

Abstract

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**War games and discourses: Polish
media and the threat for Polish
territory during manoeuvres 'Zapad
17'**

The military manoeuvres carried out in September 2017 by joined forces of Russian and Belarusian armies triggered major anxiety among elites and ordinary people living at the territories of the Balkan States, in Poland, Ukraine. The NATO has recognized this event as a threat to international order. Authors of this paper aim at empirical reconstruction of discursive practices that were manifested in Polish media during the time of the war games 'Zapad 17', with a particular goal to discover those mechanisms which constructed the feeling of anxiety and fear. The territorial aspect of a war (represented by speeding tanks, artillery and planes approaching Polish Geographical Home) was balanced by the imagined Home of Safety (represented by an imagined NATO community features and guarantees). The analysis encompassed the voice of main public agents of media discourse about the war games: politicians, journalists, experts, and military officers. It was found out that under the context of a perceived threat from 'the Eastern neighbour' Polish media activate divergent strategies, using space as a category of differentiation. For some of the agents the threat was broadened and delegated on the NATO as special community, for the others the discourse shrunk down to the narrowly defined national interest.