study of these speeches and statements is twofold. Its first objective is to uncover the discursive strategies deployed by the aforementioned leaders in the identity construction of the 'other', i.e., within the context of the 'war on terror', the perpetrators of the 9/11 attacks and their associates or allies. Its second objective is to link these micro-level discursive phenomena to their macro-level political context and more specifically to the political goals of the four leaders. The first objective situates the study within discourse analysis and more precisely within the political discourse analysis (PDA) stream of this applied field of study within linguistics. Political discourse analysis studies political text and talk, i.e. communicative acts which have "a direct functional role as a form of political action in the political process" (van Dijk 1997:23) and which are performed by political actors, mostly but not only "professional politicians (...) such as presidents and prime ministers and other members of government, parliament or political parties" (van Dijk 1997:12). One of the principal goals of political discourse analysis, according to Wilson (2001), is to identify the many ways in which language can be used or manipulated by political actors to produce specific effects in the political realm. The second objective establishes a link with political science. The study thus adopts what van Dijk (1997) has called an 'integrated approach'. It goes beyond a purely language-based analysis of the speeches in so far as it also examines the functionality of the observed

discursive practices in their wider political context. Consequently, the study should not only constitute a contribution to political discourse analysis but also to political science, as it considers why, within the given political context, specific linguistic choices have been made and attempts to map these discursive patterns or practices onto political actions and goals.

2. Discursive strategies and the identity construction of the 'other'

Chilton (2004:14) asserts that "politics *is* very largely the use of language." Butt et al. (2004:288) make a similar albeit somewhat stronger claim when they write that "the very use of language is ideological." They argue that this is so because "the use of language necessitates choices between different modes of meaning." It is precisely these choices, that are simply unavoidable during a communicative act and have to be made at all levels (semantic, syntactic, lexical and so on) of language, that can be used by political actors to political effect, as Wilson (2001) pointed out. The political plasticity of language has the potential to turn language into a "fearsome resource", argues Hasan (1996:34), a resource "through which we not only do seemingly trivial things (…) but through [which] we can also have the power of doing enormously momentous things." Indeed, Hasan (1996:34) adds, "we not only use language to shape reality, but we use it also to defend that reality, against anyone whose alternative values might threaten ours."

The linguistic operations or choices alluded to above and which characterize all forms of political discourse can be overt or covert in nature. Linguistic choices on the syntactic level of language, such as the foregrounding of information through a manipulation of word order, can be covert operations, i.e. operations that might go unnoticed by the listener or reader because they "lie beneath the threshold of consciousness" (Butt et al. 2004:270). Choices on the lexical level of language, on the other hand, tend to be more or less overt operations, in the sense that they rarely go fully unnoticed by the listener or reader since they lie above the threshold of consciousness. Both overt and covert operations, however, can be used to political effect, and exert the desired influence on public opinion.

The political effect of these linguistic operations, of which politicians needless to say recognize the importance, results both from the nature or quality of these operations as well as from their recurrence or frequency within a given communicative act or series of acts. Indeed, language and the quasi infinite number of linguistic choices it offers political actors among the rules and components of its levels allows for the expression of differing and even opposing worldviews and values. The frequency with which linguistic choices and patterns linked to a particular worldview are instantiated in a communicative act or series of acts may lead to their habituation. They become part, as Butt et al. (2004: 276) point out, not only of the meaning potential of a

political actor or group of actors but also over time of the "general public's collective meaning potential." In other words, the repeated linguistic choices and discursive patterns influence the general public's conceptualisations. They play a role in establishing a common view of the world and lead to shared views of social, economic and global phenomena. Chilton (2004) states that the creation of such shared views is at the core of the political process and can only be achieved through language.

Political actors who wish to influence public opinion, however, have to contend with an opposing force: the general public's tendency, in accordance with Gricean pragmatics, to assume that a communicative act can be truthful or untruthful. Political actors, therefore, have to be doubly strategic in their language use. They have to opt, on the one hand, for linguistic patterns which will imprint the desired view on the collective consciousness of a group and, on the other hand, they have to reduce the chances of dissent within this group by employing linguistic patterns which will back up their Habermasian *Wahrhaftigkeit* validity claim, i.e. the claim to be telling the truth, and curtail possible challenges to this claim. One way of achieving this is by using 'legitimising language', i.e. language that will positively represent the favoured worldview or the approved approach to a social, economic or global phenomenon as well as those who support this view or approach. The use of legitimising language is usually accompanied by the use of its counterpart,

'delegitimising language', i.e. language which negatively depicts the opposing worldview or approach as well as those who hold these different opinions and values. Consequently, binary conceptualisations are very common in political communicative acts. They frequently take on the form of a polarisation between a legitimised insider group ('us') and a delegitimised outsider group ('them'). These binary conceptualisations serve a double purpose. First, the delegitimising of the outsider group aims to discredit possible challenges to the *Wahrhaftigkeit* validity claim made by members of this group and simultaneously also attempts to strengthen the cohesion of the insider group. Second, the legitimising of the insider group aims to limit possible challenges to the *Wahrhaftigkeit* validity claim by members of the in-group and thus, conversely, also seeks to weaken the cohesion of the outsider group. The repeated instantiation of these binary conceptualisations tends, furthermore, to lead to similar bipolar representations in the collective consciousness of the general public.

A wide range of linguistic means is at the disposal of the political actor who wishes to influence public opinion through the use of binary conceptualisations. To achieve positive 'self' or 'us'-presentation and negative 'other' or 'them'-presentation, the political actor can make a number of choices on the semantic, syntactic and lexical levels of language. For instance, a main semantic strategy, according to van Dijk (1997:31), "is to make propositions with

positive predicates about the [in-group] rather explicit than implicit, rather direct than indirect, and stated rather than presupposed." The same semantic strategy is usually adopted for the supposed negative qualities of the out-group, which will also be made explicit and referred to directly. The 'bad deeds' if any of the in-group and the 'good deeds' if any of the out-group will generally remain implicit, i.e. unsaid, or will be referred to only indirectly and quite vaguely. Common syntactic strategies concern the use of deictic pronouns, such as *us* and *them*, as well as of word order variations which allow for the more or less prominent placement of words and word groups the political actor wishes to emphasize. Wodak et al. (1999:160) consider the repeated use of the pronoun *we* in political discourse a "persuasive linguistic device which help[s] invite identification and solidarity with the 'we-group', which, however, simultaneously implies distancing from and marginalization of 'others'." A frequently employed lexical strategy, finally, consists in the making of antonymous lexical choices. Words with positive connotations will be used to describe the in-group and its qualities whereas words with negative connotations will be used to evoke the out-group and its supposed shortcomings and faults. These antonymous lexical sets are often made up of "moral value vocabulary" (Chilton 2004), words that help to establish a dichotomy between a moral *we* versus an immoral *them*.

Political discourse analysis disposes of quantitative as well as qualitative methods to determine the presence of specific linguistic patterns in the communicative acts of political actors, to assess the nature and the probable value or role of these discursive strategies in the political context in which these communicative acts take place, and to evaluate their probable effectiveness with respect to the supposed political goals of the actors who make use of them. Quantitative methods measure the recurrence of linguistic patterns in a communicative act or series of acts. Van de Mieroop (2005:112) states that "pronouns [like *we*, *them*, etc.] are an excellent feature to be measured quantitatively", and uses this approach in an analysis of institutional identity construction. Saraceni (2003), for his part, measures the recurrence of words evoking *certainty*, *possibility*, *absoluteness*, etc. or referring to *death*, *war*, *patriotism*, etc. in a corpus of post-9/11 speeches by Blair and Bush to determine conceptual and ideological differences in their attitudes with respect to the war in Iraq. Ruud (2003:31), however, argues that a quantitative analysis of political text and talk "cannot tell the whole story." In her view, a critical qualitative analysis of the linguistic patterns selected by political actors is a more convenient way of demonstrating how these patterns reflect the conceptualisations of politicians. Citing van Dijk's (1993) multidisciplinary approach to Critical discourse analysis (CDA), an approach within discourse analysis which is frequently adopted by political discourse analysts, she adds

that the mapping of the micro-level linguistic properties of a communicative act onto macro-level phenomena in the political realm leads to a better understanding of the functionality of these linguistic properties in political discourse.

The ongoing comparative study of post-9/11 speeches by Bush, Blair, Chrétien and Chirac, of which we will discuss the initial results below, adopts a qualitative approach to the analysis of overt discursive strategies that involve choices on the lexical level of language. These lexical choices depict a negative 'other' and constitute therefore a form of delegitimising language. Indeed, they constitute antonymous lexical sets with the lexical choices retained for the identity construction of the 'we'-group. The focus on lexical patterns places the study in the relatively long tradition of research within political discourse analysis that examines lexical choices in order to better understand how positive 'us'-presentation and negative 'them'-presentation can be achieved in political communicative acts. One such earlier study is worth mentioning here. It was carried out in 1970 by Siegfried Bork, who analysed an extremely effective form of polarised language, namely the lexical choices made by Hitler in *Mein Kampf* as well as by other Nazis in their contributions to the *Völkischer Beobachter*, the official newspaper of the Nazi party. Bork noticed that these lexical choices established recurrent lexical or semantic fields, i.e. "group[s] of words that are related in meaning as a result of being connected with a

particular context of use" (Beard 2000:119). These lexical fields were, moreover, highly antonymous in nature, overly positive if not to say laudatory when they described the Nazi ideal and its supporters and intensely negative when they evoked opponents to the Nazi ideology, Jews, of course, but also members of other political groups (socialists, communists, etc.) and the Allied forces. The comparative study approaches the analysis of the lexical patterns in its post-9/11 corpus in a similar manner, in the sense that it also seeks to determine in how far these word choices establish opposing lexical fields. The study adopts, furthermore, a critical multidisciplinary approach, requiring expertise both in applied linguistics and political science, to evaluate both the value and the effectiveness of these lexical fields in the political context of the post-9/11 world.

3.   Characteristics of the corpus

The relatively large corpus contains speeches and statements by U.S. President George W. Bush, British Prime Minister Tony Blair, Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and French President Jacques Chirac given over a three-year period, from 2001 until 2004. The first speeches by each of these leaders were given either on September 11, 2001 or shortly thereafter. The last speeches were given at different dates in the latter part of 2004. The corpus of Jean Chrétien's speeches, however, covers a somewhat shorter period, with the

last speech given at the *Fighting Terrorism for Humanity Conference* in New York City dating back to September 22, 2003.

The speeches and statements discuss three main topics: the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the 'war on terror' and the military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq. The corpus contains 140 speeches and statements, 62 of which were given by Bush, 54 by Blair, 13 by Chrétien and 11 by Chirac. These statistical differences are not without meaning. Indeed, they highlight an attitudinal difference between the four leaders, particularly between Chrétien and Chirac on the one hand and Bush and Blair on the other, for whom the 'war on terror' became a far more pressing issue than for Chrétien and Chirac immediately after the terrorist attacks on the U.S. Another factor that has undoubtedly played a role, at least for the speeches and statements by the Canadian Prime Minister, is that Jean Chrétien is the only of the four leaders who is currently no longer in office. Paul Martin, Canada's current Prime Minister, succeeded Chrétien on December 12, 2003.

The 140 speeches and statements were all collected from officially recognized sources: the White House website (http://www.whitehouse.gov) for all the speeches and statements by George W. Bush, the 10 Downing Street website (http://www.pm.gov.uk) for all the speeches and statements by Tony Blair, the Government of Canada Privy Council Office website (http://www.pcobcp.gc.ca) for all the speeches and statements by Jean

Chrétien, and finally the official website of the Office of the French President (http://www.elysee.fr) for all the speeches and statements by Jacques Chirac. It should be mentioned that the official English translations of all of Jacques Chirac's speeches and statements were used for the purposes of this study. Strictly speaking, it is better to examine the original versions of speeches and statements, since translators run the risk of injecting their own subjectivity into the texts they translate. However, this would have broken the monolingual character of the corpus. In addition, it would also have hampered teamwork, as all members of this project are not fully proficient in French.

4.   Word choices and antonymous lexical fields in a sub-group of post-9/11 speeches

The speeches, all part of the larger post-9/11 corpus, that will be discussed in this section were all given in the first few hours or days after the terrorist attacks in the United States. They are: (a) two speeches by George W. Bush, an address to the Nation made on September 11, 2001 and a later address to a joint session of Congress delivered on September 20, 2001; (b) two speeches by Tony Blair, a statement given on September 11, 2001 in response to the terrorist attacks in the United States and a statement to the House of Commons made a few days later on September 14, 2001; (c) two speeches by Jean Chrétien, a statement made on September 13, 2001 announcing a National Day of

Mourning in Canada in memory of the victims of the terrorist attacks in the United States and an address to Paul Cellucci, the then U.S. ambassador to Canada, given on September 14, 2001 on the occasion of the National Day of Mourning; and (d) one speech by Jacques Chirac, a declaration made by the French President to his compatriots on September 11, 2001.

Before discussing the results obtained in this sample of the larger post-9/11 corpus, it is important to mention that other political discourse analysts have studied some of the linguistic features, which characterise post-9/11 political discourse. At least five such recently published studies need to be listed here. They are analyses carried out by Butt et al. (2004), Chilton (2004), Graham et al. (2004), Leudar et al. (2004) and Saraceni (2003). These studies, however, differ from the comparative study discussed in this paper in at least three ways, having to do with their scope (i.e. the size of the corpus of selected speeches), their perspective (i.e. the nature of the analysed linguistic properties) and their approach or methodology (i.e. quantitative, qualitative or a combination of both).

First, none of the five studies is longitudinal in nature. With the exception of Saraceni (2003), whose analysis relies on two small corpora of speeches and interviews given by Bush and Blair over a period of approximately six weeks (from February/March 2003 until April 2003), the other studies tend to limit their observations to one or two speeches or statements made shortly after the

terrorist attacks. In addition, none of the studies considers speeches given by political leaders other than Bush, Blair or Osama bin Laden, i.e. leaders such as Jean Chrétien and Jacques Chirac, for instance.

Second, the five studies focus on other linguistic features than the one retained for the comparative study, namely the lexical choices made by the four leaders which constitute opposing lexical fields that depict a delegitimised 'other' and thus, conversely, lead to positive 'us'-presentation. Butt et al. (2004) situate their research within Functional Grammar and study lexicogrammatical patterns (transitivity, mood, modality, etc.) in order to better understand the relationship between ideology and text construction. Chilton (2004) uses a newly developed three-dimensional analytical model to analyse one speech by Bush and another one by bin Laden. The three dimensional model illustrates Chilton's theory of language and politics which exploits the three dimensions of deixis, namely space, time and modality. Graham et al. (2004) adopt a discourse-historical approach in order to situate George W. Bush's declaration of a 'war on terror' in its macro-historical context. Bush's declaration of war made in 2001 is compared to 120 historical 'call to arms' texts, among them a speech given by Pope Urban II in 1095 which successfully launched the first crusade and a speech given by Queen Elizabeth I in 1588 which was instrumental in starting a war against Spain. The comparison allows Graham et al. (2004) to track the changes over time of four generic features that all these 'call to arms'

speeches seem to have in common. These are, according to Graham et al. (2004:199): "(i) an appeal to a legitimate power source that is external to the orator, and which is presented as inherently good; (ii) an appeal to the historical importance of the culture in which the discourse is situated; (iii) *the construction of a thoroughly evil Other* [the emphasis is ours]; and (iv) an appeal for unification behind the legitimating external power source." Leudar et al. (2004) use Membership Categorisation Analysis (MCA) to determine the content of the 'us' versus 'them' contrastive pair in speeches given soon after the 9/11 attacks by Bush, Blair and bin Laden. They conclude that these categorisations are highly polarised and quite complex, made of an open collection of sub-categories, in the communicative acts of all three leaders. However, bin Laden distinguishes 'us' from 'them' overwhelmingly in religious terms, whereas Bush and Blair do so mainly in social, political and moral terms. Finally, Saraceni (2003) measures, as has been indicated before, the recurrence of lexical choices in speeches and interviews by Bush and Blair in an attempt to identify ideological differences between the two politicians.

Third, all the studies seek to link the analysed micro-level linguistic properties to macro-level political phenomena, and thus attempt to assess the functionality of these discursive strategies in their wider political context. However, none of the studies seeks input from political scientists to make this

assessment. In addition, only Saraceni (2003) adopts for this purpose a quantitative approach.

4.1 Word choices and antonymous lexical fields in a sub-group of speeches by U.S. President George W. Bush

George W. Bush's use of polarised language, or of the "language of right and wrong" as the U.S. President himself calls his bipolar conceptualisations (see below), is by now quite well known. When concerns were raised over his use of delegitimising language, Bush defended his rather negative portrayals of the 'other' as follows:

> Some worry that it is somehow undiplomatic or impolite to speak the language of right and wrong. I disagree. Different circumstances require different methods, but not different moralities. Moral truth is the same in every culture, in every time, and in every place. Targeting innocent civilians for murder is always and everywhere wrong. Brutality against women is always and everywhere wrong. There can be no neutrality between justice and cruelty, between the innocent and the guilty. We are in a conflict between good and evil, and America will call evil by its name. By confronting evil and lawless regimes, we do not create a problem, we reveal a problem. And we will lead the world in opposing it.
> (Bush, June 1, 2002, Graduation exercise of the United States Military Academy, West Point, New York)

This excerpt of a speech given in June 2002 during a West Point graduation ceremony is quite representative of Bush's "language of right and wrong." Indeed, it features two characteristics, one lexicogrammatical and the other purely lexical, which are predominant in this president's official communicative acts since 9/11.

A prevailing lexicogrammatical pattern is the rarity of modality. Bush tends to make little use of modal verbs, such as *could*, *would*, *might*, etc., which tend to nuance one's statements and provide for the possibility that one might be mistaken. In the excerpt above, most of the clauses are not modalized. This lack of modality creates an effect of "categoriality" (Butt et al. 2004). It suggests the possibility of absolute certainty, of self-evident truths, of facts that are too obvious to be questioned or doubted. Wouldn't anyone agree that "murder is always and everywhere wrong", that "brutality against women is always and everywhere wrong", etc.?

Another prevailing linguistic property consists in the use of pairs of antonyms, i.e. words opposite in meaning, of which the positive member qualifies the 'us'-group and the negative member the 'them'-group. At least four such pairs appear in the above quoted excerpt:

'US'	'THEM'
right	wrong
justice	cruelty
innocent	guilty
good	evil

It is on this particular discursive strategy, which is by no means new or unique to Bush, that the ongoing comparative study focuses. However, the study does not only seek to collect pairs of 'us' versus 'them' antonyms as was done for the excerpt above, but also seeks to identify the lexical fields which these antonyms construct. Such pairs and lexical fields are not only revealing of the nature of a political actor's worldview, but can also point to such an actor's political intentions. As Martin (1995:13) argues:

> (…) the identity narrative channels political emotions so that they can fuel efforts to modify a balance of power; it transforms the perceptions of the past and of the present; it changes the organization of human groups and creates new ones; it alters cultures by emphasizing certain traits and skewing their meaning and logic. The identity narrative brings forth a new interpretation of the world in order to modify it.

In his very first address to the Nation given only a few hours after the attacks on September 11, 2001, Bush immediately resorts to legitimising language to positively portray the 'us'-group, which he chiefly defines in domestic terms.

The 'us'-group consists, in the first instance, mainly of "America", "the American people", i.e. of "all Americans from every walk of life." They are "a great people", "a great nation", the "brightest beacon" for freedom and opportunity in the world, whose institutions, in the financial, business and public sectors, are "strong" and whose military is "powerful". America is a country that is "strong" and whose citizens are "daring", "unyielding", "resolved", but also "caring". America stands for "all that is good and just" in the world: "peace", "justice", "security", "freedom" and "opportunity". And America is willing to "defend" these values.

> But they [the terrorists] have *failed*; our *country* is *strong*. A *great people* has been moved to defend a *great nation*. Terrorist attacks can shake the foundations of our biggest buildings, but they cannot touch the foundation of *America*. These acts shattered steel, but they cannot dent the steel of *American resolve*.

The 'us'-group is comprised, in the second instance, of "friends", i.e. "allies" who embrace America's values and who are also willing to defend these values against terrorism.

> *America* and *our friends and allies* join with all those who want *peace* and *security* in the world, and we stand together to win the *war against terrorism*.

Finally, comparatively little attention is paid to the 'other', the "enemy", the "terrorist", i.e. those "who committed these acts" but also "those who harbour them". They are, however, "evil" and "despicable" and represent "the very worst of human nature", but have "failed" in their endeavour to frighten America into chaos and retreat.

> Thousands of lives were suddenly ended by *evil, despicable* acts of terror. (...) Today, our nation saw *evil, the very worst of human nature*.

In his 'state of the union' address delivered on September 20, 2001 to a joint session of Congress, Bush legitimises the 'us'-group particularly at the beginning and at the end of his speech but delegitimises the 'other' in the remainder of his speech.

The 'us'-group, once again, mainly consists of the "American people" but also includes "friends', none "truer" than Great Britain, who show unity with America and support its intent to fight the "enemies of freedom". They are members, like the U.S., of the "civilised world", a world that believes in "progress", "pluralism", "tolerance" and "freedom". As for the "American people", they are not only "loving" and "giving" but also "decent" and "just". They "respect" the people of Afghanistan but condemn the Taliban regime, just like they "respect" Islam but condemn those who "pervert" its peaceful teachings. The "American people", like the state of the union, are "strong". They are "prosperous" and "successful" because of their "efforts", their "hard work" and their "enterprise". They are "courageous", "determined" and full of "resolve". Like their leaders, their president and government, they "will not tire", "will not falter" and "will not fail". They "will not yield", they "will not rest" and they "will not relent" in their fight for American principles and values. They are "patient", "confident" of their victory and assured that their cause is "right". This cause is the "war on terror" and it is not just "America's fight". It is the "world's fight". It is "civilization's fight". It is a "fight for our principles", "our freedoms: our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble". It is "freedom" that is at war with "fear". The safeguarding of "human freedom", of "liberty", from now on, depends on "us", i.e. the American people and its leaders.

Freedom and *fear* are at war. The advance of "human freedom", the great achievement of our time and the great hope of every time, now depends on us. Our nation, this generation, will lift the *dark threat of violence* from our people and our future. We will rally the world to this cause by our *efforts*, by our *courage*. We *will not tire*, we *will not falter* and we *will not fail*. (…) we will meet *violence* with *patient justice*, assured of the *rightness* of our cause and *confident* of the victories to come.

It is, moreover, in this address that Bush makes the now famous and much quoted statement: "either you are with us or you are with the terrorists", which announced to the American people as well as to the international community the U.S. president's thoroughly binary worldview. The "terrorists", who chiefly constitute the "other" in Bush's well-known statement, are "murderers", "heirs of all the murderous ideologies of the 20th century", who believe in "killing" Christians and Jews and all Americans. They are to terror what the "mafia" is to crime. These "enemies of America", "these enemies of freedom" are, furthermore, "traitors" to their own faith, who have "hijacked" Islam and who by "committing evil" in the name of Allah "blaspheme" the name of Allah. Consequently, they are a "fringe movement", "a fringe form of Islamic extremism", whose "radical beliefs", "radical visions" and "pretences to piety" "pervert" the peaceful teachings of Islam. They "plot evil and destruction".

They "brutalize", "repress" and "threaten" and commit "atrocities". They have "abandoned every value" and "sacrifice human life" to attain "power". In doing so, they "follow in the path of fascism, Nazism and totalitarianism." They "hate" American freedoms and their goal is to "end" the American way of life. They are not courageous, however, but "hide" in countries around the world. Finally, they are "violent" and "cruel" and their tactic is "fear".

> The *terrorists* practice a *fringe form of Islamic extremism* (…); a *fringe movement* that *perverts* the peaceful teachings of Islam. The terrorists' directive commands them to *kill* Christians and Jews, to *kill* all Americans and make no distinctions among military and civilians, including women and children. (…) They (…) *hide* in countries around the world *to plot evil and destruction*. (…) The terrorists are *traitors* to their own faith, trying, in effect, to *hijack* Islam itself. (…) These terrorists *kill* not merely to end lives, but to *disrupt* and *end* a way of life. (…) By *sacrificing human life* to serve their *radical visions*, by *abandoning every value* except the will to *power*, they follow in the path of *fascism*, *Nazism* and *totalitarianism*.

The antonymous lexical choices highlighted in the preceding paragraphs constitute at least the following lexical fields:

'us'

The 'us'-group, as indicated above, is first and foremost composed of the "American people" but also to a lesser extent of the "civilised world". The lexical fields below, however, apply to the "American people" and reflect Bush's efforts to distinguish the "American people" from the terrorists, i.e. the 'other', in the two analysed speeches.

1) greatness	"a *great* nation" "a *great* people"
2) strength	"our country is *strong*" "our military is *powerful*"
3) successfulness	"American *prosperity*" "America is *successful*" "we will *not fail*"
4) good work ethic	"the *hard work* and *enterprise* of our people"
5) decency	"the *caring* for strangers and neighbours" "the *decency* of a *loving* and *giving* people" "we *respect* your faith [Islam]"
6) courage	"the *daring* of our rescue workers" "the *extraordinary spirit* of all New Yorkers" "our *courage*"
7) resoluteness	"America's *resolve*" "we will *not tire*"
8) American values	"*freedom*", "*liberty*", "*opportunity*", "*progress*", "*pluralism*", "*tolerance*", "*justice*", "*peace*"
9) upholder of values, of civilization	"the *brightest beacon* for freedom and opportunity in the world" "the advance of human freedom (…)

	depends on us" "we *defend* (…) all that is good and just in our world"
10) just cause	"the *rightness* of our cause"
11) belief in own abilities	"*confident* of the victories to come" "the course of this conflict is not known, yet its *outcome* is *certain*"

'other'

The 'other' or 'them'-group is made up chiefly of the "terrorists", in fact "a collection of loosely affiliated terrorist organizations known as Al Qaeda", but also comprises "any nation that continues to harbour or support terrorism". The lexical fields below, however, apply mainly to Al Qaeda, as it is the perpetrators and organizers of the 9/11 attacks that Bush wishes to contrast with the "American people".

1) outlaws	"Al Qaeda is to terror what the *Mafia* is to *crime*" "They are (…) *murderers*"
2) religious radicals	"a fringe form of *Islamic extremism*" "*radical* beliefs"
3) political radicals	"the heirs of all the *murderous ideologies* of the 20th century" "they follow in the path of *fascism*, *Nazism* and *totalitarianism*"
4) blasphemers	"*traitors* to their own faith" "their *pretences* to piety"
5) evil	"*evil*, *despicable* acts of terror" "the *very worst of human nature*"
6) violence and cruelty	"with every *atrocity*, they hope (…)" "dark threat of *violence*"

7) terror, fear	"these acts of mass murder were intended to *frighten* our nation" "freedom and *fear* are at war"
8) enemies of moral values	"*enemies* of freedom" "they *hate* our freedoms" "*sacrificing* human life"
9) destructiveness	"*disrupt* and *end* a way of life" "to plot evil and *destruction*"
10) oppressors	"*imposing* its radical beliefs on people everywhere"
11) cowardice	"they (...) *hide* in countries around the world"

4.2 Word choices and antonymous lexical fields in a sub-group of speeches by British Prime Minister Tony Blair

In his first statement in response to the terrorist attacks in the United States made on September 11, 2001, Tony Blair concentrates on reassuring his fellow citizens and on informing them of the precautionary measures that have been taken by the British government to prevent similar attacks on the United Kingdom. The British Prime Minister does, however, use some delegitimising language towards the end of his statement to describe the 'other', "those that carried out these attacks". In addition, he also gives some indications of who belongs to the 'us'-group according to his worldview.

Blair asserts that "there are no adequate words of condemnation" for "those that carried out these attacks". They have little or no regard for the "sanctity of human life", and are guilty of "barbarism", "carnage", "horror" and

"terror". They are the "new evil" that needs to be "eradicated" and "driven from our world".

> As for those that carried out these attacks (…). Their *barbarism* will stand as their shame for all eternity. As I said earlier, this mass terrorism is the *new evil* in our world. The people who perpetrate it have *no regard whatever for the sanctity or value of human life* (…).

The fight against this "new evil" needs to be waged by 'us', i.e. "we, the democracies of the world". As a member of the "free and democratic world", "Britain", like its "American friends", "will not rest" until the "new evil" is "driven from [the] world".

> This is not a battle between the United States of America and terrorism, but between the *free and democratic world* and terrorism. We, therefore, here in *Britain* stand shoulder to shoulder with our *American friends* (…) and we, like them, *will not rest* until this *evil* is *driven from our world*.

In the second speech, a statement delivered to the House of Commons on September 14, 2001, Blair uses more legitimising and delegitimising language. His 'us' versus 'them' categorisation is in many respects similar to that of Bush,

except that Blair displaces the centre of the 'us'-group towards the "civilised world" and in particular Britain, as is quite to be expected.

Britain, a member of the "civilised world", unites with the vast majority of "decent people" to offer its condolences to the "people of America", who are Britain's "friends and allies". The British are "a people that stand by their friends" in time of need, when the "basic democratic values" they, like their friends, believe in, are being attacked. Like other members of the "free world", Britain is "democratic" and holds dear its "liberal values", its "civil liberties" and its basic "respect for human life". It holds strongly beliefs, such as "reason" and "tolerance", which are the foundation of the "civilised world". Britain wants to bring to justice those who are responsible for the attacks, but believes, like its allies, that one should "proceed with care".

> We are *democratic*. They are not. We have *respect for human life*. They do not. We hold essentially *liberal values*. They do not. (…) Our beliefs are the very opposite of the fanatics. We believe in *reason*, *democracy* and *tolerance*. These beliefs are the foundation of our *civilised world*.

Blair describes the 'other' in more detail. They are "terrorists" and "enemies of the civilised world". They are composed of those who "inflict terror on the world" but also of those who harbour them. In fact, Blair makes a statement, which paints a world as bipolar as that of the U.S. president and

which is echoed by Bush in his previously analysed state of the union address: "(…) those that harbour or help them [the terrorists] have a choice; *either to cease their protection of our enemies; or be treated as an enemy themselves* (the emphasis is ours)." The "enemies of the civilised world" are "fanatics", so-called "Islamic fundamentalists", who are "not governed by morality" and thus behave in ways "foreign to the true spirit and teachings of Islam". They are "wicked", "evil" and "barbaric". They know "no mercy", "no pity" and they "kill" and "murder" indiscriminately.

> By their acts, these *terrorists* and those behind them have made themselves the *enemies of the civilised world*. (…) We know that these groups are *fanatics*, capable of *killing without discrimination*. The limits on the numbers they kill and their methods of killing are *not governed by morality*.

Blair's antonymous word choices, which oppose the 'other' to 'us', construct the following lexical fields, some of which are quite similar to those encountered in the two speeches by Bush:

'us'

Blair's 'us' category is complex, just like Bush's, and comprises Britain, as a member of the "free, civilised and democratic world", as well as the "people of America". The lexical fields below characterise Britain and the "civilised

world" but also implicitly Britain's "friends and allies", the United States of America.

1) civility	"our *civilised* world" "*civil liberties* are a vital part of our country"
2) democracy	"we, the *democracies* of the world" "the *free and democratic* world" "we are *democratic*"
3) tolerance	"we believe (…) in *tolerance*" "we hold essentially *liberal values*"
4) rationality	"we believe in *reason*" "(…) will want to identify, *with care*, those responsible" "(…) a judgement that must (…) be based on *hard evidence*"
5) decency	"let us unite too, with the vast majority of *decent* people"
6) solidarity	"we *stand shoulder to shoulder* with our American friends" "we are a people that *stand by our friends* in time of need"
7) moral conduct	"we have *respect* for human life"
8) resoluteness	"we (…) will *not rest* until this evil is driven from our world"

'other'

Blair's 'other' category has a complex content similar to that of Bush's. It contains two sub-categories; the perpetrators of the attacks and those who help and harbour them. The lexical fields below apply to the terrorists and their helpers, and to a lesser extent to those nations who offer them refuge.

1) lack of civility	"*enemies* of the civilised world" "their *barbarism*"
2) religious radicals	"*Islamic fundamentalists*" "[they] wear the ultimate badge of the *fanatic*"
3) blasphemers	"the *perversion* of religious feeling" "totally *foreign to* the true spirit and teachings of Islam"
4) absence of moral conduct	"are *not governed by* morality" "*no regard* whatever for the sanctity or value of human life"
5) outlaws	"will have *murdered* at least a hundred British citizens" "to *take the lives* of so many innocent and defenceless men, women and children"
6) evil	"the new *evil* in our world" "the exact origin of this *evil*" "an act of *wickedness*"
7) merciless	"this form of terror knows *no mercy, no pity*"
8) terror/fear	"*to inflict* such *terror* on the world" "*machinery of terror*"

4.3   Word choices and antonymous lexical fields in a sub-group of speeches by Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien

In a short statement made on September 13, 2001 announcing a National Day of Mourning in memory of the victims of the terrorist attacks in the United States, Canada's then Prime Minister, Jean Chrétien, uses very little deligitimising language. However, he does mention that an "awful crime" has been committed, but refrains from linking the 'other' to "any one community or faith". The 'other' are simply terrorists.

(…) bringing those who have committed *this awful crime* to justice. (…) I also want to emphasize that we are in a struggle against *terrorism*. *Not against any one community or faith*.

Chrétien is a bit more specific when he refers to the 'us'-group. His worldview here is similar to that of Tony Blair, except that Chrétien's 'us'-category obviously has at its centre the people he represents, i.e. "all Canadians". They have shown "tremendous concern and generosity" towards their "American friends", and join all "civilised nations" in "supporting" them.

We join all *civilised nations* in pledging *our complete support* in the days to come. (…) I also once again wish to thank *all Canadians* for *the tremendous concern and generosity* they have shown for our *American neighbours* in their time of need.

In his address the next day, on September 14, 2001, to Paul Cellucci, the then U.S. ambassador to Canada, Jean Chrétien once again uses very little delegitimising language. He refers to the 'other' only three times, employing words such as "terrorism", "evil" and "atrocity".

We reel before the blunt and terrible reality of the *evil* we have just witnessed. (…) we will defy and defeat the *threat* that *terrorism* poses to all civilised nations.

Chrétien uses some legitimising language to describe the people at the core of his 'us'-group, namely "Canadians". They are "a people of every faith and nationality to be found on earth", who have shown "concern" and "sympathy" for the "American people" whom they have "helped" and for whom they feel great "friendship". Canadians and Americans are united in their "common humanity and decency" as well as in their "resolve" to defeat the threat that terrorism poses to all "civilised nations" and to vanquish "any threat to freedom and justice".

> Our *friendship* has no limit. Generation after generation, we have travelled many difficult miles together. Side by side, we have lived through many dark times. Always firm in our shared *resolve* to vanquish any threat to *freedom and justice*. And together, with our allies, we will defy and defeat the threat that terrorism poses to all *civilised nations*. Mr. Ambassador, we will be with the United States every step of the way. As friends. As neighbours. As family.

Chrétien's word choices construct the following lexical fields:

'us'

Like the two preceding 'us'-categories, Chrétien's 'us'-category is complex. It is composed of "all Canadians" who have joined "all civilised nations" in declaring their support to their "American friends". The lexical fields below, however, mainly describe "Canadians" and to some extent their

"American neighbours", as Chrétien's main purpose seems to be highlighting

Canada's solidarity with its neighbours to the South in their time of need.

1) civility	"we join all *civilised* nations"
2) decency	"our common *humanity* and *decency*" "by their outpouring of *concern*, *sympathy* and *help*, the feelings and actions of Canadians have been clear"
3) upholders of values, of civilization	"our shared resolve *to vanquish* any threat to freedom and justice" "we will *defy and defeat* the threat that terrorism poses to all civilised nations"
4) solidarity	"our *friendship* has no limit" "*we are with you*" "pledging our *complete support*"
5) resoluteness	"our shared *resolve*" "a people (…) united in *resolve*"

'other'

Contrary to the two previously analysed 'other'-categories, Chrétien's

'other'-category does not seem to be complex. It is simply made up of

"terrorists". The lexical fields below, therefore, only apply to them.

1) evil	"the *evil* we have just witnessed"
2) enemies of moral values	"*threat* to freedom and justice" "*threat* (…) to all civilised nations"
3) outlaws	"those who have committed this awful *crime*"
4) violence/cruelty	"the *atrocity* committed against the United States"

4.4 Word choices and antonymous lexical fields in a speech by French President Jacques Chirac

In a declaration to his compatriots on the day of the attacks, September 11, 2001, Jacques Chirac resorts to little or no polarising language. He simply expresses to the American people "the solidarity of all the French" and stresses that the most effective way to combat "terrorism" is through "resolute collective action". As for the 'other', Chirac states that the perpetrators of the "terrorist" attacks, which he characterises as "violent" and "barbarous", are as yet unknown.

> I want once again to express to the American people the *solidarity* of *all the French* (…). (…) At this stage, we know neither the perpetrators of, nor the reasons for these *barbarous* acts. (…) France knows that we can effectively combat terrorism only through *resolute collective action*. And she will do what must be done.

These statements cannot be considered truly indicative of a bipolar worldview, as they leave the 'us' versus 'them' dichotomy quite undetermined. Some of Chirac's word choices, nevertheless, coincide with some of the lexical fields identified in the previous speeches:

'us'

1) solidarity	"the *solidarity* of all the French"
2) resoluteness	"*resolute* collective action" "and she [France] will *do what must be done*"

'other'

1) lack of civility	"these *barbarous* acts"
2) violence/cruelty	"terrorist attacks (…) so *violent*"

4.5   Initial contrastive results

To summarize, the use of polarising language is most prevalent in the speeches by U.S. president George W. Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair. The bipolar worldviews of both leaders are similar. Indeed, their word choices establish an 'us' versus 'them' dichotomy, which opposes a morally upstanding 'we' (the centre of which is either the 'American people' (Bush) or 'Britain' (Blair)) and a thoroughly immoral 'them' or 'other'. There also is considerable overlap in the highly antonymous lexical fields their word choices construct.

Jean Chrétien's use of polarising language is more subdued. His worldview is bipolar, in the sense that it also contrasts a moral 'we' with an immoral 'them'. However, his 'other' is not divided into sub-groups consisting of terrorists and those who harbour them and the centre of his 'us', although it comprises Canada, is all-embracing: "a people of every faith and nationality to

be found on earth". Chrétien's focus is on the 'us'-group, which possesses moral qualities, expressed by lexical fields, such as *decency*, *upholders of moral values*, etc., that it shares with the American people and that are intended to emphasize the closeness of Canada's relationship with the United States.

Jacques Chirac, finally, does not evoke a truly bipolar worldview. France, which should be at the centre of his 'us'-category, is not described in laudatory terms. His 'other'-category is undetermined, but the few words (*violent* and *barbarous*) used to characterise the acts committed by the 'other' echo those selected by the other leaders.

These contrastive results may signal differences in the political goals of the four statesmen. Indeed, the construction of a thoroughly evil 'other' is often done "to create a public climate favourable to possible future military operations" (Brekle 1989: 88) and constitutes, as has been mentioned earlier, one of the four generic traits of a 'call to arms' text.

5. Political functionality of observed antonymous lexical fields

(to be added later)

6. Conclusion

(to be added later)

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