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The Framing of Serbia's EU Accession by the British Foreign Office on Twitter

This article involves a qualitative study of how the British Foreign Office frames its Twitter discourse pertaining to Serbia's EU accession. The corpus of the study consists of the British Foreign Office's tweets associated with Serbia within the period of time from 1 January 2015 until 1 May 2016. The tweets have been compiled and analysed qualitatively following the frame analysis methodology described by Entman (1993, 2010). Results of the qualitative analysis of tweets associated with Serbia's EU accession on the Twitter accounts of the British Foreign Secretary, Minister for Europe and the British Ambassador to Serbia reveal the following conceptual constructs which structure and organise the discursive space of the tweets: 'Path', 'Positive Mood', 'UK Support', 'Regional Cooperation', 'Disappointment' (only in the Minister for Europe's tweet) and 'European Family' (only in the British Ambassador's tweet). Data analysis indicates that the corpus of the examined tweets associated with Serbia's EU accession involves neither instances of Euroscepticism on the part of the Foreign Office, nor conceptual constructs associated with the UK's possible exit from the European Union. These findings are further presented and discussed in the article.

Key words: framing, political discourse, Serbia, Twitter, the UK

Framing akcesji Serbii do Unii Europejskiej przez Biuro Spraw Zagranicznych Wielkiej Brytanii na twitterze

Artykuł prezentuje badanie jakościowe framingu dyskusji toczącej się na twitterze brytyjskiego Foreign Office, a dotyczącej przystąpienia Serbii do UE. Na korpus składają się tweety brytyjskiego Biura Spraw Zagranicznych z okresu od 01.01.2015 do 01.05.2016. Tweety zostały zebrane i poddane analizie jakościowej zgodnie z metodologią opisaną przez Entmana (1993, 2010). Wyniki analizy jakościowej tweetów na kontach brytyjskiego ministra ds. Europy i brytyjskiego ambasadora w Serbii dotyczących akcesji Serbii do UE wskazują na występowanie następujących konceptów strukturyzujących i organizujących przestrzeń dyskursywną: *droga*, *pozytywny nastrój*, *pomoc Wielkiej Brytanii*, *współpraca regionalna*, *rozczarowanie* (tylko w tweetach ministra ds. Europy) i *europska rodzina* (tylko w tweetach ambasadora). Analiza danych wskazuje, że korpus badanych tweetów dotyczących przystąpienia Serbii do Unii Europejskiej nie zawiera przykładów eurosceptycyzmu ze strony Biura Spraw Zagranicznych, ani konceptów związanych z możliwym

wyjściem Wielkiej Brytanii z Unii Europejskiej. Niniejszy artykuł prezentuje i omawia wyniki tych badań.

Słowa klucze: framing, dyskurs polityczny, Serbia, Twitter, Wielka Brytania (Zjednoczone Królestwo)

Framing von Serbiens EU-Beitritt in den Tweets von British Foreign Office

Dieser Artikel stellt eine qualitative Twitter-Studie um den Diskurs des britischen Foreign Office über Serbiens EU-Beitritt dar. Das Korpus der Studie besteht aus den Tweets des British Foreign Office über Serbien im Zeitraum vom 01.01.2015 bis zum 2016.05.01. Die Tweets wurden zusammengestellt und qualitativ analysiert nach der Methode der Framesanalyse von Entman (1993, 2010). Die Ergebnisse der qualitativen Analyse der Tweets über Serbiens EU-Beitritt auf die Twitter-Konten des britischen Außenministeriums, insbesondere des Ministers für Europa und des britischen Botschafters in Serbien zeigen, dass die folgenden konzeptionellen Konzepte realisiert werden: ‚Weg‘, ‚Positive Stimmung‘, ‚UK Unterstützung‘, ‚Regionale Zusammenarbeit‘, ‚Enttäuschung‘ (nur in den Tweets des Europaministers) und ‚Europäische Familie‘ (nur in den Tweets des britischen Botschafters). Die Datenanalyse zeigt, dass im Korpus der untersuchten Tweets über den EU-Beitritt Serbiens weder EU-Skepsis noch ein möglicher Austritt des Vereinigten Königreichs aus der Europäischen Union konzeptualisiert wird. Dieser Beitrag präsentiert und diskutiert die Ergebnisse der Analyse.

Schlüsselwörter: Framing, politischer Diskurs, Serbien, Twitter, Großbritannien

1. Introduction

The present article involves a qualitative investigation of how the British Foreign Office frames its Twitter discourse involving Serbia's EU accession. Specifically, this study examines how Philip Hammond (the Foreign Secretary), David Lidington (Minister for Europe) and Denis Keefe, the British ambassador in Serbia, frame their Twitter discourse associated with Serbia's EU entry. The corpus in this study consists of Hammond's, Lidington's and Keefe's tweets involving Serbia's EU accession in the period of time from 01.01.2015 until 01.05.2016. Presumably, the Foreign Office's Twitter discourse associated with Serbia's EU entry is framed by a variety of conceptual construals, which will be further identified and discussed in the present study from the vantage point of cognitive linguistics. The novelty of this investigation consists in the identification of conceptual construals in the Foreign Office's Twitter discourse about Serbia's EU accession, which framed against the background of the UK's exit from the EU (the so-called 'Brexit').

In 2015-2016, the issue of 'Brexit' frames the UK's political discourse in the realms of both domestic and international relations, since "any Brexit will not happen in isolation from other events, not least of which are ongoing efforts to manage

the ongoing problems in the Eurozone and Schengen” (Oliver 2016: 3). Obviously, Brexit will impact on the framing of the EU's further enlargement agenda. To specify the concept of framing in political discourse, it should be noted that it involves an organising principle which streamlines fragmentary or incidental information into a structured and meaningful problem, concurrently with its diagnosis, i.e. the issue which constitutes the problem, and the solution of the problem (Lombardo/ Meier 2008: 105). According to Entman (1993), to frame is

to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make it more salient in a communicating text, in such a way to promote a particular problem definition, casual interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described. (Entman 1993: 52)

Research indicates that political discourse in the UK in 2015-2016 is framed by the resurfacing of 'the European question' of whether or not to leave the EU, even though the majority of British political leaders believe that the United Kingdom should remain an EU Member State (Gee/ Young 2016). This framing, however, is not novel, since the UK has been previously referred to as a Eurosceptic country which has “vacillated between being both inside and outside of Europe” (Miles/ Doherty 2005: 89), exhibiting an ambivalent, controversial and Eurosceptic stance on the EU affairs (Hoops et al. 2015; Usherwood/ Startin 2013). In this regard, Kenny/ Pearce (2016: 304) indicate that the British Eurosceptics foster the idea of a group of 'Anglosphere' countries comprised of the UK, USA, Australia, Canada and New Zealand, which share liberal, protestant, democratic and free-market values. Subsequently, the notion of the Anglosphere is in contrast with the countries currently on the accession path towards the EU, for instance, predominantly Orthodox Montenegro, Serbia and Macedonia, which, in addition, have experienced totalitarian past under the former Yugoslav leader Tito and, in case, of Serbia, under the authoritarian regime of Milosevic.

However, simultaneously with Euroscepticism and Brexit, the official UK supports the EU aspirations of a number of non-EU countries, such as Serbia among others (Aydin-Düzgüt 2013). The case of the British Foreign Office's discourse involving Serbia's EU accession is especially noteworthy within the wider context of the UK's Brexit. To elucidate the British Foreign Office discourse on Twitter involving Serbia and its future EU accession, this article is structured as follows: First, there will be outlined previous studies involving the framing of political discourse associated with Serbia's EU accession. Second, there will be provided an overview of previous studies involving political discourse on Twitter. Third, the framing of Serbia's EU accession by the British Foreign Office on Twitter will be presented and discussed.

1.1. The Framing of Discourse Associated with Serbia's EU Accession: An Overview of Previous Studies

Since the start of Serbia's accession negotiations with the EU, there have been numerous studies in political discourse involving Serbia's EU entry (Tomic 2013). Previous research indicates that the framing of the topic of Serbia's EU accession involves several salient issues, which are construed upon various theoretical and methodological foundations, e.g. conceptual metaphor and conceptual blending (Durovic 2011), critical discourse analysis (Subotic 2011), as well as upon rhetorical paradigm (Tomic 2013). Within the parameters of the latter, one of the salient foci employed in the framing of Serbia's EU accession is the rhetoric of good relations with the neighbouring countries, such as Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia and Montenegro. According to Tomic (2013:95), the framing of Serbia as a good neighbour is relevant in the light of the country's EU accession: "Regional cooperation, good neighborly relations are furthermore outlined as important goals in Serbia's path to EU membership also in the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA)". The framing of Serbia as a good neighbour facilitates the country's normalisation of relationships with the former Yugoslav republics.

Serbia's discourse of normalisation is evident from the framing of Serbia as a country which is on the road to normalcy (Greenberg 2011). This framing involves the conceptual construal of a ROAD leading to the EU. Moreover, the normalcy is evident from the visa-free ROAD to the EU. In this regard, Greenberg (2011: 88) posits that the day Serbia was granted visa-free access to the Schengen area

...was greatly anticipated in Serbia as the culmination of the country's painful transformation from an authoritarian pariah state to a democracy on the verge of European integration. After almost two decades during which Serbian citizens were subject to strict visa regimes, costly visa applications, humiliating lines at foreign embassies, intrusive interrogation by embassy staff, and embarrassing attention at foreign airports and borders, men and women with Serbian passports could once again freely travel to Europe.

Similar framing is found in Jansen (2009), who compares the visa requirements imposed by the EU on the Serbian passport holders to a metaphoric construal 'Non-EU as a TRAP'. This framing construes Serbia as entrapped by a circle of the EU countries, all of which demand visas for the entry and restrict the freedom of movement (Durovic/ Silaski 2012). In Serbian discourse prior to 2010, the EU visa requirements are associated with inferiorisation and stigmatisation of the Serbian citizens whose status is relegated to the 'outside' of Europe

(Jansen 2009). Consequently, to be able to travel to the EU freely presupposes a metaphoric ROAD (Greenberg 2011) leading from the TRAP (Jansen 2009) to normalcy, which signifies Serbia's return to Europe (Greenberg 2011: 96). The construal of Serbian ROAD towards the EU is also referred to as the metaphor SERBIA'S REACHING THE SCHENGEN WHITE LIST AS A JOURNEY (Durovic/ Silaski 2012: 65).

Greenberg's (2011) framing of Serbian accession discourse is echoed by Ejodus and Bozovic (2016), as well as Nielsen (2010) who construe Serbia's return to European normalcy as a ROAD or a PATH metaphor: "On its path toward the EU, Serbia had to swallow many 'bitter pills' including the cooperation with The Hague Tribunal (accomplished in 2011) and normalization of relations with its breakaway province of Kosovo (Brussels Agreement, 2003)" (Ejodus/ Bozovic, 2016). In this regard, Nielsen (2010: 97) posits that "...Serbia and other former Yugoslav republics follow the path blazed by Slovenia to EU membership...".

Just as Slovenia was the first ex-Yugoslav republic to join the European family, Serbia's EU accession is framed via the FAMILY, MARRIAGE and DIVORCE metaphors. Durovic and Silaski (2010:237) indicate that a complex political landscape in Serbia has given rise to the MARRIAGE as well as DIVORCE metaphors in Serbian political discourse. Whilst the MARRIAGE metaphor is applicable to Serbia's coalition governments and coalition agenda settings, the DIVORCE metaphor is associated with the peaceful dissolution of the Union state of Serbia and Montenegro. It is inferred from Durovic and Silaski (2010; 2012) that the DIVORCE metaphor has eventuated as a result of Serbia's rapprochement with the EU. The framing of the dissolution of the Union of Serbia and Montenegro into Serbia and Montenegro respectively reflects the EU's diplomatic efforts to prevent another military conflict between the ex-Yugoslav states and by means of facilitating the peaceful dissolution analogous to the Czechoslovak scenario, the so-called VELVET DIVORCE (Durovic/ Silaski 2010; 2012).

1.2. Political Discourse on Twitter: An Overview of Previous Studies

Twitter is a text-based microblogging service where users can send messages or tweets of up to 140 characters, place a hashtag symbol (#) to create the topic around which further tweets are grouped (Lorenzo-Dus/ Di Cristifaro 2016: 2). Freelon (2015: 778) indicates that Twitter hashtags function as repositories of up-to-date information for the focal topics. It is assumed that three main functions of Twitter are "news reporting of events as they happen, continuous discussion of events deemed to be newsworthy, and commentary on current events from the users' personal viewpoints" (Lorenzo-Dus/ Di Cristifaro 2016: 2).

Twitter as a short-form communication platform has changed institutional culture, power relations and impacted upon political discourse (Barnard 2016; Burnap et al. 2016). Twitter facilitates political discourse by agenda framing, community forming, and opinion articulation (ibid.). Frame and Brachotte (2015: 278) posit that Twitter has imposed itself as a significant tool employed by politicians in many countries around the world.

The studies of political discourse on Twitter appear to be gaining popularity (Garimella et al. 2016: 2). Frame and Brachotte (2015: 279) argue that previous research involving Twitter discourse suggests that Twitter is often used by politicians for self-promotion, for information exchange, debates or information insights into political processes. In particular, Trilling (2015:260) distinguishes two principal spheres of Twitter usage in political discourse, namely as a tool for persuasion and mobilisation and as a means of deliberative discourse. The former is used in political discourse to convince the potential voters, whilst the latter is employed in facilitating dialogue, consensus and the inclusion of the non-elite political actors.

Hong and Nadler (2015: 92) point to the facilitative role of Twitter in expanding the communications capability by an individual politician or a political party. Often, it is achieved by forwarding the message to other Twitter users or by retweeting. Additionally, the facilitative role of Twitter in political discourse is achieved via gaining access to data mining of the available profiles of the Twitter users to gauge a politician's popularity or to assess the relevance of the political topic (Abisheva et al. 2014). Hence, Twitter has been employed in political discourse in conjunction with the notions of influence, and with the discovering political alignments of the Twitter account followers (Abisheva et al. 2015).

2. The Framing of Serbia's EU Accession by the British Foreign Office on Twitter

Whilst there is a wealth of literature involving Serbia's future EU accession (Tomic 2013), there are no previous studies which elucidate Twitter discourse associated with Serbia's EU entry. Given the novelty of this topic, the present research seeks to establish how the British Foreign Office frames Serbia's EU accession on the social platform Twitter. It should be reiterated that this framing has been taking place against a wider context of Brexit.

2.1. Hypothesis and Specific Research Aims

The hypothesis has been based upon the assumption that Twitter represents a constrained discursive space marked by one or several salient conceptual construals. Given that framing involves the selection of a salient focus to promote a particular problem definition, its interpretation and/or moral evaluation (Entman 1993: 52), it is assumed that the framing of Serbia's EU accession in the British Foreign Office's tweets would involve one or several conceptual construals which are salient. These construals would structure and organise the discursive space in a particular tweet. Based upon this assumption, the following specific research aims have been formulated:

- to identify tweets associated with Serbia's EU accession on the Twitter accounts of Philip Hammond (the Foreign Secretary), David Lidington (Minister for Europe) and Denis Keefe, the British ambassador in Serbia;
- to identify salient conceptual construals in the corpus of the above-mentioned tweets;
- to establish whether or not the corpus of tweets associated with Serbia's EU accession involves conceptual construals pertaining to Brexit.

2.2. Materials and Methods

To verify the above-mentioned hypothesis, a corpus of tweets involving Serbia's EU accession is compiled and analysed. The present corpus involves tweets by Hammond, Keefe and Livingston from 01.01.2015 until 01.05.2016 available online at www.twitter.com. The present Twitter corpus is considered a genre of political microblogging via social media. The analysis of tweets involves an electronic search for hashtags (#) containing the following key-words: 'Serbia', 'EU', 'accession', 'Brexit' and 'EU enlargement'. In total, 41 tweets have been identified. Multiple tweets written on the same date are counted as separate tweets. Retweets are counted as separate tweets. The corpus is analysed qualitatively according to the research methodology of framing and frames identification described by Entman (1993; 2010).

2.3. Results

Qualitative investigation indicates that the British Foreign Office frames its Twitter discourse associated with Serbia's EU accession via several conceptual

construals. In particular, Hammond frames his tweets involving Serbia's EU accession by means of conceptual construals 'Path', 'Positive Mood', 'UK Support' and 'Regional Cooperation'. These construals are summarised in Table 1 below.

| Total N | Conceptual Construal | Example |
|---------|----------------------|---|
| 4 | Path | Just arrived in #Serbia. Will be discussing EU path and reforms, #Kosovo and regional relations, and improving business climate. |
| 1 | Positive Mood | Good meeting with @avucic. Pleased to hear his & #Serbia's commitment to EU membership & reform agenda – good start but too much to do. (15.01.2015) |
| 1 | UK Support | Excellent talks w/Western Balkan PMs at #EBRDwb meeting. Set out UK support & need for continued reform in the region. (22.02.2016) |
| 5 | Regional Cooperation | Also discussed #Kosovo with @avucic. Welcomed #Serbia commitment to dialogue, and encouraged further development of relations. (15.01.2015) Welcomed progress on #Kosovo Dialogue & urged @SerbianPM to maintain positive momentum. Real possibility to open first EU chapters soon (08.10.2015) Good to see PM @avucic again. Talked about Serbia's reforms, EU progress and positive role in region. (29.10.2015) |

Table 1. Phillip Hammond's framing of Serbia's EU accession on Twitter

Qualitative analysis of the corpus reveals that the Foreign Office's Minister for Europe Lidington frames his Twitter discourse involving Serbia's EU entry as the following conceptual construals: 'Path', 'UK Support', 'Disappointment', 'Positive Mood', and 'Regional Cooperation' respectively. These findings are summarised in Table 2.

| Total N | Conceptual Construal | Example |
|---------|-----------------------|---|
| 1 | Path | Cestitam # Serbia on opening of first two accession chapters. Fruit of much hard work & big step forward on EU path. (15.12.2015) |
| 2 | UK Support | A retweeted from Hammond: Excellent talks w/Western Balkan PMs at #EBRDwb meeting. Set out UK support & need for continued reform in the region. (22.02.2016) |
| 1 | Disappointment | Disappointed at welcome for ex-General Lazarevic in Serbia. Reconciliation is a better way to address the past. (10.12.2015) |

| Total N | Conceptual Construal | Example |
|---------|-----------------------------|---|
| 4 | Positive Mood | Positive mood from W Balkans leaders at #EBRDwb today. Economic + political reform & reconciliation key to future investment & prosperity. (22.02.2016) |
| 3 | Regional Cooperation | A retweet from Vuchich: Successful day for #Serbia at #EBRDwb. Regional stability is a guarantee of further economic progress. (22.02.2016) |

Table 2. David Lidington's framing of Serbia's EU accession on Twitter

Corpus analysis indicates that the British ambassador to Serbia frames his Twitter discourse pertaining to Serbia's EU membership as conceptual construals 'Regional Cooperation', 'Positive Mood', 'UK Support', 'Path', and 'European Family'. These findings are summarised in Table 3.

| Total N | Conceptual Construal | Example |
|---------|-----------------------------|---|
| 6 | Regional Cooperation | A retweet from Mogherini: Good developments between #Serbia and #Croatia. Tanks to avucic and Zoran Milanovic. Teamwork with JHahnEU (25.09.2015) A retweet from Lidington: I deplore the violent attack on Serbian PM avucic. It was brave & right for him to go to memorial (11.07.2015) |
| 5 | Positive Mood | Delighted to attend #WW1 commemorations in Corfu. Important lessons about shared values and our partnership with Serbia #SrbinaKrfu (18.04.2016) A retweet from Anthony Williams: ebrdsuma praises #serbia reforms in interview with Serbian TV ahead of #EBRDwb Western Balkans summit (22.02.2016) |
| 3 | UK Support | A retweet from James Ker-Lindsay: Great that #UK seen as a leader in terms of strengthening # EU engagement in the Western #Balkans (29.01.2016) |
| 5 | Path | Cestitam # Serbia on opening of first two accession chapters. Fruit of much hard work & big step forward on EU path. (15.12.2015) A retweet from Vuchich: With #Quinta ambassadors and DavenportEUSrb on # Serbia's #EU path, dialogue with Pristina and regional cooperation |
| 1 | European Family | A retweet from Mogherini: Listening to JHahnEU address to Serbian Parliament: to bring Serbia where it belongs, the European Family (10.12.2015) |

Table 3. Dennis Keefe's framing of Serbia's EU accession on Twitter

2.4. Discussion

Results of the qualitative analysis of tweets associated with Serbia's EU accession on the Twitter accounts of the Foreign Secretary, Minister for Europe and the British ambassador in Serbia reveal the following conceptual construals which structure and organise the discursive space of the analysed tweets: 'Path', 'Positive Mood', 'UK Support', 'Regional Cooperation', 'Disappointment' (only in Minister for Europe's tweet) and 'European Family' (only in the British Ambassador's tweet). Data analysis indicate that the corpus of the examined tweets associated with Serbia's EU accession does not involve conceptual construals pertaining to British Euroscepticism. Similarly, the issue of Brexit does not appear to be involved in the framing of Serbia's EU accession by the Foreign Secretary, Minister for Europe and the British ambassador in Serbia respectively.

Qualitative analysis of the corpus indicates that British diplomacy frames its Twitter discourse associated with Serbia's EU accession via construal of 'Regional Cooperation'. The salience of regional cooperation as a prerequisite for the future EU accession is stipulated by the European Commission and is institutionalised within the framework of the accession procedures for Serbia. The importance of the regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations with other countries in the region stem from the Balkan wars in the 1990s. Nowadays, however, with Croatia being an EU member, and Serbia in the process of reconciliation with all the neighbours, the Foreign Office states an increased level of regional cooperation. This cooperation takes a variety of forms, for instance, economic (Excerpt 1), and cultural (Excerpt 2)

1. Extremely positive tone at EBRD Western #Balkans summit. PMs emphasizing increasing levels of regional economic cooperation. #EBRDwb. (A retweet from Lames Ker-Lindsay by Keefe on 22.02.2016)
2. UK, US & Germany support #Kosovo membership of UNESCO. Good for Serbian heritage, good for all. (A retweet from the Foreign Office by Keefe on 5.11.2015)

The salience of regional cooperation in Serbia's accession process is concurrent with the framing of the country's accession via the construal of the 'Path'. Tweets by the Foreign Secretary, Minister for Europe and the ambassador indicate that the British diplomacy frames Serbia's EU entry via the construal of the 'Path', which Serbia needs to cover in order to reach the final destination of the accession process, the full EU membership. It should be noted that the framing of Serbia's EU accession as a 'Path' is found not only in Twitter discourse. In a newspaper article, the British Ambassador to Serbia frames Serbia's EU entry

by referring to the same construal of the 'Path' by stating that Serbia is 'on the EU accession path, which means that it needs to align its foreign policy to the EU' (Keefe 2015). The framing of Serbia's EU entry as a 'Path' supports previous research findings, which report analogous 'Path' construals (Durovic & Silaski 2012; Greenberg 2011). The present Twitter data indicate that the construal of the 'Path' is instantiated by evoking 'big steps on the path', by 'discussing EU path and reforms', etc. (see Tables 1-3).

As any 'Path' presupposes a process protracted in time, the construal of the 'Path' is concurrent with the construal of the British help to facilitate Serbia's journey towards the EU. As evident from the data, UK's support takes shape of reforms facilitation (as found in Hammond), as well as proving a leading role in the EU's assistance to Serbia (as evident from a retweet by Keefe). It should be observed that the construals of 'UK Support', 'Path' and 'Regional Cooperation' are in unison with the construal of 'Positive Mood' identified in the tweets by the Foreign Secretary, Minister for Europe and the UK's ambassador to Serbia. Presumably, the positive discursive tonality maps into the UK-Serbia relations, and into Serbia's efforts on the 'Path' towards the EU, e.g. 'delighted to attend', 'praises Serbia reforms', and 'Pleased to hear his & #Serbia's commitment to EU membership & reform agenda' (see Tables 1-3). However, in the corpus there is a tweet by the Minister for Europe whose tonality is framed by the construal of 'Disappointment'. Specifically, the construal of 'Disappointed' is associated with the welcome of the former General Lazarevic in Serbia. This tweet is evocative of the 1990s Balkan wars which still need to be addressed, as suggested by the tweet (Lidington 10.12.2015)

As evident from the corpus (see Tables 1-3), there are no other instances of the construal 'Disappointment'. In contrast with 'Disappointment', British ambassador to Serbia retweets Mogherini's original tweet, which frames Serbia's EU accession as a family re-union, where Serbia gets reunited with the rest of the European family of nations, e.g. '...to bring Serbia where it belongs, the European Family' (10.12.2015). Presumably, the construal of the 'European Family' is not fortuitous in the data. It is indicative of the official position of the UK regarding its own EU membership. Note that there are no instances in the data which point to the framing of Serbia's EU entry within the context of Brexit, or within a wider context of British Euroscepticism. On the contrary, taken in conjunction with the construals 'Positive Mood' and 'UK Support', the construal of the 'European Family' in the framing of the Serbia's EU entry seems to be logical on the part of the British diplomacy.

Conclusions

The present article presents a qualitative study of the framing of Serbia's EU accession by the British Foreign Office on Twitter. The corpus of this qualitative study consists of the tweets by the Foreign Secretary, Minister for Europe and the ambassador to Serbia within the period of time from 01.01.2015 until 01.05.2016. The tweets have been compiled and analysed qualitatively following the frame analysis methodology provided in Entman (1993; 2010). Results of the qualitative analysis of tweets associated with Serbia's EU accession on the Twitter accounts of the British Foreign Secretary, Minister for Europe and the British ambassador in Serbia reveal the following conceptual construals, which structure and organise the discursive space of the tweets: 'Path', 'Positive Mood', 'UK Support', 'Regional Cooperation', 'Disappointment' (only in Minister for Europe's tweet) and 'European Family' (only in the British Ambassador's tweet). Data analysis indicates that the corpus of the examined tweets associated with Serbia's EU accession involves neither instances of Euroscepticism on the part of the Foreign Office, nor conceptual construals associated with Brexit, the UK's exit from the European Union. It can be concluded that whilst the UK's Brexit is one of the dominant topics in British political discourse in 2015-2016, it does not map onto British political discourse on Twitter involving the EU's future enlargement, which has been illustrated by the case of Serbia.

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