

What metaphors tell us about the market: reconciling linguistics, cognition and pragmatics in order to understand the impact of metaphor use on society

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Outline

- ▶ Background
- ▶ Literature review
- ▶ Research questions
- ▶ Methodology and research process
- ▶ Findings
- ▶ Conclusions

Background

- ▶ The housing situation in Auckland in 2016 - debates in media - crisis or not?
- ▶ Discourse in the media - metaphors:
- ▶ *flipping insanity: the mad world of Auckland house prices;*
- ▶ *speculators, investors and homeowners cashing in on Auckland's rampant property market made close to a \$200 million capital gain in under 18 months.*

Literature Review

Investigated in:

- ▶ political & diplomatic dialogue and negotiations (Cameron, 2011; Musolff, 2004; 2011; Weng, 2013);
- ▶ religious discourse, speeches by political leaders, advertising, news and financial reporting (Charteris-Black, 2004; Mohamed, 2014);
- ▶ party manifestoes (Charteris-Black, 2004, 2011; Guo, 2013; Koller, 2004; Lopez & Llopis, 2010; Peres-Sobrino, 2016);
- ▶ debates on European integration (Drulak, 2006; Musolff (2004; 2011);
- ▶ online news (Han, 2014);
- ▶ citizenship & immigration discourse (Lee, 2015; Salashour, 2016; Musolff, 2017).

Literature Review

- ▶ Literature explores the function of metaphor in socio-political discourses (Carver & Pikalo, 2008; Charteris-Black, 2004, 2001; Deignon, 2015; Fairclough, 2013; Kovecses, 2015; Li, 2016; Musolff, 2012) and
- ▶ debates the methodology of identifying and researching metaphors (Charteris-Black, 2004; Drulak, 2006; Pragglejaz Group, 2007; Steen, 2017); Wilson, 2011).

Literature Review

Three major types of research methodologies debated:

1. Traditional/substitutional/rhetorical approach - metaphor as 'embellishment' (Charteris-Black, 2004; 2011; Perrez & Reuchamps, 2015; Walter & Helmig, 2008)
2. Cognitive approach/Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) - based on Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) metaphors are elements of cognition and structure thinking (Lakoff, 2008) as they represent one domain of experience in terms of another, e.g. *housing market as something wild out of control, or housing market as a game*

Cognitive approach: Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT)

- ▶ Universal system of ‘primary metaphorical mappings’.
- ▶ A cross-domain conceptual mapping between a *target domain* and a *source domain*, grounded in people’s physical, bodily, experiences of the concept referring to the target domain: *fire raging in the housing market*.
- ▶ Focus on ‘conceptual metaphor’ (CM).
- ▶ Distinguishes between CM and metaphorical expressions (ME) = linguistic metaphors.

CM ‘HOUSING MARKET IS SOMETHING WILD OUT OF CONTROL’:

MEs: *debt monster gaining weight, what a shambolic monster our city would have become.*

Cognitive approach: CMT

Criticisms of early CMT for:

- ▶ Decontextualised, intuitive data (Charteris-Black, 2004; Cameron, 2008; Deignan, 2010; Musolff, 2012) as opposed to data from real language use. Hence calls for corpus analysis (Drulak, 2008; Deignan, 2010; Tissari, 2017).
- ▶ Insufficient consideration of the metaphor's textual grammatical form and its irregular character.
- ▶ **In response**, applied linguists have examined metaphors in naturally occurring language data of 2 types: corpus data & discourse data (Deignan, 2015) - general patterns in the meaning, semantic domains and form of linguistic metaphors = a language perspective to finding and testing CMs.

3. Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA)

- ▶ Over the past 25 years the following have been incorporated:
 - **corpus-based and corpus-driven** methods (e.g. Charteris-Black, 2004; De Landsheer, 2009);
 - discourse and conversation analysis (Cameron and Deignan, 2006);
 - sociolinguistic and multimodal studies (Gienki and Muller, 2008; Steen; + further reflection on the ‘rhetorical metaphor’ (Charteris-Black, 2013).
- ▶ This resulted in **integration of CMT and CDA into CMA** (see Li, 2016).
- ▶ New cognitive approaches based on principles of both ‘cognitive’ and ‘communicative relevance’, informed by Relevance Theory within CDA (Cameron, 2011; Carston, 2017; Musolff, 2011, 2012; Wilson, 2011).
- ▶ Cameron’s (2011) “complexity/dynamic systems” approach: linguistic and cognitive phenomena as processes, flows, movements, rather than as objects.

Metaphor scenarios

- ▶ Metaphorical clusters (Cameron & Stelma, 2004; Ritchie, 2017).
- ▶ Musolff (2006) and Semino (2008) investigated the structure of source domains in public debates on EU.
- ▶ Organised source concepts into mini-narratives = specific “scenarios” within the general mapping = focal points for conceptualising the target topic.
- ▶ Convey an evaluative stance through:
 - characteristics of participants, assessment of their actions and intentions;
 - polemical nature of the discourse.
- ▶ **“A platform to link the conceptual side of metaphor to its usage patterns in socially situated discourse” (p. 36).**

Metaphor scenarios

- ▶ Kheovichai (2014) - metaphor in business research articles: metaphor constructs concepts as scenarios which have participants performing actions to reach their goals - according to the SOURCE-PATH-GOAL schema of source domains (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).
- ▶ In the centre - the BOUNDED SPACE source domain, onto which the other SDs project their scenarios, forming an interconnected and coherent scenario of the discourse.

This study

- ▶ adopts an approach based on a combination of cognitive tenets and works by Charteris-Black (2004, 2011) and other scholars (Cameron & Stelma, 2004; Koller, 2004; Semino, 2008; Drulak, 2008; Musolff, 2006; Walter & Helmig, 2008; Deignan, 2017);
- ▶ uses a corpus-based approach to investigate metaphors in news and comment texts published in *The New Zealand Herald* on the topic of Housing in Auckland;
- ▶ follows Charteris-Black (2004): a metaphor is caused by a shift in the conceptual system revealing a similarity between the referents in the original *source context* and those in the novel *target domain*;
- ▶ sees metaphor from a pragmatic perspective as an incongruous linguistic representation, which aims to persuade, often covertly.
- ▶ views conceptual metaphor as a statement that resolves the semantic tension of a set of metaphors by showing them to be related.

Rationale and aim

- ▶ For L2 acquisition and L2 teaching
- ▶ For comprehension and evaluation of sophisticated socio-economic and political situations and their participants
- ▶ For the development of an ability to challenge the author's stance. Understanding about metaphor is a component of intellectual freedom (Charteris-Black, 2004, p. 253)
- ▶ **Aim:** to reveal the possible rhetorical effects of metaphors and their ideological functions in the 2016 socio-economic environment of NZ in reporting and commenting on housing problems in Auckland and with particular reference to perceptions of crises. To contribute to the understanding of whether the use of metaphors is genre-specific.

Research questions

- ▶ What are the metaphors used in reporting and commenting on the 2016 housing situation in Auckland and how can they be classified?
- ▶ Can particular patterns of relationship between metaphors be identified in the context under investigation?
- ▶ Is there any difference in the patterns of use of metaphors in the two genres under investigation?

Research process and methodology

- ▶ Two small corpora created: news reports and commentary articles on the topic of housing, published in *The New Zealand Herald* and collected over 2 months in 2016: 162 texts =111606 words).

Corpus	Number of texts	Total number of words	Average text length
News sections	127	79,869	628 words
Comment sections	35	31,737	906
Wellington corpus of written NZ English	500	1 million	2,000

Research process and methodology

- ▶ Candidate MEs identified via reading the texts and from *WordSmith Tools 7.0* (Scott, 2016) wordlists, keyword lists and concordance lines
- ▶ and categorised into CMs/source domains (SD).
- ▶ Frequent targets (housing, market) and sources (game, living being) identified.
- ▶ CMs checked against the semantic categories as determined by *Wmatrix* (Rayson, 2008). It assigned semantic tags to the keywords from the corpora, enabling the predominant semantic categories in the corpora to be identified.
- ▶ Further searches for MEs carried out, concordances made for each ME and the CMs modified as appropriate.
- ▶ Conventional metaphors distinguished from idiosyncratic ones following the Pragglejaz Group's (2007) *Metaphor Identification Protocol (MIP)* approach.
- ▶ The CMs and MEs then analysed to determine patterns and inter-relationships, including comparisons between their use in the two corpora. Four 400-word snapshots were subjected to descriptive statistics and 2-sample hypothesis testing.

3-stage procedure: Charteris-Black (2004)

- ▶ Metaphor identification - establishing the presence of incongruity or semantic tension between the literal source domain and a metaphorical target domain
- ▶ Metaphor interpretation = the type of social relations constructed
- ▶ Metaphor explanation = examining the way that metaphors are interrelated and become coherent in the context of their use
- ▶ Highlights the complex linguistic, cognitive and pragmatic dimensions of metaphor and the contextual importance of metaphor in persuasion.

Findings: Identification stage

Wordlists for HN and HC:

- ▶ News reports and comments both focus on the core aspects of the housing market: *house(s)*, *property*, *prices*, *investor(s)*, *buyers*, *banks*.
- ▶ The news reports however, seem to foreground stories of access to homes or lack of it with the *council* being a key player, whereas the comments texts are more likely to describe the situation as a *crisis* or *bubble* and to see the *government* as key player.

Findings: Identification Stage

- ▶ *Wmatrix* - to confirm semantic categories for the keywords - pointing to potential target domains, e.g. HOUSING, HOUSE(S), MARKET and aspects of these domains: apartments, tax, speculator, buyers.
- ▶ Data indicates that the most key semantic categories are those of *Architecture, Buildings, Houses, the Home* (e.g. *architecture, kinds of houses & buildings and residence*); *Money and Commerce* (particularly *Money Generally, Money and Pay*); *Business (selling)*; *Possession (getting and giving)*.
- ▶ The first two categories guide us towards investigating HOUSING and the last three towards MARKET. We have combined these into a single target domain of HOUSING MARKET.

Findings: Identification stage

Selected keyness data in HC and HN corpora - Similarities and differences

Prices, buyers, house(s), bank(s), investors, property

The key semantic concepts in both corpora are related to housing as business.

Market is at 13 on HN list but 34 in HC list

Reflects the dominance of the topic *Auckland Housing market* in *News*.

Crisis is at 15 on HC list but at 67 on HN lists

Greater willingness to describe the situation as a crisis.

Tax is at 9 on the HC list but at 161 on HN.

Possible indicator of a key solution as seen by commentators.

Council is at 30 in *HN* list but at 39 in *HC*

An indication of who the key agents are seen to be, indicating the greater role proposed for the government by commentators.

Findings: Identification continued

► Source domains (SDs) with number of MEs in corpora

Source domain	MEs in HN texts	MEs in HC texts
A BUILDING/BOUNDED SPACE	3	8
A LIVING BEING	15	15
A GAME	22	11
A POLITICAL AGENDA ITEM	4	31
MOVEMENT/CHANGE	22	31
SOMETHING WILD OUT OF CONTROL	14	16
IMPACT/PRODUCT/RESULT	26 + 21 of crisis + 4 bubble	13 + 16 of crisis + 17 bubble
CONFLICT/STRUGGLE/FIGHT	3	8
Total	134	166

Findings: Interpretation stage

= Establishing a relationship between metaphors and the cognitive & pragmatic factors that determine them (Han, 2014).

► We identified 8 SDs/CMs within the primary metaphorical mapping of the HOUSING MARKET AS BUSINESS.

Findings: Interpretation example

HOUSING MARKET IS SOMETHING WILD OUT OF CONTROL:

debt monster gaining weight; arrest the wild caravan of real estate exuberance; expected to cool Auckland's rampant market; bidding war mania; what a shambolic monster our city would have become

- ▶ The metaphors here are based on personification and reification at the same time, and often present the characteristic metaphoric feature of exaggeration.
- ▶ Can be also related to PRODUCT of human activity or to the need to regulate/control (under POLITICAL AGENDA ITEM domain).

Findings: Interpretation example

HOUSING MARKET IS A GAME:

the impact of the recently announced rule-changes; rules are likely to hurt some first home buyers outside Auckland; locking first home buyers out; one speculator pocketing \$100,000; shutting out families; first home buyers snapped up 25%.

- ▶ A scenario of participants/players aiming to win, but many ending up being locked out and losing the game.
- ▶ This source domain is related to FIGHT/STRUGGLE/CONFLICT/WAR, where first home buyers struggle to get on the board, and/or to IMPACT on the losers (*it will be cold comfort for first-home buyers; leaving wannabe buyers starved of choice; it is sickening for first-home buyers who are shut out of the market; speculators are feasting off the misery of first home buyers*).
- ▶ Possibility of a ME being mapped onto more than one source domain.

Findings: Interpretation example

HOUSING MARKET IS BUSINESS = primary mapping:

demand and supply sides of the market; first home buyers have picked up 33% of sales; leaving wannabe buyers starved of choice; more first home buyers get a foothold in the Auckland market; market collapse

- ▶ depends on a reader's personal, social and cultural experiences
- ▶ different semantic aspects of the metaphor may come to light:
 - *housing market is a struggle/fight/war; or*
 - *housing market is a building difficult to climb into; or*
 - *housing market is a game with players that first-home buyers appear to be losing; or*
 - *housing market is impact; or - housing market is movement/change*
 - *housing market is a living being (with characteristic actions, etc.).*
 - Produce a scenario of gaining profit, money and commodity.

Findings: Explanation stage

- ▶ **The use of 2 MEs in one sentence, e.g.**
 - *dwindling supply had pushed prices up*
 - *it is sickening for first home buyers who are shut out of the market*
 - *it is expected to cool Auckland's rampant market*
 - *(the government) sitting on its hands while a crisis rages*
- ▶ **Often contain two homogenous, simultaneous or consecutive, actions**
 - *swamp the market with supply and suppress prices*
 - *giving up smoking or learning to cook on a budget*
 - *keep that under control and cut fat*
 - *this market is not a bubble and it is not a crisis*

Parallel structures and crowding of the metaphor space serve evaluative purposes and help to decode the intention of the writer.

Findings: Comparison of MEs in News and Commentary genres

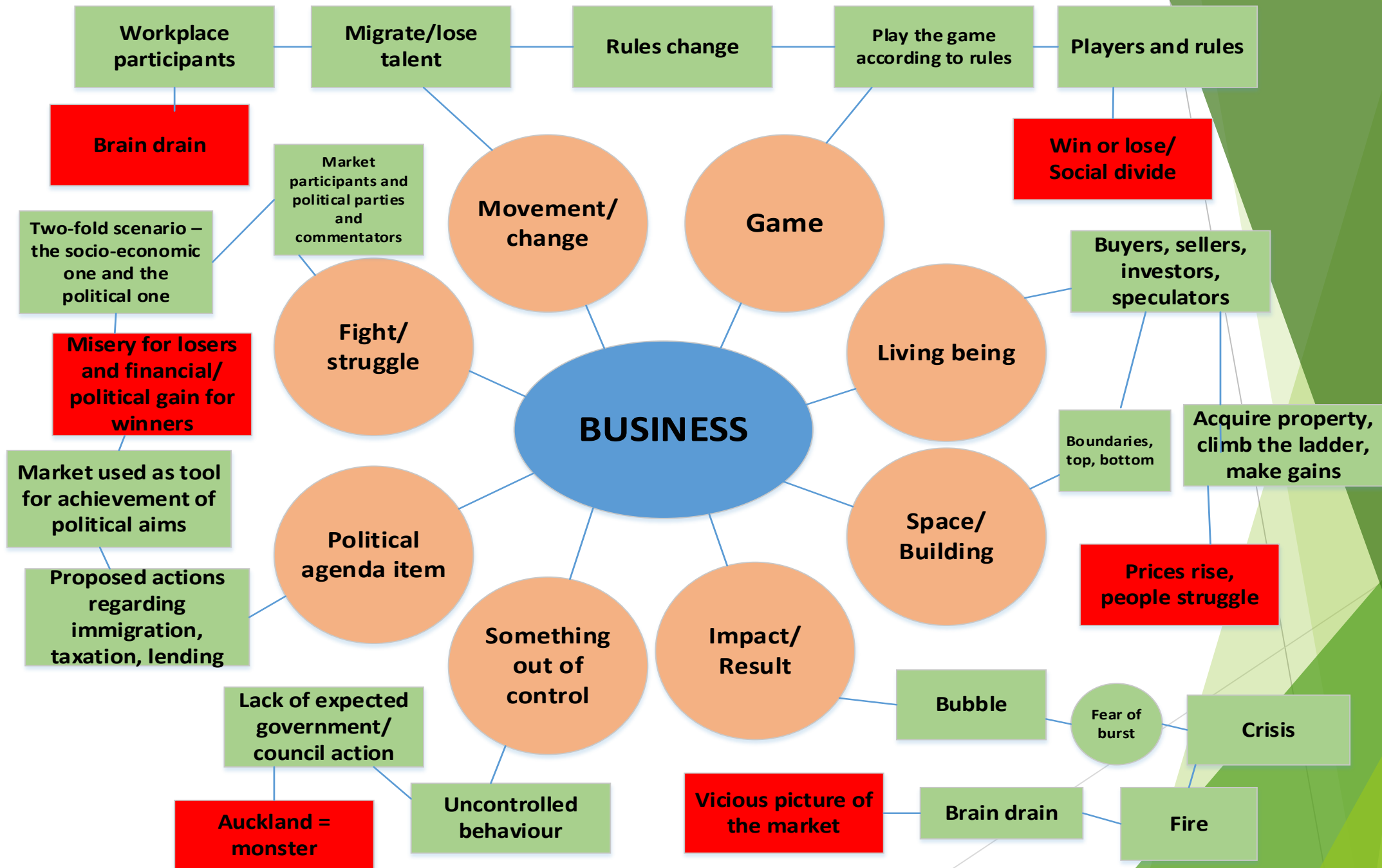
- ▶ MEs **cluster** in short spans of text, presenting the same or different CMs in both the genres.
- ▶ Comparison of the news and commentary corpora (density and nature): 15 MEs v 21 MEs per 210 words
- ▶ Descriptive statistics and 2-sample hypothesis testing on 4 randomly chosen 400-word snapshots from each of the two genres:
- ▶ The mean, median and mode indicators of MEs used in commentaries are statistically greater than in news.

Findings: Explanation stage: Stories

- ▶ The use of clusters assists in developing a “story” (Cameron, 2011; Ritchie, 2017) or a “**scenario**” (Musolff, 2006), and intensifies the authorial negative evaluation of the passage and the potential persuasive power of the text.
- ▶ Selection of MEs from the same CMs for a particular cluster: *to cool Auckland’s rampant market, the limits would help to cool the overheated market.*
- ▶ These metaphorical extensions (Gibbs, 2011) may be an indication of cognitive aspects of metaphor selection and an assistance with the readers’ decoding process.

Findings: Explanation stage: the ME *housing crisis*

- ▶ SD “IMPACT” with its scenario of CRISIS and the inter-related BUBBLE, SOMETHING WILD OUT OF CONTROL, FIRE – in both genres.
- ▶ All the SDs harbour MEs with a strong negative evaluation, e.g.: *the evil which is land banking; the social carnage which is the Auckland housing market; the disease of house price inflation.*
- ▶ The rhetorical nature of MEs in news reporting is often different from the highly emotional MEs in the commentary corpus (references to experts & politicians, statistics – expectations of the audience?)
- ▶ May they be appealing to the cognition of the reader rather than to emotions? Therefore, to certain categories of reader they may appear more persuasive than the emotive ones.



Conclusions

- ▶ Metaphors draw on a **limited range** of source domains (8).
- ▶ Their use is **systematic**: *impact/product/result of human activity, game, something wild out of control, political agenda item, living being, conflict/fight/struggle/war/movement/change, building/bounded space* - common to both genres.
- ▶ Several source domains **more productive** than others: *impact, game, movement, political agenda item*.
- ▶ Evidence for ideological and rhetorical motivation for the use of metaphors.
- ▶ **Persuasive** function of MEs clustering and interacting in the same paragraph and forming extended metaphor frames/scenarios - a manifold housing market scenario, often producing the impression of **political propaganda**.

Conclusions

- ▶ The SD of IMPACT has CRISIS as one of its semantically-connected scenarios (FIRE, BUBBLE, EVIL, EMPLOYEE MIGRATION/BRAIN DRAIN) - all with a negative connotation.
- ▶ These scenarios and the related MEs feature extreme and dramatic lexical meanings that in combination contribute to the perception of a housing situation clearly judged to be in crisis.