The Troublesome Concept of Sovereignty – the Czech debate on European Unity[1]

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Abstract: How the European Union is conceptualised in the national and public political debates restricts the European policy options available to that state. It is therefore of interest to see which conceptions of the EU dominate in a country, and to understand how these can be identified and interpreted. This paper outlines a framework for discourse analysis and then applies it to the Czech public discourse on the European Union. I describe how the debate can be analysed according to three different ideal types of legitimation, based on 1) an instrumental rationalisation, 2) a "we feeling", 3) a "good argument". I argue that any single actor will likely use arguments drawing upon all three levels, and I conclude that the Eurosceptics (Euro-realists) associated with the Civic Democratic Party came to see EU membership as a "marriage of convenience", a necessary evil, because their arguments went in two incompatible directions. According to the third ideal type, they had to favour membership as good for the national interest, in economic terms. Simultaneously, this conflicted with the other two levels due to their belief that the EU is a threat to national sovereignty, and their conception of the nation state as the only legitimate arena for democratic decision-making. Advocates of membership, such as Prime Minister Špidla, had a more inclusive conception of the EU, enabling the argument that the EU strengthens nation states in globalising times.

Key words: discourse analysis, legitimacy, European integration, the Czech Republic

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INTRODUCTION

In this article I approach the question of how to identify and interpret contesting conceptions of the European Union in political and public discourses. I claim that an actor is likely to use arguments based on differing underlying constructions of a discourse. Thus scholars engaged in discourse analysis should not merely try to identify a certain political actor's conception of Europe; but also what the underlying constructions are and to what extent these mutually coincide or conflict. Such an approach explains why parts of the Czech Civic Democratic Party faced a dilemma in the run up to the referendum on membership. On the one hand, membership had to be advocated as in the national interest in economic terms, but on the other their conception of the EU conflicted with their understanding of the sovereign nation state.

To approach the underlying constructions of the Czech political discourse on Europe I suggest the use of three ideal types of legitimation, modifications of the three types outlined by Eriksen and Fossum (2004). The ideal types are chosen because they represent three different types of governance in Europe. The first refers to a problem-solving regime, the second to a value-based community with a collective self understanding,[2] and the third to a rights-based

union deriving its legitimacy from norms approved in a free and open debate.[3] Thus by analysing the discourse according to these ideal types we will not merely categorise the different conceptions of Europe in the debate, but will gain a deeper understanding of what kinds of European governance will likely find legitimacy in the Czech discourse. However, the ideal types need modification since they are, in their original form, too narrow to allow the interpretation of all arguments used to justify the EU.

If we understand discourse in accordance with Ole Wèver and the Copenhagen School[4] as "...a system that regulates the formation of statements",[5] then we also find a clear argument for why it is relevant to study discourse. In a discourse not all statements are possible, or at least if less-likely statements are uttered, the chances of them being taken seriously are low.[6] It follows that the discourse also has implications for policy formulation. Since political actors must justify their decisions, not all possibly decisions are likely given a certain time and context. This is not to say that the actors cannot change the structure of a discourse, merely that it in some instances that less likely.[7] So the kind of European governance that can be legitimated in the Czech discourse is likely to influence Czech Europe-related policymaking.

So far I have said that what is to be analysed is the Czech discourse on the European Union, and that the discourse will likely be structured around different legitimating criteria. Here the European Union should be understood as a contested concept in the Czech political discourse: a contested concept in the sense of what Thomas Diez refers to as discursive nodal points (DNP; 1998, 1999 and 2001). According to Diez, each different conception of the discursive nodal point is made possible by different meta-narratives.[8] In other words, there are contesting views on how the EU as a concept should be understood. These can be analysed through the suggested ideal types of legitimation. These ideal types present the link between different conceptions of the discursive nodal point and the meta-narratives constituting the different conceptions. As this article primarily examines how the Czech discourse on European integration is structured in accordance with the ideal types of legitimation, less attention is paid to the constitutive meta-narratives, the deeper layers of discourse.

Furthermore, the aim of the article is primarily to explore the possibilities of discourse analysis, not to produce a comprehensive description of the Czech debate on EU membership.

The article first outlines and discusses the theoretical framework, after which the topic of the Czech Republic and European integration is briefly introduced. Finally, the framework is applied to the public discourse on the European Union in the Czech Republic.

OUTLINING THE FRAMEWORK

The framework used in this article is based on the understanding of discourse as discussed and developed by the Copenhagen School. However, it differs from the Copenhagen School on the issue of how to analytically approach the discourse. I first describe the Copenhagen School's approach to analysing discourses on Europe, indicating some problems with it. Secondly, I explain the concept of discursive nodal points, and how it can be used with-

out departing from the underlying understanding of discourse as used by the Copenhagen School. In the following part I elaborate on how the ideal types of legitimation need to be modified to fit the analytical purpose of this paper.

Hansen, Wæver et al. (2002) take as their point of departure how the reluctance towards the EU in the Nordic countries can be explained by specific aspects of the national discourses on Europe. These in turn are argued to consist of three layers: 1) the basic conceptual arrangement of state and nation, 2) the relation of the state/nation vis-à-vis Europe, 3) the concrete policy on Europe.[9] The risk of such a scheme is that possible main themes of the discourse other than the nation-state might be ruled out. These could include the economy or competitiveness,[10] or democracy, which, even if it is naturally closely linked to the nation/state nexus, should not necessarily be taken from this perspective.

Furthermore, while starting with the roots of the "national" discourse on Europe, the framework tends to produce a rather uniform description of that discourse. In other words, the approach is more concerned with discursive structures than discursive practices, and therefore it is less likely to recognise the diversity of a discourse,[11] e.g. where competing articulations of a certain concept are active inside a single national discourse.

In addition, this perspective presupposes that the discourse is national at all levels. The reading of the discourse therefore often starts with an historical exposition going back to the 19th century (or even further). Even if we agree with the view that the discourse consists of different layers, or meta-narratives, there is no reason to argue that these must necessarily be limited either to a national setting or to the basic concepts of state and nation.

Let me take a concrete example to illustrate my point. Czech political scientist Petr Drulák (2005) uses an approach based on the discourse analysis of the Copenhagen School while analysing perceptions of Europe in the Czech political discourse. In dealing with the construction of the state/nation advocated by Czech President and former Prime Minister Václav Klaus, he argues that:

Klaus' construction is innovative in the sense that his framework of neo-classical economics makes him perceive the state/nation primarily as a regime where only market relations between economic agents matter. This construction of the state/nation then implied the construction of Europe as a regime as well...[12]

This illustrates that the approach is limited by its restriction to the national discourse. By seeking explanations in the Czech discourse on the nation/state, this approach can only deliver answers to the question of what preconditions in the Czech discourse on the nation-state enabled Klaus to make this articulation of the state/nation and of Europe as a "regime". It seems clear from this quotation that this change of the discourse *(innovation)* enters the Czech discourse from an international neo-classic economic discourse. Thus Klaus' role here is not that of an "innovator" but of an "introducer". He can be seen as an important actor trying to introduce this understanding of European governance into the Czech discourse, but surely not the inventor of this view of the state. The discourse about the state based on neo-classical economic theory might also be a factor uniting the Czech Euro-realist conception of the EU with Eurosceptic conceptions in other member states.

Diez's concept of discursive nodal points enables us to approach the discourse on Europe from another direction than the three-layered model discussed above. According the concept, like in the Copenhagen model the discourse consists of different layers. Each conception of the DNP is made possible by different combinations of the underlying discourse, or meta-narratives to use the term preferred by Diez.[13]

Since the European Union constitutes a contested concept, various views on both what the European Union is and what it ought to be are present in the debate. These in turn derive from the underlying meta-narratives.[14] From this perspective, if we again consider Drulák's point above, it would be possible to argue that Klaus's conception of the discursive nodal point (state/nation or European governance) has one of its meta-narratives in the neo-classical economic discourse on the state. Thus it is not an innovation but rather a logical projection of the neo-classical economic discourse on the state onto Europe.[15]

The underlying discourses, meta-narratives, are structured according to different legitimising criteria. Diez uses four ideal types of polity ideas to distinguish between different conceptions of European Governance, which were originally developed to compare European political parties' views on Europe.[16] These ideal types, e.g. intergovernmental cooperation, the federal state, the economic community and network, are too explicit for this paper's purpose, since an actor will likely use arguments based on various forms of rationalisation, which in turn refer to different criteria of legitimation. They are, however, based on wider categories of legitimacy; the former two ideal types (intergovernmental cooperation and the federal state) are based on identity legitimacy, the third (the economic community) on output and the forth (the economic network) on participation.[17] Hence it is not such a radical step to bring the suggested ideal types of legitimation into the framework. The suggested ideal types have the advantages, as mentioned above, of referring to different types of governance in Europe, and moreover to different concepts of democracy.[18]

I will now discuss and modify the three ideal types of legitimation, and subsequently describe which texts have been used for the analysis. Following this, I will briefly introduce the issues surrounding the Czech Republic and European integration, after which I present the analysis of the Czech debate on European unity, structured in accordance with the three ideal types.

THREE IDEAL TYPES OF LEGITIMATION

The three ideal types correspond to the main theoretical divide in contemporary European studies, between rationalists and various forms of constructivist. The former emphasise an instrumental rationalisation primarily based on material interests, and the latter at least does not exclude the role of identity and norms.[19] According to the first ideal type, the EU is seen as a problem-solving entity that serves to promote the material interests of member states. The second type views the EU as a value-based community legitimised through a collective self-understanding of special European values. Thirdly the EU can be seen as a rights-based union where a set of legally entrenched fundamental rights evokes popular support for the Union.[20]

The three ideal types of legitimation draw upon three different types of rationalisation. The first is based on an instrumental rationalisation (maximising material interests), the second is based on a contextual rationalisation, and the third on a communicative rationalisation.[21] These ideal types need some modification if they are to be broad enough to allow interpretations of arguments advocating and rejecting the EU, and moreover if they are to be clearly defined in relation to each other. Furthermore, they should still be clearly linked to the three forms of European governance: a problem-solving regime, a community based on a collective self-understanding, and as a rights based union.

The first type has been modified following Petr Drulák's (2005) suggestion of to include not only economic interests but also geopolitical ones.[22] Disregarding whether the state is concerned either with maximising its economic or its geopolitical interests, in any case the state's narrowly defined self-interest is the driving force.[23] The first model thus includes arguments legitimising the EU as optimising the national interest. It consists of two subcategories; the first includes exclusively economic arguments and legitimises the EU according to the economic gains provided to a member state – this can in turn take various forms, from increased foreign investment to redistribution between parts of the Union. The second subcategory covers geopolitical interests, and includes both national security concerns and the effect on a state's negotiation power.

The second ideal type of legitimation refers to identity-based arguments and follows a contextual rationalisation.[24] This model includes arguments based on geographically based "we feelings": European, national and their mutual relationship. These arguments basically approach this question: Is the EU advocated, pictured or rejected in terms of a cultural community?

The third ideal type of legitimation is in its original form the procedural reference to norms established through deliberate democratic decision-making.[25] This is problematic, since this paper analyses political argumentation on the EU and conceptions of the EU in the political discourse. Here we can decide either only to include arguments drawing upon the normative view that the EU should be based on such deliberate decision-making, or include arguments based on norms thought of as having been accepted in this way. Yet what appears as an "uncontroversial norm"[26] by one actor can be considered part of an ideological programme by another. It follows that this ideal type needs to be re-defined. In my definition, the third ideal type refers to arguments based on what an actor defines as "good society". In accordance with this type of rationalisation, the EU can be advocated on the basis of the norms it promotes, but likewise rejected for the same reason.

These ideal types should not be taken as a tool for categorising the various actors, since the actors in the discourse operate on various levels of the discourse. Instead, what is interesting is how the actors operate on the various levels represented by the three ideal types of legitimation.

MEDIA, UTTERANCES AND ACTORS

I suggest the political debate in media as the starting point for analysing the political discourse on Europe. I have two arguments for doing so. Firstly, the contesting meanings of the DNP are likely to appear at one stage or another in the mass media, in the form of statements by politicians and other per-

sonalities, commentaries, editorials, etc. Thus I accept that more actors influencing the political discourse than politicians alone; the dominating actors of the discourse might as well be journalists, writers, scientists, etc. Secondly, the mass media is crucial to the political discourse on any given topic since this is the structure by which politicians necessarily have to advocate their decisions and opinions.

It should be stressed that even if we accept a wider definition of political discourse, this is not the same as studying what ordinary people really think of the European Union. The focus here is on the question of what conceptions of the EU are present in the public debate and the meta-narratives influencing them. This has two consequences. Firstly, any analysed utterance is treated as an object in itself, independent of its author. It follows that in the analysis the question of what an actor actually thinks is not asked, which also allows for the possibility that an actor contributes statements to the discourse that are not coherent or even contradictory. Of course, it could be argued that an utterance is made for strategic purposes, hiding the true motives of an action. Yet the actor must still find a way of justifying a decision acceptable in the discourse.[27] So the actual argument is important. Secondly, the attitude of the wider population is not being studied. Clearly not all people in a society possess the capability to enter media debates.

Still, to say that the first object of the study will be the media is not very helpful, given the extensive material that has at one point or another been produced on the topic, or rather topics. There are many issues related to the European Union, and often commentaries or other statements only deal with a certain aspect of the union, or even more so of integration. The analysis is based on a study of articles from four major Czech dailies: *Hospodářské noviny*, *Lidové noviny*, *Mladá fronta Dnes* and *Právo*, between 2003 and 2005. I do not claim to have analysed all articles published on the topic – that would have been impractical. Yet I am unlikely to have missed a any dominant position in the discourse.[28] I have tried to ensure this by adding to the study of articles during the longer (two-year) period a shorter period, the month preceding the referendum, which allowed for a more extensive analysis of the articles published at that time. Moreover, a check was made to ensure that the views of all major political subjects were included in the analysis.

THE CZECH REPUBLIC AND EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

Membership of the European Community/European Union, has been a priority for Czechoslovak/Czech foreign policy since the end of the communist regime in 1989.[29] The Czech opposition Civic Forum (OF) even called for a rapid incorporation into Europe in its first draft programme on foreign policy in 1989.[30] Since the elections of 1992, all Czech governments have proclaimed the goal of entering the EU. All major political parties, except for the Communist Party (KSČM), have supported this line.[31]

This does not mean that there has always been a consensus on European issues among the dominant political players. Despite the fact that Václav Klaus, as prime minister and leader of the rightist Civic Democratic Party, handed in the Czech application for a membership in 1996, seven years later as president he refused to state how he would vote in the referendum.[32]

If we look at the positions the political parties took in the run-up to the referendum, the Communist Party was the only party in the Czech parliament that recommended its voters not to vote for membership, although there was internal criticism of this decision.[33] The Civic Democratic Party, on the other hand favored membership even if some leading representatives publicly rejected it (i.e. vice chairman Ivan Langer and MP Martin Říman).[34] Generally a divide can be discerned between the pro-EU view of the coalition of social democrats, liberals and Christian democrats governing since 2002, and the more skeptical approach of the Civic Democratic Party. The Civic Democrats claim to pursue a Euro-realistic policy, arguing the necessity of defending Czech national interests in relation to the EU and rejecting the notion of federalism.[35]

Instrumental Rationalisations

In this section arguments referring to economic and geopolitical output are discussed. I demonstrate that arguments referring to economic output in the narrow sense were especially crucial for representatives of the Civic Democratic Party. The importance of economic arguments is illustrated by the fact that some people associated with the party rejected membership because the economic advantages could be achieved without entering the Union. Moreover, the governing coalition itself emphasised the maximisation of national interests, even stressing the importance of geopolitical output in the form of security, influence and stability, and not merely economic output.

The journalist Marek Švehla[36] used the term "čerpací stanice" *(refuelling station)* as a metaphor to describe the dominating theme of the Czech debate on EU membership. This metaphor referred to the discussion on how much the different regions and municipalities in the country had "pumped"[37] in benefits from the European Union. This was a frequent topic in news reports in the run-up to the referendum, and was also reflected in, for example, comments made by local politicians in the media. This quotation from the Mayor of Brno is an illustrative example: "If the Czech Republic becomes a member of the European Union, it will of course have a great impact on the city of Brno. We are expecting an improved rating of the city, increased interest on behalf of investors, increased possibilities of attracting international institutions; we get the possibility of gaining from EU funds."[38]

The same economic logic brings the Chairman of the Civic Democratic (ODS) Party, Mirek Topolánek, to argue that there is no alternative to membership.[39] The economic costs of non-membership are said to be significant or, as the Civic Democrats' shadow minister of foreign affairs Jan Zahradil put it, "[a] non-entry to the EU would dramatically worsen the conditions for our trade exchange."[40] When Topolánek, in a publication tellingly titled "Therefore I am not a Euro federalist"[41] developed his thoughts on what kind of European cooperation he would prefer, he accordingly does this in terms of trade and national benefits. He writes: "I would like a Europe ... of trading and collaborating national states, that cooperates only in the areas where it is more favourable and efficient than single-handed action."[42]

If the EU is seen only in terms of the Czech Republic's economic output, then there is no reason for membership if the sum of the cost/benefit analysis

is negative; such voices were heard in the debate. Petr Mach, executive director of the Centre for Economics and Politics, a think tank closely related to ODS and President Klaus, argued that: "After reading the Accession Agreement I do not hesitate to argue that accession to the EU would be a disaster, at least from the perspective of the state budget."[43] However, difficult to count the economic returns of membership. At the most basic level, this comes down to a narrowly defined question of how much money the Czech state will pay to the EU budget, and how much it will receive. Before the referendum there were doubts about the capability of Czech subjects to claim all the economic resources available from the various European funds. This allowed one economist to argue: "We know how much we will pay but we do not know how much, exactly, we will get back."[44]

That quote illustrates the most narrowly defined cost and benefit argument possible, yet it should be noted that the output argument can be extended to include not only a whole range of other economic parameters but also geopolitical considerations, without deserting the instrumental rationality. A quotation of the then Czech Prime Minister, Vladimír Špidla, clearly illustrates this geopolitical argument, referring to the shortcomings of nation states in a globalised world. Nation states, he argues, are no longer capable of defending their national interests on their own, he continues: "Today, there simply does not exist any European state that would be capable of conducting global politics on its own, for instance in relations with China or Japan. Therefore the European states have grouped together."[45] Elsewhere, Špidla has also used the security argument to favour membership by arguing that the EU is a peace project that will never allow another Munich agreement.[46]

The European Union is thus not seen as a state in the making, as also indicated by Špidla, but rather as an instrument necessary for promoting the national interests of its members. Others, as we shall see, come to the opposite conclusion and argue that the EU is a state in making and thus a possible threat to Czech sovereignty. Thus the root of the differences in opinion seem to be contested conceptions of what the European Union is, as much as contested views on what it ought to be.

So far the arguments discussed have followed instrumental rationalisations from a perspective so bound to the Westphalian concept of nation states that any questioning of its central unit, the nation state, has been impossible. To approach the question of why sovereignty is so crucial we must leave the instrumental rationalisations (the first ideal type of legitimation) and turn to the second type, contextual rationalisations.

Contextual Rationalisations

In this section it is first suggested that the critics of the EU in the Civic Democratic Party reject deeper European integration partly because this would be incompatible with what they consider the "natural" political unit. Then I argue that even if some voices in the debate suggest that Europe constitutes a natural geographic unit, rarely would anyone suggest Europe as a replacement for or a way of overcoming nation states.

Leading critics of the EU (or "euro-realists", to use the term they favour) in the Civic Democratic Party have on several occasions compared EU mem-

bership to a marriage of convenience, as opposite to one of love. This particular quotation is from the party's vice chairman, Jan Zahradil, but President Klaus has used similar formulations: "[W]e recommend voters to vote in favour but ... we believe that this is a marriage of convenience and not of love."[47] The marriage of convenience corresponds with the aforementioned material benefits of membership, but as to what a marriage of love would be, Zahradil and Klaus have not said.

Danish scholar Peter Bugge (2003) has argued that Václav Klaus's negative view on European unification is closely related to his view of the nation and the challenge of being European without losing one's nationality. Among other things Klaus has warned of the risk to Czech nationality "...dissolving in European-ness like a lump of sugar in a cup of coffee."[48] Clearly, it is not possible to approach questions concerning national identity and its argued compatibility or non-compatibility with a European identity in terms of cost and benefit. If we look at criticism at this level, we see that the EU is portrayed as an artefact, something at odds with an essentialist Westphalian world-view where nations are seen as unquestionable entities. This is totally in line with Ernest Gellner's classical definition of nationalism as "primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent".[49]

Klaus does not use the term nationalism in accordance with Gellner's definition, but distinguishes between a natural, "positive" feeling of national identity (necessary for any liberal democracy) and nationalism, understood as something not only extreme but also artificial. Klaus rejects the need for any kind of nationalism, independent of whether it is "national" or European, but stresses the importance of a national feeling of loyalty towards one's own nation as the basis for the political state.[50] The definition of nationalism in itself might seem irrelevant but illustrates how "natural" this idea about the congruency between nation and the political unit is in Klaus' argumentation. This quotation makes the point clear:

We do not need any nationalism. We need a political system of liberal democracy that necessarily demands a citizenship principle based on the natural loyalty of people towards their own nation and with an elementary feeling of national identity.[51]

From this perspective it is understandable that Klaus has repeatedly rejected the possibilities of democracy at the supranational level. Klaus's concern for democracy is linked with his belief that the nation state can be the only arena for a functioning democracy: "I do not believe it is possible to realise a democratic system at the supra-state level."[52] In another article, Klaus describes "traditional democratic mechanisms"[53] as being inseparable from existing national states. This can be taken as an utterance of Westphalian logic, where the actor is bound to a contextual logic of argumentation and therefore fails to see any other possible options.[54]

The opposite of this natural unit is thus what is above referred to as a "marriage of love". Civic Democratic Party Vice-Chairman Ivan Langer took the position that the economic gains related to a membership of the EU could be achieved without membership, thereby rejected not onlya "marriage of love" but alsoa "marriage of convenience". Langer argues that the Czech Republic

already enjoys the benefits of close economic cooperation with the EU and in case of non-membership that would remain the same: "Merely, we would not participate in the inventions of European president, European minister of foreign affairs, European charter..."[55] The view of the EU as an unnatural unit is not an exclusive possession of the Civic Democratic Party but is also part of a wider debate in the media. For example, the idea of a European presidency that could help Europeans identify with the EU is rejected by writer Jan Jandourek on because a European people with which he could symbolise "...has yet to be born".[56]

Hardly anyone denies the importance of nations or nation states. More often the controversy stems from disagreements over the possibility of combining the nation and national identity with a European structure for cooperation.[57] As already mentioned, the EU has in this debate often been advocated as a necessity for promoting the national interest in a globalised world. The same pattern can be seen regarding the debate on the Constitutional treaty. Critics like Klaus see the Constitutional treaty as a threat to national sovereignty and national democracies: a "...decisive step from a Europe of states to a Europe of one European state".[58] Advocates of the Constitutional treaty tend in turn to argue that the constitutional treaty strengthens and clarifies the role of nation states in the EU.[59]

However, it is possible to find examples where the role of the nation state has has been challenged, at least partly. Václav Havel has publicly advocated a view of the EU as a supranational and democratic entity, for example in his 2002 speech to the Italian Senate in Rome: "Europe now has not only a chance to demonstrate to the world how many diverse nations can successfully join together in one large supranational and democratic entity..." Notably, Havel has not only argued that the EU can be joined by nations, but moreover that Europe "...has always been and still is in essence a single and indivisible political entity, though immensely diverse, multifaceted and intricately structured."[60] This reflects a view that the political unit does not have to be congruent with the nation. However, it would be wrong to say that Havel disregards the role of the nation or even the nation state, since the EU that he favours is "a democratic union of states consisting of equal citizens and nations".[61]

From this we can conclude that the European Union is not seen as a way of overcoming the nation state even by Havel. Contextually based legitimation thus seems bound to the nation state. For EU advocates the Union is a way of reinforcing the nation state, while for its critics it is a way of undermining the state.

Communicative Rationalisations

In this section we see that while some actors consider the EU a promoter of norms protecting citizens' rights, others reject these norms as part of an ideological project.

In the "return to Europe" or "back to Europe" argument that predominated in the beginning of the 1990s, and earlier in dissidents' writings under communism,[62] Europe should probably be taken as a symbol for that what Soviet totalitarianism was not. Jaques Rupnik (2003) argues that Milan Kundera's essay "The Stolen West or the Tragedy of Central Europe" sparked a debate

about Europe as something more than merely a common market: "...[I]t was a civilisation, a culture, a set of values that were most forcefully defended precisely where they were most directly threatened by Soviet/Eastern totalitarianism."[63]

In line with such argumentation, the EU can be seen as a shield against undemocratic forces. Czech foreign minister Cyril Svoboda has, for example, argued that Mussolini, Hitler and the Bolsheviks all came to power democratically, which in his view would not have been possible in the EU because the states are so closely interconnected.[64] Joining the EU can thus be seen as protection against non-democratic domestic forces. Likewise the EU is seen as a preventative measure against corruption among the national elite. Editor of the weekly *Respekt* newspaper Martin Švehla wrote: "...this country only gains from a loss of sovereignty. Czechs, like all small post-totalitarian states, suffer from a lack of an elite that would be able to faithfully and reasonably administrate the state..."[65]

Furthermore, the EU is often pictured as bringing law and order, and, as Havel indicated in a speech shortly before the referendum on membership, should put an end to "economic dupery".[66] Other arguments made have included a strengthening in respect for the individual and better laws protecting against gender and ethnic discrimination, improving consumer rights, etc. Yet not everyone would agree to the norms the EU promotes. A quotation from Topolánek serves as an example.

I am not interested in accepting that someone in Strasbourg would decide about how many percentages of women, members of national minorities, gays and lesbians shall be employed in this or that institution or sit in the parliament.[67]

This criticism can be interpreted in two ways. Firstly that Topolánek does not agree with the norms promoted, and secondly that the EU is not accepted as the right level of decision making. The latter criticism has already been discussed at some length under the heading Contextual Rationalisations. Regarding the former, clearly what advocates consider neutral norms for the protection of the individual are by the EU's critics interpreted as parts of an ideological project.

Klaus argues that Europeanism is one of several new ideologies that has replaced socialism and that shares with it a "...restriction of human freedom and [it] offers ambitious social engineering" (Klaus, 2005b).[68] Chairman of the Civic Democratic Party Mirek Topolánek argues similarly that the EU is not the true standard-bearer of "Europeaness" because it is too bureaucratic and restricts the freedom of its citizens and member states in a way that contradicts the idea of Europe. According to this view Europe is not restricted to a specific geographical territory so it is pointless to ask where Europe starts and where it ends "because Europe has its value-roots and historical transmission everywhere where there is freedom. Europe is present in the USA, in New Zealand, in Japan. ... In a certain sense of the word it would be possible to argue that Europe today is more at home in these countries than in our continent."[69] Czech political scientist Miloslav Bednář makes the argument even clearer: "The EU again publicly rejects the very essence of Europeaness, that is democratic freedom."[70]

This indicates that both advocates of the EU and its critics use the concept of Europe as anti-totalitarian. However, while advocates view the EU as the guardian of certain individual norms, its critics argue that it limits the freedom of member states and so they reject the promoted norms as ideological.

CONCLUSION

Both of the scholars considered founding fathers of European integration theory, Ernst B. Haas and Karl W. Deutsch, included identity-related concepts in their concepts of integration.[71] So to argue that identity matters regarding European integration is nothing new. This article shows that Czech Euro-realists faced a conflict between the perceived economic gains of membership in instrumental terms and the perceived losses of sovereignty according to the contextual rationalisation. As most of the so-called Euro-realists in the end advocated membership, even if their enthusiasm was tepid, indicates the importance of economic output for legitimising the EU. Some Euro-realists' heavy criticisms of the Constitutional treaty also fit into this pattern; because the Czech Republic is already a full member of the Union, the economic national interest is no longer at stake.

Advocates of the EU had no similar conflict of incompatible interests. A common approach, as for instance held by Prime Minister Špidla, was that the EU could be favoured for economic and geopolitical interests, and since the EU strengthens the member states in a globalised world, no discussion of a loss of sovereignty was needed. Thus advocates of the EU did not have to enter into a discussion on national identity, and even if they did, and the EU was advocated for reasons based on identity and norms, it never came down to a conflict between the three ideal types of legitimation. Their conception of the contested concept (the European Union) did not conflict with the underlying meta-narratives on the nation, national sovereignty and democracy. A conflict could be avoided since the EU is interpreted not as overcoming the nation state, but reinforcing it. So both EU membership and the Constitutional treaty had to be interpreted as favourable to the Czech national interest. In other words, the EU is only likely to maintain its legitimacy as long as future functioning of the EU can be argued to be beneficial for the Czech Republic in economic or geopolitical terms.

Still, even if the European Union is seen by most as a problem-solving regime, there is an opening for an interpretation of it as a rights-based Union. The conflict between what is considered good for "ordinary citizens" and good for the national elite indicates a gap that can not be articulated with references to the national interest. It remains to be seen whether the EU can provide such forms of individual security that would entitle it widespread support based on the rights it pursuits. The problem such an articulation of the EU has to overcome is the accusation of promoting just another ideological project.

ENDNOTES

[2] Eriksen, E. O. and Fossum, J. E. (2004), "Europe in Search of Legitimacy: Strategies of Legitimation Assessed". *International Political Science Review* 25 (4), pp. 436–438.

[3] Ibid., pp. 445–446. These ideal types are discussed in greater detail and operationalised under the heading *Ideal Types*.

[4] Most coherently presented by Wæver, O. (2002), "Identity, communities and foreign policy: discourse analysis as foreign policy theory". In: Hansen, L. and Wæver, O. (eds.), *European Integration and National Identity: The Challenge of the Nordic States*. London: Routledge.

[5] Wæver, O. (2004), "Discursive Approaches". In: Diez, T. and Wiener, A. (eds.), *European Integration Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 199.

[6] Compare Foucault, M. (2003), *Die Ordnung des Diskurses*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Wissenschaft, pp. 11ff.

[7] Compare Wæver (2002), p. 27.

[8] Diez, T. (2001), "Europe as a Discursive Battleground: Discourse Analysis and European Integration Studies". *Cooperation and Conflict*, 36 (1), p. 16.

[9] Wæver (2002), pp. 33ff.

[10] Compare Diez (2001), p. 14.

[11] Ibid., p. 150.

[12] Drulák, P. (2005), "Probably a Regime, Perhaps a Union: European Integration in the Czech and Slovak Political Discourse". In: Sjursen, H. (ed.), *Enlargement in perspective*. Arena Report, No. 2/05, Centre for European Studies University of Oslo, p. 229.

[13] Diez (2001), pp. 19ff.

[14] Ibid., p. 16.

[15] Compare Drulák (2005), p. 229.

[16] See Jachtenfuchs, M., Diez, T. and Jung, S. (1998), "Which Europe? Conflicting Models of Legitimate European Political Order". *European Journal of International Relations,* Vol. 4 (4).

[17] Jachtenfuchs, et. al. (1998), pp. 417f; see also Diez, T. (1998), "The Economic Community Reading of Europe: Its Discursive Nodal Points and Ambiguities towards Westphalia". *COPRI Working Paper* 6/98, Copenhagen Peace Research Institute, pp. 3f.

[18] Drulák (2005), p. 214; Eriksen and Fossum (2004), p. 436.

[19] Checkel, J. T. (2004), "Social constructivisms in global and European politics". *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 30 (2), p. 231; Risse, T. (2004), "Social Constructivism and European Integration". In: Diez, T. and Wiener, A., *European Integration Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 162.

[20] Eriksen and Fossum (2004), pp. 436–438. For discussions on the ideal types see also, Sjursen, H. (2005), "Introduction – Enlargement in Perspective" and Dulák, P. (2005), "Probably a Regime, Perhaps a Union: European Integration in the Czech and Slovak Political Discourse". In: Sjursen, H. (ed.), *Enlargement in Perspective*.

[21] Eriksen and Fossum (2004), p. 438.

[22] Drulák (2005), p. 215.

[23] The first ideal-type is comparable to the liberal-intergovernmentalist perspective on European integration. Moravcsik (1999) argues that the decisions for and against deeper European integration can be explained based according to "...underlying economic interests with geopolitical ideas playing a distinctly secondary role." Moravcsik A. (1999), "Is something rotten in the state of Denmark? Constructivism and European Integration". *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 6 (4), p. 674.

[24] Compare Erikssen and Fossum (2004), p. 438.

[25] Eriksen and Fossum (2004), pp. 445–447; Sjursen (2005), p. 5. The communicative logic of the third model shares similarities with the "truth seeking" argumentation discussed by Risse, T. (2000), "Let's Argue!: Communicative Action in World Politics". *International Organization,* Vol. 54 (1), p. 4. Both cases are based on the writings of Jürgen Habermas.

[26] Eriksen and Fossum (2004), p. 447.

[27] Compare Schimmelfennig, F. (2001), "The Community Trap: Liberal Norms, Rhetorical Action, and the Eastern Enlargement of the European Union". *International Organization* 55 (1), pp. 63–65.

[28] Compare Wæver (2002), p. 44.

[29] Dürr, M; Marek, D. and Šaradín, P. (2004), "Europeizace české politické scény – politické strany a referendum o přistoupení k Evropské unii". *Mezinárodní vztahy* 39 (1), p. 31.

[30] Občanské fórum (1989), "Programové zásady Občanského fóra".

[31] Dürr et al. (2004), p. 31.

[32] Klaus quoted on the Czech section of the BBC World Service, 9 June 2003 (**www.bbc.co.uk/czech/interview/030609_klaus.shtml**).

[33] See Handl, V. (2004), "Evropeizace KSČM mezi ortodoxií a eurokomunismem". Policy Paper, p. 6. Prague: Institute of International Relations; Dürr et al. (2004), p. 35.

[34] Dürr et al. (2004), p. 35.

[35] Ibid., (2004), p. 32; see also; ODS (2002) "ODS volí E".

[36] *Mladá fronta Dnes*, 29 May 2003.

[37] In Czech "čerpat" – relating to the analogy of a petrol station.

[38] Duchoň, Petr quoted in *Mladá fronta Dnes* 12 June 2003 – all translations are my own unless otherwise stated.

[39] See for instance the quotation in *Mladá fronta Dnes*, 7 June 2003.

[40] Zahradil, J. (2003), "Proč nejsem eurofederalistou. Pohled stínového ministra zahraničí ODS". Praha: CEVRO, p. 17.

[41] "Proč nejsem eurofederalistou."

[42] Topolánek, M. (2003), "Proč nejsem eurofederalistou? Pohled předsedy ODS". Praha: CEVRO, p. 10.

[43] Mach, Petr (2003), "Krutá pravda o evropských dotacích". *Právo*, 21 May 2003.

[44] Němec, Martin (2003), "... vstup do unie nám uškodí". *Mladá fronta Dnes*, 6 June 2003.

[45] *Právo*, 14 June 2003.

[46] See Špidla, Vladimír (2003), "Sázka na Evropu je správná". *Mladá fronta Dnes,* 12 June 2003.

[47] Zahradil, Jan vice-chairman of ODS, quoted in *Mladá fronta Dnes*, 9 June 2003, but the same analogy has been used by Czech President Klaus, for example in an interview with the Czech section of the BBC World Service, 9 June 2003 (**www.bbc.co.uk/czech/interview/030609_klaus.shtml**).

[48] Klaus, V. (1997), *Renaissance: The Rebirth of Liberty in the Heart of Europe*. Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, p. 106; see also Bugge, P. (2003), "Czech perceptions of the EU membership: Havel vs. Klaus". In: Rupnik, J. and Zielonka, J. (eds.), *The Road to the European Union. Volume 1 – The Czech and Slovak Republics*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, p. 189.

[49] Gellner, E. (1983), *Nations and Nationalism*. Oxford: Blackwell, p. 1. Gellner's definition is also an interesting example of how natural these units have come to be viewed, since even if the definition seems straightforward it leads in a circle, because of the question of what makes a national unit? This has been pointed out by Hylland Eriksen, T. (1993), *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives,* London: Pluto Press, p. 99.

[50] From Gellner's perspective this is a contradiction, since the very belief in this natural tie between nation and political entity actually constitutes nationalism.

[51] Klaus, V. (2005), "Využijme 'období reflexe' pro vymezení jiné Evropské unie". *Lidové noviny*, 16 Jule 2005.

[52] *Lidové noviny*, 11 June 2003.

[53] *Lidové noviny*, 16 July 2005.

[54] This could also be interpreted in Wæver's terms regarding the nexus between state and nation. In that case we would have to ask if the ties between state and nation may be especially intertwined in the Czech case. Looking back, we see that the founding president of Czechoslovakia, Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, viewed Czechoslovakia as a multinational union based on democracy (Drulák /2005/, p. 225). To paraphrase Drulák: "...the configuration of the state / nation as a union within Europe understood as a union is well internalised, despite the broad variety of historical twists and turns" (ibid., p. 237). While this union is rights-based it allows the separation of the political entity and the nation. This indicates that national sovereignty is not only part of the national discourse on the state and on Europe, but just as much part of a universal discourse on the status of the nation state as the "natural form of political organisation" (compare Holsti (2004), *Taming the Sovereigns – Institutional Change in International Politics.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 54).

[55] Ivan Langer quoted in *Lidové noviny*, 31 May 2003.

[56] *Mladá fronta Dnes*, 7 June 2003.

[57] Compare Bugge (2003), p. 192.

[58] Klaus, V. (2005), "Předmluva Václava Klause k publikaci CEPu 'Řekneme své ano nebo ne evropské ústavě'", **www.klaus.cz**.

[59] See for instance Zaorálek, L., "Národní státy posílí" (*Mladá fronta Dnes*). Zaorálek's argumentation clearly follows the logic discussed under the first heading here: the constitution would strengthen the European cooperation necessary due to globalisation.

[60] Speech given on 15 of May 1996 in Aachen, **www.vaclavhavel.cz**; see also Bugge (2003), p. 185.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Compare Vachudova, M.A. (2005), *Europe Undivided – Democracy, Leverage & Integration After Communism.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 83. In its first draft on foreign policies from November 1989, the Civic Forum (OF) calls for a rapid incorporation into Europe (Programové zásady Občanského fóra 1989).

[63] Rupnik, J. (2003), "Joining Europe together or separately? The implications of the Czecho-Slovak divorce for EU enlargement". In: Rupnik, J. and Zielonka, J. (eds.), *The Road to the European Union. Volume 1 – The Czech and Slovak Republics*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, p. 26.

[64] Quotation in *Lidové noviny*, 19 May 2003.

[65] *Mladá fronta Dnes,* 29 May 2003. Klaus however reversed this argumentation and warned against a European political elite that would gain from a move towards supranational decision-making thus increasing their personal power and weakening the influence of the ordinary citizen. See Klaus, *Lidové noviny*, 16 July 2005.

[66] See quotation in *Mladá fronta Dnes*, 11 June 2003.

[67] Topolánek (2003), p. 11.

[68] Klaus, V. (2005b), "Intelektuálové a socialismus".

[69] Topolánek, M. (2005), "Vraťme Evropě sílu svobody". *Mladá fronta Dnes*, 30 July 2005.

[70] "Ponechte unii jejímu osudu". *Mladá fronta Dnes,* 12 June 2003.

[71] Risse (2005)*, "*Neofunctionalism, European identity and the puzzles of European integration*"*. *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 12 (2), p. 293.

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