

**Prime Ministers on Twitter:
Mateusz Morawiecki and Andrej Babiš during the
2019 European election campaign – two models of
communication**

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Abstract:

The aim of this paper is to analyse Twitter activity of Prime Ministers of Poland and of the Czech Republic, Mateusz Morawiecki and Andrej Babiš respectively, during the 2019 European Parliament election campaign with the special focus on their ways of creating, imposing and reproducing the campaign discourse. It examines especially the person-alization of the election campaign, namely using the election-related activities to promote their image. Also, the im-portance of hashtags as a strategy for building discursive styles is explored and ways of using political pretexts e.g. the Europe Day to introduce election themes are compared. In this context the answer to the following question pre-sents itself as a research challenge: to what extent PMs' tweets impact the course and the dynamics of the campaign and to what extent it is just dry information, a press commentary?

Keywords: Twitter, election campaign, Mateusz Morawiecki, Andrej Babiš, image building

Introduction

The influence of social media on activities of politicians and on the social space in general has been steadily growing. The politics happens not only behind the doors of parliaments and cabinets, but also in social media. Political players share their decisions on social platforms, announce specific undertakings, while analysts and experts include in their researches and reports social media activity as a category with the potential to affect the position and stability of a given country or its government.

Twitter is one of the social platforms that revolutionized media presence of politicians and the entire social space as such (Gil, 2020). It is a medium used for direct contact between the politician and the voter, but it is also a platform for self-promotion and self-production used by public life participants, a channel for announcing decisions, such as plans to withdraw from an arrangement or to ratify an agreement (Murthy, 2013, p. 41).

The aim of the paper herein is to explore Twitter activity of prime ministers during the election campaign with the special focus on the way the campaign discourse is created, imposed and reproduced. It also attempts to define the role of Twitter activity of the PMs in the election campaign dynamics, in introducing new election-related themes and in self-production of their own political position. In this context the paper will try to answer the following question: to what extent PM's tweets impact the course and the dynamics of campaigning and to what extent it is just a dry information, a mere press commentary?

The analysis is based on a comparative study (Rusin Dybalska et al., 2019, p. 541-555). The Twitter activity of the Polish PM Mateusz Morawiecki is compared with the one of the Czech PM, Andrej Babiš. The analysis covers the period of the 2019 European Parliament election campaign. The Twitter activity of candidates was monitored between 25 April 2019 and 28 May 2019.

The applied study method is the medial and linguistic juxtaposition of tweets published by the PMs, including their discursive meaning (Klementewicz, 2010, p. 301). The conclusions were collated with the analysis of the political position of both candidates on the political scene from the perspective of political sciences to see how the way the social media campaign is run depends on the position of the prime minister on the political scene (Bodio, 2003, p. 251).

The analysis was performed using Twitter analytics tools. The *Twitonomy* application was used to map the architecture of Twitter accounts of both PMs, namely, to identify links and interactions with other users and to highlight topics tackled by both politicians during the time in question.

Morawiecki and Babiš: their position on the political scene

The position of a politician, in this case of the PM, on the political scene is crucial for the way he or she campaigns, as it relates to the problem of his or her subjectivity, i.e. the independence (Garczyńska, 2003, p. 45) of the politician as far as what he or she says and how he or she runs the campaign.

The subjectivity, its existence or lack thereof, not only affects the freedom of running and managing the election spectacle, but it is also reflected by the role the prime minister adopts in the campaign. One should bear in mind that an election campaign involves not only competition for electorate's votes, but also rivalry inside political camps. A politician whose position in his or her political camp is not strong, will often use the campaign to build his or her status inside their party: they exploit the election-related activities, which become restricted by the fact that campaigning is adjusted to what serves the standing of the politician in his or her camp best.

The upper hand of Babiš over Morawiecki in this respect is quite clear. The Czech PM is the leader and the founder of the ANO party. As such he enjoys full institutional control over the power base. Morawiecki does not have this luxury. Jarosław Kaczyński is still the leader of the ruling party, while PM Morawiecki is not even a member of the Law and Justice (PiS) party leadership. He formally exercises authority without having any real political power (Karwat, 2000, p. 185).

The position of politicians on the political scene also stems from their political activity. Here one can identify a number of similarities between Morawiecki and Babiš. They both lack the "professional politician" card, if one does not count their activism in opposition and youth wing organizations and both emerged through the *revolving door mechanism*, i.e. by a transfer from the world of business to politics. Before Babiš founded his ANO party in 2012 he had been an entrepreneur (Szczygieł, 2018). In 2013 he was ranked as the 736. richest person in the world by the *Forbes* magazine (2nd richest in the Czech Republic). The same applies to Morawiecki: before he made his way to the PiS government, he used to be e.g. the chairman of the board in one of the Polish major banks, Bank Zachodni WBK.

Now let us look at the image burden of both politicians. Babiš is often accused by the Czech opposition of his communist activity: he used to be a member of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and collaborated with the Czechoslovak secret state security. Morawiecki's image is burdened by his activities in the Civic Platform and Polish People's Party government where he used to serve as the economic advisor to Donald Tusk, the main political antagonist of PiS (Gadomski, 2017).

The position and the political background of prime ministers affect an election campaign. The trick of personalisation, when you build your campaign message around the dark sides of the image of your competitor, is very frequently used in politics (Fras, 2005, p. 153). However, in case of Morawiecki and Babiš and their campaigning one should remember about the subjectivity

criterion. The Czech PM definitely enjoys greater political freedom, as he does not depend on internal party frictions and processes in a way that Morawiecki does.

Twitter in election campaign

Twitter is not a typical social medium, as it is a microblog where the main goal is not to build a network of friends and maintain social relations, but to have a quick exchange of views, present positions, opinions and dynamic reactions to what is happening in different places in the world (Mistewicz, 2015, p. 55).

Twitter modified political communication. Initially, it was a medium for presenting one's views and political expression. Currently, it is a platform for conducting a permanent election campaign (Woźniak, 2015), constant contact between a politician and his electorate. It is also a policy making platform - remember that on Twitter, politicians announce important decisions, present positions or even terminate strategic agreements.

The role of Twitter in the mediascape and in social networks domain results from its structure: the speed of exchanging messages, tweets, which, although they remain on the main page (timeline), gradually make space for newer, more up-to-date posts; and the short form of messages imposed by character limits, as a single tweet cannot exceed 280 characters.

The need to constantly react and post tweets so that they are not lost in the maze of other posts and the restraints connected with character limits define the *modus operandi* of Twitterers (Doctoroff, 2014, p. 111), namely the ongoing Twitter presence, need for relentless activity and specific format of messages that cannot be too long and should be both short and informative to make for a good punchline.

Twitter's structure makes it an ideal communication tool on the politician-voter line. Firstly, it allows for a direct contact, the one-sided communication can be transformed into an interaction: a politician can reply to taunts of the voters and the other way round; also it is an opportunity to become recognizable, independently of the regime of traditional media which select people, events and topics to fit their agenda predefined by the media brand. Thanks to the Twitter type of media opposition members, controversial or second line politicians also get their chance to shine in the political landscape.

Twitter is where you can also win votes thanks to the users of the platform. In the analysed period, i.e. in the 1Q2019 the service was used by 330 million users monthly

worldwide, with the daily traffic of 134 million users¹. Twitter users appreciate the medium as an alternative source of information; a channel to exchange opinions and views, to find inspiration and ideas for personal development; a place where you can have a peek at your heroes (Golinowski, 2007, p. 131). It is also a platform for flaming, i.e. ongoing online arguments referred to as “online fussing and fighting” (Zappavigna, 2013, p. 64).

Olgierd Annusewicz (2017, p. 92) points to basic functions of Twitter in political communication online, i.e. the self-presentation, persuasive, informative, educational, integrating, economic function, reciprocal communication and agenda-setting function.

These functions represented by specific, peculiar messages are shifted in the campaign reality where the persuasive function is in the forefront substituting education and information (Łukomski, 2005, p. 96), together with integration, self-presentation, and most of all the agenda-setting function (Bralczyk, 2020, p. 294).

The above catalogue of functions and communication can be expanded by two more categories that are significant for the Twitter activity from the perspective of election rivalry. The first one is the ludic type. Entertainment on Twitter can serve at least two purposes. It can be a way to make one’s image more fun as a form of self-affirmation, to give the audience a wink, to show that one does not take everything seriously, be a way to lose the political formal tone for a moment (Rusin Dybalska, 2011, p. 269). But it can be also used to make fun of the rival (Rawski, 2020a, p. 135), as a whip-of-laughter strategy against political competition (Karwat, 2009, p. 321).

Another campaign strategy is the distortive, or disruptive activities. They can be traced in popular phenomena of trolling and flaming as artificial generation of distortions on competitors’ profiles: sending internet users to hurl insults or make fun of the profile owner; to disseminate lies and fake news. Armies of *trolls* are a social media plague, especially during an election campaign. Analysts believe that as much as every third tweet posted on the Polish Twitter is bot generated (from so called fake accounts) (Maguś, 2019, p. 63).

PMs on Twitter

Twitter activity of a user, i.e. whom they follow, how often they add new conte, with whom they usually have interactions is one thing. But there is the self-presentation layer of the account, the profile photo, the background photo, the bio and the profile of the account based on the activity.

¹ In 2019 there were more than 6 million Twitter active users in Poland. In the Czech Republic it was almost 700,000 users. See: Statcounter.

One should also note the importance of subaccounts in social media. Both Morawiecki and Babiš have their own, personalized social media accounts, they also have accounts for their offices run by PR professionals. In Poland it is The Chancellery of the Prime Minister of Poland account (@PremierRP), in Czechia it is the Government Office (@strakovka)².

Subaccounts can serve to lighten up the personal profile. They can take over the formal publications and fulfil the need to inform the audience about events connected with running the country and activities related with the function held. PMs discount the delegation of the formal account in the area of self-production. Politicians can now have direct contact with the followers and can shape the political agenda, e.g. by posting opinion-making tweets (Adamik-Szysiak, 2018, p. 41).

Let us now focus on personal accounts. In terms of Twitter activity, the Czech PM seems to have the upper hand. Babiš started his Twitter presence in July 2012, before he really entered politics. He started off as a businessman, only to adapt his account later to the reality of becoming the leader of the Czech government.

The situation is completely different in Mateusz Morawiecki's case, who was absent from Twitter prior to his political career. Morawiecki set up his Twitter account in December 2017, i.e. after he was designated as the prime minister. During his time as the deputy prime minister and the minister of economy he was not an active Twitterer. The situation changed with his political promotion, which shows that the Twitter journey of Morawiecki is a result of the self-production strategy and the posts the PM tweets can be the consequence thereof (Karwat, 2009).

The self-production nature of the account itself is very clear already on the profile card with the profile information. When one opens the @MorawieckiM profile, the profile photo of the Prime Minister Morawiecki shows him in a formal and official pose, while the background photo shows the Chancellery of the Prime Minister of Poland flooded in a red-and-white illumination. The colours obviously introduce the patriotic symbolism here. The same is applied in the "about me" section, where one reads: *Prime Minister* next to a red and white flag emoticon. Morawiecki's profile includes further information about the date of birth and a link to the website of the Chancellery.

The account of Morawiecki is clearly managed by professionals with attention to details. It may suggest that the goal of the account is not to have a free interaction between the politician

² A difference in approach is already clear from Twitter handles. In Poland the political function was emphasised: the PM, while in the Czech Republic it is the place: Strakovka, which is the informal name of the PM's seat (Strakova Akademie).

and the surrounding world, nor any spontaneous activity, but rather a meticulous execution of a PR strategy.

If the @MorawieckiM account is an example of a professional self-presentation strategy, then the @AndrejBabis profile, which has been active since 2012 is a hybrid, where you can find both image management aspects and the elements showing the free nature of the account, which is untamed by any formal factors channel for communicating both with the world and the voters.

The first thing that stands out is the lack of the background photo. Babiš did not add any image or photo to fill in the background section. However, this is not something that really affects the reception. On the contrary, it directs the attention to the profile photo. The photo, unlike the photo of Morawiecki, is informal. What is more, it is incompatible with the office held. Andrej Babiš is pictured in a way that does not show his face which hides under a red baseball cap with a phrase *Strong Czechia* in white. It channels the *Make America Great Again* baseball cap worn by Donald Trump (Kokot, 2018).

Twitter presentation of Babiš is an attempt to steer away from the image burden of the function he holds. In the presentation section the politician leaves out the components that would disclose his position in the government. The profile card does not say that it is the Czech PM's account. Also, no links to websites or subaccounts can be found here. The only content is available in the bio where one reads: *Občan ČR*, i.e. a Czech citizen.

The *Občan ČR* bio is relational to the football cap shown on the profile photo: *silné Česko*. Together they make a coherent whole that evokes associations with political power, principles etc. in followers without highlighting the post Babiš holds.

It seems that from the political communication point of view the strategy adopted by the Czech prime minister is closer to the presumed self-presentation potential of Twitter and to the direct communication with voters than in case of his Polish counterpart and his account. It is clear that in the image building segment Andrej Babiš wants to simply remain Andrej Babiš on Twitter, while Mateusz Morawiecki wants to be the Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki.

PM tweets

The *Twitonomy* app allows one to monitor PMs' activity in the *retweet* category, i.e. forwarding tweets of other users, and in the *mentions by other people* category. This will help us place the accounts of Morawiecki and Babiš both on the Twitter and the real-life political landscape.

In the examined period Mateusz Morawiecki shared tweets mainly from two accounts. The first one was @PremierRP, i.e. the account of the Chancellery of the Prime Minister. 56

percent of all retweets came from this account, while further 8 percent were retweeted from the Law and Justice profile (@pisorgpl). The most mentioned users were the politicians associated with the ruling camp, with the Law and Justice (PiS) party. Mentions regarding the president of the Polish Republic, Andrzej Duda (@AndrzejDuda) and the PiS account amounted to 6 percent of all mentions each, while further 5.6 percent were connected with Joachim Brudziński³ (@jbrudzinski).

It shows that from the perspective of Twitter activity, its sources, people engaged and engaging, Morawiecki is closely affiliated with the Polish ruling political camp. What strikes is the strong correlation with the @PremierRP account, which might suggest that both accounts are affected by the suggestions and hints from PR and political communication specialists and that both profiles serve one and the same PR strategy.

No official account of the Government Office or of the ANO 2011 party profile can be found among the retweets and people mentioned on Babiš's account. The Czech PM adopts a completely different strategy to his Polish counterpart. Babiš usually retweets posts of his subordinates, namely of ministers. Most of the retweets, i.e. 30 percent, come from the Minister of Health profile @adamvojtechano; 24 percent from the deputy PM and the Minister of Finance account @alenaschillerov; 15 percent from the deputy PM and the Minister of Industry and Trade @KarelHavlicek_. These are also the users that Babiš mentions most often.

The array of PM Babiš's activity shows that on Twitter he is the boss, the coordinator and the source of information about what is happening at home and in his cabinet. What is interesting, unlike Morawiecki, Babiš only occasionally shares content from a subaccount or from his power base. As if he wanted to emphasize his political autonomy and highlight the personal nature of his Twitter profile.

Twitter campaign

The review of content added by the politicians on their timeline allows us to identify the nature of their profiles during the election campaign, to formulate answers to the question to what extent is Twitter a tool to heat up the political rivalry during the campaign and to what extent it is a social medium making use of the behind-the-scenes theme, showing the politics from the inside (Majewski, 2018, p. 78).

³ Deputy PiS leader, former Minister of Interior and Administration, Member of the European Parliament since 2019.

In the period in question PM Morawiecki used Twitter as a reporting tool. He shared coverage from his visits to events such as Game Jam Square; Together for Europe; Polish Top League (Ekstraklasa) games or celebrations of the Silesian Uprising anniversary. Because of the flood that hit southern Poland in May 2019, PM Morawiecki posted extensive information about the progress in the works of the crisis management centre and about help for flood victims. The situation of crisis was most probably the reason why purely campaign related content got reduced. If it had not been for the flood, it would have probably found its way to Morawiecki's profile more often.

One should point out that the PM rarely initiates any discussion. If, however, he decides to do so, then these are very scarce posts, which are added in the form of a C2A (*call to action*). Morawiecki asks his followers about their memories connected with their school leaving exams or which team they will support in the Polish Cup finals. It is clear that the politician is trying to use Twitter for self-promotion, which is supported by the coverage of PM attending various events and gatherings.

PM's activity often takes place in a non-political domain. Morawiecki likes to present himself as a politician who is active not only in places where he has to be, such as an EU Summit, but also where he wants to be. This is his take on the close-to-people politics, his self-presentation as a prime minister who takes personal interest in what is going on in the country. It is significant that Twitter is used here to post a message about a direct participation of the PM in the social and political life and to show the audience that the PM is also active in the non-political domain.

On the @PremierRP account retweets on formal activities of Morawiecki are predominant. It is interesting to see that @pisorgpl retweets from the Law and Justice profile include coverage from the conventions or political agenda declarations endorsed by PM Morawiecki. However, if you take a closer look at the PiS Twitter account in the period in question it becomes clear that it is Jarosław Kaczyński who plays the leading role here. The rift is additionally highlighted by the deficit of the party power base of PM Morawiecki who is looking for some space or area in social media where he could show his autonomy.

Babiš, just like Morawiecki, uses Twitter to report on his political activities. The Czech PM informs about a fruitful meeting with mothers petitioning for increased parental benefits; he reports on his visit to a grocery shop; informs about his EU meetings or shows the *behind-the-scenes* reality of the campaign. But the trick with the *behind-the-scenes* coverage in case of Babiš

is different than in case of Morawiecki. The Czech PM seems to be giving his followers a wink, sharing informal, tongue-in-cheek contents, such as a video of himself sleeping after the campaign tour.

Babiš posts agenda tweets, which reveal political intentions and inform about the political agenda. PM tweets about the AI development programme or the development of the Dukovany nuclear power plant. With each such tweet he never fails to mention that it is the result of the efforts of the government under his leadership. It is a completely different approach to self-presentation than what can be seen on Morawiecki's timeline.

Moreover, Morawiecki does not seem to use Twitter to confront his competition, or to address replies and responses to his political rivals (Singer & Brooking, 2019, p. 23). When during the election campaign the Czech opposition made accusations regarding the dubious business past of Babiš, he dismissed them on Twitter:

I am no longer a businessman thinking about his own profits. Now I am fighting only for the interests of the Czech Republic⁴ (Babiš, 2019).

Interactions with political competition intensify Twitter traffic. They are in line with the Twitter agenda-setting function that allows for the transfer of what is happening on Twitter to the traditional mediascape. The Czech PM seems to be well aware that traditional media are eager to reproduce Twitter discussions and perhaps this is why he does not hesitate to comment on and react to what the opposition and his political competitors do.

#Discussion

Hashtags are a way to increase Twitter account traffic and a recipe to dictate the discourse or initiate a discussion on the given topic. They are special links that allow other users to find a specific thread or issue in the sea of other tweets and posts.

One must not ignore the discursive meaning of hashtags. They are often marginalized due to their predominantly organizational role. But hashtags are not just hyperlinks, they are also a specific communication unit, a message with a semantic load. Thus, one should approach hashtags as a persuasion instrument in disguise which restricts, profiles and provides emotional frames for the message (Walewski, 2020). This is why political parties try to come up with

⁴ Original: „A že už nejsem byznysmen, který myslí na vlastní zisk. Já teď bojuju jen a pouze za zájmy České republiky.”

occasional hashtags that are also a positive, evaluative message, e.g. a campaign hashtag of Law and Justice: #PolskaSercemEuropy (PolandHeartofEurope).

In his tweets Mateusz Morawiecki follows the imperative of using hashtags. PM's posts include such hashtags as #PiS4EU;#NaszaUniaNaszaPrzyszłość; #PiSbus; #konwencjaPiS. Although most of them are in line with the strategy of the party as a whole, the #NaszaUniaNaszaPrzyszłość (#TogetherForEurope) was a common initiative of 13 EU countries for the review and presentation of the vision of European development, alternative to the "old EU" proposition.

Andrej Babiš does not use the hashtag strategy. The only hashtag used by the PM is #EUElections2019 which he includes only in his tweets directly related to the European elections. Tweets presenting Babiš's views on the EU or his reaction to campaign activities of his competitors do not include any hashtags. As if the PM did not bother to start any Twitter discussion on the topic.

PMs on Europe and the EU

2019 European Parliament election campaign overlapped with two events that are crucial for the position of Poland and the Czech Republic within the European community and which became a pretext to introduce campaign themes in the Twitter discussion. The first was the common Polish and Czech anniversary of their EU accession (then referred to as European Community), i.e. 1 May and the 9 May which is Europe Day.

Social media love special occasions. Many social channels commemorate a special day or holiday in a way that encourages users to engage. Both the EC accession anniversary and the Europe Day together with the campaign reality are a good example of how both PMs approach the subject that is already present in social media.

Mateusz Morawiecki made no official reference to the anniversary of the Polish EU accession. He did not directly mention the significance of this day for both Poland and the Poles. On 30th April he tweeted:

Europe has to change, be more just, with more solidarity and innovation. This can be achieved through five public policies and goals for the EU. I believe that @pisorgpl in PE can make it happen⁵! #PiS4EU (Morawiecki, 2019).

⁵ Original: „Europa musi się zmienić - stać się bardziej sprawiedliwa, solidarna i innowacyjna. Droga do tego prowadzi przez realizację pięciu polityk publicznych i celów dla Unii. Wierzę, że dzięki @pisorgpl w PE to się uda!”

adding a link to the interview he gave to politico.eu website to the tweet. It includes a catchy hashtag suggesting that the answer to everything Europe needs: the solidarity, justice etc. is exactly what PiS can offer. What is more, the PM does not mention the achievements and experience Poland gained thanks to its presence in the European Union. It is not a date to celebrate and demonstrate European values. Morawiecki appropriates the anniversary of the Polish accession into EU and uses it to present PiS's agenda for modernization and reforms of the EU, without celebrating and honoring the anniversary. And on 1 May the PM publishes coverage from the *Together for Europe* summit.

Andrej Babiš approached the EU accession anniversary in a different way. Although the PM attended the mini-summit *Together for Europe*, he posted a long, 5-tweet message about the anniversary⁶ (Babiš, 2019).

We are celebrating fifteen years since our EU accession; the PM begins thus clearly emphasizing the 1 May is a date that not only deserves remembering but should also be treated as an opportunity to comment on European matters. And this is exactly what Babiš does: he thanks all Czechs and Czech political forces for their efforts in securing the republic's place in the community, he highlights advantages of the EU and how the Czech Republic benefited from joining it:

Thanks to EU we have new export opportunities, EU companies can invest here. Only our EU membership assured foreign investors that we are a politically stable, functional market economy with the rule of law. We sit at one table in the EU, nothing about us without us, we participate in decision-making.

In his criticism of the EU Andrej Babiš mentions risks connected with migration and excessive bureaucracy. However, he refrains from the accusatory tone, he does not play the euroscepticism card, but rather approaches these risks as a challenge that the Czechs and the EU

⁶ Original: „Připomínáme si patnáct let od vstupu do Evropské unie. Zásluhy na tom nemělo jen pár jedinců a politiků. Vstup naší země do NATO i EU byl důsledek práce a zodpovědnosti všech poctivých, slušných, pracovitých a podnikavých lidí v této republice. Díky EU máme kam vyvážet a firmy z Unie u nás mohou investovat. Teprve členství v EU ujistilo zahraniční investory o tom, že jsme politicky stabilní, fungující tržní ekonomika s vládou práva. V EU sedíme u společného stolu, není to »o nás bez nás«, podílíme se na rozhodování. EU má mínusy, ale žádný z nich není důvod odcházet. Je to výzva, abychom byli aktivní. Vadí nám přílišná regulace, která přichází z Bruselu, a musíme získat větší vhlad do toho, jak se rodí. Lidé pak z toho mají pocit, že se tam řeší prkotiny a nesmysly. Vadí nám nápady Bruselu a mnohých velkých zemí na přerozdělování migrantů. Zde je náš názor jasný. Chceme neprodyšnou ochranu vnějších hranic EU. Sami si budeme vybírat, kdo u nás bude žít, a azyl se bude udělovat podle našich zákonů. Naše členství v EU je návrat do Evropy, kam patříme a vždy jsme patřili. Není to téma k diskusi ani k nějakému referendu. Je to nezpochybnitelné a nezvratitelné. V EU však nebudeme jen aktivní a kooperativní, ale i kritičtí, když bude třeba.”

need to face. The PM makes references to the eurosceptical factions and politicians prompting the CZECHexit idea, so that the Czech Republic leaves the European Union:

Our EU membership is us returning to Europe, because we have always been a part thereof. It is not up for any discussion or referendum.

Although Poland and the Czech Republic share a similar history within the EU, in the messages of the PMs a different approach towards the common Europe issue transpires. Babiš presents his views very clearly, while Morawiecki makes references to the topic, but in an oblique, evasive way.

What is striking is the fact that the idea of POLexit and CZECHexit emerged both in Poland and in Czechia. Although the power of eurosceptics in both countries is more or less the same, nevertheless Babiš declares that there is no future for the Czech Republic outside the EU, while PM Morawiecki remains silent on the topic, at least on Twitter.

Mateusz Morawiecki in a similar oblique way makes references to the Europe Day. He posts the coverage from the European meeting on Twitter:

The EU needs an ambitious vision for growth and courage to face challenges. Creating a common market, wise environmental policies, fighting EU VAT gap – these are the topics we discussed today during the Europe Day at the #SibiuSummit⁷ (Morawiecki, 2019).

What is striking is the fact that the challenges Morawiecki refers to are the same as what PiS suggested during the campaign. Thus, Morawiecki again uses the date and the occasion not to contribute to a discussion or present his opinions, but to do politics and fulfil campaign goals (Rawski, 2020b, p. 303). On the other hand, Andrej Babiš does not make a note of the Europe Day at all, he does not tweet a word about it. On the 8th of May he reports on the visit of the then President of the European Council in Prague. The Czech PM and Donald Tusk made a joint declaration on their readiness to build Europe of respect, cooperation and justice.

Metaphors for Europe

In the campaign discourse metaphors used by political leaders play a special role. One should mention them especially in the persuasive context of Twitter influence. The metaphors have the

⁷ Original: „Unia Europejska potrzebuje ambitnej wizji rozwoju i odwagi, by stawić czoła wyzwaniom. Budowa wspólnego rynku, mądra polityka klimatyczna, walka z europejską luką VAT – o tym wszystkim rozmawialiśmy dziś w Dniu Europy na #SibiuSummit”.

potential to impose images, consolidate associations and reconstruct knowledge and awareness of the audience (Lakoff, 2017, p. 19) in line with the needs and goals of the Twitterer.

Metaphors are a popular method in politics, well known and applied in any elections. Metaphors allow politicians to freely infuse (Lakoff, 2017, p. 31) basic campaign topics with characteristics that comply with their election strategies, goals or agendas (Kaczmarek, 2001, p. 11). Social media are especially useful in setting up and disseminating metaphors. This is mainly due to the brevity of messages, whose simplification determines the use of the language of metaphors.

The subject and the main campaign concept that the elections in question revolve around is Europe and the European Union in the sense of institutions, political entities, organizations, values, etc. Depending on the political context and even more so on the elections goal one sees different definitions of Europe.

When Mateusz Morawiecki writes about the European Union, he usually compares it to *a community; a dream; a European modernity whose fruits can be enjoyed by everyone equally*. The audience is clearly presented with a conservative discourse here with implies catalogue of values shared by conservative voters. The *community* is a value frequently recurring in PiS communication, *dreams* show aspiration and longterm plans PiS wants to fulfil, *European modernity* and the metaphor of *fruits* express objections towards exclusion and marginalization of some countries within European structures. PM Morawiecki wants everybody to enjoy the fruits, meaning advantages and development opportunities equally, without any rationing based on political values or views. Probably this is why when talking about the EU the politician applies metaphors connected with expectations and desires. Because then both him and his party can be those who know how to fulfil these dreams without destroying the order and axiological integrity. This is what Morawiecki conveys in his tweet on 2 May saying: *We want Europe where everybody feels at home*.

The home metaphor is a bridge, a link to the campaign message of Law and Justice. Europe and the EU are not a political entity here or an organization where you need to clash and compete for your own interests. It is a home and a community, where harmony, mutual respect and solidarity should prevail (Economist, 2019).

One should note here that the Twitter metaphors used by Morawiecki contradict the already mentioned narrative critical of the EU and its institutions. Probably what Morawiecki

does is a way to soften the campaign communication, to de-escalate the conflict between PiS and selected European structures.

Andrej Babiš resorts to a completely different strategy in disseminating images and metaphors of Europe. When tweeting about the European Union the politician mainly compares it to a *leader, a partner and a challenge*. Thus, he triggers associations with competition, rivalry, need for competence and collective efforts.

Europe as a leader is a comparison that evokes a high stake, a need to be a player in a team with a significant position in the geopolitical order. It is also a declaration of identity and political affiliation: we stick with the strong one. A *challenge* may be a way to invoke the logic of rivalry: both in internal Czech politics and within the EU. It is an action that needs to be faced. *Partnership*, on the other hand, is an activity that requires politicians to be professional, competent and have a vision. This takes us back to Babiš, whose political and business background makes him proficient in games and cooperation with players in Brussels on equal terms.

Andrej Babiš imaging of Europe introduces the language of professionalism, he imposes optics of competition and negotiations where the European Union is not a value, but an organization, an economic entity, where the key to success and achievement is competence and skills. Twitter metaphors used by the Czech PM are meant to affirm him as a politician, as the one who can take on challenges (Nadeau, 2001, p. 359) faced by the Czech Republic in the European Union. It is a clever strategy of escaping forward. Let us reiterate the accusations made by the Czech opposition in this context: the criticism of PM's dubious business connections. By using metaphors Babiš takes the wind out of his opponents' sails. In his crafty effort he reverses the discursive order, changes image burden into a superlative that speaks to his merit (Karwat, 2009, p. 23).

Conclusions

The review of Twitter activity of Prime Ministers Morawiecki and Babiš suggests that during the election campaign the medium is used with caution. It seems that the politicians fail to make use of the potential offered by Twitter for generating campaign discourse and establishing topics and issues that would trigger comments from followers, analysts, voters, and mainly the political competition.

Virality of tweets, i.e. how they are shared, commented, liked, thus generating the huge reach of the tweet is ignored by the PMs. Babiš tries to initiate discussion, to interact with individual players on the Czech political scene, which is not the case of Morawiecki, who uses the medium as a reporting tool and refrains from what one could call Twitter politics, i.e. he does not engage in politics, rivalry, communication with his competitors by writing emotionally marked tweets (Maliszewski, 2008). This kind of strategy is closer to what Babiš does.

Both PMs show signs of affinity towards the self-production potential of Twitter. They report on the good things happening around them. They follow the strategy of overinforming about events with a potential to consolidate and improve their political image, while ignoring anything that might rebound on their image.

The focus on image related issues during election campaign together with the limited use of Twitter for generating election discourse may come as a bit of surprise. It is very clear when looking at their opinion-making tweets or the use of hashtags (Kapuścińska, 2018). Politicians clearly steer away from the *clickbait* strategy which is supposed to attract attention of the audience with catchy phrases or exaggerated artwork (Walewski, 2020, p. 29). It may be the result of strong personalization of politics, when based on the calculation of gains politicians feel it is better to focus attention of the voters on the prime minister, to personalize the campaign rather than introduce or start a discussion on political or agenda-related issues, which may be far riskier, especially until the votes are cast.

The campaign period is marked by caution and a conservative approach. Politicians clearly refrain from any confrontational strategy entailing interaction with voters, with competition and from tweeting their own views or opinions. Here PM Babiš seems to be bolder compared to the static Morawiecki. The defensive communication may be the consequence of the risk that it involves. Such tweets may be later transferred to traditional media where the PM may be depicted as a troublemaker or a press instigator. During the campaign it pays better off for politicians to remain level-headed, conservative, even for the price of having a boring profile for a while.

When one compares the Twitter activity of Morawiecki and Babiš, it seems that the gusto with which a politician uses social media depends on his position in the party and in the political landscape. It is clear on the example of Babiš who enjoys a very strong position in his party and, unlike Morawiecki, does not have to share his social media presence with anybody.

Although social media have been revolutionizing political communication and the political domain, it seems political leaders appreciate their power. However, they are well aware that they can be used to their advantage and hurt them as well: this is why in their approach towards new media they remain conservative.

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