

The discourses on European unity in the member states are crucial for the legitimacy of the EU. Therefore they should be studied in order to improve our understanding of EU legitimacy as a whole.

This study shows that the conceptualisations of European Unity in the Czech Republic as well as in the countries used for comparison, i.e. the Visegrád countries and Sweden, are made up of different constellations of the nexus of sovereignty – modernisation. The author discusses how the two meta-narratives on sovereignty and modernisation interrelate, and based on different constellations of these, three ideal types of discourse on European unity of are outlined: *sovereignty unchallenged*, *sovereignty challenged* and *modernisation unchallenged*.

The conclusion of the study suggests that the EU retrieves its legitimacy primarily as an instrument for modernisation. The EU, however, is also viewed in the Czech discourse as something more than an instrument since it is simultaneously understood as a certification of a certain level of development.

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MODERNISATION UNCHALLENGED:

THE CZECH DISCOURSE ON EUROPEAN UNITY

ÚSTAV
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Modernisation Unchallenged: THE CZECH DISCOURSE ON EUROPEAN UNITY

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Prague 2008

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1. Introduction

In the field of European integration studies, there is an increasingly growing body of literature analysing political discourses on Europe from a wide variety of perspectives (see, e.g., Wæver 2004; see also, *inter alia*, Diez 1998, 1999, 2001; Hansen 2002, 2006; Wæver 2002; Drulák 2005; Jachtenfuchs et al. 1998; Larsen 1999). It is relevant to study national political discourses about European governance since these to a large degree shape the legitimacy of the EU (cf. Diez 2001: 10). How the European Union is conceived in the discourse is inherently linked to how the EU retrieves legitimacy in the member state. Ultimately, the nationally limited political discourses are central for the legitimacy of the EU at large, due to the lack of a true all European political discourse (cf. Gaffney 1999: 201). The centrality of the national discourses can be illustrated by considering which discourses can be alternatives to the national ones and provide the EU with popular support. These alternatives can be the discourse of the European bureaucracy, the discourse of European-level leadership, and the discourse of the utopianism associated with the European movements (cf. Gaffney 1999: 204).

There is a significant amount of scholarly literature produced on the topic of the legitimacy of EU governance (e.g. Føllesdal and Hix 2006; Majone 2006; Lord 2004; Eriksen and Fossum 2004; Moravcsik 2002; Scharpf 1999). Some scholars have recently argued that European integration has reached such a level that the EU can no longer be legitimated merely by its problem-solving capabilities and therefore call for a European Demos (see, e.g., Eriksen and Fossum 2004). Yet others argue that restricting EU competencies could solve the legitimacy problem (Majone 2006) and / or that the democratic

deficit does not exist, and that thus the legitimacy problem is largely a question of output (Moravcsik 2002). But what are the arguments used by national politicians? According to what legitimisation criteria is the EU advocated or rejected?

In the scholarly literature, there are broadly three different perspectives from which state legitimacy can be analysed. First, a political system can be compared to normative political theories about legitimacy. Second, legitimacy can be studied from the perspective of law. Third, legitimacy can be viewed from a sociological perspective (cf. Beetham and Lord 2001:15–16). It is the third perspective which is of primary concern in this study. The legitimacy of governance is from this perspective determined by the acceptability of a certain system to the citizens. However, this does not mean that the other two understandings of legitimacy would be unimportant, since legitimacy as viewed by citizens as well as the political elite tends to reflect contemporary political and legal theory. The argument, of course, can also be put the other way around; neither political theory nor legal practice is immune to the discourse of the contemporary society. For this reason, even if we are dealing with the last of these three approaches to legitimacy, the other two are also of relevance.

Viewed from such a sociological perspective, it should be stressed that the legitimacy of governance, despite popular beliefs, is not necessarily linked to democracy. That is, actors may ascribe legitimacy to a social order for various different reasons (Longo, 2006: 175). Legitimacy, as the term is understood in this study, does not have a prescriptive or essentialist content but refers to convictions about the rightfulness of governance shared by actors in the political system. This view of legitimacy stresses the importance of discourse since individual beliefs in the legitimacy of the system are shaped through human communication (Jachtenfuchs *et al.* 1998: 413). Therefore this project is based on an analysis of the Czech discourse on the EU, and subsequently, the findings of the initial inductive research are related to the scholarly literature on EU legitimacy.

This project started off partly as a reaction to the dominating use of discourse analysis in the field of European integration studies. The aim of discourse analysis is to uncover the deeper structures of the studied discourse. Therefore there are two fallacies which are often made by researchers engaged in discourse analysis. Firstly, if the research is deductive, i.e. using

a readymade theoretical model of the underlying structure of discourse, the research does not allow for any uncovering of other structures of discourse. Secondly, and in contrast, more empirically oriented approaches face the risk of being too preoccupied with the contemporary debate on European integration and thus failing to see the deeper structures of discourse. The so-called Copenhagen School,¹ which is one of the dominating schools based on discourse analysis in the field of European integration studies, is an example of the former due to its preoccupation with the discourse on nation and state, i.e. with a conviction that the central discourse on Europe that affects a country's EU policy is necessarily linked to the discursive conceptualisation of the nation. The works of the so-called Governance School² provide a more empirically grounded analysis of political discourse, but these works can also be accused of being an example of both of these two shortcomings. On the one hand, they are too empirical to account for deeper layers of discourse (cf. Wæver 2004: 203–204). On the other hand, by being deductive, they fail to uncover unexpected aspects of discourse.

Thus, after reflecting the results of discourse analyses in the field, I came to the conclusion that it might be more fruitful for understanding how European integration is conceptualised in Europe to start a project based on discourse analysis using a more inductive approach than what is normally the case in the field of European integration studies (see chapter 2.1; see also Braun 2006), which would allow us to see other possible dominant structures of the discourse than, for instance, the state – nation nexus. Therefore, in approaching the Czech political discourse on European Unity, I followed the largely inductive research strategy of grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967; see chapters 2.1 and 2.2 for a general introduction to the use of grounded theory in political science and international relations; see also Braun 2008).

In research following grounded theory, the initial research question is deliberately left rather open-ended. Meanwhile, it is believed that the research method should be flexible enough to take into account all potential directions of the tracks in the empirical material. Therefore, the research strategy I followed was not initially restricted to selected themes such as nation, legiti-

¹ Most coherently represented by Ole Wæver (2002). See also Hansen (2006).

² The works of Marchus Jachtenfuchs, Thomas Diez and Sabine Jung. See primarily Jachtenfuchs *et al.* (1998), Diez (2001).

sation, etc., but allowed for relevant topics prevailing in the Czech discourse on European unity to become the focus of the analysis.

I also had an initial point of departure for the analysis, which was the debates on EU membership that preceded the Czech referendum on the issue in 2003. The analytical work therefore started with a detailed analysis of the pre-referendum discourse in Czech newspapers. Based on this material, theoretical proposals³ were formulated, which were thereafter elaborated on through a larger amount of material consisting of party programmes, other kinds of media sources, parliamentary debates, and secondary sources (see chapter 2). At the beginning of the project, I asked the following two research questions:

What are the prevailing conceptualisations of the European Union in the Czech Republic, and how are these conceptualisations transformed into positive or negative attitudes towards the EU or to different aspects of European integration? How can the prevailing conceptualisations of the discourse be understood?

In a case study of the political discourse in one country, it is impossible to determine the difference between the country specific aspects of this discourse and the more general aspects of political discourses on European unity in EU member states. For this reason, it was clear from the beginning that the study would include comparative aspects. The initial study of the Czech discourse led to the construction of four theoretical proposals of the conceptualisation of the EU in the discourse and of how the conceptualisation of the EU is linked to a rejection or advocacy of EU membership. These proposals were then discussed and applied to the political discourses in Sweden, Slovakia, Hungary and Poland.

The proposals developed from the study of the Czech discourse are:

1] **The EU as an instrument:** The EU is understood as the rational instrument for the Czech Republic to use in order to achieve progress in a wide sense and to be able to catch up with more developed countries. The alternative would be irrational and lead to stagnation and isolation.

³ The term 'theoretical proposal' is often used in grounded theory instead of 'hypothesis' for two reasons. Firstly, the term 'hypothesis' is often misinterpreted due to its use in quantitative research, and secondly, in grounded theory research, there is not a question of falsifying the hypothesis, and the actual result of the work is a reformulation of the proposal and not a confirmation or rejection of the hypothesis.

2] **The EU as a hindrance:** The EU is a hindrance because it forces an ideological project on its member states. This might lead to policy outcomes undesired by the country's citizens.

3] **The EU as a natural unit:** The EU is understood as a natural political unit in the Czech political discourse, but one that does not challenge the existence of the nation state.

4] **The EU as an artificial unit:** The EU is understood as an unnatural political construction that challenges the natural unit, the nation state, since some sovereignty is handed over to this political entity.

The Czech Republic entered the EU in the fifth wave of EU enlargement. Therefore I firstly asked to what extent the proposals developed on the Czech discourse are applicable to some of the Czech Republic's neighbouring countries that entered the EU at the same time, i.e. Slovakia, Hungary and Poland. These countries were selected on the basis of the principle of the most similar cases, due to their common history and geographical affiliation. These countries shared the communist experience with the Czech Republic, and they all entered the EU as below average affluent countries that, for some time, were likely to remain net-benefiters of the common EU budget.

Secondly, I asked whether the proposals, which were developed in the Czech context and modified on the basis of the experiences of the neighbouring countries, would also hold in a country with very different historical experiences. Would the proposals also be applicable to any of the three countries of the fourth enlargement of the EU in 1995 (which were all rather affluent countries with an unbroken history of democracy and sovereignty, at least since the end of the Second World War)? Given that one of the meta-narratives involved in the Czech conceptualisation of the EU was identified as seeing the EU as an instrument for catching up with the modernisation of Western Europe, any one of these cases would have been an unlikely case for this proposal. Yet, as it turned out, when the proposal was formulated in a more general sense (the EU as an instrument for modernisation), it turned out to be a key element of the Swedish conceptualisation as well.

Sweden was thus selected as a suitable case for comparison because the country accessed the EU from a position very different from that of the Czech Republic regarding economic standard, tradition of democracy, etc. Also, the fact that Sweden recently experienced a referendum on EU membership provided a good starting point for comparison. Sweden was also selected for

pragmatic reasons, since in order for a discourse analysis to be carried out, the researcher needs extensive knowledge of both the language and the context of the analysed discourse. Thus, for the analysis of the Swedish and the Czech cases, both primary and secondary sources are used, whereas the discussion on the other Visegrád countries is based primarily on secondary literature.

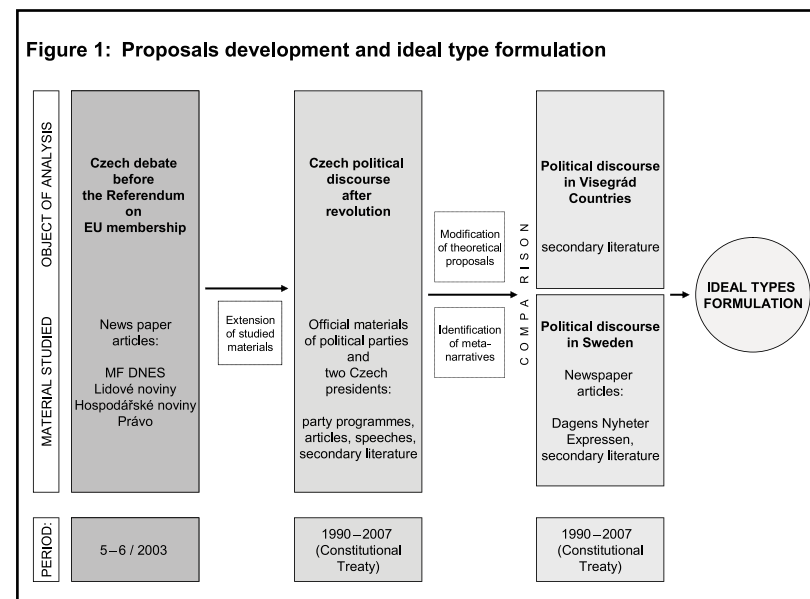
The final outcome of the analysis was three ideal types of discourses on European unity, representing different constellations of the four theoretical proposals developed throughout the study. The ideal types are structured according to different combinations of the nexus of sovereignty – modernisation, which were identified as the meta-narratives that structure the discourses on European unity. The first ideal type, *sovereignty unchallenged*, illustrates the non-conflicting co-existence of Westphalian sovereignty and modernisation. Modernisation is, according to this conceptualisation, seen as being *per se* a part of the national project. That is, modernisation can best be realised in the frame of the sovereign nation state. The EU is viewed as a hindrance to this development. This ideal type hardly exists in the Czech discourse or in that of the other Visegrád countries. In Sweden, however, both the Left Party and the Green Party present an understanding of the two concepts that resembles that of the first ideal type.

The second ideal type, *sovereignty challenged*, can be exemplified by the Civic Democrats in the Czech discourse. It contains an understanding of Westphalian sovereignty as being the priority, but on the other hand, it acknowledges that some compromises with the discourse of modernisation have to be made. This is more than an acceptance of the EU as an instrument which is necessary for future progress because it is also linked to the conceptualisation of the EU as a standard setter for progress in Europe. Some actors in the Czech discourse tried to challenge the view of the EU as a standard setter, e.g. Václav Klaus and some other voices from the Civic Democratic Party, but rather unsuccessfully.

The third ideal type, *modernisation unchallenged*, can be exemplified by the Czech Social Democrats. In the third ideal type, the political unit, meaning both the nation state and the European Union, is viewed primarily in instrumental terms, and thus if it would be beneficial for efficiency reasons, the essence of the political unit can be renegotiated. Only the third ideal type allows for a redefinition of the concept of Westphalian sovereignty as meaning the exclusion of external sources of authority. However, this ques-

tion is mostly ignored in the discourse. Instead, what is emphasised is the performance benefits of membership. The dominant conceptualisation in the discourse is that there is actually no conflict between the two concepts (modernisation and sovereignty), since further integration is a rational solution that strengthens the nation state as well. In other words, even if the third ideal type challenges sovereignty, it does so implicitly and not outspokenly.

The latter two ideal types illustrate that the EU retrieves its legitimacy from performance. This has consequences not only for the legitimacy of the EU, where a Union that is conceived as failing to deliver progress loses its *raison d'être*, but furthermore for the legitimacy of national governance. The performance oriented character of EU legitimacy restricts input based legitimacy at the national level as well, since the EU legitimacy is constructed as a part of a discourse important also for the legitimacy of domestic governance. The legitimacy of national governance is therefore, as a consequence, also becoming more based on performance.



The Figure 1 provides an overview of proposal development and ideal type formulation.

The book has the following structure. In the second chapter, I outline the used methodology, which is based on what sometimes is referred to as post-structuralist discourse analysis, or more often as Foucaultian discourse analysis, and the constant comparative method of grounded theory. The concrete method used in the project is described, and some common shortcomings of discourse analytic approaches in the field of European integration studies are pointed out. Thereafter, in the third chapter, the analysis of the Czech discourse on European unity is presented. It starts with an initial analysis of the debates preceding the referendum on membership in 2003. These debates serve to outline the initial theoretical proposals, which are then discussed in relation to the main political actors in the Czech Republic during the period from the Velvet Revolution to 2007. The comparative cases of the other Visegrád countries are discussed in the fourth chapter. In the fifth chapter, the Swedish case is discussed in some length. The sixth chapter includes a further elaboration of meta-narratives on modernity and sovereignty, and the three ideal types of discourses on European unity are presented. In this chapter, it is also discussed how these ideal types can be linked to the scholarly debate on EU legitimacy and what implications this study brings for the EU legitimacy debate. Finally, in chapter seven, everything is summed up in the conclusion, and some suggestions for further research are made.

2. Methodology

In this section, I begin by outlining my understanding of discourse analysis. I do so by making some comparisons to the works of authors associated with the Copenhagen School and the Governance School, since these are the dominating approaches based on discourse analysis in the field of European integration studies. Thereafter, I turn to discuss the methodological challenge of how to approach discourse, and I suggest the constant comparative method of grounded theory as a useful method for solving the task.

However, let us begin with two broader questions which deserve some attention. Firstly, why should we study discourse? And secondly, what should be the end product of this type of research?

There is a growing awareness regarding the importance of talk within the field of European integration studies, and the body of literature based on discourse analysis is ever growing (for an overview, see Wæver 2004; see also, *inter alia*, Diez 1998, 1999, 2001; Hansen 2002, 2006; Wæver 2002; Drulák 2005; Jachtenfuchs et al. 1998; Larsen 1999). Discourses are not merely believed to be interesting objects for scholars with a deeper interest in certain contexts to study. They are also thought of as a way to improve our understanding of policy decisions and even allow for some predictions of future policies (Wæver 2002: 27).

The understanding of discourse advocated throughout this work is closely linked to what is sometimes described as a poststructuralist position (Hansen 2006; Wæver 2002), a position that shares a lot with Ernesto Laclau's and Chantal Mouffe's (2001) interpretation of Michel Foucault's concept of discourse. Thus, I share the general understanding of post-structuralist discourse

analysis in which objects and subjects are given meaning through language. In this sense, discourse analysis overcomes the distinction between material and ideational factors (see Hansen 2006). Therefore, it is not possible to answer the question of the importance of discourse in relation to non-discursive factors. While material and ideational factors gain their meaning through language, there is no distinction between discursive and non-discursive practices (Laclau and Mouffe 2001: 107), and it is furthermore impossible for a researcher to set himself/herself free from discursive practice (cf. Kratochwil 2006).

Therefore, discourse analysis, from this perspective, is not seen as a way of adding yet another dimension to a scientific realist epistemological project.⁴ Rather, it should be understood in the context of social constructivism. Stefano Guzzini (2000) has made the following very accurate definition of what social constructivism is: "...constructivism is epistemologically about the social construction of knowledge and ontologically about the construction of social reality" (Guzzini 2000: 147).

Now given that (1) the social world is constructed due to human interaction and (2) that social scientists are also a part of that interaction, this implies that there is no such thing as a social world that a researcher can study independent of her/his own social context. Furthermore, given that the social world is a result of continuous social interaction between actors, there cannot be any transhistorical laws in the social world comparable to those of the natural world (cf. Berger and Luckmann 1973: 210–211).

Based on these two premises, the mistaken conclusion is sometimes made that neither methodology nor theory matter. Even if we reject the notion of objectivity as an attainable goal for social sciences, this does not necessarily lead to absolute relativism. There are still good arguments for why knowledge produced in a methodological, structural way is better than knowledge produced in an intuitive way (cf. Kratochwil and Friedrichs 2007). If the research process is structured and follows certain rules of methodology, then

⁴ Alexander Wendt (1999) defines scientific realism according to three principles: (1) the world is independent of the mind and language of individual observers, (2) mature scientific theories typically refer to this world, (3) even when it not directly observable (Wendt 1999: 51). Wendt attempts to combine scientific realism with a constructivist project, but manages to do this only at the expense of the core of constructivism as defined above.

it can be judged within the academic field, and thus competition between academic works might lead to the development of a best practice (Kratochwil 2006: 13).

However, if we reject transhistorical laws in the social world, we can hardly find a credible advocacy for the project of building grand theories. A grand theory is understood as a theory which aims at explaining more or less all aspects of a certain social system. The alternative is a middle range theory. Middle range theories, as developed by Robert K. Merton (1968), take a concrete concept as a starting point and aim at being more empirically saturated (Merton 1968: 45). In political science, such a concept could, for instance, be power. The concept of power can then be applied to different situations, and a more elaborated concept of power can be developed.

In this project, grounded theory is combined with discourse analysis. The starting point for Anselm Strauss and Barney Glaser, when they developed the methodology of grounded theory, was, just as for Merton, dissatisfaction with the gap between grand theory in sociology and empirical studies (Glaser and Strauss 1967). Grounded theory, however, presents a more specific inductive methodology for generating theory based on concepts which the researcher constructs by doing empirical analysis (see sections 2.2. and 2.3.). The final products of research carried out by following the methodology of grounded theory tend to be either theoretical proposals for further research or what in grounded theory terms is referred to as substantive theory (explaining, for instance, the concept of power in a limited number of situations) or formal theory (explaining power in a general sense). In any case, the final product is not intended as a grand theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967: 79–99).

It might seem to be a paradox that middle range theory and grounded theory, both being approaches initially associated with a rather naïve empiricism, would be combinable with constructivist scepticism of empirical truth. Yet, it is logical that the rejection of grand theory leads us in the direction of more limited theorising, e.g. middle range theory. Recently, two leading constructivist scholars in the field of international relations, Friedrich Kratochwil and Jörg Friedrichs (2007), suggested a pragmatic solution for generating knowledge based on abduction, which they also related to grounded theory methodology.

The end product of this study should thus be understood in two ways. Firstly, it provides an account for how the EU is conceptualised in the Czech

discourse on Europe. This is not a description of the Czech conceptualisation of the EU, but a generalisation pointing out the central aspects of this conceptualisation. Secondly, the three ideal types which are the result of the study suggest, on a more general level, how discourses on European unity are made up of different constellations of two underlying discourses on modernisation and sovereignty. This should be understood as a substantive theory of EU legitimacy. It is substantive since it is limited to a certain number of cases, and it is a theory of legitimacy in the sense that the EU retrieves its rationale through how it is conceived in the discourse.

2.1 Discourse Analysis

– the Dominating Approaches and their Shortcomings

What is then the relationship between discourse and policy? We could argue that the discursive context sets constraints on policy; policy, on the other hand, does also have an impact on the shaping of the discourse. The Danish political scientist Ole Wæver (a prominent representative of the so-called Copenhagen School) defines discourse as “... a system that regulates the formation of statements” (Wæver 2004: 199).⁵ Therefore, 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 (cf. Foucault 2003: 11).

Moreover, it is not the case that some actors can be outside of the discourse and try to influence it from the perspective of an outsider because they are all parts of the discourse themselves, whether they are politicians, journalists, scientists or others, and thus their identities are, in turn, shaped and restrained by the discourse.⁶ Their interests are thus not given in a context prior to dis-

⁵ This definition might seem puzzling given that Wæver also claims to work in the tradition of poststructuralism. Poststructuralism should not, however, be understood as anti-structure, but rather as developed out of structuralism (Wæver 2002: 23).

⁶ This is an important difference from, for instance, discursive institutionalism (see Schmidt 2008 for one example), where the actors are seen as moving freely in and out of discourse depending on institutional setting. Thus, according to Schmidt there is one discourse between the policy actors and a separate one between these actors and the public. Even if in general it can be said that combined frameworks such as that of Schmidt might be better equipped to provide causal explanations, they simultaneously deviate from the underlying understanding of discourse

course; they are shaped by the discourse (cf. Laclau and Mouffe 2001: 144). Actors or subjects are thus not the origin of social relations because all social experience “depends on precise discursive conditions of possibility” (Laclau and Mouffe 2001: 115).

This, however, does not mean that discourse predetermines the behaviour of the actors within the discourse. In order to come to terms with this double relationship between discourse and actors, we need to further specify what is meant by the term ‘discourse’. Laclau and Mouffe use the term *discursive formation*⁷ to refer to a certain ‘regularity in dispersion’, and they define the term in three points (Laclau and Mouffe 2001: 105). Firstly, within the discourse, subjects engage in *articulation*, which means a practice of establishing or changing the relations among various elements within a certain discursive formation, i.e. changing the identity or meaning of the elements or concepts referred to in the formation. Thus, in theory, we could have a discursive totality, which would imply a situation where all elements have a given place in the totality, and they would not be changing (i.e. they would not be in the process of being rearticulated), but such a discursive formation does not exist. However, in theory, it could exist, and it would then be a field where the principle of repetition would dominate every practice within the system and thus not give any space to articulations (Laclau and Mouffe 2001: 106, 134).

Secondly, at the same time as the specific discourse always remains at least partly open for re-articulations, thus being an open system and not a closed one, there are no relations between objects which are prior to discourse. In other words, we cannot speak of non-discursive practices because material factors also gain their meaning through language. This is commonly misunderstood as saying that there is no world external to discourse. An earthquake certainly exists independent of the discourse about it, but whether it is described as an object in terms of a ‘natural phenomenon’ or an ‘expression of the wrath of God’ depends on how the discourse is structured (Laclau and Mouffe 2001: 108).

Thirdly, as mentioned previously, no discursive formation constitutes a completely closed system, but, on the other hand, it is never totally exterior to other discursive formations. Thus, “neither absolute fixity nor absolute

as provided in post-structuralist discourse theory, and thus such research programmes are less useful when it comes to the uncovering of discursive metanarratives.

⁷ Inspired by Foucault’s elaboration on the concept in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969).

non-fixity is possible” (Laclau and Mouffe 2001: 111). Because of the partial fixity of the discursive formation, the concept of *discursive nodal points* becomes relevant. A nodal point is an instance of partially fixed meanings that binds together various discourses into a discursive formation (Laclau and Mouffe 2001: 113).

In the field of European integration studies, the concept of discursive nodal points has been further developed by Thomas Diez (1998, 1999, 2001). Discursive nodal points (DNPs) are central and contested concepts in a political debate; in this case, the concept is the European Union. We can identify different conceptions (or meanings) of the particular DNP present in the political debate. Each conception of the DNP is made possible by different underlying discourses which Diez would call meta-narratives (Diez 2001: 16). In other words, the discourse on the European Union is composed of other discourses which exist as meta-narratives. And conversely, the European Union might figure as a meta-narrative in another political discourse. Diez explains it in the following way:

Each articulation of European governance is therefore part of a discourse on European governance. In order to fill the contested concept of European governance with meaning, this discourse draws on others, which therefore operate as its metanarratives. In bringing these metanarratives in, each articulation simultaneously attempts to stabilize a field of discourses through the pinning down of specific meanings in the metanarratives, which often remain unquestioned or are presented as ‘natural’ or taken for granted, and their relations with each other (Diez 2001: 16).

Followingly, this study concludes that the Czech discourse on the European Union is formed primarily on the basis of combinations of two meta-narratives, i.e. one on modernisation and one on sovereignty.

The term ‘nodal point’ indicates that there are several understandings of the concept present in the discourse simultaneously. The theoretical proposals presented in this study should be seen as attempts to bring together groups of articulations that produce a similar understanding of the European Union and thus a specific discourse on European unity. My conviction is that one single actor is likely to use arguments drawing from different underlying meta-narratives while discussing the EU and, furthermore, that an actor might therefore produce conceptions of the EU that are mutually incompatible. However, it does not mean that an actor necessarily has fewer premeditated

opinions, but that a single actor might use arguments that, depending on their perspectives, might be based on different deeper discourses and so might even indicate contradictory conclusions.

I started this chapter by asking the question of what is the link between discourse and policy. A certain articulation of the European Union implies a certain ‘political rationalisation’ or, in other words, a certain way of imbuing a certain view of the EU with ‘reason’ (cf. Diez 2001: 16). Therefore, different conceptions of the discursive nodal point are bound to different ways of legitimating governance. In other words, different combinations of meta-narratives are likely to produce different conceptions of the EU, expressed through different ways of legitimising or rejecting the European project. The aim of the discourse analysis is thus to identify firstly the conceptualisations of the discursive nodal point, in this case the EU, that are present in the debate, secondly the meta-narratives on which they draw, and thirdly the rules according to which they are bound together (Diez 2001: 17).

It follows that if we identify the central conceptualisations of the DNP present in the discourse and its meta-narratives, then we also gain a deeper understanding of how European policy is formed in the studied discourse. Meanwhile, political actors are firstly a part of the discourse and thus not autonomous in the sense that they would be able to draw up a strategy external to the existing discourse, and secondly, they have to justify their decisions within a certain discursive formation that thus might even exclude some policy options. This is not to say that the actors cannot change the structure of a discourse, but merely that it is less likely in some instances (cf. Wæver 2002). Followingly, as we will see in the following discussion on the Czech discourse on European unity, the certain constellations of the meta-narratives on sovereignty and modernisation that are dominant in the discourse might say something about how we can anticipate some topics (e.g., the euro question) to be handled by the political actors. Yet, the discourse is open for re-articulations, which is to suggest that even if we can make some predictions of future policy based on the structure of the discourse, these predictions are never absolutely certain.

In the field of European studies, as in the field of international relations, discourse analysis predominantly tends to be concerned with national identity. This is not that surprising, given that the concept of discourse is closely linked to that of identity, in the sense that the identities of both actors and

objects are formed by discursive practices. Discursive practices are processes in which identities do not have a fixed existence but are continuously shaped and reshaped in the discourse. The discursive context that sets constraints on policy can therefore be translated as identity. It is through discourse that identity affects policy making, but the relationship is mutual, and policy also affects the discourse and thus identity. In short, this means that identity and policy are mutually constitutive (cf. Hansen 2006).

However, arguing that the discursive context is crucial for an understanding of how European governance is conceptualised and legitimised in a certain member state is not necessarily the same as arguing that it is necessarily the discourse on the nation that should be analysed in order to understand a specific country's position on the EU. There is nothing to suggest that underlying discourses are necessarily bound to the national setting. Thus, even if discourse analysis of foreign policy is also, by necessity, an analysis of state identity, there is nothing to suggest that the underlying discourses that shape state identity are discourses bound to a national setting.

In fact, the discourses that are involved when politicians and other actors articulate what the EU is and in which way it is legitimate or not might be very similar in different EU member states. In this way, my work departs from that of the Copenhagen School as exemplified by Hansen and Wæver et al. (2002).

They use a three-layered framework to analyse the reluctance of Nordic countries towards the EU. These three layers are as follows: 1) the basic conceptual arrangement of the state and nation, 2) the relation of the state/nation vis-à-vis Europe, 3) the concrete policy on Europe (Wæver 2002: 33ff). There are some specific risks involved when using a framework that presupposes discourse to be national at all levels. The reading of the discourse often starts with a historical exposition going back to the 19th century (or even further). Even if one agrees with the view that discourse consists of different layers, or meta-narratives, to use the term favoured by Diez (2001), there is no reason to argue that these must necessarily be limited to a national setting or to the basic concepts of the state and nation. On the contrary, a focus of the analysis on the nation might lead to neglecting other significant meta-narratives (for further discussion on how this framework can restrict analysis, see Diez 2001; Braun 2006).

Thus, even if discourse analysis is about the reconstruction of identity, since things, actions, subjects and other events are given meaning through

language, and the discursive context in which actors operate is a constitutive part of their identity, this does not imply that a study of, let's say, Czech Euroscepticism should necessarily start with a historical exposition about how Europe, vis-à-vis Czech national identity, has been articulated and conceptualised in the Czech debate over the decades. While focusing too much on the genealogy of one country, it is easy to forget that the discourses of many countries are mutually intertwined. Furthermore, despite even the best intentions, this could be very similar to national historicising, or, in other words, by presenting a coherent national history, the research could contribute to the discourse on the nation in such a way that the myth of national history would be reinforced rather than deconstructed.

Allow me to use a concrete example here to illustrate how international deeper layers of discourse can influence the national one. The 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. When 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... (Drulák 2005: 229).

This illustrates that the approach of the Copenhagen School is limited by its restriction to the national discourse. By seeking explanations in the Czech discourse about the nation/state, this approach can only deliver answers to the question 'What preconditions in the Czech discourse about the nation-state enabled Klaus to make such an articulation about the state/nation and about Europe as a "regime"? It seems clear from this quotation that this change of discourse (*innovation*) enters the Czech discourse from an international neo-classic economic discourse. Thus, Klaus' role here is not that of an 'innovator' but that of an 'introducer' of ideas already existing in other national or international discourses. He can be seen as an important actor who tried to introduce this understanding of European governance into the Czech discourse but not as the inventor of this view of the state. This discourse about the state, which is based on neo-classical economic theory, may also be one

of the factors that unite the Czech Euro-realist conception of the EU with Eurosceptic conceptions in other member states (see Braun 2006).

National identity is not necessarily about how people understand the nation or about the history of that particular nation. National identity might be linked to international discourses about things that might at first glance seem unrelated to that particular nation. For instance, one such discourse could be the about modernisation, as this study shows.

The advantage of the approach of the Copenhagen School is its inherent awareness of the deeper layers of discourse. Given that the aim of discourse analysis is to grasp an understanding of these deeper structures of discourse, or the meta-narratives, and identify how they are bound together in the particular discursive formation, this is an obvious plus. On the other hand, given that the theoretical model specifies, already at the beginning of the research, what these deeper layers (meta-narratives) are, the approach is not open for seeing which other meta-narratives might be relevant.

The alternative to the Copenhagen School approach would be a more empirically based approach, which would be more concerned with the actual discourse than with a prior model. The approach suggested by Diez and his colleagues Markus Jachtenfuchs and Sabine Jung, sometimes referred to as the Governance School, might be one such alternative. This approach, however, has been criticised for not grasping the structure of the discourse by being too engaged in categorising the contemporary debate (cf. Wæver 2004: 203–204).

Jachtenfuchs et al. (1998) used an approach based on comparisons of party documents in France, Germany and the UK. In order to analyse these documents, they produced a list of polity ideas based on existing literature and then, in turn, four ideal types of polity ideas, which they then used to categorise the documents (Jachtenfuchs 1998: 417–418). Thus, in contrast to the Copenhagen School, the work of Jachtenfuchs, Diez and Jung started off with a well-structured empirical analysis. However, their approach failed to be inductive, while the model used for the analysis was deduced from theoretical literature. Furthermore, their approach in its initial shape failed to consider deeper layers of discourse or meta-narratives (cf. Wæver 2004: 203). The latter shortcoming has been improved by Diez in his later works, where he has elaborated on the concept of discursive nodal points (see Diez 2001).

However, while Diez's later work is also based on the four ideal types

outlined in the collective work from 1998, this approach still fails to be open to new discoveries in the material. By trying to categorise party documents into ready-made categories, it violates the basic idea of discourse analysis where no categories are universally valid (Wæver 2004: 204).

Thus far, we have concluded that in discourse analysis, the task is to identify the conceptualisations of the analysed discursive nodal point, which in this case is the European Union, and furthermore identify the deeper layers of discourse, or meta-narratives, that, in their various constellations, make these conceptualisations feasible in the discourse. Dominating approaches in the field of European integration studies have been criticised for failing to take into account the actual nature of the studied discourse and thus for having a tendency of confirming developed theoretical models of the structure of discourse prior to the actual study. How then can we take the variations of discourse into account while avoiding the fallacy of ending up with a description of a political debate that fails to take into account the deeper structure of discourse? In the following part, I suggest the constant comparative method of grounded theory as the solution to this problem.

2.2 Approaching Discourse

– Grounded Theory and the Problem of Induction

There is a huge methodological challenge in how to approach discourse (for a discussion, see Milliken 1999). This study advocates an approach based on grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Strauss and Corbin 1990). By using an inductive methodology (or an abductive methodology, see below) for analysing discourse, it has been my intention to produce an analysis which is more empirically grounded than what would have been the case if I had deductively applied a ready-made model that assumes the structure of the discourse on European unity as based on previous research.

In order to identify the different conceptualisations of the EU present in the political debates, the *constant comparative method* of grounded theory is used (see Glaser and Strauss 1967). Even if grounded theory methodology has been designed to enable inductive research, this does not mean that the researcher should erase his/her prior knowledge of the field and not be concerned with the already existing literature. What it proposes is an initially

inductive method (through the work process, an actual oscillation between deduction and induction is a vital part of the analysis) where the researcher is encouraged to take advantage of his/her preknowledge of the field yet at the same time remain as open as possible to alternative explanations (Glaser and Strauss 1967).

The constant comparative method has been developed to generate and suggest theory, and therefore, it is not rigorous enough for testing theory. The methodology is based on the identification of certain important concepts that in turn can explain the studied phenomenon. The identification of a concept is based on a comparison of several instances where a similar phenomenon appears; once a concept is developed, it is then compared with other instances until no further information is added to the category, and it can be considered theoretically saturated (Glaser and Strauss 1967: 101–115).

The constant comparative method basically means that the researcher constructs terms based on the studied material which are then gradually transformed into categories and concepts on a higher level of generalisation and abstraction. This is done by continuously comparing terms identified in the material. Research according to grounded theory does not aim to produce the most detailed description of an event, but to identify the core of that event and thus identify what phenomenon the studied event is an occasion of. The dilemma of grounded theory is how to generate a theory, or theoretical proposal, that is empirically grounded but moves beyond being merely a description of the studied event (Glaser and Strauss 1967).

The constant comparative method is thus an instrument that should allow the researcher to generate theory in a fairly structured way that simultaneously allows the researcher enough space for interpreting the studied data. The work is done in such a way that the researcher goes through a range of material and tries to identify key terms in this material, and simultaneously, s/he compares the concepts in order to see how they mutually correlate. Within grounded theory research, there are various concrete strategies for how to compare the identified terms, categories and concepts. A rather formalised way of doing this has been proposed by Anselm Strauss and Juliette Corbin; i.e. they include the steps of open coding, axial coding and selective coding in their analysis. With some simplification, we can say that in the step of open coding, a broad list of terms is identified; in the step of axial coding, the terms are bound together into categories based on how they mutually correlate; and

in selective coding, the core of the studied phenomenon is identified, often in the form of a central concept. In praxis, these three steps are carried out simultaneously (Strauss and Corbin 1990).

Grounded theory research always starts with rather open-ended research questions. The idea is that the researcher should be able to take into account ideas that arise from the empirical material. The initial phase of the coding process should therefore also be open to any interpretation. In this case, the initial part of the research, which I will soon describe in greater detail, started with reading through a quite extensive range of material. While reading, I wrote down terms that seemed to be crucial. The terms were combined into categories depending on their mutual relations, and the categories, in turn, were used to formulate theoretical proposals. The proposals were then applied to another type of material and thereafter modified. Therefore, it is possible to speak of the research process in terms of abduction, i.e. an oscillation between the empirical level and theory. However, the research process always starts with the empirical work, and therefore it is primarily inductive.

Another specific aspect of grounded theory research is that the material is not specified at the beginning of the research process. Again, the idea is that the researcher shall adapt the used material in accordance with the initial findings of the research process (Strauss and Corbin 1997: 250). In this case, I defined a specific entrance point to the discourse, and I also had a rather clear idea of what should be the following step. However, the actual way in which the Visegrád countries and Sweden were included in the study as cases for comparison was a result of the initial research process, as it turned out that one of the underlying meta-narratives in the Czech discourse was that on modernisation.

Below, I turn to discuss in more detail how the constant comparative method of grounded theory was used in this study. However, before I do so, three more aspects of the studied object, the Czech discourse on European unity, must be specified.

Firstly, discourse analysis is not the study of how ordinary people think on a certain topic. Rather, what is studied here are conceptualisations of the European Union in public and political debates. Clearly, not all people in a society possess the capability of having an impact on the shaping of these understandings of the EU. Therefore it is not a question that is discussed in this study whether the identified conceptualisations correspond to those of the

majority of Czech citizens or not. However, given that they are also a part of the studied discourse, it is likely that they at least have an active relation to the identified conceptualisations. What we are interested in at the end of the day is policy making, and therefore it is the specific political discourse that is our object of study. Yet, the public debate in the media is of pivotal importance because the media is the instrument politicians have to use in order to justify a certain policy decision. This also suggests that politicians are not the only actors who can influence and shape a political discourse, but given that their decisions are of primary concern to us, paying particular attention to their articulations is justified. However, it should be realised that they operate within a discursive field where they do not have the monopoly of articulations.

Secondly, and following from the first argument, even if the argument could be made that there is a difference between what is said in public and what is said behind closed doors, this does not necessarily have to be of major concern, since it “is always necessary for policymakers to be able to argue where ‘this takes us’” (Wæver 2002: 27). Therefore, the actual argument used by an actor for justifying a decision is important whether s/he sincerely means it or not (cf. Schimmelfennig 2001).

Thirdly, this is an analysis of discourse and not of debate. There is a clear distinction between the two terms because whereas the former implies that the concern of our research is the underlying structures of discourse, the latter could be understood as meaning a mapping of who said what in the Czech debate on the European Union. It is also not our task to count how frequently a certain word or phrase appears in the Czech debate because from the perspective of discourse analysis, this might even be contra-productive, since a certain word or phrase can have varying meanings depending on the context (cf. Wæver 2004: 204).

2.3 The applied method

In the following text, I present a brief summary of how the research work was carried out in this study. However, the method is also described in more detail later in chapters three to six, reflecting each step of the analysis. This structure reflects the nature of grounded theory research design, which should be seen as an evolving process. Primarily, however, I have chosen this struc-

ture for the sake of the readability of the text. If I were to present all aspects of the used method here, it would seem very abstract to illustrate the different steps in the research process without the findings of the analysis.

In brief, the work included the following steps. Firstly, newspaper articles from the month before the referendum in the Czech Republic from four leading daily newspapers (i.e. *Hospodářské noviny*, *Lidové noviny*, *Mladá fronta DNES* and *Právo*)⁸ were studied. While reading the material, crucial terms in the debate were recorded. These were turned into a list of terms (in total 42 terms), which in turn were mutually compared to identify similarities and differences between them. Based on this procedure, seven categories were identified, which, on a more general level, included several of the terms (see chapter 3.1).

The categories were again compared in order to identify their mutual relations. This comparison led to the formulation of four theoretical proposals. These proposals were then elaborated on with a wider selection of material structured around the central political actors in the Czech Republic. The actors were identified as the major political parties present for a longer time period in the Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Parliament (primarily ODS, ČSSD, KDU-ČSL, US-DEU and KSČM) plus the two presidents of the Czech Republic. The materials used in the following part include party programmes, other party publications and articles written by politicians from 1990 to 2007. In addition to the empirical analysis, secondary literature was used for interpretation of the theoretical proposals (see chapter 3.2).

The elaboration on the theoretical proposals enabled the identification of the discourse on modernisation and the discourse on sovereignty as being the meta-narratives in the Czech discourse on European unity. Thus, different constellations of these underlying discourses lead to different conceptualisations of the European Union in the Czech discourse.

However, I also wanted to know whether the Czech discourse is unique. Therefore the Visegrád countries and Sweden were selected as cases for

⁸ The articles from *Hospodářské noviny* and *Mladá fronta DNES* were obtained directly from the digital archives of the respective newspapers. The articles from *Lidové noviny* and *Právo* were obtained through the digital archive ANL FULL, which meant that the selection of articles included primarily longer reportages, interviews and commentaries. See chapter 3.1 for how the articles were selected and filtered.

comparison. Grounded theory allows the researcher to select material on an ad hoc basis throughout the research process. Whereas the first steps were planned before the beginning of the research, the actual selection of countries for comparison was made during the research process.

In comparative studies, two strategies in general are used for the selection of cases: i.e. *the method of agreement and the method of difference*. According to the method of difference, similar cases are selected that, despite their similarities, might show different outcomes on the dependent variable. According to the method of agreement, on the other hand, the cases that are selected are those with big general differences that might have a similar outcome regarding the studied phenomenon despite these differences (Karlsson 2008: 68–71). In this work the cases for comparison were chosen in a way that reflects these traditional strategies of comparative studies. However, the selection of countries was not made prior to research but was based on the results of the initial analysis of the Czech discourse. Furthermore the aim of the comparison is to elaborate the theoretical proposals and not to identify a causal relationship between dependent and independent variable (see further discussion in chapter 4).

The cases for comparison were selected due to the centrality of the meta-narrative on modernisation in the Czech discourse. Sweden was selected primarily on the basis of the method of agreement. Given that the return to Europe element was one of the prevailing parts of how the modernisation narrative appeared in the Czech discourse, the following question appeared: How would this relation look in a non-post-communist context? Sweden is thus a suitable case for comparison, even though the country accessed the EU from a position very different from that of the Czech Republic regarding economic standard, tradition of democracy, etc. Therefore, intuitively, it might seem unlikely that the understanding of the EU as an instrument for modernisation is applicable to the Swedish case as well. And thus, if it is applicable, then this would need an explanation. However, the question is also how representative the Czech discourse is of the other post-communist EU member states. Therefore the other Visegrád countries, i.e. Slovakia, Hungary and Poland, were selected as cases for comparison (see chapters 4 and 5).

The commonalities and the differences of the cases were used for the construction of three ideal types of discourses on European unity. These ideal types in turn enabled, firstly, a further elaboration on the specifics of the

Czech discourse and, secondly, an elaboration on the consequences of European integration for the legitimacy of governance in the Czech Republic and the compared cases. The ideal types were constructed by using the four theoretical proposals, and they represent different constellations of these.

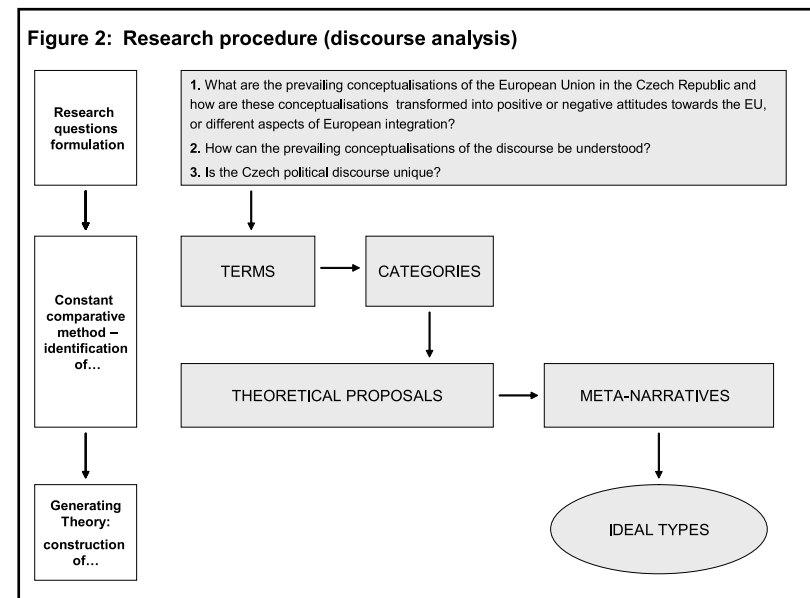


Figure 2 summarises the research procedure.

3. The Question of European Unity in the Czech Republic

The Velvet Revolution that in 1989 ended more than forty years of communist rule in Czechoslovakia turned the European integration project into a real possibility for the country. Some analysts have argued that in the aftermath of the 1989 Velvet Revolution, EU membership came to be seen as “... a logical consequence of the return to normality” (Kopecky and Učeň 2003: 164, see also, for example, Rupnik 2003: 16). The urgency of the European issue can be seen in the first drafting of a foreign policy program by the Czech Civic Forum (OF) from November 1989 that called for a rapid integration into European structures (Občanské fórum 1989).

The Czech Republic joined the EU in May 2004 after a referendum in June 2003. During the 1990s, there was general support among the political parties and the political elite for membership. Since the elections of 1992, all Czech governments proclaimed the goal of entering the EU. All major political parties, except for the Communist Party (KSČM), supported this line. 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 liberal conservative Civic Democratic Party, handed in the Czech application for membership in 1996, seven years later, as president, he refused to state how he would vote in the referendum (see, e.g., interview with Klaus, Czech section of BBC World Service, 9 June 2003).

During the campaign leading up to the 2003 referendum, the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSČM)⁹ was the only parliamentary party that recommended rejecting accession to its voters. There was some internal opposition, including that of some leading members (e.g. vice chairman Jiří Dolejš) who publicly favoured membership, and the official party line was sometimes described as a “soft no” (Handl 2004: 6; see also Dolejš 2003). The Civic Democratic Party (ODS) favoured membership, but not without reservations, and some leading figures publicly objected to membership (for example, Vice-Chairman Ivan Langer and Deputy Martin Říman) (Dürr *et al.* 2004: 35).

Thus, in the period before the referendum on membership, there was a divide in Czech politics between the pro-European government, which consisted of the Social Democrats, the Christian Democrats and the small, liberal Freedom Union, on the one hand, and the EU-realist¹⁰ / EU-sceptic Civic Democrats and the Communist opposition on the other (cf. Kopeček 2004).

Also, after the Czech EU accession in 2004, questions relating to further integration split the political field. The Civic Democrats have been outspoken critics of the Constitutional Treaty (ODS 2004a). And even if the party leadership accepts the Lisbon Treaty, the opposition within the party managed to push through a decision at the party congress in 2007 that the Constitutional Court should state its view on how the Lisbon Treaty affects the Czech constitution (ODS 2007). The more positive view on the treaty among the party leadership can be explained by the fact that the country is preparing for its first EU Council presidency in 2009. Klaus, however, still opposes the new treaty. Also, the KSČM is critical toward the latest treaty reform and demands a referendum on the issue (see Kratochvíl and Braun 2008). Thus, we can conclude that even after EU membership, European integration remains a topic of political struggle within the Czech Republic.

This chapter has the following structure: firstly, in part 3.1, the analysis of the debate preceding the referendum in 2003 is presented. Thereafter, in part 3.2, the analysis is structured according to the political actors. Part 3.3

⁹ Until 1989, it was the governing communist party (KSČ).

¹⁰ ‘Euro-realist’ refers to a ‘realist’ concern for the promotion of the Czech national interest. The term is used by the Civic Democrats to stress the difference between their European policy and what they consider to be the ‘naïve Euro optimism’ of the Social Democrats and Christian Democrats.

provides a further elaboration on the developed theoretical proposals, and in part 3.4, the Czech central storyline is summarised.

3.1 Developing Theoretical Proposals

In the following part, I describe in detail how the initial theoretical proposals used in the study were generated. The first step in this process was that I identified key terms in the discourse through an analysis of newspapers from the month preceding the referendum in 2003. In the second step, these terms were structured into categories which show how they mutually relate. Thereafter, in the third step, I compared these categories in order to identify how these categories are in turn subordinated to more general concepts. The result of this comparison of categories was four theoretical proposals. In the fourth step (discussed in part 3.2), these proposals were then further explored and elaborated on through the utilisation of a broader range of empirical material (including party programmes and other party documents from the period 1990–2006, articles and comments by politicians in the media and secondary literature).

The initial analysis was thus based on articles from the month preceding the referendum in 2004 (i.e. 13. 5. 2003–13. 6. 2003) from the four main daily newspapers in the Czech Republic: *Hospodářské noviny*, *Lidové noviny*, *Mladá fronta DNES* and *Právo*. The articles from *Hospodářské noviny* and *Mladá fronta DNES* were obtained directly from the digital archives of the respective newspapers. In these two cases, I first made a search for all articles including the words “EU” or “European Union”; thereafter, I filtered out 1) articles presenting merely descriptions of EU related affairs and not including any comments from politicians, journalists, and other individuals and 2) articles actually referring to other events or topics. The remaining articles, including commentaries, interviews and news articles, were included in the analysis. The articles from *Lidové noviny* and *Právo* were obtained through the digital archive ANL FULL, which meant a selection of articles including primarily longer reportages, interviews and commentaries.

Through the analysis of newspaper articles, a list of terms of crucial importance in the debate was generated. It should be emphasised that the constant comparative method of grounded theory should not be confused with content analysis. In grounded theory research, it is the analyst who coins the terms

and concepts used, while these should be on a higher level of abstraction than the actual words used by the actors in the discourse. In other words, one term coined by me, and included in the list below, refers to several different actual words, or phrases, used by the authors of the analysed argumentation. Because it is not the purpose of the discourse analysis, I did also not count the number of times a certain word appeared in the material. In discourse analysis, this type of quantification, which is a part of content analysis, is believed to be counterproductive because the same word might have different meanings in different contexts (cf. Wæver 2004: 204).

The purpose of generating the following list of terms was to capture the terms that can provide an understanding of the Czech EU discourse. Thus, what is important is not how many times a certain word appears but how different terms mutually relate to each other and that they, in total, capture the underlying structure of the debate. Therefore, the first list of terms generated during the first step of the analysis should be rather inclusive than exclusive (cf. Strauss and Corbin 1999: 42).

In practice, I studied the mentioned newspaper articles, always writing down a few key words for each article. Firstly, I worked my way through the articles of *Hospodářské noviny* and then *Mladá fronta DNES*. I continuously compared the list of terms as it grew and tried to exclude terms referring to the same phenomenon. After finishing the analysis of these two newspapers, I put the list aside for approximately two weeks, and thereafter I continued with the articles from the other two newspapers. I analysed a few of the articles and then compared the list to see if I could come up with any new relevant terms. I continued doing so until I could not come up with any new relevant terms. Thus, gradually it became clear that the following terms were at the centre of the story. It should also be noted that at this stage, the statements in the included articles are treated as being parts of the Czech discourse independent of their authors.

This is the list of terms generated from the initial analysis of newspapers: **category 1)** *funds, free movement, economic growth, competition, catching up, improved living conditions, social progress, free movement, law/norms, primary league, opportunity, prosperity*; **category 2)** *regulations, competition, centralisation (bureaucratisation), social planning, Marxism, expenses*; **category 3)** *voice, security, Germany (Austria), negotiations, interest conflicts*; **category 4)** *internal security, legal norms, democracy, end of the com-*

munist era, journey, the West; **category 5)** *unavoidability, fear, irrationality, risk of being an outsider, isolated island, globalisation*; **category 6)** *national identity, sovereignty, artificial, democracy*; **category 7)** *part of Europe, cultural community, good company*.

The list already shows what the next step of the analysis was. After the list had been generated and every two or more terms obviously referring to the same phenomenon were combined into one, the terms were organised into seven categories. Some terms were included in more than one category, and therefore these appear more than once in the list. These categories were found by comparing the initial terms and searching for commonalities between them and organising them into broader categories depending on how the terms could be mutually related.

The first category includes a certain group of terms which are all economic terms related to increased living conditions: *funds, economic growth, catching up, living conditions, free movement, opportunity* and *primary league*. Here we can distinguish between what is a goal and what is a strategy or instrument for reaching that goal. It seems that *funds, free movement* and *economic growth* are conditions that should lead to the goals of *improved living conditions* and *prosperity*. We could simplify it by saying that *funds* and *free movement* should lead to *economic growth*, which in turn leads to *improved living conditions*. All this is viewed as an *opportunity* for the Czech Republic to take.

Where then does the term *catching up* fit into this category? Firstly, it should be mentioned that this term was not coined by me but taken over from the texts in the newspaper articles where the following question was frequently discussed: “Will the new members be able to catch up with the economic and living standards of the developed countries?” (This particular quotation is from Czesaný in *Hospodářské noviny*, 10. 6. 2003). In fact, the term *catching up* seems at least as crucial as the one referring to *improved living conditions*.¹¹ Thus, the scheme illustrating the first category has the following structure: The EU is viewed as an *opportunity* where *free movement* and *funds* lead to *economic growth*, which in turn brings *improved living conditions* and a *catching up* with more developed countries.

¹¹ The frequent discussion on how many years the Czech Republic will need before it can finally catch up with the West illustrates this point.

Two of the other terms identified actually relate to the same phenomenon but from different and contradicting perspectives: *regulations* and *law/norms*. Both terms refer to EU regulations that mostly concern the internal market. The term *law/norms* could clearly be integrated into the first category presented above in cases in which we would extend this category as producing *increased living conditions* and *catching up* in a wider sense. The term *law/norms* refers in such cases to the opinion that the adoption of the *acquis communautaire* is generally positive because EU laws are more developed than the national ones, and thus, this can be beneficial both for the business climate in the country and for citizen's rights, e.g. consumers' rights. Following this reasoning, we can add the term *social progress* to the first category. This term refers to increased promotion of equal rights between the sexes, for instance. Thus, we can modify the first category and produce a broader scheme including terms referring to *improved living conditions* in non-economic and even non-material terms.

Yet, regulations can also be expressed from another point of view, and then the term belongs **to the second category**. When regulations refer to overregulating, then the term can be integrated with the following terms: *regulations – centralisation (bureaucratisation) – social planning – Marxism – expenses*. In the second category the terms are interrelated in the following way: *Regulation* is the visible symptom of *centralisation*, which is a result of a belief in *social planning*, which can be linked to the old regime and to *Marxism* or socialism. Another unwanted result of such a development is unnecessary *expenses* produced by the over-regulations. Thus, the second category also stands in contrast to another term: *competition*. The EU leads to *social planning*, which is the opposite of a free market and *competition*. Yet, the EU is understood both as a hindrance to competition and as a competition improver in the debate. Seen from the latter perspective, *competition* should be included in the first scheme of *catching up / improving living conditions*, and seen from the former, it is seen as a *hindrance*, which is then a part of the second category.

The **third category** refers to the term *voice*. *Voice* is an interesting term since both the Prime Minister Vladimír Špidla and Foreign Minister Cyril Svoboda, in their final appeals to the voters before the referendum, referred to arguments categorised under this term. *Voice* can refer to the ability to have a say in European affairs or in world affairs. Referring to world politics,

voice is linked to the term of *globalisation*. Because of globalisation, a small country lacks influence, even more so today than during earlier periods; therefore the EU provides the country with a voice and thus also increases the country's real *sovereignty*. It is also linked to the internal dimensions of the EU. The EU is viewed as cooperation based on *negotiations*. If the Czech Republic is a part of the EU, it can have a say in the negotiations and thus influence the growing European order. The term *negotiations* is also linked to the term *peace* because the argument states that the negotiation culture within the European project has brought peace between its member states.

Špidla links the *voice* argument to *security* by referring to the Munich agreement: “no more decisions about us without us” (Špidla, *Hospodářské noviny*, 13. 6. 2003). Thus the third category is also linked to both *security* and *Germany* (and possibly *Austria*). It is argued that the EU gives the Czech Republic a voice in negotiations with Germany. For this articulation to be plausible, the EU has to be understood as being based on *negotiations*. The third category also appears in a rejected version where the EU is seen as being made up of *interest conflicts* between the member states; i.e. the EU is an area where the member states try to push through their national interests. In the rejected version of the third category, the EU does not give the Czech Republic any increased voice, but on the contrary, because the development within the EU is to such an extent determined by the big powers, especially Germany, EU membership limits the voice of the Czech Republic in relation to Germany.

The fourth category generated refers to *internal security*. The EU provides its member states with a protection against internal enemies of democracy and thus also against a totalitarian power overtake organised by parts of a country's own national elite (for a good example of this line of argumentation, see Svoboda, *Lidové noviny*, 19. 5. 2003). This category is also linked to the implementation of *legal norms* that are believed to make it easier to, for example, combat corruption. The EU is seen from this perspective as the guarantor of *democracy* and the rule by law. In this sense, the EU is conceived as the opposite of communism. The EU accession is accordingly seen as the final *end of the communist era* and the final destination of a *journey* from Communism to becoming a part of the *West* as a norms-based community.

The fifth category generated refers to the EU as an *unavoidable* project, reflecting the view that the Czech Republic has to be a member of the EU whether ‘we like it or not’. Basically, the EU membership is an *unavoidable*

necessity, and only *fear* and *irrationality* can lead to the opposite development. From this perspective, the EU is seen as providing at least some of the benefits described in the first category, and therefore it would be irrational to reject a membership offer. Furthermore, the EU is seen as a necessity given what would be the consequences of the opposite alternative. The economic *risk of being an outsider* is pointed out, as well as the fear of being an *isolated island* in Europe. Thus this category is also linked to the first category by referring to *living conditions / catching up*. If the Czech Republic is a member, this is an *opportunity to catch up*. If not, then *isolation* and stagnation will follow.

The sixth category identified refers to *national identity* and *sovereignty*. The EU is considered and described as being *artificial* in this chain of thought. It is considered as being an artificial construction because it is understood as a state or a state in the making which lacks a “people”. Thus, it is breaking with the principle that each cultural nation should have its own nation state. The EU restricts the nation states’ *sovereignty* and simultaneously lacks correspondence with the national unit and the *national identity*.

Furthermore, the argumentation following the logic of the sixth category often includes the term of *democracy*. In this view, democracy is a property of the nation state. Without a national identity, democracy is not possible. Therefore, an artificial supranational state can never be democratic. Following this logic, for instance, Václav Klaus is convinced that it is not possible to introduce a democratic system at a supranational level (Klaus, Lidové noviny, 11. 6. 2003). Thus, in accordance with the logic of the sixth category, the EU restricts sovereignty, and because of the lack of a European national identity, the sovereignty lost at the national level cannot be compensated for by the sovereignty gained at the European level.

The opposite of artificial is natural. Europe is also presented in the debates as being a natural unit. In **the seventh category**, the Czech Republic is considered a natural *part of Europe*, and therefore there is no doubt that the country belongs to the EU. From this perspective, the EU is understood at least partly as a *cultural community* and as being synonymous with Europe, or at least as meaning Europe in the sense that membership is considered a natural consequence of the fact that the Czech Republic is a European country.

The *good company* category reflects the argument that by joining the EU, the Czech Republic will be in one club together with, for instance, the United

Kingdom, the Scandinavian countries, France, the Netherlands, Germany and so on. In what sense can it be bad to be a member of an organisation with such prominent members? If this argument refers to the fact that these countries all share a common heritage, then this line of argumentation belongs to the seventh category. More often, however, this argument might reflect the developed nature of these countries (economic and democratic), and in this sense, this term would rather belong to the first category. The seventh category also reflects the argument that being European implies having a special responsibility for the other European countries with the same geographic and cultural (sometimes understood as Christian) affiliation. Thus, these countries are believed to have a moral obligation to mutually show solidarity with each other.

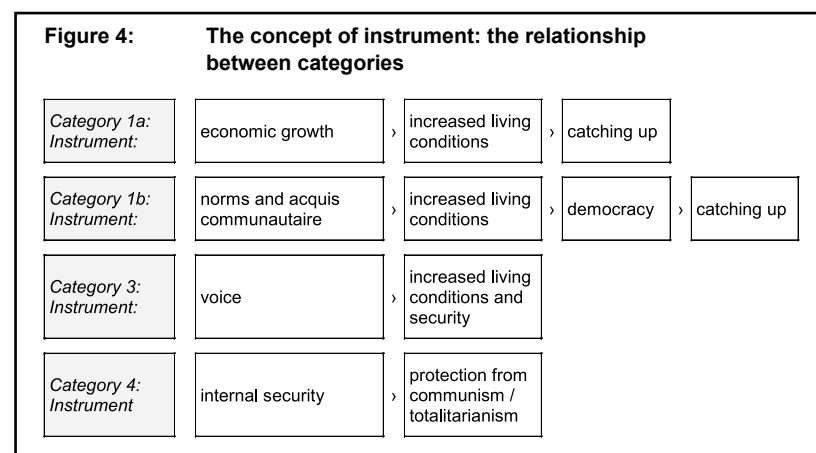
The initial seven categories are summarised in Figure 3.

Figure 3: The initial seven categories

1. Opportunity:	free movement and funds	economic growth	improved living conditions and social progress	catching up
2. Regulations:	centralisation (bureaucratisation) and social planning	Marxism	expenses	
3. Negotiations:	peace and voice	increased sovereignty (especially because of globalization)		
4. Internal security:	legal norms	end of communist era		
5. Membership unavoidable:	irrationality	isolation		
6. Artificial:	restricts sovereignty	failed democracy		
7. Natural unit:	cultural community	good company		

How do these categories relate to each other then? Can we find an internal order between them? Notably, one term included in the list above turns out to be broad enough to include several of the others. This term describes the EU as being an *opportunity*. The meaning of this term can be illustrated by a quotation from Prime Minister Vladimír Špidla: “European integration is not an automat for success, but an opportunity” (Právo, 14. 6. 2003).¹²

Categories 1, 3 and 4 all describe the EU as being an opportunity or, more precisely, an instrument that can be used for reaching some more or less specified goals such as economic growth, living standards, peace, or catching up with the rest of the EU, primarily those old EU member states that did not have to suffer under communism during the latter half of the 20th century. Categories 1, 3 and 4 are thus all subordinated to the concept of instrument (see Figure 4).



Related to the concept of instrument, we have another important concept – catching up. As Figure 4 illustrates, the EU is viewed as an instrument used to achieve a whole range of various goals, but the concept of catching up could be added to the right end of any of the above schemes. As Figure 4 illustrates, the most obvious cases are categories 1A and 1B. However, the EU as an instrument for voice can be seen as an instrument for both

¹² Unless stated otherwise, the translations are my own.

increased security and increased living standards, and both could be seen as necessary preconditions for catching up with the West. Thus, we can formulate our first theoretical proposal: in the Czech political discourse, the EU is conceptualised as an instrument. We can further specify the proposal in the following way: the EU is understood as an instrument for catching up with more developed countries.

The fifth category is interesting because it presents us with the rationality argument. The EU is unavoidable. However, what is it that makes the EU unavoidable? If we relate it to the other terms, we can formulate the proposal that it is due to the vaguely specified terms *progress* and *catching up*. The EU is unavoidable because it is the only option that could offer progress and the prospect of catching up with more developed countries. As mentioned above, the fifth category illustrates this relationship while emphasising the risks of being an outsider. The fifth category therefore helps us to further specify the first proposal as follows: *the EU is understood as a rational instrument for the Czech Republic to use in order to achieve progress in a wide sense and to be able to catch up with more developed countries, while the alternative would be irrational and lead to stagnation and isolation.*

Not all of the seven categories fit the general concept of instrument, but even category 2, which is not subordinated to *instrument*, relates to this concept. But for us to be able to understand this relation, we have to construct a new concept on a higher level of abstraction to which the second category would be subordinated. If we consider the concept of instrument, we could state that in the most general sense, the *instrument* shall provide *progress*. We cannot really make out what kind of progress this will be, but it will include both economic and security concerns, and progress is relative in relation to other countries, primarily the other members of the EU. The terms included in the second category are: *regulations, centralisation, social planning, Marxism*. These are all understood as being the opposite of *competition*; therefore the EU is understood as an obstacle to competition in the second category. Thus, the second category is also related to the concept of instrument because it is its opposite. According to the logic of the second category, the EU is not merely understood as a hindrance to free competition, but moreover it is understood as a hindrance to *progress*.

Therefore, we can formulate a second theoretical proposal, which is inter-related with the first one. The second proposal is: *the EU is seen as a hin-*

drance to free competition and to progress, and in fact, it might lead to stagnation and a return to the centralisation and over – regulation associated with the former regime and socialism.

Thus, based on the first five categories, we can specify two different but interrelated proposals in regard to how the EU is conceptualised in the Czech political discourse; these are from now on referred to as proposal 1 (*instrument*) and proposal 2 (*hindrance*). Proposal 1 (*instrument*): *The EU is understood as the rational instrument for the Czech Republic to use in order to achieve progress in a wide sense and to be able to catch up with more developed countries. The alternative would be irrational and lead to stagnation and isolation.* Proposal 2 (*hindrance*): *The EU is seen as a hindrance to free competition and to progress. In fact, it might lead to stagnation and a return to the centralisation and over-regulation associated with the former regime and socialism.*

Thus, these two proposals include categories one to five. Yet, the sixth and seventh categories cannot be included in these two propositions. Therefore, we also have to construct an alternative proposal for how the EU is conceptualised in the Czech discourse. If we consider categories six and seven, a conceptual nexus appearing in both of them is that of natural-artificial. The two categories are concerned with the question of what is the natural political unit. We find two contradictory proposals. Firstly, the Czech Republic is seen as a natural part of Europe, and therefore, it follows that the Czech Republic should be a part of this unit. Secondly, the Czech Republic constitutes a natural political unit that should not hand over its sovereignty to the EU because the EU is not a natural unit but an artefact.

The sixth category is clearly centred on the question of whether sovereignty can be handed over to the EU. Therefore we can construct the following proposal, which from now on will be referred to as proposal 4 (*artificial*): *The EU is understood as an unnatural political construction that challenges the natural unit, the nation state, since some sovereignty is handed over to this political entity.* Yet, we also have the opposite proposal, proposal 3 (*natural*): *The EU is understood as a natural political unit in the Czech political discourse.*

Summary

Based on the initial analysis of newspaper articles from the month preceding the referendum on EU membership, four different theoretical proposals

were generated. Two of them are centred on the dichotomy of whether EU is understood as an instrument or a hindrance, the other two on the dichotomy of the EU is understood as an artificial or a natural political unit.

The four proposals have been formulated in the following way:

1. The EU as an instrument: *The EU is understood as the rational instrument for the Czech Republic to use in order to achieve progress in a wide sense and to be able to catch up with more developed countries. The alternative would be irrational and lead to stagnation and isolation.*

2. The EU as a hindrance: *The EU is perceived as a hindrance to free competition and to progress. In fact, it might lead to stagnation and a return to the centralisation and over-regulation associated with the former regime and socialism.*

3. The EU as a natural political unit: *The EU is understood as a natural political unit in the Czech political discourse.*

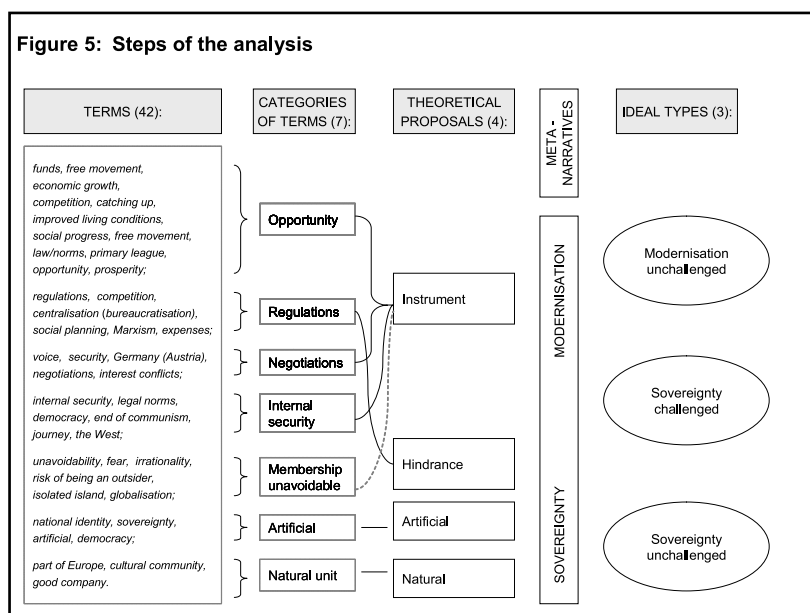
4. The EU as an artificial political unit: *The EU is understood as an unnatural political construction that challenges the natural unit, the nation state, since some sovereignty is handed over to this political entity.*

Figure 5 recapitulates the steps leading to the formulation of the theoretical proposals and how they are further used in the study. In the following part, these proposals are further explored in the context of the Czech discourse over a broader time frame (from 1989 to 2007).

3.2 Elaboration of the Initial Proposals

In this section I elaborate on the two proposals worked out above. They are the result of the analysis of the discourse shortly before the referendum in 2003. This period represents a snapshot of the general Czech discourse on the EU. Yet, we necessarily need to analyse the Czech discourse from a broader time perspective, given that the aim of this study is not to merely describe the debate on the EU before the referendum, but to understand the conceptualisations of the EU that dominate in the Czech debate. Therefore, in this section, the Czech discourse on Europe from the end of communism until the end of 2007 is analysed by using the proposals as points of departure.

The presentation in this part is structured according to the main political actors who were involved in constructing the Czech political discourse on the EU. These are the major political parties that have been represented in the Chamber of Deputies during the larger parts of the post communist



period (primarily ODS, ČSSD, KDU-ČSL, US-DEU and KSČM).¹³ Václav Havel's contribution to this discourse, as he cannot be clearly linked to a certain political party, is discussed separately, whereas Václav Klaus' is included in the discussion on the ODS discourse.

This section first deals with the discourse of the Civic Democratic Party (including Václav Klaus), thereafter with the discourse of the KSČM and then with the discourse of the more Europhile parties ČSSD, KDU-ČSL, and US-DEU. A fourth section is devoted to Václav Havel's contribution to the discourse. In each of these sections, the two proposals outlined above are discussed.

¹³ The Green Party and ODA are discussed under the heading *The Discourse of Liberals, Christian Democrats and Greens* (3.2.3). However, due to the relatively short period in which they managed to stay in the Chamber of Deputies, they are given less attention. The Republicans are not discussed separately in this part of the analysis.

3.2.1 The Discourse of the Civic Democratic Party (ODS)

The ODS has, since its formation in 1991, been one of the dominant political parties in Czech politics. The party's gradual turn to Euroscepticism, or Eurorealism, has led to a situation where the ODS Europe discourse is clearly distinctive from that of most of its political opponents (e.g. ČSSD, KDU-ČSL, US-DEU, the Green Party and former president Václav Havel).

The party had an ambivalent position on EU membership before this became a reality in 2004. It was ambivalent in the sense that the party criticised large parts of the integration project but did not, in most cases, question the necessity of membership. On the one hand, the party's 'realist' position on foreign policy made it impossible for it to reject the economic benefits of membership, and simultaneously EU membership was viewed as constituting a serious challenge to sovereignty, which was crucial to the party due to the very same realist position. Expressed differently, the argumentation used by party representatives is built on two different discourses which may lead to two very different outcomes regarding the Czech EU membership. Firstly, the role of the state and foreign policy is seen as that of protecting the national interest. For most party members who held a position of leadership, EU membership was considered to be in the national interest of the country, due to the economic benefits involved. Secondly, the state is also expected to protect the national sovereignty. Thus, the nation state is considered to be the natural unit, and therefore all attempts to restrict sovereignty are considered unnatural. The party was thus faced with a dilemma: How far could restrictions of national sovereignty be compensated for by economic benefits?

The ODS discourse thus includes a clash of two of the proposals stated above, i.e. *the instrument proposal* and *the artificial political unit proposal*. The analysis of the ODS conceptualisation of the EU presented in this part is based on interpretations primarily of party publications (party programmes, election manifestos and others), writings and speeches of Václav Klaus from the period from 1990 to 2007, and secondary literature on the topic. The discussion is structured in accordance with the four proposals outlined above.

The ODS party discourse on Europe can be traced backwards and includes some key documents such as the *Manifesto of Czech Eurorealism* from 2001 and the *Manifesto for the elections to the European parliament in 2004*. It is not the task here to determine the role of the single actors within the party for constructing the discourse. Yet, two persons seem to have been

very influential in the formulation of the party discourse. The first is Václav Klaus (chairman of the party during 1991–2002, prime minister 1992–1998, president since 2003), who has himself produced an extensive number of articles and speeches on the topic. Klaus has had a significant influence on the party's EU policy throughout the period from 1991 until present. Yet, it is possible to detect a slight difference between his views and the views of the party in the early 1990s. After the party's crisis of 1997–1998, it seems that the party line turned more in the direction of Klaus's more outspoken EU sceptical perspective (cf. Hanley 2004: 546).¹⁴

The second person is Jan Zahradil, the foreign policy spokesman for the party since 1999 (with a history as a foreign policy specialist for the Czech government and as head of the department for European integration at the government's office),¹⁵ who led the group which elaborated the *Manifesto of Czech Eurorealism*. Even if the manifesto builds on prior party programmes to a large extent, it specifies the ODS position, and for the first time, EU membership is at least partly put into question. Zahradil seems to have had an influence on this 'sharpening' of the party's EU policy.

At the time of the foundation of the ODS in 1991, there was no dramatic difference in the views on Europe of the members of the Civic Forum (OF) that opted for this new party and the other parts of the OF (Hanley 2004: 516). The desire to join the European institutions was, at this time, a sentiment shared by all the parties with the possible exception of the Communist party. It is even doubtful whether EC membership, during these days, was viewed as something significantly different than, for example, membership of the Council of Europe, an organisation which the Czech Republic (Czechoslovakia) entered in 1991. The ODS 1992 party programme says: "We [the ODS] see the integration of Czechoslovakia into the European Community as our most urgent and important goal. It is the only road to a long term stabilization of our entire political, economic and security situation" (ODS 1992).

If the ODS diverted from the other political subjects of the time, it was in their view of cooperation within the constellation of the Visegrád three

¹⁴ This can be explained by the fact that some senior figures in the party up till this point, such as Josef Zieleniec (foreign minister 1992–1997), had a moderating effect on Klaus.

¹⁵ Jan Zahradil was also on of the three Czech delegates to the Convention on the Future of Europe. Since 2004 he serves as a member of the European Parliament.

(Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia). Instead of seeing this as a precondition for further European integration, it was seen as a break by the party or, as Klaus described it, as a poor man's club (Klaus 1994: 136). The party also rejected the notion of Central Europe as a possible bridge between East and West. In short, the party called for a pragmatic foreign policy that would lead to a rapid integration into Western and West European institutions (cf. Hanley 2004).

The 1996 party programme cherishes as a success the fact that the Czech Republic, as the first of the transition countries, could accede to the OECD, which is described as being an organisation of the most developed countries of the world (ODS 1996). Yet, much less attention is devoted to this success than to the fact that the Czech Republic, in 1995, became an associate member of the EU, and a full EU membership is still described as the main foreign policy goal of the ODS. In the programme, it is explained that economic growth is one of the most efficient instruments for reaching stability. That is the primary reason for why the Czech Republic should join the efficient economies of the EU (ODS 1996). Thus, in the party discourse of the early 1990s, the EU is clearly linked to economic growth and to catching up with Western Europe as described in the *instrument proposal*.

A slight warning can, however, be found in the party programme from 1996. The authors argue that the process of European integration should not be allowed to "artificially suppress the diversity of states, nations and cultures" (ODS 1996). And even if the party is firmly committed to membership, its leader and Prime Minister Václav Klaus presented a more critical view of the EU in several articles and speeches during this period. Especially telling is the collection of speeches and texts in Klaus's *Česká cesta* (The Czech Road) from 1994.

In Klaus's speeches and writings, and in the party documents as well, the EU is seen as a possible way of solving problems that the member states share (see, e.g., Klaus 1994: 136–138). However, Klaus stresses the possible negatives of European integration in a way that we only see in official party documents from 1998 and onwards. Klaus repeatedly describes the dilemma of integration in speeches from 1993 as follows: "how to be European without dissolving like a lump of sugar in a cup of coffee" (Klaus 1994: 136).

Seán Hanley (2004) argues that Klaus' EU criticism at this time consists of three levels: 1) a neoliberal criticism of the EU as being overregulated,

2) a moralist criticism of the EU as being too self concerned and having too little faith in Eastern Central Europe and 3) a criticism of the EU as being a threat to the sovereign nation state (Hanley 2004: 518–519). The first of these would correspond well with the *EU as a hindrance proposal*, and Hanley's third category would correspond with the EU as an *artificial proposal*.

The election manifesto of 1998 entails a key concept which thereafter plays a significant role for the party's foreign policy. The pragmatic foreign policy has here been redefined as a 'protecting the Czech national interest' doctrine. In 1992 there is no mentioning of national interest in the ODS programme on foreign policy, in 1996 the term appears 5 times, and in 1998 it appears 4 times in a shorter text with the heading "We protect the Czech national interest". Strikingly, whereas in 1992 and 1996, full EU membership is described as the primary foreign policy goal, in 1998, the integration of the Czech Republic into the European integration is only mentioned as an additional important goal after the primary goal of NATO membership is mentioned first. Furthermore, in 1998 the party also presents the slogan "Integrate yes, dissolution no" (Integration yes, dissolution no) (ODS 1998). Since 1998, the ODS also uses the concept of 'realist' to describe their European policy: the party advocates "a realist and not naïve approach to integration" (ODS 1998). Thus, the term "realist" should be seen in opposition to what they warn of – that which they call the "naïve visionariness" of their pro-European opponents.

The *Manifesto of Czech Eurorealism* from 2001 did not come out of nowhere. It was based on the ODS view of the EU, which had continuously been moved in a more critical direction throughout the 1990s. Although the document to a large extent summarises the already established position, it is more specific on the ODS vision of the EU, and it further emphasises the notion of realism and the defence of the national interest (cf. Hanley 2004: 136), which we have traced back to the 1996 and 1998 party programmes.

Interesting to note is that the *instrument proposal* is indirectly criticised in the manifesto because the membership of the EU is described as not being a "politically neutral step" (Zahradil et al. 2001: 3). Thus, the European integration project is interpreted as being part of an ideological project. Some Civic Democrats have also later accused the EU of being a new ideological project comparable to that of socialism. By linking the EU to socialism, it is also linked to the country's dark history and thus it is considered as

a step backwards. In this context, Klaus has coined the term 'Europeanism' (europeismus).¹⁶ By linking the European integration project to the country's past, the EU is also seen as the opposite of progress.

The key concept of the *Manifesto of Czech Eurorealism* is conflict. The EU is described as being a tilt-yard of interests (*EU jako kolbiště zájmů*). The cooperation within the EU is characterised by conflicts of interest at various levels: between member states, between EU bureaucracy and member states and between the EU and other parts of the world. The assumption about the conflict of interests also leads to the conclusion that old member states are intending to use the enlargement for their own gains. This argumentation follows in the line of the *instrument proposal*. From this perspective, the EU is an instrument and primarily a way for member states to realise their interests, but it is also an instrument that can be misused.

As pointed out above, the ODS realist position implies an awareness of this competition, which means that the task for national politicians should be to protect the national interest in the integration process. It seems that the party following also tries to do this. During the parliamentary debates on, for instance, the Constitutional Treaty, some ODS MPs consequently argued that the at the time governing coalition of ČSSD, KDU-ČSL and US-DEU failed to defend Czech national interests. The following quotation of the Civic Democratic MP Fajmon is illustrative for this line of argumentation:

In our country, there is a very special group of politicians who do think that on the contrary [to defending the Czech national interest], it is in the Czech interest to have the weakest possible position. I don't know how if this attitude is in accordance with the parliamentary oath, which we all have sworn. In my opinion, it's not, but let them answer to this, they who publicly defend this opinion. (Fajmon at the 21st meeting (2002–2003) of the Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Parliament.)

Also the resolution adopted by the 2006 party congress is illustrative as this position, which prohibited all ODS politicians from handing over any further competences of the Czech Republic to the EU level and from extending the part of the European agenda that is decided by a qualified majority

¹⁶ In an interview for the Czech daily *Hospodářské noviny* (13 January 2006), Klaus argued that Europeanism is a greater danger than a raise in the Czech communist party's electoral performance.

(ODS 2006). Moreover, Klaus has repeatedly stated his view that the European cooperation should be based on intergovernmental cooperation, where no states can be overruled by the others. For this reason, according to him, consensus was the leading principle at the genesis of European integration and should also remain the leading principle (Klaus, *Hospodářské noviny*, 13.6.2007; cf. Brunclík and Novák 2008: 376).

In the *Manifesto of Czech Eurorealism*, Czech EU membership is still considered the desired outcome for two reasons. Firstly, EU membership is considered a necessity for the Czech Republic to be able to take part in the decision making process of the EU (cf. the term *voice*). Secondly, the Czech economy is depending on becoming fully integrated into the single market (cf. the term *economic growth*). However, even so, the authors emphasise that every further step of integration should be carefully analysed from the perspective of Czech national interests. Among other suggestions, it is suggested that the Czech Republic should oppose the Constitutional Treaty and the incorporation of the Charter of Fundamental Right in this or any such treaty in any other way than by merely making a political declaration, as was the case in the Nice Treaty. Furthermore, the manifesto argues in favour of another referendum concerning the introduction of the Euro in the Czech Republic (Zahradil et al. 2001: 9–10).

As noted above, the *Manifesto of Czech Eurorealism* can be interpreted as a significant change in the argumentation of the ODS because EU membership is not considered inevitable anymore. Albeit membership is still the prioritised strategy, given the understanding of the EU as a field for non-violent conflicts of interests, the authors of the manifesto come to the conclusion that there can be a situation where EU membership will not be a possible option. The authors anticipate that the EU might prioritise less demanding candidate countries. The authors also argue that given certain conditions, membership in the European Economic Area could be more favourable than the full EU membership (for instance, in case of changes in the decision making process which would favour bigger states). The Czech Republic might arguably also find inspiration in the Swiss way of bilateral relations with the EU (Zahradil et al. 2001: 11–12).

Thus, to a large part the manifesto might be interpreted in terms of the *instrument and hindrance proposals*. The EU is an instrument for economic growth and political influence, but in case the membership conditions or

the future integration process would lead to a situation where the membership would rather restrict the Czech Republic, then the EU would become a hindrance and membership would not be desired anymore. If we look at the debate immediately prior to the referendum in 2003, this proposal is confirmed. EU membership was described by representatives of the party on several occasions as a marriage of convenience rather than a marriage of love (see, e.g., Klaus quoted on the BBC, 9 June 2003; Zahradil quoted in *Mladá fronta Dnes*, 9 June 2003). The economic costs of being an outsider were argued to be so high that no alternative to membership existed (see, e.g., Topolánek 2003; Zahradil 2003).

Furthermore, when Mirek Topolánek (party chairman from 2002), in a publication with the telling title “Why I am not a Euro-Federalist”,¹⁷ develops his thoughts concerning what kind of European cooperation he would prefer, he does so in terms of trade and national benefits. He writes: “I would like a Europe /.../ of trading and collaborating national states that cooperate only in the areas where it is more favourable and efficient than single-handed action” (Topolánek 2003: 10).

As a consequence, in cases where the economic benefits can be obtained without membership, such a strategy might be preferable. Following a similar chain of argumentation, two leading figures of the ODS openly campaigned against Czech EU membership in the end (i.e. vice chairman Ivan Langer and MP Martin Říman) (Dürr et al. 2004: 35). Ivan Langer was one of the vice chairmen of the party during this period. In his view, the Czech Republic could enjoy the benefits of close economic cooperation with the EU even without a membership and would not have to take part in undesired state-like inventions. “Merely, we would not participate in the inventions of the European president, the European minister of foreign affairs, the European charter...” (Langer quoted in *Lidové noviny*, 31. 5. 2003).

How can we then understand Langer’s rejection of EU membership and the party’s rejection of the Constitutional Treaty? In accordance with the *instrument proposal*, the EU is viewed according to instrumental rationalisation. Something is accepted or rejected because of its concrete consequences in terms of rather concrete material benefits or costs. Thus, the EU president (i.e. the president of the European Council) is rejected because such an office

¹⁷ In the Czech original: „Proč nejsem eurofederalistou“.

is expected to diminish Czech influence. However, it is not possible, according to such an instrumental logic, to answer the question of why a Czech politician should defend the level of Czech influence instead of, e.g., efficiency gains at the European level, which could also be beneficial for the Czech population at large.

The *Manifesto of Czech Eurorealism* also contains other ideas which cannot be understood from an instrumental rationalist logic. The manifesto is quite clear on the point that the Czech Republic is a natural political unit, which the EU is not. Among others, the term “natural” appears in this context four times in the text. The natural political unit and moreover the specific Czech identity are a mentioned reason for rejecting further steps of unification. The manifesto contains an interesting passage dealing with the notion of a Czech state idea, which, according to the authors, is contradictory to some of the ideas of European unification. According to the authors, the Czech state idea has been embodied by, among others, Palacký, Havlíček and Masaryk – all being liberal democrats and belonging to a tradition close to the Anglo-Saxone. Therefore the authors conclude:

Therefore the concepts of European unification that originate from non-liberal democratic principles in contradiction with the Czech state idea are problematic. These [non-liberal principles] belong together with the earlier extreme fascist or Marxian visions of violent European unification – and also with the present centrally distributing Social Democratic and Christian Democratic policies of centralised Catholicism (Zahradil 2001: 8).

The 2002 party programme states that the EU is moving in the direction of a supranational state. The party warns that this development can have a negative effect on the relations between the European nation states. The nation state, the party states, is “... not an unnecessary leftover, but a fully natural product of societal development” (ODS 2002).

The nexus of natural and artificial is thus at the centre of the party’s EU criticism. The party defends a natural European order based on the nation state as the prime unit, which is considered to be under attack by the idea of “...an artificial alignment of all national states” (ODS 2002). In the ‘Blue Book’,¹⁸ Jan Zahradil discusses why the nation states cannot be replaced:

¹⁸ *Modrá kniha – modrá šance pro Českou republiku*. ODS 2004.

The irreplaceableness of nation states is determined for most by a common national language, a common interpretation of historical events and a national identity that results from it, but it is also determined by the direct voters’ direct influence and control over the behaviour of the national political elite (Zahradil 2004: 215).

Thus, further steps of European integration are rejected because they would create an artificial European state (see also, e.g., Topolánek 2003: 11). The reason for why the party rejects the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe (TCE) is that it is believed to demise the member states’ sovereignty (Zahradil 2004: 219).

Also, in the manifesto for the elections to the European Parliament in 2004, the European integration project is described primarily in terms of *competition*. The EU is necessary for the member states to be able to compete with the outside world. Simultaneously, it is indicated that if the EU promotes the wrong social policy, it can violate the sound competition between the member states. However, two other terms out of those outlined above are also frequently referred to: *opportunity* and *prosperity*.

Thus, the ODS seems to understand the EU in terms of the *instrument proposal* and of the *hindrance proposal* in this election manifesto as well. The EU is described as an instrument and an opportunity, but as one where the national politicians should consider their national interests and defend them. Furthermore, this instrument could rather easily turn into a hindrance, in particular in the event that the EU would be provided with a more fully fledged social dimension. Such a step would hinder natural reforms of the European welfare states and, in the end, lead to Europe losing out in international competition (cf. ODS 2004b: 2).

This quotation from the 2004 election manifesto is illustrative of the interpretation of the EU present in the party discourse: *Contrary to many proclamations, the EU is not, at this moment, turning into a supranational state form. On the contrary, under the alleged ‘federalisation’ of Europe, we are witnessing a renationalisation of the policies of some (in particular) big member states of the EU... (ODS 2004b: 2).*

Another party publication from 2004 also strengthens this interpretation. If we would look at the programme publication of the ODS shadow cabinet from 2004 called ‘The Blue Book’, the international system is described by Zahradil as being one of economic competition between states, where the primary goal

is to achieve a better position for maintaining or gaining prosperity (Zahradil 2004: 216). The single European market is described as being both the biggest gain of Czech EU membership and the heart of European integration.

However, it is interesting that the election manifesto from 2004 also indicates that the *instrument proposal* does not necessarily refer only to an instrumental type of rationalisation. The authors of the election manifesto namely relate economic prosperity to Czech history and tradition, which would also imply a national identity. This quotation from the election manifesto is illustrative: *Geographically the Czech lands are a part of one or two European north-south verticals, which have traditionally shaped a space of wealth and prosperity. For that reason, in the EU, we have to take up an honourable and equal position, proportional to our geographical and geopolitical position* (ODS 2004b: 1).

Summary

The discourse of ODS is largely possible to understand within the frame of the above outlined proposals. In accordance with the *instrumental proposal*, the EU membership is accepted, but it is just an acceptance rather than a greeting, or as some party representatives put it, it is a 'marriage of convenience' rather than a 'marriage of love' (see, e.g., Zahradil 2003 and Klaus 2003). There are two reasons for why the party's approach to the EU is reluctant. Firstly, as suggested by the *hindrance proposal*, the EU is seen as a failed instrument, and secondly, as in the *artificial proposal*, the EU is seen as an artificial political unit. The importance of the latter two proposals has grown over time, especially after 1997, as the party has turned more EU reluctant.

This suggests, as will be discussed later, that we are dealing with two different articulations of the problem which are related to two different underlying meta-narratives. The first one is related to growth and prosperity and to the possibility of catching up with more developed countries. This could be described in more general terms as a discourse of modernisation or progress. On the other hand, the second articulation is tied to a discourse on the nation and on sovereignty. These two discourses clash in the case of the Czech Civic Democratic Party. In the case of EU membership, the former turned out to be stronger than the latter, and therefore membership was the preferred option, but it remains to be seen if this will be the case regarding further steps of integration (e.g. the introduction of the Euro in the Czech Republic).

3.2.2 The Discourse of the Social Democratic Party (ČSSD)

The ČSSD has, perhaps in several respects, changed more as a political party than the ODS during the period from the fall of communism to the present. In the case of the social democrats, there has not been one single person dominating the party for the largest part of the period, as was the case with Klaus in the ODS. Miloš Zeman was the dominating figure of the party from the congress in 1993, when he was elected party leader, until his resignation in 2002. In contrast to Klaus, Zeman largely disappeared from politics after his failed attempt to become president in 2003. The ČSSD views on Europe, however, have changed rather little throughout this period, from the re-establishment of the party in 1990, through its increase in popularity and power overtake in 1998, and until its return to being the opposition in 2006.¹⁹

In the early 1990s, there was not a big difference between the position of the ČSSD as outlined in party documents, the position of the Civic Forum and the position of ODS in 1992. In the first post-communist ČSSD party programme from 1990, the party calls for the gradual construction of an all European confederation.²⁰ This is motivated by Czechoslovakia's geographical position but foremost by the country's cultural affiliation to Europe (ČSSD 1990). In 1991, the party argues that everything shall be done for closer association with the EC. It is mentioned as a plus that the socialists at this time were in majority in the European parliament, and the party also wants closer cooperation with these affiliated parties. The ČSSD is also keen to point out the importance of increased cooperation with the countries of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and a future NATO membership (ČSSD 1991).

In the 1996 programme, the formulations on EU membership are somewhat more extensive. The membership is described in terms similar to those of the *instrument proposal* as this quotation illustrates: "...our participation

¹⁹ The ČSSD existed during the first Republic of Czechoslovakia (1918–1938) but was prohibited by the Communist regime in 1948 and operated in exile until 1989. Therefore we can speak of its re-establishment (Kopeček 2003).

²⁰ The term "confederation" as used here was probably inspired by Mitterrand's proposal of a European Confederation, which was later rejected as a way of excluding the post-communist countries from full EC/EU membership. The Confederation would have created an all European political institution, but it would have kept the East-Central European states out of the core of the EU (cf. Vachudova 2005: 93).

in this process [of European integration] enables the equalizing of the citizens' living standards in all countries of the union..." (ČSSD 1996: 22). In the 1996 party programme, the ČSSD actually welcomes some limitations of Czech sovereignty if that would protect the social rights of its citizens. The authors of the programme write: "We identify with the principles of the Maastricht Treaty, and we would like to sign its social chapter and also ratify its social charter, which would make our parliament unable to embrace anti-social legislation" (ČSSD 1996: 22). The last part of this sentence, however, is left out in the 1997 programme, which otherwise, regarding foreign policy, is a mere extension of the 1996 programme. Therefore we should not exaggerate the importance of this formulation.

In 1997, the party emphasises to a greater degree that the EU membership is in the national interest of the Czech Republic and stresses further the importance of membership for economic growth, security, stability and the possibility of influencing the shape of Europe in the twenty-first century (ČSSD 1997: 42). In the programme from 2000, the Euro-realist discourse of ODS is reflected. The ČSSD, as follows, stresses that the membership is beneficial and that the Czech Republic does not risk losing its national identity (ČSSD 2000: 12).

Thus, the ČSSD seems to embrace the EU primarily as an instrument for growth and catching up as presented in the *instrument proposal*. However, it also seems to be an instrument for the implementation of a certain social democratic policy. The social democratic view of the EU is presented in the most detail in the long term programme of the party approved at the 2005 congress. One key concept that can be read out from this programme is *globalisation*, meaning a lack of regulations in world politics. There has been a deregulation of world markets, which is a result of the weakened role of nation states which have not been sufficiently compensated by supranational political institutions. Thus, there is a view corresponding to that presented in category 3 – the EU as an instrument: voice › increased living conditions and security (in times of globalisation).

Interesting to note is that the authors of the party programme do not merely describe the EU as an instrument to handle globalisation. They actually refer to the nation state in similar instrumental terms. The nation state was a necessary part of the process of building a democratic society. The following quotation from the programme summarises the party's argument on the nation state:

The social form of the law governed state was founded on a national market economy regulated by law. This road was the source of national prosperity and facilitated a visible increase in living standard, limited social differences and included citizens in the process of democratic decision making. Yet, this historically unique and tender symbiosis of market economy and socially oriented democracy is falling apart in the process of globalisation, while globalisation has a destructive impact on internal and external sovereignty of nation states (ČSSD 2005: 13).

The globalised world is, in the words of the ČSSD, characterised by a social, environmental and security deficit. These deficits cannot be sufficiently dealt with without international cooperation. The authors of the programme are not merely referring to the EU but also, for security concerns, to NATO and, for environmental threats, to the United Nations. In opposition to the ODS, who argue that the EU is a field for a contest of national interests, the ČSSD sees a common European interest; all European nation states have the common interest of reversing the negative consequences of globalisation (ČSSD 2005: 17).

The ČSSD does not refer to the national interest as often as ODS does, and when the concept appears, it is defined as being equal to the interests of all Czech citizens:

The accession of the Czech Republic to the European Union was in the interest of all citizens of the Czech Republic and thus in the national interest of the Czech Republic as such. This also counts for further stages of the integration process. The European unification process also has the same importance for other citizens of EU member states and for the Union as a whole. A strong EU means a strong Czech Republic, and a strong Czech Republic contributes to a stronger EU (ČSSD 2005: 23). In the party's middle-long term programme from 2002, the national interest is mentioned as being to minimise eventual negative effects on the Czech economy and on the living standard and social security of its citizens (ČSSD 2002).

It seems thus that the EU is interpreted largely in line with the *instrument proposal*, as a beneficial instrument. In the programme, a whole range of concrete benefits of cooperation is listed. They include benefits in terms of economy, security and voice in the international community. The party programme also states that the party is positive as to the extension of cooperation to new fields, including a more full-fledged common foreign and security policy.

The question then is whether the natural – artificial nexus is relevant at all in the case of the ČSSD. The party rejects what it refers to as a conservative understanding of the nation, i.e. the idea of peoples as ethnical nations and not as civic nations. Yet, the party simultaneously presents itself as the true defender of the nation state. This is because the claimed defence of the nation presented by neo-liberals (ODS) is nothing more than the acceptance of the undermining of the nation state by global capitalism in the view of the ČSSD (ČSSD 2005: 27–28).

This becomes even more obvious if we move to the debate on the Constitutional Treaty. Zaorálek, social democratic chairman of the parliament during 2002–2006, the foreign policy spokesman of the party and possibly the treaty's most productive defender in terms of articles written, argues that the treaty would strengthen the nation states and clarify the role of nation states in the European Union (see, e.g., Zaorálek 2005). Zaorálek presents his argumentation as a polemic to Václav Klaus, who argues that the Constitutional Treaty is a decisive step from a "Europe of states to a Europe of one European state" (Klaus 2005). In the European Manifesto (2006), the party refers to an increased action capability of the nation states being the result of the institutionalised cooperation in Europe (ČSSD 2006).

Yet, it is important that the ČSSD does not rule out the possibility of democracy on the European level, which would, according to the party programme, necessarily include the construction of a European demos (ČSSD 2005: 28). This view can also be contrasted to that of ODS and Václav Klaus, where democracy is by necessity bound to the nation state.

The biggest difference regarding the *natural* and *artificial proposal*, however, is that the ČSSD does not discuss the problem in terms of the nexus of natural – artificial. There are no references to the EU as a natural political unit in the party programme. The third and fourth proposals are thus of less value in the case of the ČSSD. This is not to suggest that we cannot find any descriptions in party material or articles by party representatives referring to the Czech Republic as a natural part of Europe. Such formulations can be found, for instance, in the very first post-communist party programme of the ČSSD (1990). Moreover, there are formulations in the European Manifesto referring to borders between nations as being unnatural (ČSSD 2006), thus referring to the process of tearing down border checks and similar processes as being natural. This, however, does not suggest that Europe would be

a natural political unit whereas the nation states would be unnatural political units or the other way around.

Thus, the point here is not that members of the ČSSD never speak of Europe as a natural political unit or that they do not relate it to a continuous historic development, because they do. The point is rather that to the extent that they do this at all, it is subordinated to the instrumental logic. The following quotation illustrates this point. EU membership is seen as a logical consequence of Czech history, but the accent is on the benefits provided by the Union:

The return of our country to the democratic community of European nations /.../ is closely related to the Czech history and the continuous efforts of our nation to reach continental peace and cooperation. This is symbolised by a whole range of names – Jiří z Poděbrad²¹ being the beginning and Edward Beneš the ending. /.../ The accession of the Czech Republic to the EU in 2004 meant its definitive political, security and economic grounding in this area of peace, prosperity, fellowship, sustainable development and the enshrining of cultural identity (ČSSD 2006).

What speaks against an interpretation of the EU as a cultural community, judging from the party programmes, is that nothing would rule out the possibility of also extending the EU to other parts of the world. Consequently, ČSSD remains positive towards further enlargement of the EU in comparison to, for instance, Turkey (ČSSD 2006).

Such an instrumental interpretation of the ČSSD conceptualisation of the EU corresponds fairly well with previous research on the party's position in regard to the EU. The position of the party has been labelled as 'functional Europeanism', meaning that the party supports the continuation of the integration process as long as it serves domestic and / or party interests (Kopeček 2004: 248). Thus, in the case of the Social Democrats, it seems to be mainly the living standard of the citizens and the protection and extension of a European welfare state that give the integration process its primary reason d'état.

Yet, the Social Democratic Prime Minister Vladimír Špidla, in one of his final appeals to the nation before the referendum, chose to emphasise the

²¹ Jiří z Poděbrad was the king of the Czech lands in the 15th century and tried to build a union for peace among Catholic kingdoms. For this reason, he is sometimes argued to have attempted to produce a UN or EU of the Middle Ages.

security argument to favour membership in the EU. He did so by arguing that the EU is a peace project that will never allow another Munich Agreement (Špidla 2003b). Thus, the EU is also described as a peace providing instrument. Arguments that refer to peace and internal stability also refer to concrete benefits, and thus also follow an instrumental logic of argumentation (cf. Drulák 2005).

Summary

The discourse of the ČSSD corresponds in general to the *instrumental proposal*. Yet, even if the EU is largely described as an instrument for general improvement of living conditions, economic growth and catching up with Western Europe, the EU is also more specifically seen as a necessary instrument for the promotion of a special type of European social policy and as a counterbalance to economic globalisation. Proposals three and four, referring to the *natural – artificial* dichotomy, are only applicable to the ČSSD to a limited degree, and when they are applicable to it, they accord with the proposal of the EU as a natural political unit. In general, however, the party rejects the notion of a natural political unit. The ČSSD discourse has remained fairly coherent throughout the period.

3.2.3 The Discourse of Liberals, Christian Democrats and Greens

Since the fall of communism, a number of smaller centrist or rightist political subjects have been present in the Chamber of Deputies of the Czech parliament. They share a fairly clear-cut pro-European position. The most stable party in this group, in terms of electoral support, during the period has been the Christian Democratic Party (KDU-ČSL).

Two liberal parties have challenged the ODS and offered a more pro-European alternative on the right side of the political scale: ODA and US-DEU (cf. Kopeček 2004: 224). The ODA scored around 6 percent in the elections to the Chamber of Deputies in 1992 and 1996 but disappeared from the chamber after the elections in 1998, and after a series of scandals, the party finally ceased to exist in 2007. The US-DEU entered the Chamber of Deputies in 1998 after a split within the ODS and remained there until the elections in 2006, but they could only do so by forming a coalition with the Christian Democrats in the 2002 elections (see Fiala and Hloušek 2003). The Green Party (SZ) entered the Chamber of Deputies only in 2006. Thus, we could say that it ‘replaced’

US-DEU because at least concerning European integration, the two parties have rather similar views.

In this section, I firstly discuss the contribution to the Czech political discourse on Europe made by the KDU-ČSL. Thereafter, I turn to the US-DEU and the ODA. The Greens are also discussed in this part, which, however, still primarily focuses on the US-DEU. All four parties, however, make rather similar contributions to the discourse with an accent on a deepening of the integration process, and with the exception of the Greens, they share an understanding of the EU in terms of values.

The Christian Democrats

The logic of the KDU-ČSL argumentation can be understood in terms of the *instrumental proposal* with an element of the *EU as a natural unit proposal*. The main difference between the view of the party and the others discussed in this chapter is the accent it places on the EU as a community based on Christian values. The EU is not merely an instrument to increase the efficiency and action capacity of its member states but also a value based community. Thus, the view of the Christian Democrats in this respect differs from that of, for instance, the ČSSD.

In the party’s manifesto for the elections to the European parliament in 2004, the EU is described in four different ways: 1) as a community of peace and stability, 2) as a community of prosperity (engaged in boosting economic growth and social cohesion in the member states), 3) as a community of solidarity (the EU producing increasingly similar living conditions in different parts of Europe), and 4) as a community of values (promoting those common European values that are primarily advocated by Christian Democrats) (KDU-ČSL 2004).

The last point brings us at least one step in the direction of considering Europe as a natural political unit. This is further emphasised by the fact that the party rejects Turkish EU membership since the country is not considered European. In the election manifesto for the 2006 elections to the Czech Chamber of Deputies, it is explicitly stated that: *We are interested in close relations between Turkey and the EU, yet even if the membership talks have been opened, we do not support full Turkish EU membership. If the EU is defined as a Union of Values, then the compatibility with Turkey is problematic because both units are founded on different civilisations* (KDU-ČSL 2006).

The emphasis on the EU as a community of values also took a concrete shape in relation to the debates on the Constitutional Treaty as Foreign Minister and Chairman of KDU-ČSL Cyril Svoboda criticised the vague formulations in the Constitutional Treaty that failed to define specific European values (Svoboda 2003b).

The Christian Democrats also provide outspoken criticism of the ODS conceptualisation of the EU as based on competition and interest conflicts. Instead, they stress an interpretation of the EU as an opportunity for joint action with the realisation of a common project as its goal.

The Liberal Parties and the Green Party

All three of these political parties (ODA, US-DEU and the Greens) accept the instrumental understanding of the EU as presented in the *instrument proposal*. The ODA and US-DEU, however, argue that the EU is more than merely an instrument because it is based on common values and a shared culture, with a common heritage (see ODA 2002, US-DEU 2001). The Greens advocate the EU primarily in instrumental terms, but the catching up aspect is not present in the party documents studied; the EU is there to solve problems of an economic and social nature as well as challenges to the environment (SZ 2006).

What the three parties have in common is that they would prefer a further deepening of the integration process. The Greens, for example, were in favour of the Constitutional Treaty and consider a stronger role for the European parliament as crucial for a fairer representation of the European citizens. In their view, the current largely intergovernmental structure of the EU favours the big European powers (SZ 2007 and 2003).

If we turn to the liberal party US-DEU, which was present in the Czech Chamber of Deputies from 1998 to 2006, the party was created by the anti-Klaus fraction of the ODS after the crisis in the party in 1997–1998. Thus, whereas the exit of some prominent members of the ODS led to a more clear-cut Eurosceptical programme (see above), the US-DEU was created as a pro-EU party. Kopeček goes as far as describing the party as one with an ideational pro-EU stand and thus a party that would support further integration independently of instrumental benefits (Kopeček 2004: 248).

The US-DEU produced an articulation of the EU as a natural form of co-operation that would thus correspond to the *natural unit proposal*. The EU is

described as a way to overcome nationalism but not the nation state. Europe is described as not merely a geographic concept, but as an old culture and ‘political reality’. Europe has had a supranational intellectual and spiritual life and thus also a political identity throughout the centuries (US-DEU 2001).

Just like KDU-ČSL, the party refers to and rejects the ODS conceptualisation of the EU as an area for competition of interests. Instead, they write about the common European interests, which entails, as in the case of ČSSD and KDU-ČSL, finding a counterweight to globalisation.

The US-DEU does not reject the *instrumental proposal* but argues that the EU is more than merely an instrument. It is rather based on common values and a shared culture, with a common heritage. Yet, the EU membership is also conceived as an instrument that the Czech Republic should use for catching up with Western Europe in the rhetoric of the party. Illustrative is the following goal outlined in the party’s 2001 European vision: “that the Czech Republic will belong among the 15 most developed countries [in economic terms] in the Union before the year 2010, i.e. that it will be the best of the new member states and overtake one of the current member states” (US-DEU 2001: 14).

Summary

For this group of parties as well, the EU is largely conceptualised as an instrument. However, especially in the case of the KDU-ČSL and US-DEU, the EU is also understood in terms of the third proposal as a natural political unit. This is especially clear in the case of the Christian Democrats, who also provide the EU with clearly defined borders and see it as the Christian Europe.

3.2.4 The Discourse of the Communists (KSČM)

Since the right wing extremist part, the Republican Party (SPR-RSČ), exited from the Chamber of Deputies after the parliamentary elections in 1998, the most clear-cut Euro-sceptical position is found at the extreme left of the political spectrum (cf. Kopeček 2004: 244). The Communist Party (KSČM) recommended that its voters reject membership of the EU in the referendum in 2004. The reason for this was that the membership conditions were not considered to defend the Czech national interests. Party representatives warned of the risk of Czech Republic ending up with a class B membership of the EU. After the referendum, the party has adopted a line of critical

acceptance of the outcome of the referendum (KSČM 2004, 2006). Thus, the party now accepts the Czech EU membership and does not demand a Czech withdrawal from the Union.

The KSČM emphasises that the aim of the Czech foreign policy should be to promote the Czech national interest. The world order should, according to the communists, be based upon an equal cooperation of sovereign nation states. Therefore the goal of the Czech foreign policy is supposed to be “(t)o defend the independence, state sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state, to ensure its defence and protection from any threat, to ensure the security of its citizens” (KSČM 2002). For this reason, the party rejects any new treaty that would increase the use of qualified majority voting in the Council, and the new system of qualified majority voting, as proposed in the Constitutional Treaty and later in the Lisbon Treaty, is also criticised because it is viewed as weakening the Czech position and undermining the equality of states (KSČM 2005). The emphasis on state equality is a commonality between the KSČM and ODS. It also follows that KSČM rejects the transfer of sovereignty in accordance with the *EU as an artificial unit proposal*.

In the 2004 manifesto for the elections to the European parliament, the party presents a rather pessimistic description of the situation in the world. The key term is *threat*. There is, firstly, an economic threat that takes the shape of economic stagnation and unemployment. Secondly, there is a security threat in the form of increased militarisation, terrorism and also criminality. Albeit the articulation of the economic threat is similar to what ČSSD and KDU-ČSL describe as globalisation, the Communists only partly interpret the EU as the proper instrument to face this challenge.

In the election manifesto from 2004, the party argues that the EU should be used to approach difficult social and democratic issues as well as to promote peaceful cooperation in Europe (KSČM 2004). Thus, the EU can to some degree be viewed as an instrument, yet not as a preferred instrument, but one which the party has to use, since the EU membership has become a reality.

According to Vladimír Handl (2004), the party is divided into two factions, one more pro-European and the other more sceptical. The pro-European wing tends to see the EU as a possible instrument for a radical left programme (Handl 2004: 1). Judging from a discussion in the newspaper linked to the party (*Haló noviny*), the EU is viewed as being right wing and therefore not capable of dealing with the challenges of the working class people (see,

e.g., Větelář 2005). This view is also reflected in the party's position on the Constitutional Treaty. The party argues that the ‘constitution’ subordinates everything to the free movement of capital, which in fact means that a neo-liberal policy is institutionalised in the constitution. The EU is thus seen as a *hindrance*, albeit in a different way than in the articulation of the ODS. The EU is not a hindrance to competition as suggested in the *hindrance proposal* but a hindrance for the possibility of carrying out communist policies.

Summary

Since the Czech Republic received its EU membership, the party has partly adopted an instrumental view of the EU. The EU is then viewed as an instrument to combat globalisation and thus not as an instrument for catching up as in the *instrument proposal*. Yet, the view is largely based on the same instrumental view of rationalisation. Simultaneously, however, further integration is rejected as a possible institutionalisation of neo-liberal policy. This rejection is thus in accordance with the logic of the *hindrance proposal*, but this needs modification. The EU is a hindrance in the sense that it restricts the possibility of carrying out the preferred policy at the national level. The KSČM favours a Europe of nation states and thus seems to stress the concept of nation states as natural political units as in the fourth proposal.

3.2.5 Václav Havel's Contribution to the Discourse

Václav Havel served as the first president of post-communist Czechoslovakia and then two terms as the president of the Czech Republic. Together with Václav Klaus, he is one of the key figures in Czech post-communist politics (cf. Drulák and Beneš 2008: 329).

One key term frequently appearing in Václav Havel's writings is *journey*. The transition process at large is described as being a journey. In one sense, according to Havel, politics always take the shape of a journey.²² In his New Year's address from 1996, Havel states:

²² Havel's emphasis on journey has also been noticed by previous research. Drulák and Beneš (2008) studied Havel's view on Europe as based on metaphors. They came to the conclusion that the metaphor *movement* was especially important in Havel's writings in the early 1990s (Drulák and Beneš 2008: 345).

On the other hand, history and politics do take the shape of a journey. It is a journey that never ends and that includes a never ending search, a never ending interrogation, and continuous dialogue between ideals and experiences.... (Havel 1999[7]: 550).

In the “Summer Meditations” from August 1991, Havel writes about the transition as a concrete journey, but also as one with a particular goal:

“How much further do we have to go on the road ahead of us before we can hope to also find our home in the European Communities, or rather a certain dimension of our home...” (Havel 1999: 476). As this quotation illustrates, the EU is a goal rather than an instrument. The goal is the return to Europe. However, we must ask the question of what this return to Europe actually means. Havel defines it himself in the following way: “basically the acceptance to the club of historically more lucky countries that were on the other side of the Iron Curtain” (Havel 1999[7]: 600 – Aachen). What the countries in this club have in common is that they are politically relatively stable and economically affluent. Thus, the membership of this club is linked to the reaching of certain standards set by these countries in both the political and economic field.

The return to Europe is also much more than a possible EC/EU membership, which was considered as something very distant in the early 1990s. A first symbolic step in the return to Europe had already been taken when Havel wrote his “Summer Meditations” in 1991 – the membership of the Council of Europe (see Havel 1999: 475–490). In 1991, Havel writes optimistically about the possibility of a future European Confederation.²³ Havel writes about the long road Czechoslovakia would have to travel before it would eventually be able to reach the goal of a complete return to Europe and become a normal “West European” liberal democracy with a functioning market economy. Yet, this does not mean that Havel would like the Czech Republic (or, in 1991, Czechoslovakia) to copy the politics of Belgium or the Netherlands. Havel stresses the need for it to find its own road rather than copy other states. But on the other hand, he emphasises that this does not mean constantly yelling “we are Czechs and Slovaks” (Havel 1999[6]: 543).

²³ The term was inspired by Mitterand’s proposal. Yet Havel refuses to see it as an alternative to EU membership.

To understand what Havel means when he writes about becoming a normal European country, it is worth considering Havel’s vision of the future of Czechoslovakia from 1991. In his “Summer Meditations”, he contemplates on what the country might look like 10 / 15 years from then. There are many things mentioned that would seem trivial in any West European society, and for that matter in the Czech Republic 17 years after the end of communism, such as different private stores and coffee shops. Many of the things mentioned by Havel are related to very concrete problems for Czechoslovak citizens of the time, concerning, for instance, housing problems (Havel 1999: 491ff).

In Havel’s speeches, the concept *opportunity* also appears frequently. Europe has, in the post-Cold War period, a unique possibility of voluntary unification based on mutual respect and cooperation. The alternative to this vision is totalitarianism and nationalism. Thus the EU is also seen as an instrument for internal security, or rather as an instrument for European internal security, since Havel repeatedly warns that a destabilisation of Central-Eastern Europe would inevitably spread to the Western part as well. This was an argument Havel used to promote enlargement and warn the Western powers against self absorption and neglect of the post-communist countries (cf. Bugge 2003: 185–186). Thus, this part of Havel’s argumentation corresponds with a view of the EU in which it is conceived as an instrument for internal security and, more precisely, for protection against communism and other forms of totalitarianism.

Thus, there is an instrumental part in Havel’s conceptualisation of the EU. However, the EU is not merely an instrument to be used for mutual benefits of the member states. Havel directly rejects such an instrumental view of the EU even if he does admit and stress the benefits that the cooperation brings. He warns against an understanding of the EU as a “perfect machine” (Havel 1999[7]: 225) and stresses the importance of common values and a European identity.²⁴

Havel clearly makes the point that the European nations are bound together by destiny and geography. “We are all different, but we are all on board the same boat” (Havel 1999: 220), as Havel put it in his speech to the Eu-

²⁴ Cf. Drulák and Beneš argue that Havel rejects the metaphor of the EU as a machine (2008: 345).

ropean Parliament in 1994. Europe is a natural unit that even existed before the modern nation states (ibid.: 182). The EU is a natural political unit in the sense that the Iron Curtain dividing Europe was artificial, and the process of European integration is, in this sense, natural. All parts of the European continent are numerous and diverse in terms of geography, nationalities, culture, economics and politics – “at the same time all its parts always were mutually bound together, and in that light, it is possible to speak of it as one – even if complicatedly structured – political unit” (Havel 1999[7]: 219).

Thus the EU is described as a natural political unit in accordance with the *natural unit* proposal. Yet, this does not mean that the EU is the natural political unit whereas the nation states would be unnatural. In Havel’s writings and speeches, the word ‘nation’ appears frequently, not only in relation to the EU but also when discussing Czechoslovakia in the early 1990s. When Havel, in 1999, reflects upon the separation of Czechoslovakia, he argues: “It even seems as if only now the break-up gets a real reason. It is only now that we can, without any limitations and like equal partners, take part in the making of Europe...” (Havel 1999[7]: 823).

Havel is thus not suggesting that the nation is not a natural unit. He does not argue that the EU is a political unit competing with the nation; the argument is rather that the EU is a forum that allows for an equal cooperation between nations. The point of the unification of Europe is that it leads to a situation where a powerful state cannot suppress a less powerful one. Therefore the European nations, including the Czech one, have to give up some of their sovereignty in favour of the sovereignty of the EU because it is beneficial for all (Havel 1999[7]: 222). Havel summarises this argument in the following way: “an open international environment and an advanced democratic culture of neighbours, friends and allies constitute the best ground for the advancement of our own uniqueness” (Havel 2000; Bugge 2003: 187).

Thus, there is no contradiction between the EU and the nations and their independence because the EU consists of equal partners (i.e. the European nations). Havel considers nationalism potentially dangerous, warns against a state built on the ethnical principle and argues that while a mature nation can be proud of its tradition and culture, the state needs to be something more than the fulfilment of the nation. The state needs to be built on the citizen’s principle that can unite all the citizens of a state (Havel 1999[7]: 181 – New Year’s Day 1994).

Havel’s conceptualisation of the EU is based on the following terms: *nations*, *shared values*, *equal partners* and *difference*. Importantly, the EU is described as a “community of values and rights” (Havel 1999[7]: 822). Is then the EU as a community of values geographically determined? Peter Bugge (2003) writes extensively on this aspect of Havel’s conceptualisation. He argues that Havel, in this respect, uses double standards. While Lithuania has the right to decide on its own where it belongs in terms of cultural and historical links, Russia is not granted the same freedom of choice. Havel tends to include America and exclude Russia from “his own civilization” (Bugge 2003: 185).

Summary

In Havel’s writings and speeches on Europe, we can find the components of the *instrument proposal*. Yet, Havel himself rejects such a conceptualisation of the EU as being too one-sided. Havel also describes the EU as a community of destiny. All European countries are in the same boat. Thus, the EU is understood as a natural political unit, but it should be added to this (i.e. to the third proposal) that it is not a unit that competes with the nation states. The nation states are not considered artificial, but closed borders between them are considered unnatural.

3.3 Modifying the Initial Proposals

1. The **instrument proposal**: *The EU is understood as the rational instrument for the Czech Republic to use in order to achieve progress in a wide sense and to be able to catch up with more developed countries. The alternative would be irrational and lead to stagnation and isolation.*

The interpretation of the EU as an instrument is relevant in the discourses of all the political actors. The ODS accepts EU membership due to the economic benefits that the membership provides. The ČSSD and KDU-ČSL present the EU as an instrument for the protection of the European model of welfare states in the age of globalisation. Even the pro-EU part of the KSČM tends to view the EU as a possible instrument that could be used to support left-wing politics. The US-DEU criticises the instrumental view of the EU by arguing that the EU is more than merely this, but at the same time, the

party states the concrete goal of overtaking one of the old member states in economic growth before 2010, which emphasises the catching up aspect of proposal 1A in a clearly outspoken way.

A common interpretation of the Czech discourse about Europe is that it has gone from an initially more ideationally based vision of European integration, as was the case shortly after the fall of communism, to a more pragmatic approach characterising the debates on EU membership, as was the case shortly before the referendum on membership in 2003, which was oriented towards the economic benefits of membership. The slogans 'back to Europe' and 'return to Europe' have often been interpreted as being based on identity and culture based arguments as well as on material interests (cf. Vachudova 2005: 84).

However, such a distinction is hard to make. In the early 1990s, the EC/EU membership was viewed as a priority but mentioned in the same breath as membership of NATO, OECD and other world institutions. This was not only the case with party programmes, as demonstrated above, but also in the programme declarations of Czech governments (Pospíšilová 2006: 308). The EU membership was thus presented as a part of a return to the West or as Havel put it, 'a club of historically more lucky countries'. If these countries had not been as wealthy and prosperous, a membership of that club would clearly not have been a desired goal. This is not to suggest that identity and culture do not matter, but clearly, the relationship is rather complex and the 'becoming one of them' argument is clearly linked to the increase of living standard and so forth. When some parts of the ODS reject the EU, it is accordingly because the instrumental benefits could be reached even without the membership.

The EU membership is also presented as the only way. Some political actors have a negative view of the current European integration process, but despite this, they, in the end, favour membership because there is no economically responsible alternative. Not even the KSČM reject membership completely. When they recommended for their voters to reject the membership in the referendum in 2003, they argued that it was because the terms of membership could have been made more favourable to the Czech Republic.

Pospíšilová stresses that pro-EU governments and pro-EU opposition, to a large extent and for a long period of time, managed to keep the discussion on Czech EU membership on a rather technical level that did not help to

stress the different aspects of EU membership. The EU membership was viewed as a historical opportunity without any alternative (Pospíšilová 2006: 323).

Yet, such various political actors as Klaus, Havel and US-DEU all reject the first proposal but for different reasons. Klaus questions whether membership of the EU really should be used as a standard for how developed a certain state is. As he puts it: "In Europe we have the unfortunate situation where membership or non-membership of the EU is seen as a sign of development, maturity, quality, democracy and success" (Klaus in Lidové noviny, June 11, 2003). Havel criticises an overly technical understanding of the EU and argues for the importance of the EU as a value community.

Yet, despite criticism, the EU is largely viewed in instrumental terms in the Czech debate. In its most concrete form, it referees the directing of visible amounts of European money that go into the Czech Republic. In his column, an editor of the Czech weekly *Respekt*, Marek Švehla, used the term "čerpací stanice" (filling station) as a metaphor to describe the dominating theme of the Czech debate on membership in the European Union. The metaphor referred to the discussions about how much different regions and municipalities within the country had managed to achieve²⁵ in terms of benefits from the European Union. In a broader meaning, the EU is understood as an instrument that provides for stability and the security necessary for increased living standards in the Czech Republic.

The *instrument proposal* furthermore implies a prediction for the future. If we accept the strength of this line of argumentation, that the EU is seen as a necessity for catching up but also as a proof of successful transition, then the question emerges: Could the Czech Republic reject the euro? Within the ODS and in the argumentation of Klaus, the euro has been increasingly criticised (see, e.g., interview with Klaus in *Právo*, 22. 9. 2007; interview with Topolánek on *Aktuálně.cz*, 20. 1. 2008). Will they be able to reject the euro in a situation where, for instance, Slovakia introduces the currency? Would not that also be a blow to a certain type of identity (the Czech Republic as a successful transition country)?

²⁵ In Czech, the word that is used for this is "čerpat" (literally "to draw out" or "to pump") – thereof comes the analogy with a filling station.

Basically, it was possible for some Czech politicians to reject the Constitutional Treaty because they could reject it without any fears of being overtaken by other European countries. With the euro, it is different because it is a situation where other post-communist countries could become Euro countries while the Czech Republic could remain outside. In such a situation, it might be tricky for Czech politicians to make credible the argument that being an outsider was a free choice and not a result of a failure.

The alternative story which they would have to make credible in such cases would have to be similar to what was present in the ODS *Manifesto of Czech Eurorealism*. The other states are not better than the Czech Republic, but they introduce the Euro because they are too weak to defend their national interests. Discourses are changing, and the actors can influence the future shape of a discourse and what will become a dominant understanding within the discourse. Therefore there is a possibility that such a re-articulation could be successful, but given the conserving nature of the discourse, when it comes down to it, it might be very difficult for Czech politicians to reject the Euro.

2. The **hindrance proposal**: *The EU is perceived as a hindrance to free competition and to progress. In fact, it might lead to stagnation and a return of the centralisation and over-planning associated with the former regime and socialism.*

If we look at the *hindrance proposal*, this line of argumentation appears mainly in the argumentation of Euro-sceptics or Euro-realists. The critics, by articulating the EU as a hindrance, challenge the assumption present in the first proposal of the EU being a 'value neutral instrument'. If in the first proposal, the EU is to a large extent de-politicised, the second proposal of the EU as a hindrance understands the EU as a part of an ideological project. Whereas the communists reject parts of the integration process because that would imply a turn towards neo-liberal policies in the Czech Republic, the ODS, on the other hand, argue that it is a part of a socialist project. By linking the EU to socialism, the EU becomes connected to the country's history. The EU is thus not an instrument for progress any more, but something which can be associated with backwardness.

Thus the initial *hindrance proposal* should be reformulated to include criticism both from the right and the left. Even if the right wing articulation has a stronger position in the Czech discourse, in order for the proposal to

include as much as possible of the criticism, it could be reformulated in the following way:

The EU is perceived as a hindrance because it forces an ideological project on its member states. This might lead to policy outcomes undesired by the country's citizens.

This reformulation of the second proposal also provokes a clearer understanding of the *instrument proposal*. The instrumental understanding of the EU implies that the EU is apolitical. If the EU is truly seen as apolitical, that would imply that the EU could be described as an instrument for the *realisation of nationally set goals*. In the argumentation of the ČSSD, however, there seems to be a slight contradiction. On the one hand, regional integration is described as a necessity, given the pressures of globalisation, which not even the biggest of the European nation states could face on its own, and from such a perspective, the EU is an apolitical reaction whose purpose is to protect the national sovereignty of the member states. What they were previously able to manage on their own, they can now only manage in close cooperation with allied states. On the other hand, ČSSD argues for the political nature of the EU by stressing that the neo-liberals (ODS) "...reject further European integration mainly because they consider the European Union too socialistic. In reality, it is clear that they support the dissolution of the nation states because they embrace the other integration process, the process of globalisation, which is based on the unregulated global market and an ignorance of regulations stemming from, e.g., the defence of social values" (ČSSD 2005: 28).

Therefore, on the one hand, every "reasonable" person would support further integration because it is the only possible protection for the nation states in a period of globalisation, but on the other hand, it is necessary because it enables certain policies. The ČSSD does not claim the European project to be merely social democratic, but to be based on social democratic, Christian democratic and liberal values (ČSSD 2005: 24), which, however, means that the EU is not apolitical. Yet, it is presented in an apolitical way, implying that it is the ideological dogmatism of its rivals that make them reject the EU. The neo-liberals are supposed to have a secret agenda of destroying the nation state and its welfare because they would like to set free the global capital, and thus their nationalist rhetoric is merely a "cover", implying furthermore that the opponents of further integration are threatening the current status quo and not the other way around.

Given that the other (smaller) pro-European parties present the EU as a possible reaction to globalisation as well, we could ask the question of whether this means that the dominant understanding of the EU is one of the EU as an instrument for centre-left welfare politics. To a certain degree, this might be the case. It is interesting to point out that the two dominant political parties in the country, i.e. the ČSSD and the ODS, tend to reproduce a similar conceptualisation of the EU as being slightly social democratic in this respect. The communists are an exception to this rule when they describe the EU as neo-liberal.

For a student of European integration, this might come as a surprise, given the strong position of the so-called social democratic criticism of negative integration within the academia as outlined by Fritz Scharpf (1999). Yet, if we look again to the long time programme of the ČSSD, this (social democratic) criticism of the EU is also outlined. From this perspective, the EU, by focusing on trade regulation, neglects the social dimension, which can lead to social dumping and a negative competition between the member states, which leads to a so-called race to the bottom (Scharpf 1999). Therefore, the social democrats call for an increased attention to the social dimension (ČSSD 2005).

Thus, the hypothesis that the EU is understood as an apolitical instrument does not hold. The EU is rather an instrument which can also be used for realisation of ideological projects. Yet, the ČSSD supports the Union even if it would favour negative integration, since it is seen as the only possible reaction to globalisation. Furthermore, the linking of the EU to a certain ideological project is much stronger among EU opponents than among its advocates. And if we look to the major consensus on EU membership throughout the 1990s, this should probably be understood as discussed above and in accordance with the *instrument proposal* and thus also as a result of an apolitical understanding of the EU.

The *hindrance proposal* also helps us to understand the third and the fourth proposals. As long as the payoffs produced by the EU membership are considered as politically neutral, any negative influence on the democratic decision making can be ignored. If the EU is a Pareto improving unit, then it does not matter if its institutions contain a lack of democratic control (cf. Majone 2005; Moravcsik 2002). If the EU only improves the possibilities of realising some policies that would have been desired anyway, the question of the democratic legitimacy of European governance can be ignored.

However, the *hindrance proposal* implies that the EU is a hindrance to national policy making.

The EU is ideological and restricts possible policy choices at the national level. This statement can be understood in two different ways. Firstly, the EU is seen as bad because it promotes the wrong policies, meaning that if the EU had been socialist enough or liberal enough, then the KSČM and ODS, respectively, would not have had any objections to the supranational decision making of the EU. Or secondly, supranational decision making is seen as always bad because democracy has to be based on the national unit.

3. The EU as a natural unit proposal: *The EU is understood as a natural political unit in the Czech political discourse.*

Some political actors clearly view Europe as one political unit (most notably Havel). Yet, this proposal needs to be reformulated in the following way to underscore that no one in the discourse views the EU as a challenger to the nation state.

The EU is understood as a natural political unit in the Czech political discourse, but one that does not challenge the existence of the nation state.

Havel considers the nations as natural units, and the ČSSD suggests that a strong EU implies a strong Czech Republic and vice versa. Thus the EU is by no means understood as a unit that would compete with or possibly replace the nation state.

The question is also what defines the border of this unit. A more functional understanding, as in the case of the ČSSD, would imply that the EU could be extended far beyond its current borders, whereas a more cultural understanding, such as that which is promoted by KDU-ČSL, sees the EU as clearly limited to the Christian part of Europe. This also modifies in which way the EU constitutes a natural political unit, since if the understanding is functionalist, then the EU is only natural in the sense that shared sovereignty is a necessity, and due to globalisation, the final result could, in the end, be a world state.

The cultural understanding, on the other hand, would suggest that particularly these states have a common culture. Havel is interesting in this respect, since he would allow each state to define itself, with the possible exception of Russia (cf. Bugge 2003).

4. The EU as an artificial unit proposal: *The EU is understood as an unnatural political construction that challenges the natural unit, the nation state, since some sovereignty is handed over to this political entity.*

The fourth proposal does not need to be modified. The natural-artificial dichotomy is primarily used by representatives of the ODS. The EU is artificial, and the idea of supranational decision making is undemocratic because for a democracy to be possible, there needs to be the natural feeling of trust which is established by the national identity. Seen from such a perspective, the EU could never gain its democratic legitimacy in any other way than through its member states. Therefore, any increase of qualified majority voting in the Council is illegitimate. The following quotation from Klaus illustrates this point very clearly:

The original organisation of European integration was – correctly – based on the idea of unanimity because a parliamentary optic cannot be valid in the international community, and one state can never be allowed to have the possibility of outvoting another state. For this reason, all versions of majority voting are bad and, for a true democrat, unacceptable (Klaus 2007).

Thus, from the perspective of the fourth proposal, the democratic deficit debate can be reduced to a question of protecting national sovereignty. It is only the nation states that can guarantee democracy, and therefore they are the natural political units. Thus, European restrictions on the possible policy options of sovereign states are always bad. The KSČM is more difficult to interpret in this respect. They present formulations suggesting that only a co-operation which is based on the equality of sovereign nation states can be fair, and simultaneously, they suggest a stronger role for the European parliament as a solution to the democratic deficit problem (KSČM 2004).

3.4 Summarising the Czech Central Story

According to the *EU as an artificial political unit proposal*, the EU is rejected because of its argued interference with the principle of national sovereignty. On the other hand, in the discussion on the *instrument proposal*, it became evident that the EU is actually understood as an instrument for strengthening the sovereignty of the nation state as well as of the citizens of the nation state. In other words, given globalisation, the nation states do not

manage to face current challenges, and thus they lose their sovereignty, and thus the EU is an instrument that would help them regain sovereignty. Thus, it seems that *sovereignty* is a concept that unites both proposals. It is therefore likely that one of the meta-narratives of the Czech political discourse on the EU is the discourse on sovereignty.

However, the meta-narrative on sovereignty does not explain everything. The *instrumental proposal* helps us understand the almost political consensus on EU membership among the Czech political elite from the fall of communism until accession. Yet, even if this proposal can be linked to the concept of sovereignty, this does not account for the main part of the story. In fact, the Czech story of EU membership can be summarised in the following way. The fall of communism meant that one version of the modernisation project came to an end. Future membership in the EC/EU was seen as part of the long journey towards becoming a “modern” liberal democracy with a market economy and Western European living standards. Even the EU’s critics to a large extent agreed with the necessity of membership, based on the discourse on modernisation, but simultaneously, they rejected the EU as an illegitimate hindrance for national policy setting.

As this summary suggests, the concept of modernisation provides us with a better conceptualisation of the Czech road to EU membership. I introduce the concept of modernisation here to give a name for a discourse that cherishes the belief in a certain type of political and economic development and the possibility of planning and directing this progress. This development appears to be, to some degree, universal. As demonstrated above, to a large extent, the EU membership has become synonymous with being a part of the more developed or ‘modernised’ world. The EU membership is thus seen as a milestone in a race of modernisation between nation states.

From this perspective, EU membership is considered as a part of the story of catching up with Western Europe. A concrete illustration is the goal presented by US-DEU: the Czech Republic should overtake the GDP of one of the old member states by the year 2010.

Modernisation is not necessarily considered rational (the opposite of ideational) here. The modernisation argument seems rather to be linked to a feeling of the Czech Republic having a ‘natural’ rightful claim to being a part of ‘the club of historically more lucky countries’. This view is most clearly presented by the ODS (See, e.g., ODS 2004). Thus, Europe is understood as

meaning a certain level of ‘material’ development. Under ‘normal’ conditions, the living standards in Czechoslovakia would have been similar to the level in Western Europe.

Thus, albeit the slogan of a return to Europe can be understood as a return to a cultural community, it also includes improved living standards, economically as well as humanely – concerning individual rights and freedoms. Thus, the EU membership is a return to normality. It is a step on the road which can lead Czechoslovakia back to its place on the evolutionary stairway where it “naturally” should have been if it had not been for communism (cf. e.g. Kopecky and Učeň: 164).

Thus, the two meta-narratives underlying the Czech discourse on Europe are suggested to be the discourse on the *sovereign nation* and the discourse on *modernisation*. In chapter 6, I elaborate further on these two concepts and on how different combinations of the two concepts lead to different outcomes in a concrete conceptualisation of the EU. Firstly, however, I turn to discussing the applicability of the four theoretical proposals to the other Visegrád countries (chapter 4) and their applicability to the Swedish case (chapter 5).

4. Is the Czech Discourse on Europe Unique?

Based on the analysis of the Czech discourse, four different theoretical proposals have been developed. These are in turn explained as being linked to the deeper lying discourses, meta-narratives, on sovereignty and modernisation. The proposals have been developed on the Czech discourse but do not necessarily have to be specific only to this context. Therefore in this chapter, I aim at answering the question of whether these proposals are valid in other domestic discourses on Europe as well.

In comparative studies, two strategies in general are used for the selection of cases: i.e. the method of agreement and the method of difference. According to the method of difference, similar cases are selected that, despite their similarities, might show different outcomes on the dependent variable.²⁶ According to the method of agreement, on the other hand, the cases that are selected are those with big general differences that, despite these differences, might have a similar outcome on the studied variable (Karlsson 2008: 68–71). In grounded theory, comparisons are often made in a more ad hoc way to reflect ideas and phenomena which can be generated from the studied material. In this study, however, the cases for comparisons have been chosen in a way that also reflects the basic strategies of comparative studies.

The selection of Sweden was primarily based on the method of agreement. We saw that the return to Europe element was one of the prevailing parts of the Czech discourse and one big reason for why the EU could be conceptual-

²⁶ The dependent variable should here be understood as the studied phenomenon and thus not necessarily a part of a statistical inference analysis.

ised as an instrument for progress/modernisation. Therefore, the question is ‘Does this, the *instrument proposal*, hold also in a non-post-communist context?’ Sweden is thus a suitable case for comparison as the country accessed the EU from a position very different from that of the Czech Republic regarding economic standard, tradition of democracy, etc. Therefore, intuitively, it might seem unlikely that the understanding of the EU as an instrument for modernisation is applicable also to the Swedish case. And thus, if it is applicable, it would need an explanation.

On the other hand, Sweden is also a recent EU member and experienced a recent referendum on membership, which makes it possible to use the debates foregoing the referenda as a common starting point for analysis. The sizes of Sweden and the Czech Republic are comparable, which allows us to exclude the factor of size from the analysis. Since the ability to influence EU politics is to some degree given by the size of the country, this might also be reflected in the discourse. Sweden was also chosen for pragmatic reasons. For a researcher to carry out discourse analysis, knowledge of the language of the discourse is mostly considered necessary. This means that in the case of Sweden, I used, to a large degree, primary sources as a starting point for the analysis just as I did in the case of the Czech Republic.

However, before we turn to an investigation of whether the proposals hold also in a non-post-communist country, we need to ask the question of whether these proposals can account for the discourse on European unity in other new post-communist EU member states as well. The other Visegrád countries, i.e. Slovakia, Hungary and Poland, have, for this reason, been selected as cases for comparison. What these countries have in common with the Czech Republic is that, with the exception of Slovakia, they all belonged to the ‘first group’ of candidate countries with the biggest chances of membership throughout the accession period. Slovakia, however, after having failed to pass the political criterion in the commission avis in 1997, managed to catch up with the countries of the first group and enter the EU as a part of the big enlargement in 2004. In Poland and Hungary, as in the Czech Republic, the support for membership was initially broad in the early 1990s but afterwards became somewhat moderated as membership grew closer to becoming a reality (cf. Bielasiak 2002: 1241).

The analysis of the Visegrád countries is based on secondary material. It is thus not the purpose to carry out any outright comparison of the discourses

but rather to discuss the likelihood of the validity of the identified proposals in this group of countries and point out some general differences. The selection of these countries was based on the method of difference. Together with the Czech Republic, they all started off on the road to EU membership from fairly similar positions, with a common communist heritage, and thus we could assume that the structures of their discourses on European unity are rather similar and that any deviations would need an explanation.

For the proposals developed above to be applicable to other national discourses, we only need to drop the references to the Czech contexts from the proposals. Thus the *instrumental proposal* is as follows: *The EU is understood as the rational instrument for the country to use in order to achieve progress in a wide sense and to be able to catch up with more developed countries. The alternative would be irrational and lead to stagnation and isolation.*

The *hindrance* proposal does not need further modification and remains the same: *The EU is a hindrance because it forces an ideological project on its member states. This might lead to policy outcomes undesired by the country’s citizens.*

In the *natural* proposal, we only drop the word *Czech discourse*: *The EU is understood as a natural political unit in the discourse, but one that does not challenge the existence of the nation state.*

The *artificial* proposal does not need further modification and remains the same: *The EU is understood as an unnatural political construction that challenges the natural unit, the nation state, since some sovereignty is handed over to this political entity.*

4.1 Is the Czech Republic a Typical Example of the Countries of the Fifth EU Enlargement?

This part starts with a short overview of the political debates concerning EU accession in the other Visegrád countries. Thereafter I discuss which aspects of the proposals developed on the Czech case need to be modified in order to include the argumentations applied in Slovakia, Hungary and Poland. I conclude that all share the conceptualisation of the EU as an instrument for catching up with Europe or reclaiming the country’s rightful place among the

West European states (as is primarily the case with Hungary). In Slovakia and Poland, however, an anti-western discourse is present which is lacking in the Czech case.

4.1.2 Slovakia – a Bumpier Road to Membership

After their separation, Slovakia and the Czech Republic arguably started off from fairly equal positions regarding their prospects of future EU membership. Yet, although the governments of both countries stated that EU membership is a priority, by 1997, Slovakia had been relegated from the first group of accession countries, whereas the Czech Republic remained in this group (cf. Papp 2003: 139). Slovakia was relegated from the top candidates as the only country that failed to meet the EU's criteria on democracy; the other countries excluded from the first group, i.e. Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and Bulgaria, failed the economic criteria (Rupnik 2003: 28). It is therefore of primary interest for us whether Slovakia's failure to meet the EU's democracy criteria was due to, or reflected by, a less pro-European political discourse?

Given the similar starting positions of Slovakia and the Czech Republic, we would have expected the articulation of the EU as a necessary instrument for progress to be as strong in Slovakia as in the Czech Republic. In the Czech Republic, the strength of this argument seems to have made it more or less impossible to reject EU accession in the political discourse in the 1990s. Was it then any different in Slovakia? Or did Slovakia's failure to meet the EU's democratic criteria reflect a more dominant conceptualisation of the EU as a *hindrance* or as an *artificial* political unit?

However, there is little evidence that the Slovak discourse on the EU was all that different from the Czech discourse. In fact, it seems that what was different was not the political discourse but the actual policies of the Slovak government. The regime actually did little to challenge the EU and remained firmly committed to EU membership in its rhetoric. Yet it failed to take the actions necessary for achieving a green light for continued membership negotiations. Milada Anna Vachudova (2005) therefore argues that Mečiar lost power after the elections in 1998 partly due to a discrepancy between rhetoric and action in regard to EU membership (cf. Vachudova 2005: 159).

The programme declaration of Vladimír Mečiar's government (1994–1998) also stated that EU membership is a priority, but the repeated criticism of Slovakia in the EU demarches from 1995, 1996, and 1997 made

the people doubt the sincerity of the government. For this reason, it seems that the Slovak case illustrates the difficulties associated with any attempt to challenge a dominant discourse rather than presenting us with a more Euro-sceptic discourse.

In the beginning of the 1990s, all relevant political groups in Slovakia, with the sole exception of the extreme nationalists, considered the inclusion of Slovakia into the European integration process a priority. This priority was also reflected in the election programme of Mečiar's Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS) (Leška 2006: 69). Another interesting aspect is that future EU accession was sometimes used by Slovak politicians before the break-up of Czechoslovakia as a way of making this event seem less dramatic. Some even argued that the separation was a precondition for a smoother integration of the two nations into Europe. The last Czechoslovak foreign minister, Jozef Moravčík, put it in the following way: "We do not carry out the transformation of Slovakia into an independent state with the intention of isolating it. On the contrary, we do it in order to contribute to the process of international co-operation as a sovereign unit" (quoted according to Kopecky and Učeň 2003: 165).

The argument was that a separation would give Slovakia the possibility of participating as a partner at the European table and not merely as a region within one country. Slovakia was heading for EU membership as opposed to isolation. Also, for this reason, there was a broad consensus among the political elite that the newly independent Slovakia was heading for EU membership as opposed to isolation. Some pushed this argument even further arguing that the natural alliance between Czechs and Slovaks would give them bigger influence in Europe as two countries than as one, given the distribution of votes in the Council and Parliament (Čarnogurský 2008: 19).

Despite this broad consensus on EU membership, the demarches from the European commission, already in the period 1994–1996, presented criticism of the political development in the country. Yet, the criticism did not have any severe effect on the Slovak regime because the regime managed to present it to the public as being rather a confirmation than a criticism of its national policies (Vachudova 2005: 157).

Thus, the Mečiar government moved to a more outspoken criticism of the EU only after they realised what would be the verdict of the Luxembourg summit in 1997. The EU criticism at this stage forced Mečiar's regime to

abandon its pro-Western façade and turn East, but given the earlier consensus on the necessity of EU membership, this played into the hands of the opposition (Vachudova 2005: 159).

In April 1998, three quarters of the Slovak population stated that they favoured Slovakia's accession to the EU, but simultaneously only one third believed that Slovakia was heading in that direction. In the same year, the opposition parties were successful in presenting the EU's criticism as a failure of the regime. Mečiar tried to make the articulation that Slovakia's exclusion was caused by Western unfairness, but this explanation was only accepted by his core voters. What happened was that Mečiar's party HZDS lost the support of swing voters and failed to attract new voters. Among the core electorate, however, the voters increasingly turned to Euro-scepticism. In April 1998, 76 percent of all party voters supported EU membership. In January 1999, this figure dramatically dropped to 36 percent (Vachudova 2005: 174–175).

The Slovak Nationalist Party SNS, a minor coalition partner of HZDS, also did not question the goal of EU membership prior to the elections in 1998. The party, however, was also critical of the EU's decision to exclude Slovakia from the first group of candidate countries and argued that the decision should have been based on economic criteria only (Kopecky and Učeň 2003: 171). The only party that questioned the necessity of Slovak EU accession prior to the 1998 elections was the Slovak Workers' Association (ZRS). The party leader Ján Lupták argued in 1998 that "Slovakia can live without membership of the EU. The country has fertile soil and hard working hands. We do not want to import their surplus products. We will grow our own tomatoes, peppers, and red melons" (Lupták quoted in Kopecky and Učeň 2003: 171). Once in opposition, however, the Slovak Nationalist Party turned to outspoken Euro-scepticism as well.

The position of the HZDS, on the other hand, returned to a more stable pro-European approach once it was in opposition. Some analysts argue that the party maintained a rather contradictory view on the EU until accession. Albeit Mečiar, for instance, published a book in 2000, in which he claims to be a supporter of the united states of a Europe with an elected central government and parliament, simultaneously he and his party took a more critical stand in parliamentary debates, emphasising the Slovak national interests and statehood, and obstructed the adoption of parts of the *acquis communautaire* (Kopecky and Učeň 2003: 172).

This seems to suggest that the EU, initially, was as unchallenged in Slovakia as in the Czech Republic. Paradoxically, the EU's conditionality not only helped the opposition into office, but moreover it legitimised a discourse that challenged EU membership. It has been suggested that its one major difference to the Czech discourse is the influence of a pan-Slavonic discourse in Slovakia and thus the belief that closer ties to Russia could have been an alternative to EU membership. Some members of the pre-1998 governing coalition that used this type of argumentation were Dušan Slobodník from HZDS and Ján Slota from the SNS (Leška 2006: 70). Yet, it is doubtful whether the Eastern alternative was a real challenger to EU accession. Some analysts have argued that the conception of Slovakia as a bridge between East and West, with a special relationship to Russia, was used by the HZDS leadership as a way to make Slovakia more important for the West and thus increase the country's negotiation power (Kopecky and Učeň 2003: 170–171).

However, one certain type of EU criticism was present in the Slovak discourse and missing in the Czech. Although the Christian Democrats (KDH), who became a part of the governing coalition after 1998, were pro-EU accession, they had a more restrictive view of the integration project than their coalition partners, who all have been described as being pro-European by default (i.e. the Slovak Democratic Coalition, the Party of the Democratic Left and the Party of the Hungarian Coalition). KDH favoured Slovak accession primarily for economic reasons but was critical of other aspects of the integration process. For this reason, their approach has been compared to that of the Czech Civic Democrats.²⁷ However, the KDH rhetoric also included a certain scepticism towards western values and the western way of life, a type of criticism lacking in the Czech Republic (Kopecky and Učeň 2003: 172–173). Another difference between the KDH's view on the EU and that of the ODS is that despite the fact that KDH uses an instrumental argumentation for EU membership, it also considers the EU as a cultural community based on a common Christian heritage. For this reason, the party rejects, for instance, the idea of a future Turkish EU membership (EU 25 Watch 2006/3: 178).

²⁷ Just like ODS, the party was later also opposed to the Constitutional Treaty. The party leader Pavol Hrušovský argues that he and the party support "a further deepening of integration but only in those areas that benefit the solutions of concrete problems" (quoted in EU 25 Watch 2006/2).

Petr Drulák (2005) argues that Slovakia's bumpier road to EU membership can partly be understood through differences in the conceptualisations of the nation in the two countries, which, in turn, are also reflected in their respective conceptualisations of the EU. The Slovak understanding was less instrumental and allowed to a higher degree for an understanding of the EU as a 'value-based community', and thus as competition to the Slovak nation state. In turn, like the Czech nation, the Slovak nation was understood as a Slavic nation. However, the Slovak nation was perceived as having a more mixed relation to the West than the Czech nation. Drulák's conclusion would suggest a slightly stronger emphasis on the *artificial proposal* in the Slovak case than in the Czech. Accordingly, it seems that more actors were prepared to challenge the Slovak EU membership at one point or another (i.e. HZDS in 1998, SNS since 1998 and ZRS already before 1998).

Yet, on the other hand, after accession, the Slovak political elite remained committed to further integration, and with the exception of the KDH and the Communist Party (KSS), all parliamentary parties favoured the Constitutional Treaty, which was also ratified by the parliament in 2005 (EU 25/27 Watch 2006/2: 94).²⁸ Also the Slovak delegation at the Convention on the Future of Europe acted in a more coherent and pragmatic way than its Czech counterpart. In general they supported a deepening of European integration with the major exception of tax harmonisation and social policy, where state sovereignty was considered crucial (Malová et al. 2005: 18).

Furthermore both the socialist/nationalist coalition, which ruled since 2006, and the former Christian Democratic/liberal coalition have been firmly committed to an early introduction of the euro, and this will become a reality in Slovakia on January 1st, 2009 and thus earlier than in the Czech Republic. If the EU really was understood as more of a threat to sovereignty in the Slovak discourse, we could have expected an anti-EU reaction after accession similar to that exemplified by the ODS in the Czech Republic.

The exclusion of Slovakia from the top group of candidate countries in 1998 was thus not caused by a more critical discourse on European unity. Even if Slovakia's failure to be accepted into the first group of candidate countries in the short term led to an increased scepticism towards EU membership in some parts of the political elite, in the long term, it seems rather to

²⁸ The Constitutional Treaty, however, was never ratified by President Ivan Gašparovič.

have led to an increased emphasis of the EU as an instrument for catching up (Cf. Haughton and Malová 2007: 70). Drulák writes the following regarding the Slovak OECD membership in 2000: "The OECD accession was then celebrated as a significant enhancement of the international prestige of Slovakia, which [was found] worthy of the financial obligation connected with membership" (Drulák 2005: 236). Thus, he emphasises that the catching up with the West European countries was not merely understood in economic terms, but primarily as a source of prestige and as related to identity in the sense of being a 'normal Western country'. If the OECD membership was a partial goal, the EU membership was seen as being the final confirmation of a catching up with the West. From this perspective, it is also easy to understand the Slovak commitment to an early introduction of the euro. It would clearly also be prestigious to Slovakia to be able to introduce the euro before the Czech Republic.

Summary

The Slovak case demonstrates what happens when there is a discrepancy between the discourse and actual government policies. Mečiar's regime was at least partly punished for this reason by the voters in the 1998 parliamentary elections. The EU criticism of the political situation in Slovakia at this time, however, also temporarily opened the way for a stronger emphasis on the *artificial proposal* in Slovakia and enabled a questioning of the inevitability of membership. Yet, we should not read too much into this, since after accession, the Slovak political elite is more firmly committed to the integration project than its Czech counterpart. Overall, it seems likely that the *instrument proposal* would capture the main parts of the Slovak story as well.

4.1.3 Poland – the Role of Tradition

We could expect the Polish discourse to differ in some ways from the discourses in the other Visegrád countries, given the size of the country. Poland, arguably, did not have to fear exclusion from the first wave of enlargement, as the other countries did, given its geographic position, its size and the importance of its economy (Szczurbiak 2001). The question is then whether this also was reflected in the political discourse on European unity in Poland.

The slogan of a "return to Europe" was introduced into the Polish discourse in 1989 by the first 'Solidarity' Prime Minister, Tadeusz Mazowiecki

(Stawarska 1999: 824). In Poland, as in the other Visegrád countries, there was, throughout the 1990s, a large political consensus on EU membership. Some Euro-sceptical voices, however, were heard. They most often came from the farming circles, from the right wing and from some extreme Christian Democratic groups. The post-communist socialists, on the other hand, committed themselves firmly to integration (Stawarska 1999: 833).

The liberal Freedom Union (in office from 1991–1993) embraced the EU in positive terms, “seeing it as assurance of further progress in economic and political modernisation” (Bielasiak 2002: 1247). The post-communists in the Alliance of the Democratic Left (SLD) that replaced the Freedom Union in office were also clearly pro-European, even if sometimes criticising the negative side effects of integration on socially weaker groups. The pro-European view of SLD was also embraced by Aleksander Kwaśniewski, a founder of the SLD and president from 1995–2005. Kwaśniewski was keen on stressing the importance of the EU membership as an opportunity and as an instrument of modernisation.

Beginning with the Solidarity coalition (AWS) that came to power in 1997, however, more diverse views on the EU were heard from parts of the governing parties (Bielasiak 2002: 1247). The first euro-sceptical party formed in Poland, the Polish Agreement, was formed by seven dissident MPs from the AWS. The Polish Agreement had close links to the infamous fundamentalist Catholic radio broadcaster Radio Maryja (Szczzerbiak 2001: 111). Thus, the first influential anti-EU segment in Poland was linked to a Catholic traditionalist political viewpoint, where some parts of the Westernisation of the Polish society were considered negative. Yet, it should be emphasised that this was not the mainstream position of the Catholic Church. When Pope John Paul II made his contribution to the Polish debate, he did so by, on the contrary, stressing his and thus the Church’s support for Polish EU membership (Szczzerbiak 2001: 118). Yet, this anti-Western discourse is something that we find in Poland and Slovakia but not in the Czech Republic.

Szczzerbiak argues that the impact of the euro-sceptics on the larger political debate at this time was rather limited. What, however, changed was that prior to 1997, the debates on the EU tended to be very general in their nature, and there was very little serious discussion concerning the actual costs and benefits of accession (Szczzerbiak 2001: 109). Now, parts of the AWS accused both their allies and the opposition of being too soft in their stands on the

EU. What was needed, in their view, was a more radical advocacy of Polish national interests. For instance, one of the main subjects within the AWS election coalition, the Christian-National Union, declared that they were opposed to a federal super-state and in favour of a Europe of free nations. More concretely, the party conditioned Polish EU membership with the possibility to opt out of the euro, the maintenance of legal sovereignty in certain spheres, the retention of the veto, the rejection of European citizenship, a subordinate role for the Commission, future enlargement into the Ukraine and Belarus, immediate and equal access to the European single market for Polish agricultural products, and appropriate derogations in areas such as the sale of land to foreigners (Szczzerbiak 2001: 112).

Similarly to the Czech ODS, the Christian-National Union seems to understand the EU as a potential battlefield of national interests. Thus, the party activists also criticise their opponents for being weak and consider their role as defending Polish national interests. They also share with ODS a partial rejection of the EU in accordance with the *artificial proposal* and favour it partly in accordance with the *instrument proposal*, at least as long as concrete benefits actually can be achieved as a result of the cooperation. Just as the ODS did in the *Manifesto of Czech Eurorealism*, the Christian-National Union tries to modify the consensus on the inevitability of membership by conditioning it. It should be mentioned that early on, the Peasants’ Party argued that even if EU membership is supported, it is acceptable at any price, and they demanded mainly for transition periods for the agricultural sector in order to calm down their core voters on the country side (Szczzerbiak 2001: 114).

After the elections in 2001, two political parties which were critical of Polish EU accession entered the Deputies Chamber (Sejm): i.e. Samoobrona (the Self Defence Party) and the League of Polish Families (LPR) (Bielasiak 2002: 1248). Prior to 2001, most political subjects with conservative-nationalist leanings tended to have a fairly positive view of EU membership. They saw the EU in terms of an instrument linked to *voice* (cf. category 3, Figure 3, p. 47). As Jack Bielasiak writes, the conservative-nationalists saw EU membership “...as an affirmation of Poland’s status in the world. For many in this political grouping, entry into the Union also afforded economic opportunities associated with strengthening Poland’s standing in the world” (Bielasiak 2002: 1252). However, after the 2001 elections, the moderate con-

servative parties formerly present in the AWS coalition ceased to have a political impact, and instead, conservative parties with a more sceptical view of integration came to be influential in parliament as well as in the public discourse (Bielasiak 2002: 1252).

The socialists in power, however, remained firmly committed to EU accession. But just as in the Czech Republic when membership was more or less a reality, the political elite took a more reluctant position on further steps of integration. Both the opposition (Conservative, Liberal, Nationalist) and the government (Social Democratic) criticised the Convention draft in 2003, and the results of the intergovernmental conference in 2004 (i.e. the Constitutional Treaty) were endorsed only by the governing Social Democrats, while in the opposition, the liberal, pro-EU Civic Platform, the EU-reluctant Law and Justice Party, the overtly Euro-sceptic League of Polish Families and the Self-Defence criticised the final treaty primarily because of the new system of qualified majority voting in the Council (EU 25 Watch 2004/1: 45).

During the election campaigns to the European Parliament in 2004, the Euro-sceptical part of the Polish political elite was embodied by the League of Polish Families and the Self-Defence. However, Law and Justice and the Polish Peasants' Party had a fairly critical approach as well, only conditionally favouring the integration project as far as concrete economic benefits could be received. Both parties, in their following programmes, emphasised the possibility of maximising the realisation of Polish national interests. The Left (Democratic Alliance–Labour Union [SLD-UP] and the two liberal parties, the Civic Platform [PO] and the Freedom Union [UW]), on the other hand, showed a more unconditional support for the further integration project (EU 25 Watch 2004/1: 90).

After the electoral defeat of the Social Democrats in 2005, when the party was reduced to having the support of merely 11 percent of the voters, questions of European integration seem to have become one part of the political cleavage between the current main rivals in Polish politics: the traditionalists, represented by Law and Justice, and the liberals, represented by the Civic Platform (cf. Antoszewski, Herbut and Sroka 2003; Riishoj 2007). The early elections in 2007 that were won by the Civic Platform confirmed this trend in Polish politics.

The most striking difference in the positions on the Constitutional Treaty between the Polish Law and Justice and the Czech ODS is that Law and

Justice combine an intergovernmental understanding of the nature of the cooperation with a demand for the inclusion of a reference to the Christian heritage in the preamble of the Constitutional Treaty, which implies that the EU is to some extent understood as a value community. On the other hand, Law and Justice actually supports the enlargement of the EU into Turkey, which is thus a different stand than that of, for instance, the Czech KDU-ČSL (EU 25 Watch 2007/4: 112). Law and Justice remains committed to the nation states as natural political units. Thus, the party is likely to reject any suggestions of reform of the EU that they would interpret as a step towards more supranationalism (cf. EU 25/27 Watch 2007/5: 65).

Anna Zbierska-Sawala has analysed the Polish discourse on the EU using a methodology based on metaphors. She came to the conclusion that the following metaphors were frequently used in the Polish discourse. Firstly, the integration project was viewed as a *journey*, upon which Poland is the traveller and the EU is the destination. As in the Czech discourse (see the chapter on Havel for good examples), the EU is considered both the goal and a part of the road towards a more abstract goal such as 'freedom' (Zbierska-Sawala 2004: 409).

Interestingly, the metaphor of the EU as a train, or a similar vehicle, that Poland has to catch in order to not be left behind by the other European countries is frequent in the discourse. This Lech Walesa quotation is illustrative: "I do not believe that Poles, having paid such historic costs, would now be capable of wasting such an opportunity. Then, indeed, we would be chasing the world on bicycles" (quoted in Zbierska-Sawala 2004: 412).

Zbierska-Sawala also finds a battle metaphor that resembles the ODS emphasis on competition and national interest and that follows an interpretation in which the EU, as an instrument, can be misused. In the worst case, in the end, the EU can be seen as a *hindrance* and not as an *instrument*. Yet, despite this, it seems that the *instrument proposal* is prevailing in the discourse, and this newspaper headline after the Copenhagen 2002 summit is a good example: "...our team was promoted from the second division to the premiership league" (Zbierska-Sawala 2004: 413).

The natural-artificial nexus is also present in the Polish discourse. According to Zbierska-Sawala, Aleksander Kwaśniewski commonly used family metaphors when referring to the EU. The EU "...is accepting new family members, who are flesh of its flesh and blood of its blood" (quoted in Zbier-

ska-Sawala 2004: 413). Yet, there is no evidence that the EU would compete in any way with the nation-states as a legitimate political unit.

Summary

The main difference between the Czech discourse and the Polish discourse is that the dichotomy of tradition versus liberalism that has lately become dominant in the political landscape is also reflected in the Polish discourse on Europe. That is, in Poland, there is an anti-Western EU criticism that is based on traditional Catholic, or Polish, values, which has an equivalent counterpart in Slovakia but not in the Czech Republic. This adds an additional dimension to the proposals outlined above, since the *artificial proposal* in the Polish case should be extended to include not only the sovereign nation as being natural, but also a traditional way of life as being natural or correct in opposition to the forces of modernisation. This suggests that Polish EU scepticism is based on traditionalism, including a commitment to sovereignty.

The Polish case, however, also shows that the EU is understood as an instrument for catching up. Just as in the Slovakian case, there are several indications that the catching up is not only about improving living conditions but also about prestige.

4.1.4 Hungary – Reclaiming One’s Rightful Place in Europe

As in the other countries of the region, in Hungary, the period shortly after the end of the communist rule was marked by an optimistic “back to Europe” discourse. In the Hungarian case, it seems to have been important that the country was the first post-communist country to submit a membership application (in April 1994). Early on, the domestic political elite argued that Hungary was prepared for accession, and for this reason, the dominant understanding in the discourse in the 1990s was that a rapid inclusion into the EU would be possible. On the contrary, the process was slow as Hungary was made to wait for the other candidate countries. This was presented as unfair and superfluous (Fölsz and Tóka 2004; Hegedus 2006).

Despite this, Attila Fölsz and Gábor Tóka argue that a content analysis of the two biggest Hungarian newspapers from the period 2001–2003 shows that there were virtually no substantial arguments presented against Hungarian EU membership (Fölsz and Tóka 2004: 3). Thus, even if the opinions expressed in the media became increasingly critical, they became so without

questioning accession per se. “Accession became more often presented not so much [as] a good thing in itself, but [as] something that is necessary because staying out would be even worse, bringing about isolation and increasing backwardness for the country” (Fölsz and Tóka 2004: 3). Thus, the Hungarian discourse had the same understanding of the necessity of EU membership as was present in the Czech case.

Moreover, when the negotiations finally started in 1998, in the media coverage, disappointment was expressed over the speed of the negotiations. Commentators doubted whether EU leaders were seriously committed to enlargement. Following this, the negotiations were often described as a zero-sum game of negotiations between two sides with conflicting interests (Fölsz and Tóka 2004: 4). István Hegedus describes the 2004 European Parliament elections as a battle over who would be best able to protect Hungarian national interests (Hegedus 2006: 76). Thus, the ODS description of the EU as a tiltyard of interests seems to be applicable to the Hungarian discourse.

An indication of a rather sceptical understanding of the EU in Hungary is the low voter turnout in the referendum on EU membership in 2003 (Cf. Hegedus 2006: 74). Even if the support of membership was higher in Hungary than in the Czech Republic, 84 percent compared to 77, in Hungary, the turnout was only 46 percent compared to 55 in the Czech Republic (of the newcomers, Slovakia had the second lowest turnout: 52 percent).

On the other hand, in Hungary, no political party opposed to EU membership was present in the Parliament during the period from the fall of the communist regime until the referendum in 2003. Even the extremist nationalist party, the Party of Hungarian Justice and Life, which had a small fraction in parliament from 1998–2002, signed a statement of all the political parties in 2000 declaring their support for accession. Once out of the parliament in 2002, however, they turned Euro-sceptic (Fölsz and Tóka 2004: 6).

In Hungary, as in the Czech Republic, the centre-left tends to be more pro-EU than the centre-right. The Fidesz, which was the general governing party from 1998–2002, has gradually turned from a rather liberal party to more of a conservative party, and as a part of this transition, it turned towards a more reluctant approach to the EU (possibly also linked to the party’s position in the opposition since 2002). Already when it was the governing party, the Fidesz Prime Minister Viktor Orbán made comments that indicated a possibility for Hungary to remain outside of the EU (Fölsz and Tóka 2004: 6;

Henderson 2008: 123). The Fidesz shares with the ODS an emphasis on defending national interests in the membership negotiations, and once out of office, like ODS, the Fidesz criticised the incumbent government for being too weak in negotiations with Brussels.

However, despite this sceptical turn of the Hungarian political discourse on the EU, the Hungarian elite did not criticise the Constitutional Treaty as much as parts of the Czech and Polish elites did. Hungary was the second member state to ratify the Constitutional Treaty, and it virtually did not face any opposition in the parliament. 323 deputies voted in favour, 8 were absent and only 12 voted against the treaty (EU 25 Watch 2006/2: 63). In 2007, Hungary was also the first country to ratify the Lisbon Treaty. And even if Hungary has failed to be prepared for an early introduction of the euro, this is despite a consensus among the political elite on the benefits of the euro (Greskovits 2006).

In Hungary, there is a political cleavage based on a dichotomy of traditionalists (nationalists) versus cosmopolitans. Both parts of the political elite, however, came out in favour of accession. Fölsz and Tóka argue that the traditionalists presented an articulation of the West as having a debt to Hungary. The mission of Hungary has always been to be the eastern bastion of western civilisation. Since the First World War, however, the West has not shown Hungary the gratitude it deserves. Therefore, the enlargement is an opportunity for the West to pay back some of its debt to Hungary, which naturally belongs to the West but had the bad luck of being invaded by Turks and then later by the Soviets. This articulation shares much with the one presented by the Czech ODS. The return to Europe is not about catching up with an unfamiliar club. It is about regaining the country's rightful place, and thus it implies a return to normality.

Agnes Rajacic argues that for the traditionalists, it was important to pursue a parallelism between the foundation of the Hungarian State and the EU accession in 2004. The EU enlargement is from this perspective seen as a confirmation of St. Stephan's choice in the year 1000, but they are keen to point out how much the country has had to fight for its westernness. The following Viktor Orbán quotation is illustrative. He argues that:

King Stephan founded the state in the encirclement of the foreign peoples, on the frontier of the Oriental and the Western world. The 1000 years old Christian Hungarian state is the great and lasting creation of the Hungarian

community. This is a common creation borne of the work, fight, suffering, failure, success, hope, and will of all peoples and citizens living in this country (Viktor Orbán 2000, quoted according to Rajacic 2007: 644).

The cosmopolitans, however, understand the EU as a necessity for overcoming conflicts between nation states, and it is seen as a part of a 'natural' overcoming of borders (Fölsz and Tóka 2004: 6), an understanding that corresponds with that of, for instance, the ČSSD in the Czech Republic. Unlike in the case of Slovakia but similarly to the case of the Czech Republic, there is no visible alternative to the Western orientation of Hungary present in the political discourse. The only such alternative would have been the choice of isolationism. Rajacic, however, argues that as a consequence of the discourse of the Hungarian historical suffering, there is a certain scepticism towards the EU, embodied in the emphasis of the protection of the national interests within the integration process (Rajacic 2007: 652). Thus, the Hungarian story has been about a return to what was considered the country's rightful place in Europe, but not without some mistrust of the EU and the West, since the West has let the country down before.

Summary

Even if there have been interpretations of the EU as a field of competition of national interests, there has been very little outspoken EU criticism in Hungary, just like in the other countries, and the criticism that has been present seems to have been linked to the speed of the enlargement process. In Hungary, the return to Europe was also a return to the natural or rightful place of the country, which thus emphasises the EU as a natural political entity. As in Slovakia, but in contrast to Poland and the Czech Republic, there was no backlash against the EU after accession. Despite this, it is possible to speak of a certain reluctance embodied by a strong emphasis on the protection of the national interest.

4.2 Comparing the Visegrád Countries

In the political discourses in all three countries, the conceptualisation of the EU as an instrument for catching up with Europe or reclaiming the country's rightful place among the West European states (as is the case primarily

with Hungary and the Czech Republic) is present. In all of the countries, there was a huge consensus on EU membership at least during the greater part of the 1990s. Whereas Slovakia faced a Euro-sceptic turn after its failure to be included among the first groups of countries to start membership negotiations in 1998, a Euro-sceptic turn took place later in Poland, but such a turn hardly took place at all in Hungary. The Slovakian turn to Euro-scepticism, including an alternative vision of the country as a bridge to the East, however, was brief and does not seem to have obtained an important position in the discourse, and on the contrary, Slovakia, just like Hungary, has remained more committed to further integration after accession than the Czech Republic and Poland.

Slovakia's recent independence and its bumpier road to EU membership might explain why the political elite of the country remain more positive towards, for instance, the Constitutional Treaty and the introduction of the euro in the country than Poland and the Czech Republic were. A plausible interpretation would also be that it is more important for the prestige of Slovakia to quickly introduce the euro than for the prestige of the other countries. Having breathed the air of a potential outsider, even if only briefly, Slovakia might be more concerned with the prestige associated with being a member of the euro club of 'more' modernised countries.

In all of the countries, criticism of the EU mostly referred to membership conditions. A common interpretation of the EU was seeing it as a field of competing national interests, and especially parties in opposition accused governing politicians of not doing enough to promote the national interest in negotiations with Brussels. From time to time, the EU is also accused of being especially unfair to the candidate country while not rewarding the progress that has been made (see the discussions on Hungary and Slovakia). The EU as an *instrument* is thus linked to the EU as a *hindrance*: i.e. the national politicians consider themselves to be in a position where they need to defend the national interest in the integration bargaining, which resembles a zero sum game.

In Slovakia and Poland, however, an anti-Western discourse is also present, which is lacking in the Czech case. This type of Euro-scepticism indicates a link between national sovereignty and traditionalism and implies that in the context of Slovakia and Poland, it could be necessary to redefine the *artificial proposal* in order to more firmly understand the discourse of

local EU-reluctant or EU-sceptical political actors. In these two cases, it is not only the sovereignty of the nation state, understood as a natural political unit, that is challenged by the EU, but also a certain way of traditional living and values. Thus, the Euro-sceptics in these countries simultaneously warn against EU supranationalism and want it to be a value based community. Thus, in these two cases, it is not a question of balancing modernisation and sovereignty, as in the case of the Czech ODS, but of balancing modernisation and traditionalism in a wider sense. In these two cases, we actually find a rejection of modernisation as such which we do not find in the Czech discourse. We return to this discussion in chapter 6.

5. Sweden – Modernisation and Identity

The end of the Cold War was a precondition for the reappearance of the European issue in Sweden as well. The events of 1989 were crucial for the Swedish political elite's re-evaluation of EC membership in 1990. As late as May 1990, the social democratic Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson claimed, in an article written for the Swedish Daily *Dagens Nyheter*, that EU membership would not be compatible with Sweden's neutrality.²⁹ Only a few months later, in October 1990, the government revealed its newly changed European policy as being 'hidden' in a 20 page document detailing the measures for stabilising the economy, which had been hit by a severe economic crisis (Lewin 2004: 136–137; Strandbrink 2003: 177).

Prior to this, it was mainly representatives of the Liberal and the Conservative Parties who had promoted Swedish membership in the EC. In May 1990, the two parties declared membership a joint goal and rallying point in the run up to the parliamentary elections the following year (Lewin 2004: 130).³⁰ As was already mentioned, the Social Democratic leadership changed their

²⁹ The actual wording of the article was vague, however, and in the debate, it came to be interpreted as both an opening towards a membership if some unspecified criteria were fulfilled and a declaration that Sweden's neutrality policy was unchanged and would not allow membership (for an exhaustive discussion of this topic, see Lewin 2004: 130–133). Later, Lars Danielsson, who was the permanent secretary of Carlsson's government, has argued that Carlsson had wanted to declare Sweden's attention to EU accession but chose his words too carefully (Danielsson 2007: 44).

³⁰ See Strandbrink (2003: 43–46) for a discussion on the foundation *Yes to Europe*, which became active during the same year, mainly consisting of Liberals, Conservatives and representatives of business organizations.

opinion on membership in late 1990, but the party remained largely divided on the issue. In addition, the pro-European leaderships of the Centre Party and the Christian Democratic Party faced internal opposition on the issue (see Strandbrink 2003: 178–179).

Two political parties in the Swedish parliament remained firmly against membership for a long period, and in 2008, one of the two parties, the Left Party, is still demanding a Swedish withdrawal from the EU, whereas the other one, the Green Party, changed its withdrawal paragraph in the party programme as late as in 2008 (Vänsterpartiet 2004; Miljöpartiet 2001, 2005).³¹ The two largest parties in parliament, the Social Democratic Party and the Conservative Party, tend to stress the importance of the intergovernmental dimension of European cooperation (Socialdemokraterna 2001, 2005; Reinfeld et al. 2005). The Liberal Party and the Centre Party both support some sort of European federalism (Centerpartiet 2004; Folkpartiet 2003: 26). Yet this does not imply that the latter two parties are necessarily more pro-European than the former two. For instance, the Centre Party rejected the third phase of EMU before the referendum in 2003 and favours a “...narrower but sharper EU”³² (Centerpartiet 2004).

In the following sections, I discuss the applicability of the four proposals to the Swedish discourse. For the analysis, I used articles written by leading Swedish politicians primarily during the period from the membership application in July 1991 until the referendum in November 1994.³³ In addition, I used party programmes and secondary literature on the topic.

5.1. Sweden's Entrance into the EU – Outlining the Central Story

Starting with the *instrument* and *hindrance proposals*, it is clear that the proponents of membership, in the debates that preceded the Swedish refer-

³¹ In the period between the parliamentary elections in 1998 and 2006, the Social Democratic minority government was dependent on the support of these two parties in parliament.

³² This motto refers to a view of the EU as doing less but as also doing the things that it does do more efficiently thanks to more supranational decision making in these areas.

³³ Published in the two dailies *Dagens Nyheter* and *Expressen*, obtained through the digital archive *Presstext*.

endum on membership in the EU in 1994, predominantly used arguments that were linked to the economic crisis of that time. This economic crisis had a severe impact on the Swedish society as unemployment rates increased from 1.8 percent in 1990 to 9.8 percent in 1994 (Statistics Sweden). An example of this can be seen in the two leading Swedish politicians at the time: the Conservative Party leader Carl Bildt (Prime Minister 1991–1994) and his social democratic counterpart Ingvar Carlsson (Prime Minister 1986–1991 and 1994–1996). Before the referendum, both stressed the importance of EU membership for achieving the economic recovery that would be necessary to combat high unemployment figures (see, e.g., Carlsson 1994a, b; Bildt 1994a).

Opponents belonging to the left of the Social Democratic Party as well as to the Left Party rejected this opinion, arguing that the EU would force Sweden to give priority to low inflation targets at the expense of high unemployment.³⁴ For instance, the leader of the Left Party argued that only a *no* to the EU would enable the defence and development of the welfare state (see, e.g., Schyman 1994a). From this perspective, the EU is considered to restrain Swedish policy options and thus force Sweden in a neo-liberal direction,³⁵ and this line of argumentation followingly fits the *hindrance proposal*. The critics, however, also made the argument that in a more general sense, the EU restricts Swedish sovereignty independently of whether the EU forces Swedish politics in an unwanted direction or not, and this argument is thus in accordance with the *artificial proposal*. The opponents do not view the EU as a value neutral instrument but rather as a restriction of the state policy option; thus, they see it as the opposite of an instrument – a hindrance. This is linked to the view that the EU promotes the wrong values and ideology (neo-liberalism)³⁶ as well as to the argument that any restrictions of national

³⁴ Such criticism frequently came from parts of Carlsson's own party (see, for instance, Johansson 1994) or from the Left Party (see Schyman 1994b). To understand this discussion, it might be worth it to point out the historical role of fiscal and monetary policies in Sweden in keeping down unemployment. Rudolf Meidner, a famous economist of the LO trade union, even argued: “It is scarcely a coincidence that unemployment in Sweden has reached the EC's high levels at the same time as Sweden's powerful elites are preparing for EC membership” (Meidner quoted after Aylott 1999: 72).

³⁵ This criticism resembles what has been described as negative integration by Scharpf (1999).

³⁶ As argued by representatives of both the Left Party and the Green Party (see, e.g., Schyman 1994a; Schlaug 1994; Vänsterpartiet 2004).

sovereignty are always a bad thing since democracy can only be reached in a nation state with a 'people'.³⁷

The argumentation of the proponents of the EU could be summarised in the following way. The economic crisis, caused by an already global economic diversification, makes it impossible for Sweden to maintain its high employment rates if nothing is done. The high employment rates are, in turn, a condition for the functioning of the welfare state. It is therefore argued that the EU is a necessary instrument for the Swedish economy to function well, which, in turn, is necessary for reaching targets that in this case have been nationally determined: i.e. the sustainability of the welfare state. The EU is thus understood as an apolitical instrument for progress. Thus, we can describe its proponents as (at least pretending to be) the voice of 'reason' (cf. Strandbrink 2003).³⁸ This is similar to category 5 in the Czech discourse. Both Ingvar Carlsson, the Social Democratic Prime Minister in the periods 1986–1991 and 1994–1996, and Carl Bildt, the Conservative Prime Minister during 1991–1994, have on several occasions stressed the economic risks of remaining an outsider (cf. Carlsson 1994a, Bildt 1994a).

However, whereas in the Czech discourse, the *instrument proposal* is linked to a catching up with the West, in the Swedish case, it is rather about remaining in the "top league". In the scholarly literature on Swedish national identity, it has frequently been argued that modernity is at the very core of (Swedish) national identity (cf. Trädgårdh 2002). Or as Ole Wæver put it: "Nordic Identity is about being better than Europe" (Wæver 1992: 77). Seen from such a perspective, the economic crisis in the beginning of the 1990s was more than an economic issue; it was a blow to the self-image of Sweden as one of the most modern countries in the world.

Social democrats and other centrist politicians could, in this context, make the argument that membership is necessary for the continuation of the Swedish model. It is telling that the social democratic government announced its intention of applying for membership during a press conference in October

³⁷ The two Eurosceptical parties both argued that one reason for why they reject EU membership is that it contradicts the principle of a people's right to self-determination (see also, for a discussion of this topic, Fleischer 2004).

³⁸ Compare the title of Strandbrink's book *Förnuftets entoniga röst* – The monotone voice of reason. (Strandbrink 2003).

1990, which was 'hidden' in a 20 page document detailing the measures for stabilising the economy (cf. Lewin 2004: 136–137; Strandbrink 2003: 177). If the EU was an instrument necessary for the continuation of the Swedish model (universal welfare, full employment, etc.) to the social democrats, it is likely that leading conservatives considered EU membership to be a part of a bigger system change. However, the eventual 'negative' consequences of such a change to the social model were rarely mentioned. Instead, they focused on how EU membership could contribute to full employment in Sweden (cf. Bildt 1994a).

Conservative party leader Bildt also based his argumentation, to some extent, on the peace argument, which should be seen in the context of the changes in the Baltic States and the civil war in Yugoslavia, which led to a considerable inflow of refugees to Sweden. There is thus an alternative narrative according to which EU membership is linked with peace and stability or, if we compare this with the original categories three and four in the Czech discourse, with voice in European affairs and internal security. From this perspective, EU membership is still seen in accordance with an instrumental rationalisation, yet it is questionable whether the main goal to which the instrument shall contribute is progress and modernisation. Yet, the overreaching goal during Bildt's period as prime minister was to sort out the country's finances and thus redirect the negative economic trend, which in his view could be traced all the way back to the 1970s (cf. Bildt 2003, 1993).

Thus, we can argue that proponents of the EU saw membership as either a way of continuing the Swedish project of modernisation or a new beginning where the old project failed. The opponents, on the other hand, largely did not consider the crisis of the Swedish project as being as severe as it was interpreted to be by the proponents, and mainly, they did not consider EU membership to be a part of the solution; rather, they saw it as a part of the problem.

The concept of modernisation is helpful for gaining an understanding of the EU critics' conceptualisation of the EU as well. In the critics' view, Sweden was higher up on the evolutionary stairway than the other continental European countries (for some telling examples, see Trädgårdh 2002: 165–169; see also Ehrenkrona 2001). Sweden, in this view, still had little to learn from continental Europe. The critics argued that in Sweden, women are more equal, the environment is better protected, and the unemployment rates

are almost always lower.³⁹ EU membership would thus not lead to progress but to the reverse – stagnation and backwardness.

Thus, when the Green Party argues that they could consider a Nordic Union as an alternative to the European Union, which they reject (see, e.g., Miljöpartiet 2001: 15), this argument is not just their strategy to prove that the party is not nationalistic – an accusation sometimes directed against the party – but moreover, it is their way of saying that other Nordic countries are as modern as Sweden and that thus such a Union is possible.

Due to the fact that two Swedish political parties (the Green Party and the Left Party) either still demand or for a long time demanded a withdrawal from the EU in their Party Programme, the domestic EU debate remains rather similar in its structure to the debates before the referendum in 1994. For this reason, the parliamentary debates on the Constitutional Treaty, for instance, could turn into a debate on whether to say yes or no to EU membership. The Constitutional Treaty was considered as a step in the direction of a super state (artificial) and as something that would further restrict available policy options for the Swedish state. Its critics compared the ratification of the Constitutional Treaty to a national constitution that gives priority to combating rising inflation at the expense of environmental considerations and the right to work.⁴⁰ On the other hand, the advocates of the treaty described it as a technicality. They argued that the treaty should be adopted in order to improve the efficiency of the EU and thus improve the functioning of the EU as a problem-solving instrument (cf. Persson 2005).

The end of the progress, to which the EU can contribute, is left without further specifications by the proponents most of the time. National politicians should specify the content. The EU is merely an instrument which makes possible solutions to problems that could not be solved single-handedly by the member states. As the Conservative Party stated in a party bill about Sweden's EU policy, "[t]he EU does not exist for its own sake but to solve common tasks across national borders" (Reinfeldt et al. 2005). The social

³⁹ The situation of women in the EU is described as resembling the situation in Sweden in the 1950s. A telling example is *Kristiska Europafakta* [Critical facts about Europe] Nr. 11, 1991; see Ehrenkrona (2001) for a partial but interesting collection of EU critical arguments in Sweden.

⁴⁰ For some telling examples, see, e.g., Lars Ohly and Gustaf Fridolin in the parliamentary debates during 2003–2005.

democrats argue that the EU is an offshoot of the national political work, an instrument to increase the possibilities of reaching crucial political goals, such as high employment and sustainable development (Socialdemokraterna 2001: 33–34).

The Swedish case also exemplifies what happens when EU proponents cannot make the argument of the necessity of the EU as an instrument credible. That is when they fail to produce a credible version of the *instrument proposal*. During the referendum in 1994, EU proponents could easily point at the economic crisis to illustrate the risks of being an outsider (cf. Carlsson, 1994a, Bildt 1994). Yet, the outcome of the referendum on EU membership in 1994 was a narrow margin (52.3% yes and 46.8 % no). The referendum on the introduction of the Euro took on a contrary role during a period of high economic growth. For this reason, it should come as no surprise that Swedish voters rejected the third phase of the EMU with a significant majority (55.9% no and 42.0% yes).

The opponents could quite easily argue that the Euro zone is behind Sweden when it comes to economic development, so why take a step backwards? In addition, this time, the opponents could make a credible argument that their view was not bound to any particular political position, since the Centre Party was firmly committed to the 'no camp'; the social democrats faced internal opposition on the issue as in 1994, and in addition, there was a strong non-socialist network – the Citizens Against the EMU (cf. Widfeldt 2004: 511).

Thus, it was a case of bad luck that the referendum took place during a period of peak economic performance in Sweden. Paradoxically, the government's investigation into the Euro, under the leadership of economy professor Lars Calmfors, came to the conclusion that the benefits of the Euro in Sweden would outweigh the negative aspects if Sweden could tackle the 'high' unemployment rates first (Statens offentliga utredningar (SOU) Calmforsrapporten 1996). Otherwise, membership was considered too risky due to the heavy burden of high unemployment rates on the state budget. Thus, the referendum was only possible in a situation where the likelihood of a positive outcome was very low. The 'yes camp' did not manage to put credibility behind the argument that the EMU was necessary for the Swedish economy and thus for the welfare state (and indirectly for the continuation of the national modernisation project).

Summary

If we were to summarise the Swedish story, we could say that an economic crisis challenged the conception of modernisation that has dominated the discourse thus far. The EU membership was considered a necessity for economic recovery by the dominant voices in the political discourse. The purpose of the goal of membership was that it would allow Sweden to proceed in a process of modernisation or re-enter the road to modernisation. As mentioned above, the end of the Cold War provided a necessary prerequisite for EU membership. The end of the bipolar world allowed for a redefinition of the Swedish neutrality concept, which was an often-used explanation for why EC membership could not come into question (cf. Westerberg 2003). Yet, it was the economic crisis that produced a reason for adding EU membership to the agenda. The opponents of EU membership, however, assumed that EU membership would lead to stagnation in several areas such as social policies and gender equality, given that they considered Sweden more modern in these respects. Furthermore, they saw membership as a violation of Swedish sovereignty.

If we again consider the four proposals, we can summarise the situation as follows. The *instrument* proposal is applicable in the Swedish context as well, but it has to be slightly redefined. It is not a question of catching up with more developed countries but rather of maintaining a leading position. Thus the following redefinition would be applicable to both cases: *The EU is understood as the rational instrument to use in order to achieve progress in a wide sense and to be able to either catch up with more developed countries or maintain a certain position vis-à-vis other countries. The alternative would be irrational and lead to stagnation and isolation.*

The *hindrance* proposal provides for a suitable description of the EU critical discourse in Sweden as well and does not need any modification. Thus it remains: *The EU is a hindrance because it forces an ideological project on its member states. This might lead to policy outcomes undesired by the country's citizens.*

The Swedish discourse lacks an equivalent to the 'return to Europe' slogan in the Czech discourse. Thus, if the understanding of the EU as a natural political unit was weak in the Czech discourse, in Sweden, this is even more so the case. Of course, some actors in Sweden would argue that Europe has a European cultural heritage and common values that the EU should pursue

as well. For instance, the Swedish Christian Democrats, like their Czech counterparts, partly wanted to see formulations in the Constitutional Treaty mentioning the importance of the Christian tradition for Europe (see, e.g., Hägglund 2005; Svoboda 2003c). This was similar to the Czech discourse in the sense that the EU is considered a natural political unit that does not challenge the existence of the nation state and, following the *natural proposal*, can remain intact.

Regarding the *artificial proposal*, the Swedish discourse is different in the sense that the two EU critical parties claim to be internationalist and put some effort into convincing the public that they are not nationalist. Yet both parties state that their commitment to all peoples' self-determination is one of the main reasons for why they reject EU membership (see Miljöpartiet 2001: 15, Vänsterpartiet 2004). In the case of the Green Party, an internal debate was sparked on this issue before the 1994 referendum. Some senior members of the party criticised the party leadership for being too oriented towards the nation. They pointed out that national sovereignty per se is not the goal, and, as a proof of this, they emphasised that Nordic cooperation in the direction of a state-alliance or union could be a realistic alternative (see, e.g., Schlaug et al. 1992). The Green Party is thus in a somewhat complicated situation, given, on the one hand, the party's commitment to all peoples' self-determination as a reason for rejecting EU membership and, on the other, the party's willingness to reevaluate the borders of the people. Yet, even if the Green Party could be willing to accept a federalist Nordic Union, this does not change their conclusion regarding the EU. Therefore the *artificial proposal* is also applicable to the conceptualisation of the EU presented by the Swedish Green and Left Parties.

6. Elaborating on the Meta-Narratives

The comparisons with Sweden and the three Visegrád countries indicate that the Czech discourse is not all that unique. The identified meta-narratives, i.e. modernisation and sovereignty, are relevant in all of the cases. That is, the discourses on European unity in the Czech Republic as well as in the compared cases are structured around the nexus of modernisation and sovereignty. However, hardly anyone participating in the discourse would openly challenge the value of either of the two. What is challenged is a certain understanding of sovereignty or modernisation. In the analysed discourses, three different constellations of sovereignty and modernisation can be identified. I outline these below and discuss the understandings of modernisation and sovereignty present in the different constellations and how these are linked to the legitimacy of governance.

Before I turn to these three constellations, however, some general features of the two concepts (sovereignty and modernisation) need to be discussed. Both of these concepts are contested in the scholarly literature as well. Here, I have introduced the two concepts to give a name for the main characteristics of the discourse on European unity. Sometimes the terms are used by the actors themselves and sometimes not (as was shown in chapter 3–5).

Modernisation, as the concept has been used so far in this study, is to give a name for a discourse that cherishes the belief in a certain type of political and economic development and the possibility of planning and directing this progress. Zygmunt Bauman understands the modern project primarily as the belief that a society can be planned in the same way as a garden, with unwanted problems being erased (see Bauman 1989). Anthony Giddens also empha-

sises planning and argues that the rise of the organisation that allows for the regularised control of social relations across indefinite time-space distances is a general feature of modernity and, following the nation state, is a result of the process of modernisation: “Modernity produces certain distinct social forms, of which the most prominent is the nation state” (Giddens 1993: 15).

No one in the discourse would state that they disagree with modernisation. Yet, in the Czech President’s rhetoric, the European ideology is linked to the former failed project of modernisation, i.e. socialism, which was based on illegitimate planning of the social world. Therefore an interpretation of this as a criticism of the modern idea of planning would be at hand. However, while feminism and environmentalism are also considered by Klaus to be new ideologies that have replaced socialism, such an interpretation might be too rushed. In fact, even the opposite interpretation would be possible. The way some political views are brushed aside as being part of illegitimate political ideologies could be interpreted as saying that there is only one right way and that this right way is the ‘true’ way of modernisation. Thus, it is questionable whether Klaus criticises the belief in the possibility of planning or merely the wrong approach to planning. Yet, the emphasis on the principle of self-determination among EU sceptics suggests that there are limits to how far modernisation can be pushed at the expense of tradition.

There is a paradox in the fact that the sovereign state is considered to be the most modern form of organisation while simultaneously the discourse on the sovereign state is the underlying discourse (meta-narrative) upon which the argumentation of EU critics is based, and thus the discourse on the sovereign state clashes with the discourse of modernisation in some cases. In other words, we have a phenomenon constructed by modernisation which now serves to contradict this very same rationalisation process. Given the alleged causal relationship between modernity and the genesis of the nation state, it is not strange that some political scientists have labelled the EU the first post-modern international political form (see, e.g., Ruggie 1993). Yet, if the underlying process that brought it about would be the very same rationalisation process that once led to the rise of the Westphalian world order based on nation states, it would probably be more correct to entitle the EU the first political form of the late modern or reflexive modern type (cf. Giddens 1990; Beck 1992). The sovereign nation state can be understood as a tradition created by modernisation, and it can also be dissolved by this process.

As Giddens writes: “For most of its history, modernity has rebuilt tradition as it has dissolved it” (Giddens 1995: 56).

If no one in the political discourse seriously challenges the modernisation discourse (i.e. the possibility of planning the social world and achieving progress), the same holds true for the discourse on the sovereign nation. In the political debates, no one openly challenges the necessity of the sovereign nation state. In the scholarly literature, generally the following different meanings of sovereignty can be distinguished: *interdependence sovereignty*, *domestic sovereignty*, *Westphalian sovereignty*, and *international legal sovereignty*. *Interdependence sovereignty* refers to the capability of a state to control movements across its borders. *Domestic sovereignty* refers to the ability of domestic authority structures to regulate behaviour (this was the prime concern of the classic theorists on sovereignty – Bodin and Hobbes). *Westphalian sovereignty* refers to the exclusion of external sources of authority, and *international legal sovereignty* refers to mutual recognition between states (Krasner 2001: 20–21). In the debates on EU membership, what is at stake is primarily the idea of *Westphalian sovereignty*.

In the following section, I outline three combinations of the nexus of sovereignty and modernisation that are possible to find in the discourses; simultaneously, they reflect different constellations of the proposals elaborated on throughout this study. I use examples from the analysed discourses to illustrate the different constellations, but the ambition is to construct an ideal type of how discourses on European unity are structured in the Weberian sense – constellations of the nexus of modernisation and sovereignty. That means that the ideal types are simplified in such a way that they do not correspond completely with the view of any political actor and should illustrate the dominant characteristics of a certain constellation rather than describing the position of a certain actor. This is in line with grounded theory methodology, which aims at producing an empirically grounded proposal on a higher level of abstraction, or to put it more bluntly the aim is not to produce a description of the analysed object but a caricature which helps us to see and understand the most important aspects of the studied object.

6.1. Three Ideal Types of the Sovereignty – Modernisation Nexus

Ideal type 1 – sovereignty unchallenged: *This type entails a combination of the hindrance proposal and the artificial proposal and a view of the sovereignty-modernisation nexus that suggests that there is no contradiction between the two concepts. The sovereign nation is the condition for successful modernisation, and therefore the EU is totally or partly rejected.*

Ideal type 1 assumes modernisation as a process that can best be realised in the frame of the sovereign nation. If a country defends its national sovereignty, it will also enjoy modernisation, understood here as implying economic growth, improved living conditions and a functioning democracy. The a priori assumption for this articulation is that the sovereign nation/people always make(s) the right choices; i.e. the sovereign people would not make any decisions that would oppose their own common interest. Thus, the inherent logic of ideal type 1 resembles the logic of Rousseau's discussion on the general will.

The understanding of modernisation is, from this perspective, inevitably linked to the nation state, since the progress which politics should achieve is defined as the progress desired by the people. Thus, it is not possible to enter a foreign train (i.e. the EU) that would provide the people with a short track to a more developed world, since this is bound to lead in a direction that does not lead to the ultimate destination desired by the people. Thus, the nation or the *people* is a group beyond social planning, and the primacy of national sovereignty cannot be challenged by the process of modernisation.

This, the first ideal type, *sovereignty unchallenged*, is likely to emerge when the *hindrance proposal* and the *artificial proposal* are dominating in the discourse. The EU is a hindrance to modernisation for the very reason that it restricts the functioning of what is thought of as the natural political unit. In the studied discourses, the most clear-cut examples of this view are found in the argumentation of the Swedish Left Party and the Green Party. KSČM and ODS both, to a limited degree, also refer to a similar understanding of modernisation and sovereignty.

The understanding of sovereignty within this discourse assumes the nation-state to be capable of fulfilling its commitment to popular sovereignty without accepting claims suggesting the impossibility or limitations of this vision given by globalisation. This view suggests an understanding of sover-

eignty as being close to a traditional understanding of Westphalian or external sovereignty, meaning that the “state is subject to no other state and has full and exclusive powers within its jurisdiction without prejudice to the limits set by applicable law” (Keohane 2002: 747). Therefore any authority external to the state should be rejected. The state is seen as the highest point of organised power within the international system, and it is entitled to non-interference in its domestic affairs (Lord and Harris 2006: 194).

It is not surprising that this ideal type seems to have a stronger grounding in the Swedish discourse than in the Czech one or in that of any of the other Visegrád countries. In Sweden, it was easier to make plausible the argument that the nation state is still in control and that the following modernisation can be reached without the EU. By not acknowledging the need for the EU, the whole discussion of European integration is seen from a perspective of non-understanding. If the nation state can provide the citizen with the services that are expected by its citizens, then why compromise on sovereignty? Therefore, international cooperation is welcomed but only as far as this cooperation is between sovereign states. The principle of self determination is considered as an indigenous part of popular sovereignty; i.e. popular sovereignty is understood as being national sovereignty. As we will see, this understanding of sovereignty is shared by the second ideal type but rejected by the third one, which provides an instrumental understanding of the link between state sovereignty and popular sovereignty.

Ideal type 2 – sovereignty challenged: *This type entails a combination of mainly the instrument proposal and the artificial proposal, which implies a view of the sovereignty – modernisation dichotomy as being in conflict. National sovereignty is viewed as priority, but some pragmatic compromises are viewed as necessary to avoid stagnation.*

If we combine the *instrument proposal* with the *artificial proposal*, we end up with the suggestion that there is an actual conflict between modernisation and sovereignty. As the case of the Czech Civic Democratic Party illustrates, the constellation might actually be one which is made up of the *instrument proposal*, the *hindrance proposal* and the *artificial proposal*. In case *hindrance* dominates over *instrument*, we could assume the same interaction between our meta-narratives as in the ideal type *sovereignty unchallenged*. However, the Czech case suggests that given the particular situation of a state

in transition, hardly anyone would sincerely contest the value of the EU as an instrument for the modernisation of the country or as a necessary confirmation of modernisation. This should not be misunderstood to be a general acceptance of the EU as such because it only implies the acceptance of one part of the integration project (e.g. the internal market) while other parts, such as the Common Foreign and Security Policy and so forth, are rejected.

Despite the criticism of the ODS, which is similar to, for instance, that of Law and Justice in Poland, they never managed to present a credible alternative to membership. The ODS included discussions of various alternative scenarios in the *Manifesto of Czech Eurorealism*, but the main party line remained firmly pro-membership. The dissident voices of Říman, Langer and, to some extent, Klaus indicate that there might have been an alternative to membership. Yet, the dominant view in the discourse could not be contested, primarily because the EU membership was viewed as necessary for delivering some goods (i.e. increased property) to their own citizens (i.e. voters).

The dilemma present in the ideal type *sovereignty challenged* resembles the paradox discussed by Robert Keohane (2002). Although some states are very sovereign in a Westphalian sense, they can simultaneously be very weak. According to Keohane, the EU has managed to break the tradition of a European connection, which has been valid for the last three hundred years, between a state's external sovereignty (meaning control of its external policies and being free of external authority structures) and state success (Keohane 2002: 744).

The relationship between Westphalian sovereignty and modernisation, however, is a complex one foremost because modernisation tends to be a source of national pride. In the Czech discourse, as in those of the other post-communist countries, the membership was seen as a part of becoming a normal 'West European' country. It was furthermore suggested in the discourse that the country had a historical right to such a position among the wealthier European nations.⁴¹ In Sweden, it was rather a question of keeping a certain position, but this was not merely about the material well being of the citizens but moreover about a part of a modern Swedish national identity. Thus in both cases, the modernisation discourses, even if appearing as rational and non-ideational, certainly include, both aspects. In the post-communist

⁴¹ Primarily in the Czech Republic and Hungary.

countries, in contrast to the Swedish discourse, the EU was seen not merely as an instrument of modernisation but also as the rubber stamp certifying a certain level of modernisation.

Thus modernisation, linked to the European integration project, is even more important in the discourses of the Visegrád countries than in Sweden, given that the EU also certifies the modernisation of the country, a view not accepted in Sweden. Following the view of the EU as a certification of progress, it was harder to reject the EU in the Czech Republic than in Sweden. Sweden, having an identity construction based upon being better than Europe, made it easier for itself to reject EU membership as such and to remain outside of the third phase of the EMU.

In the Czech discourse, the ODS has tried to challenge this conceptualisation of the EU as a standard setter. Klaus specifically expressed that he does not accept the EU as a standard setter: "In Europe, there occurred a misfortunate situation, in which membership or non-membership of the European Union is considered as an expression of development, maturity, quality, democracy and success" (Klaus, Lidové noviny, 11. 6. 2003). In the *Manifesto of Czech Eurorealism*, the authors also try to challenge the discourse by suggesting that weaker states, who give in to Brussels more, might enter the EU before the Czech Republic. Thus, waiting longer in regard to membership would not be a Czech failure but quite the opposite – a proof of the country's strength. In the near future, we will see what happens with the debate on the Euro in the Czech Republic. Can a "no" option be made credible or would it automatically be interpreted as a failure? Slovakia will become a part of the euro-zone from January 1, 2009. Will this be understood in the Czech discourse as Slovakia overtaking the Czech Republic? Will Czech politicians be able to make it credible that the Czech exclusion is voluntary when the public is faced with Slovakia's inclusion?

Yet, it is not only modernisation but obviously also Westphalian sovereignty that is crucial to the national identity. The protection of Westphalian sovereignty is treated as salient because of the supposed bounds between the cultural nation, the political unit and democracy. In the debates, the EU was rejected because of violating the natural bounds between the nation and the state, thus violating the principle of nationalism. This principle has been defined by Ernst Gellner as follows: "nationalism is primarily a political principle that holds that the political and national unit should be congruent" (Gellner 1983: 1).

Often the question of why it is a problem that the Westphalian sovereignty is being restricted is not discussed further. In the Czech discourse, the protection of the national interest has a prominent but hardly discussed position. And when it is discussed, it is the link to democracy that is used to explain the salience of Westphalian sovereignty. Thus, the findings here confirm Christopher Lord's and Erika Harris's interpretation of the popularity of Westphalian sovereignty: "This notion of sovereignty has enjoyed widespread support precisely because of its tight connection to the principle of national self-determination and thus gains legitimacy from both of the supreme values of our times: democracy and national identity" (Lord and Harris 2006: 194).

Ideal type 3 – modernisation unchallenged: *This type entails a combination of the instrument proposal and the EU as a natural unit proposal. Westphalian sovereignty can be traded off in order to gain true sovereignty and continued modernisation.*

In the third ideal type, both the EU and the nation state are viewed in largely instrumental terms. The *natural unit proposal* has so far been interpreted in a way that stresses that the EU is not a threat to the political unit, the nation state. All actors in the discourse tend to stress this. However, a logical interpretation of a functionalist view of the nation (as suggested, e.g., by ČSSD) would be that it does not matter if the primary political unit is the EU or the nation. There is no such thing as a natural political unit. For example, if we consider "natural" as meaning "what remains outside the scope of human intervention" (Giddens 1995:76), and if we view the nation in instrumental terms (i.e. as constructed for a purpose), then it cannot be natural according to this definition. The nation states were necessary for developing democracy and economic developments during a certain period (i.e. industrialisation and simple modernisation). However, in a globalised world, other, bigger units are needed.

Thus in the ideal type *modernisation unchallenged*, the EU is mostly not viewed as being bound to a certain geographical territory but could be extended as far as it is functional. From this perspective, Westphalian sovereignty can be traded off in order to achieve 'true' sovereignty. This, however, still does not mean that the nation state as a unit is put into question but that its tasks are redefined. From this perspective, it can be in the national interest of a nation (understood as the people) to give up some Westphalian sovereignty if that would increase the 'real' sovereignty of the people.

The third ideal type clearly illustrates that Westphalian sovereignty is linked to tradition, understood as being the opposite of modernisation. Even if Westphalian sovereignty is a consequence of modernisation, it is now challenged by the very same process. The Polish and Slovak cases indicate that the dichotomy of modernisation expressed as European integration versus tradition might in some cases be wider, in the sense that tradition is not merely expressed as the belief in Westphalian sovereignty but also reflects the cherishing of some religious beliefs that are also understood as being threatened by modernisation and European integration. Therefore in Slovakia and Poland, it would also be possible to speak of a fourth ideal type: modernisation challenged, which however is not present in the Czech discourse.

Tradition is also linked to identity. Tradition provides an "anchorage for that *basic trust* so central to continuity of identity" (Giddens 1995: 81). Identity, in turn, is linked to legitimacy of governance since, as is discussed below, one criterion for the legitimacy of a liberal democracy is an agreed definition of the people or the 'political nation' (Beetham and Lord 1999: 17). Thus, legitimacy is partly based on an agreement about who is included in the political unit and who is excluded, or to put it differently, legitimacy is partly based on the borders of the polity. Thus, the third ideal type, modernisation unchallenged, also implies a special type of legitimacy of governance that is more tilted towards legitimacy based on output (performance).

The instrumental view of the nation state and the EU inherent in the third ideal type allows for a debate about democratic and legitimate European rule. Whereas the former two ideal types imply a categorical rejection of supranationalism as being negative per se, the third constellation of the discourses on sovereignty and modernisation is, in this respect, neutral. This, however, does not necessarily mean that, as a consequence, it would be possible to defend a radical politicisation of the EU. What it means is that even if hardly anyone would question either the existence of nations or their necessary role for democratic legitimacy, the third constellation opens up to the possibility of a long term construction of a European demos, and thus also to the long term possibility of challenging the primacy of the nation state, not because this is a desired goal but because this might be necessary for the purpose of functionality.

The third ideal type implies a change in the understanding of the sovereignty concept, which moves away from what has been referred to as West-

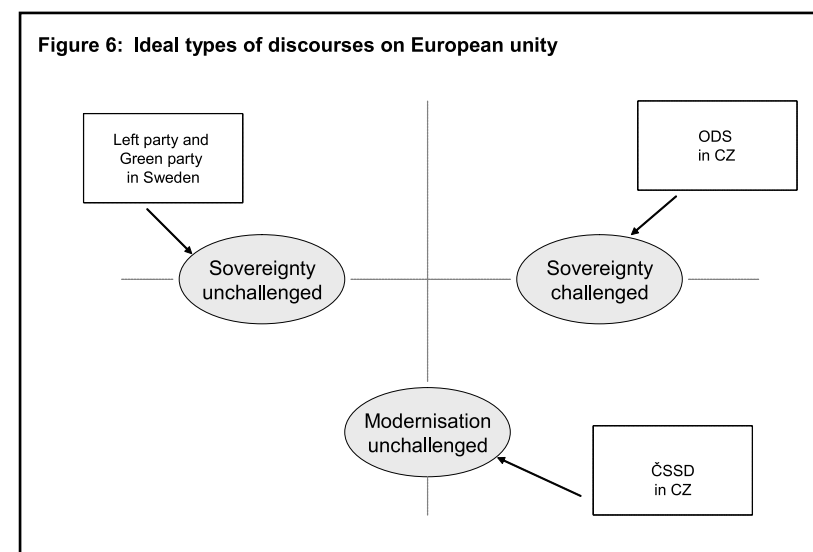
phalian sovereignty. Westphalian sovereignty could be saved if the idea were to provide for such sovereignty on the EU level, but it is more realistic to assume that what would replace this concept is some kind of pooled sovereignty, which thus conflicts with the idea of Westphalian sovereignty. Since Jean Bodin's invention of the troublesome concept of sovereignty in the 16th century, the concept has changed dramatically, which can be illustrated by the fact that Bodin understood the sovereignty concept as anti-democratic by definition and assumed a sovereign master with absolute powers. Today, the concept is considered a prerequisite for democracy (Keohane 2002: 747). Until the last quarter of the 18th century, the idea of sovereignty was coupled with a unitary view of sovereignty, the idea that each state must have one authority that acts upon it and has final authority, but this was changed by the American Constitution (Keohane 2002: 745). Yet, in the European tradition, the unitary concept of sovereignty prevailed in most cases until after the end of World War II, thus emphasising that sovereignty cannot be divided. This is thus the very aspect of the sovereignty concept that is challenged by the European integration process, and the difference between the third ideal type and the former two is in the willingness to accept what has come to be called 'pooled sovereignty' (Keohane 2002: 749).⁴²

Figure 6 provides an overview of the three ideal types of discourses on European unity.

6.2 Modernisation, Sovereignty and the Legitimacy of Governance

The three ideal types of discourses on European unity presented above, with their different constellations of modernisation and sovereignty, all have different implications for the legitimacy of governance, which can be illustrated by comparing them with criteria of legitimacy derived from normative political theory. David Beetham and Christopher Lord argue that the norma-

⁴² This pooled sovereignty is often linked to the specifics of the EU, and even if the amount of pooled sovereignty attributed to this organisation is unique, intergovernmental organisations such as the IMF and the UN also contradict the principle of unitary sovereignty because of the UN charter, where non-members of the Security Council are required to respect its resolutions (Keohane 2002: 748).



tive justifiability of liberal democracy depends on three criteria: “an agreed definition of the people or the ‘political nation’ as defining the rightful bounds of the polity; the appointment of public officials according to accepted criteria of popular authorisation, representativeness and accountability; and the maintenance by government of defensible standards of rights protection, or its routine removal in the event of ‘failure’” (Beetham and Lord 2001: 17). Since the first criterion is linked to the second, we can actually speak of two core principles for legitimacy: 1) popular sovereignty from which the electoral authorisation of the government derives, and 2) that the political system should be seen to facilitate rather than hinder the attainment of its performance criteria (e.g. freedom, security, and welfare in variable and contestable order) (Beetham and Lord 2001: 16). The three different ideal types of discourses on European unity correspond to these principles for legitimacy in the following way:

Ideal type 1, *sovereignty unchallenged*, suggests that the EU membership unambiguously challenges all parts of the legitimacy of the nation state. That is because, firstly, EU membership violates the agreed definition of the people, and, secondly, while the accepted criteria of popular authorisation are

based on the principle of the nation and popular sovereignty, the EU membership violates this aspect of legitimacy as well. And thirdly, since the EU is viewed rather as a hindrance for modernisation than as an instrument, it does also violate the government's possibilities of performance.

The second ideal type, *sovereignty challenged*, produces an understanding of the EU that corresponds with the first ideal type in the sense that the EU violates the first two legitimacy criteria. However, given that performance is also a part of the national legitimacy, EU membership might actually strengthen legitimacy of governance from this perspective.

The third ideal type, *modernisation unchallenged*, similarly to the second one, suggests that the violations of the first two criteria are less significant, since performance can outweigh these violations. The instrumental view of the political unit would suggest that the definition of the people can be renegotiated if necessary and that the following accountability is possible also at the supranational level. Yet, in the discourses, this is rarely discussed. The emphasis is rather on the non-conflicting nature of the relationship between the EU and the nation state. By increasing performance, the EU actually strengthens the possibility of governance at the level of the nation state as well and not the opposite.

The first ideal type would suggest that the question of EU legitimacy is irrelevant, since the organisation has no *raison d'être*. Both ideal type 2 and ideal type 3 share a view of the EU as legitimised through performance. Although the third type would, in theory, be open to a discussion of a renegotiation of the *demos*, which is a prerequisite for the first two legitimisation criteria, this is rarely discussed. It follows that it would be possible to derive the conclusion that performance is becoming increasingly important for political legitimacy at large, i.e. both at the level of the European Union and at the national level. In the following section, I discuss the implications of this conclusion for the EU legitimacy debate.

6.3 Implications for the Legitimacy Debate

The conclusion of this study suggests that the reasons for entering the EU as well as other steps in the direction of further European integration have been primarily advocated based on arguments related to the discourse on

modernisation. In other words, the arguments used in favour of integration are largely instrumental. Political speeches are not necessarily the only way of building EU legitimacy in EU member states. On the other hand, due to the lack of direct accountability from the EU, referenda, and the arguments used before these, should be considered crucial. If the reason for entering the EU is presented as being mainly instrumental, to fulfil progress in a vaguely specified direction, then we can assume that it can be difficult to radically change this discourse.

It should be stressed that legitimacy of governance, despite popular beliefs, is not necessarily linked to democracy. That is, actors may ascribe legitimacy to a social order for various different reasons (Longo 2006: 175). To use Fritz Scharpf's term, EU legitimacy in the studied countries is based on output oriented legitimisation (Scharpf 1999). From a liberal intergovernmentalist perspective, this would neither come as a surprise nor necessarily be considered a problem, since the emphasis on intergovernmental aspects of cooperation would lead to the conclusion that the EU can still find sufficient legitimacy through its output (cf. Moravcsik 2002; 2004). In the first instance, the argument that EU membership has been advocated primarily as a necessary instrument for progress may seem to fit well with the liberal intergovernmental theory as well. Yet, such an interpretation would miss the crucial point that the discourse on modernisation is also a discourse based on human articulations. The fact that states apply for membership in the EU and continue to cheer the value of membership cannot be reduced to merely economic factors.⁴³ The prestige associated with EU membership illustrates this point.

Lene Hansen and Michael C. Williams (1999) have made a similar argument and pointed out that the functionalist vision of European integration is also based on a myth – the myth of rationalisation. They argue that whereas national myths tend to be based on a more or less distant golden age, the myth of Europe is its future. This study shows that in the Czech Republic as well

⁴³ Liberal intergovernmentalism explains decisions for and against deeper European integration in terms of three factors. "These are: (1) underlying economic interests, with geopolitical ideas playing distinctly secondary role; (2) relative power, understood in terms of asymmetrical interdependence; and (3) the need for credible commitments to certain policies, with ideology playing a distinctly secondary role" (Moravcsik 1999: 674).

as in the cases used for comparison, the EU is considered a necessary part of the future of the modernisation project of the nation state. That is when the national project is seen as being in a crisis or as falling behind those of the competitors; the striving for incorporation into the EU seems to be the strongest at this time. Yet, the outcome of the discourse on modernisation does not necessarily have to lead toward more integration. One reason for opponents to reject the EU is the claim that it is actually not a problem-solving instrument but rather a part of the problem, a hindrance to actual progress. This indicates one problem with legitimising the EU through performance.

The very fact that the 'voice of reason' can come to different conclusions provides a problem for the articulation of the EU as a non-political unit, or as a regulatory Pareto-improving state (Majone 2006). On the other hand, this study suggests that in the studied countries, instrumental rationalisations are clearly necessary for politicians to be able to sell the European integration project to their voters. For example, when the instrumental arguments were not convincing enough, the Swedish voters rejected the Euro. The Czech Civic Democrats could afford to be more outspokenly Euro-sceptical once the country entered the Union and the instrumental goals were fulfilled. This also indicates what a treacherous friend the discourse on modernisation might be.

The major problem for a purely output based legitimacy of the EU is that this would assume the EU to be apolitical, which is far from evident. In the scholarly debate it is often argued that the European integration process would lead to a policy drift to the right, the so called social democratic critique (Scharpf 1999). Even if this social democratic concern has been contested elsewhere (see, e.g., Moravcsik 2002; Føllesdal and Hix 2006: 544), the main point here is not whether such a policy drift caused by the EU on the national level exists or not, but simply that the EU's ideological neutrality is questioned. The policy drift might be to the left, as suggested by the ODS, or to the right, as suggested by KSČM and the Swedish Left and Green Parties.

In the discourses in the post-communist countries, the EU as a certification of a certain level of development adds another dimension to the modernisation discourse which does not refer to an instrumental logic of rationalisation. The EU membership is seen from this perspective as a confirmation of the nation's abilities and standing in relation to other nations. Notably, this aspect is less underscored in the Swedish discourse, which, however, does

not suggest that the Swedish discourse on modernisation is not relational but that the EU is not accepted as the legitimate standard setter. Yet, even the certification aspect of the Czech discourse suggests an instrumental base for EU legitimacy; i.e. the EU cannot, in the long term, receive legitimacy in the Czech Republic based on having other affluent members if this prosperity is not spread to the Czech Republic.

As was shown above, our three ideal types have direct implications for the EU legitimacy debate. Only ideal type 3, *modernisation unchallenged*, would accept a sincere discussion on legitimate governance at the European level. According to ideal type 2, *sovereignty challenged*, the nation states would still have to be the guarantors of EU legitimacy, due to the non-questioning understanding of Westphalian sovereignty within this articulation. Both ideal type 2 and ideal type 3, on the other hand share the view that the EU is legitimised primarily due to its output.

Similarly, several scholars have questioned whether legitimacy as understood from the perspective of early modern democratic theory can be of any use for assessing the EU. The risk is, of course, that we end up with what in Weiler's words is "....a description of oranges with a botanical vocabulary developed for apples" (Weiler 1999: 286, quoted according to Longo 2006: 180). And if the EU cannot be compared with a state, then one need not go far to reach the conclusion that the democratic deficit does not exist or is less of a problem, since such an assumption is generally the outcome of a fault comparison between the EU and a state (Moravcsik 2002).

If the EU retrieves its democratic legitimacy through its democratic member states, the EU does not necessarily need popular participation in decision making to have legitimacy ascribed to it. The legitimacy is likely to be found in its output and not in its democratic input, and following performance biased advocacy of the EU is not necessarily a reason for concern. The German Constitutional Court, in its verdict on the Maastricht Treaty, presented a position following a similar logic.

In its verdict, the court states that the Maastricht Treaty does not conflict with the German Basic Law. According to the court, it is not a question of Germany surrendering sovereignty, but what Germany does is delegate a marginal part of the decision-making to European institutions, which further live up to the condition of being predictable in how they will use the delegated sovereignty. Thus the court interpreted the democratic principle of

the German Basic Law as demanding for Germany to remain a self-governing country whose own citizens control decision-making in perpetuity. However, the Maastricht Treaty does not conflict with this aim since the loss of sovereignty is marginal and predictable and can be evoked (some scholars have expressed doubts regarding the possibility of evoking membership of the third stage of the EMU; see, e.g., Gustavsson 2001).

The Swedish sociologist Kerstin Jakobsson has interpreted the Swedish government's line on the issue of the alleged democratic deficit caused by EU membership in a similar way. According to her, the Swedish position has been characterised by three paradoxes. First of all, the EU is considered democratic but not a democracy. It can and should not be compared to existing democracies since it is not a state, and because its members are all democratic states, it follows that the EU has to be democratic. Secondly, politics move out but democracy stays. Since the world is getting more and more internationalised, democratic decision making on the national level is not sufficient and has to be moved to a higher field, but on the other hand, democracy cannot be moved, since democracy requires a demos. Thirdly, Sweden disposes of its sovereignty but remains sovereign. Sweden is actually not considered as giving up sovereignty but rather as sharing it with other states in exchange for increased decision-making power. This is based on the Swedish view that the EU is an instance of cooperation between sovereign states (Jakobsson 1997: 41).

Thus, again, from such a perspective, it is not a problem that the EU gains its legitimacy through its output. However, what is often neglected in the debate is the implications of this for the legitimacy of national governance because at this level of governance as well, the increased importance of output at the expense of input as a consequence also appears. As David Beetham and Christopher Lord have pointed out, the legitimacy of political authority in Europe is now a two level process which cannot be analysed at one level alone, but only as a process of interaction between the EU and its member states (Beetham and Lord 2001: 18).

Several scholars such as, for example, Erik Eriksen and John Erik Fossum (2004) consider an output-based strategy of legitimisation as insufficient, arguing that this would imply a "step backward from what has already been achieved" (441). The Czech sociologist Jiří Musil (1994) uses the failure of Czechoslovakia as a warning to demonstrate that economic, technical and

organisational mechanisms are not enough to create the common identity necessary for a stable state. According to Musil, a supranational identity never emerged in Czechoslovakia, which ironically disintegrated when the two parts most resembled one another (Musil 1994: 9–10).

In similar terms, Eriksen and Fossum argue that if the only base of legitimacy is outcome, support for the Union is likely to be withdrawn as soon as it fails to provide (Eriksen and Fossum 2004: 440). However, given the problematic matter of measuring these outputs – for instance, how much does peace in Western Europe owe to European integration, which factors actually matter for economic growth, etc. –, this is not as straightforward a calculation as it might seem. Therefore, a more precise conclusion would be that support for the EU would likely be withdrawn when political leaders doubt the EU's usefulness for an intrinsically national project of modernisation. And since, as pointed out by Majone, "voters, like consumers, are interested in results, not in process" (Majone 2006: 612), one interpretation would be that the EU can continue in the direction towards 'ever closer union' but only as long as politicians are able to convince the electorate of the gains of the integration process.

The alternative to output based legitimacy would be input based legitimacy, meaning an increased participation of EU citizens in the decision making process. This strategy would most likely involve a politicisation of the EU, which, in turn, would mean an increased majoritarian rule within the EU. However, in order for this to be a feasible strategy, a basic trust between the European people has to be established. Otherwise, increased majoritarian rule within the EU could actually lead to the organisation losing legitimacy (Lord 2005: 17). In other words, in the event that a European majority would rule, it is most likely that this would be conceived as illegitimate in many parts of the continent.

Erik Oddvar Eriksen and John Erik Fossum (2004) outline two strategies for how a European demos can be established: it could either be based on a sort of European national identity or on a procedural collective identity in which some common norms and values are developed to be the focal point of identity construction (based on Habermas's discussion on deliberative democracy). This study, however, suggests that the domestic discourses on Europe might be obstacles to both of these strategies in the studied countries. In general, it seems that input legitimacy in the debates belongs to the EU

critics. It is the critics that argue that there exists a natural bound between people and rulers, and EU proponents do not challenge this. Klaus, for instance, explained his position in the following way.

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 (Klaus 2005a).

The study of political discourses on European unity also highlights some problems with Eriksen's and Fossum's second strategy, that of suggesting the possibility of constructing a *demos* based on Habermas's ideas on deliberative democracy. This might be the most interesting strategy for the discussion here, since this is clearly the strategy favoured by these authors. This strategy is based on the notion that public deliberation can ensure democratic legitimacy and thus ensure some kind of constitutional patriotism based on the civil and political rights that the Union offers its citizens (Eriksen and Fossum 2004: 446).⁴⁴ The problem with this strategy is whether norms that are "normatively uncontroversial" (Eriksen and Fossum 2004: 447) can be distinguished from ideologically based values. What one actor might consider a universal value is a part of an ideological project to another. This seems to be the case in the studied discourses. The opponents of the EU argue that it is an ideological project, whereas the proponents stress the project's apolitical nature to a higher degree. The variety of values that can be assigned to the EU is best illustrated by comparing Swedish and Czech Euro-sceptics. Whereas the biggest part of the Swedish sceptics considers the EU a part of a neo-liberal ideological agenda that fails to take into account social and environmental values (see chapter 5), the majority of the Czech sceptics, on the other hand, argue that the EU is a socialist project (see chapter 3).

To conclude, in the scholarly debate, we can identify two broad categories of legitimacy: legitimacy based on output and legitimacy based on input. The latter category in turn requires some kind of common identity, which can either be based on a feeling of sameness comparable to national identities or based on norms. The findings of this study suggest that the advocates' argu-

⁴⁴ The third strategy is inspired by the writings of Habermas. Thomas Risse provides a similar discussion on communicative rationality in *International Relations* (Risse 2000; see also Sjursen 2005: 4–5).

mentation is based on output logic, whereas the critics refer to input logic in their argumentation. The EU is an obstacle or hindrance for the people, the *demos*, to carrying out the policies they prefer. The conclusions of this study suggest that a Union that is conceived as failing to deliver progress loses its reason d'être. However, whether the EU delivers or not is not a question of some hard economic facts; it is to a large extent a question of conceptualisations and political argumentation. Therefore the future of EU legitimacy in the studied countries seems to be bound to the question of political will and skill in articulating the EU as a necessity for future progress and modernisation.

Summary

Regarding the legitimacy of governance, there is a potential inherent conflict between the discourse of modernisation and the discourse on sovereignty. In the scholarly debates on legitimacy, the conflict between modernisation and sovereignty corresponds with the distinction between output and input based legitimacy. Input based legitimacy needs, as a prerequisite, a definition of the people, specifying a group within which there is enough trust to enable majoritarian decision making.

Ideal type 1, *sovereignty unchallenged*, illustrates a situation where the two concepts of sovereignty and modernisation are non-conflicting, since the modernisation discourse is subordinated to the sovereignty discourse. Thus, the modernisation discourse does not challenge the established understanding of the people.

Ideal type two, *sovereignty challenged*, shows a situation where the sovereignty discourse is dominating, but it is acknowledged that some compromises need to be made, and finally ideal type three, *modernisation unchallenged*, shows a case of the domination of the modernisation discourse.

Whereas the former two ideal types presuppose legitimacy of governance to be based on the sovereign Westphalian state, the third ideal type, *modernisation unchallenged*, can make it possible to overcome this political unit by challenging the concept of Westphalian sovereignty. The third ideal type views the political unit primarily in instrumental terms. European integration is therefore presented as being a rational solution that also strengthens the nation state. The conclusions of this study therefore suggest that a Union that is conceived as failing to deliver progress loses its reason d'être. The techni-

cal character of EU legitimacy restricts input based legitimacy at the national level as well. As a consequence of this, the legitimacy of national governance in the Czech Republic as well as in the countries used for comparison is also becoming more based on performance.

7. Conclusion

In this study, I have identified the discourses on modernisation and sovereignty as the meta-narratives for the discourses on European unity in the Czech Republic and in the countries used for comparisons. The two meta-narratives appear in different constellations. Based on these, I outlined three ideal types of discourses on European unity that also show how the discourses on European unity are linked to the legitimisation of governance.

The first ideal type, *sovereignty unchallenged*, displays the non-conflicting co-existence of Westphalian sovereignty and modernisation. According to this conceptualisation, modernisation is seen as being per se an integral component of the national project. That is, modernisation can best be realised in the frame of the sovereign nation state. Thus the EU challenges the legitimacy of the nation state both in terms of performance and in terms of popular sovereignty. This ideal type hardly exists in the Czech discourse, or in that of the other Visegrád countries. In Sweden, however, both the Left Party and the Green Party present an understanding of the two concepts (modernisation and sovereignty) that resembles that of the first ideal type.

The second ideal type, *sovereignty challenged*, can be exemplified by the ODS in the Czech discourse. It understands Westphalian sovereignty as being the priority, but on the other hand, it acknowledges that some compromises with modernisation have to be made. This conceptualisation of the EU is more than an acceptance of the EU as an instrument which is necessary for future progress because it is also linked to the conceptualisation of the EU as a standard setter for progress in Europe. Even if some actors associated with the ODS tried to challenge this view of EU membership as an expression of modernisation, they were not successful.

The third ideal type, *modernisation unchallenged*, is the only ideal type that allows for a redefinition of the concept of Westphalian sovereignty, as meaning the exclusion of external sources of authority. In the Czech discourse, the ČSSD provides an understanding of the EU that follows a similar logic to that which is inherent in the third ideal type. The third ideal type views the political unit primarily in instrumental terms, and thus if it would be beneficial for reasons of efficiency, the political unit, and thus also the idea of Westphalian sovereignty, can be renegotiated.

The third ideal type thus allows for a redefinition of the people, but mostly, this question is ignored in the discourse. Instead, what is emphasised is the performance benefits of membership. The dominant conceptualisation in the discourse is that there is actually no conflict between the two concepts (modernisation and Westphalian sovereignty), since further integration is a rational solution that also strengthens the nation state. In other words, even if the third ideal type challenges sovereignty, it does so implicitly and not outspokenly.

Both ideal type 2 and ideal type 3 share a view of the EU as legitimised through performance. The EU is primarily legitimised in the discourses as an instrument for modernisation. In the scholarly debate, we can identify two broad categories of legitimacy: legitimacy based on output and legitimacy based on input. The latter category in turn requires some kind of common identity, which can be based either on a feeling of sameness comparable to national identities or on norms. The findings of this study suggest that the advocates' argumentation is based on output logic, whereas the critics refer to input logic. The conclusions of this book thus suggest that a Union that is conceived as failing to deliver progress loses its *raison d'être*. However, whether the EU delivers or not is not a question of some hard economic facts; it is a question of conceptualisations and political argumentation.

The findings of the study also underscore a specific poststructuralist claim: the relational nature of state identity (cf. Hansen, 2006). The findings suggest that membership of an organisation such as the EU can be viewed as a recognition of a certain level of development, which is important for both interaction with other states and the domestic legitimacy of the government. In order to be successful according to the values cherished by the discourse on modernisation, states are willing to give up some of their sovereignty and thus end the association between state success and sovereignty (cf. Keohane, 2002: 744).

As mentioned, some actors in the Czech discourse unsuccessfully tried to challenge this view of the EU membership as a confirmation of progress. They failed to do so, but it remains to be seen what will happen regarding the introduction of the euro. On the first of January, 2009, Slovakia will introduce the euro. In Slovakia, this event will most likely be celebrated as another proof of the country's successful transformation and modernisation. Slovakia will then be a fully 'normal West-European country'. The question is how this development will affect the Czech discourse. Will this be understood as a Czech failure, or will Czech actors successfully break the link between success and international recognition in the form of membership of various parts of the European integration project? The question of the introduction of the euro thus stresses the relational features of the modernisation discourse, which in turn imply that the discourse is not entirely based on instrumental rationalisations, as it might appear, but that it is clearly also linked to a state/national identity that needs the recognition of other states.

It follows that the modernisation discourse should not be understood as supporting liberal intergovernmentalism, which is based on the primacy of economic interests. I do not argue that material and economic factors do not matter, because they do, but they only matter in terms of how they are articulated and given a meaning (cf. Hansen 2006: 22). This is not merely to say that different actors interpret the national interest in different ways, which might have been to batter at an open door. The main point is that, for instance, Sweden could reject the third stage of the EMU not because it can afford to but because such an articulation could be made credible in the discourse, which should be seen in the context of a long term articulation of Sweden as being more modern than the rest of Europe, among others.

This study has also made a contribution to the methodological debate on discourse analysis. I have shown that the constant comparative method of grounded theory can be used to uncover the meta-narratives of a certain discourse. It provides a strategy for how to avoid the two most common fallacies made by researchers engaged in discourse analysis in the field of IR: i.e. that of being preoccupied with a readymade theoretical model and therefore failing to identify the underlying structure of the discourse or that of being too engaged with the contemporary debate of the studied discourse and, for this reason, failing to see the deeper structures of the discourse.

In order to illustrate this methodological claim, let us here recapitulate how the three ideal types of discourses on European unity were generated. As should be the case in grounded theory research, the initial research question was defined in a rather broad sense: 1) What are the prevailing conceptualisations of the European Union in the Czech Republic, and how are these conceptualisations transformed into positive or negative attitudes towards the EU or to different aspects of European integration? 2) How can the prevailing conceptualisations of the discourse be understood?

Following the grounded theory method known as the continuously comparative method, throughout the work, I identified terms in the discourse and compared them in order to create categories of terms. The categories served to develop theoretical proposals which were explored and modified throughout the research process. The proposals enabled the identification of the meta-narratives of the discourse on European unity as being *sovereignty* and *modernisation* and furthermore outlined three different ideal types of how discourses on European unity are structured based on the different constellations of these two concepts.

I used the political debates that preceded the referendum on Czech EU membership in 2003 as the access point to the discourse. In the first step, in order to make the analysis feasible, I narrowed down the studied material to include only newspaper articles from the four biggest Czech daily newspapers (i.e. *Mladá fronta Dnes*, *Lidové noviny*, *Hospodářské noviny* and *Právo*) from the month-long period before the referendum (i.e. 13. 5. 2003–13. 6. 2003). The analysis of the newspapers served to produce a list of 42 terms central to the debates. The terms were then categorised according to how they mutually relate. This procedure led to the formulation of seven different categories, all suggesting a slightly different understanding of the EU. These were *opportunity*, *regulations*, *negotiations*, *internal security*, *unavoidable*, *artificial unit*, and *natural unit*.

Further comparison showed the relationships between the categories. Four of the categories actually refer to the concept of *instrument*, and based on the categories, the first theoretical proposal of the EU as an *instrument* could be formulated: *The EU is understood as the rational instrument for the Czech Republic to use in order to achieve progress in a wide sense and to be able to catch up with more developed countries. The alternative would be irrational and lead to stagnation and isolation.*

The category of *regulations* also referred to the *instrument* concept but rejected the EU as an instrument. Therefore a second proposal of the EU as a *hindrance* was formulated: *The EU is perceived as a hindrance to free competition and to progress. In fact, it might lead to stagnation and a return of the centralisation and over-planning associated with the former regime and socialism.*

However, the last two categories, referring to the EU as either an artificial or a natural unit, could not be captured by the *instrument – hindrance* dichotomy. Followingly, two more proposals were needed in order to fully capture the conceptualisations present in the discourse. Proposals three and four are thus based on the dichotomy of natural – artificial: Proposal three (*natural unit*): *The EU is understood as a natural political unit in the Czech political discourse.* Proposal four (*artificial unit*): *The EU is understood as an unnatural political construction that challenges the natural unit, the nation state, since some sovereignty is handed over to this political entity.*

What we had at this stage then were empirically grounded theoretical proposals regarding the conceptualisation of the EU in the Czech political discourse. The proposals were empirically grounded but only through rather limited materials. In order to develop the proposals further, it was therefore necessary to extend the empirical materials used. This was done by focusing on the arguments used by the main political actors involved in shaping the discourse: the political parties represented in parliament plus the two presidents of the Czech Republic. If the initial analysis was based on a snapshot of the discourse, in the second step, the development of the discourse from the Velvet Revolution of 1989 until the debates on the Constitutional Treaty (ending in 2007) was taken into account. In the second step, the analysis was based on party programmes, articles and speeches of the political actors and on secondary literature. This part served to modify the initial proposals but also to identify the underlying meta-narratives: *sovereignty* and *modernisation*.

To answer the question of to what extent the Czech discourse on European unity is unique, comparisons were made firstly with the other Visegrád countries and secondly with Sweden. The comparison took as its starting point the following modified theoretical proposals: 1. Instrument: *The EU is understood as the rational instrument to use in order to achieve progress in a wide sense and to be able to catch up with more developed countries.*

The alternative would be irrational and lead to stagnation and isolation. 2. Hindrance: The EU is perceived as a hindrance because it forces an ideological project on its member states. This might lead to policy outcomes undesired by the country's citizens. 3. Natural: The EU is understood as a natural political unit in the discourse, but one that does not challenge the existence of the nation state. 4. Artificial: The EU is understood as an unnatural political construction that challenges the natural unit, the nation state, since some sovereignty is handed over to this political entity.

The Visegrád countries were chosen for comparison since these countries entered the process of accession from starting points similar to that of the Czech Republic. Thus, it was expected that the political discourses on European unity in these countries would have a structure rather similar to that of the Czech discourse. It was, however, shown that in the Polish and Slovak cases, the sovereignty – modernisation nexus, which was identified in the Czech case, included one more aspect. In these countries, the Euro-sceptical discourse also includes the element of anti-Western values, i.e. the belief that the modernisation process, as expressed through European integration, challenges traditional and religious values and not just the understanding of sovereignty. In general, however, the political discourses of these countries shared with the Czech one a conceptualisation of the EU as an instrument for catching up with Western Europe, which was manifested also by a broad consensus on EU membership during the biggest part of the accession period. Primarily in Hungary and the Czech Republic, catching up with Europe was also linked to the idea of reclaiming the country's historically rightful place in Europe, where the country would have been if it had not been for the Soviet intervention and communism.

Sweden was added as a case for comparison, while the *instrument proposal* as formulated, being linked to catching up with Europe, was very unlikely to be applicable in this case. Yet, Sweden shared some features with the Czech Republic, such as being a recent EU member and thus also recently having experienced a referendum on membership (in 1994), which thus could served as a starting point for comparison. As it turned out, modernisation as a meta-narrative was also very helpful in the analysis of the Swedish case. The EU was not viewed as an instrument for catching up with Europe, but EU membership became a possibility due to the fact that Sweden's position as 'one of the most modern countries in the world' was conceived

as being threatened due to the economic crisis in the country in the early 1990s. Thus, the EU was seen as an instrument to save the national project of modernisation and allow Sweden to maintain its position vis-à-vis other countries.

One major difference between Sweden and the Visegrád countries is that in the latter, the EU was viewed as a standard setter. EU membership was seen as a criterion for being a developed, modern country. This conceptualisation was rejected in Sweden, where the critics on the contrary argued that Sweden is more modern than the EU and that EU membership would thus imply a step backwards.

Finally, the three ideal types of structures of discourses on European unity were identified according to the constellations of the nexus of sovereignty – modernisation. Thus, this study has shown that it is possible to use grounded theory to analyse discourse in a structured way by following clearly described methodological steps. It has also shown that it is possible to generate more general theoretical claims (the three ideal types) based on a thorough analysis of empirical material. Yet, the validity of the claims made has to be seen with some reservations, given the explorative nature of the utilised methodology. Therefore the claims should be the starting point for further studies, not only of the discourses in other European countries but also of the Czech discourse (for instance regarding the question of the euro), where the claims made could be further explored using a deductive methodology.

7.1 Proposals for Further Research

This study has shown that the conceptualisations of European Unity in the Czech Republic as well as in the countries used for comparison, i.e. the Visegrád countries and Sweden, are based on different constellations of the nexus of *sovereignty – modernisation*. It has been suggested that the modernisation discourse includes an ideational aspect, which is based on the relational character of the understanding of modernisation. An interesting case for elaborating further on this dimension of the modernisation discourse might be the question of the euro in the Czech discourse. What will happen after the euro is introduced in Slovakia and a Czech debate on the topic is most likely sparked?

A study of the Czech euro discourse in the next two years could further specify the ideational character of the modernisation discourse. The outcome is, however, not given. Even if we accept the ideational character of the discourse, the relationship between euro membership and state success is not predetermined and can be restructured by the actors in the Czech discourse. In the Czech discourse, however, given that the EU membership was seen as such a recognition of modernisation, which was not acknowledged, for instance, in the Swedish discourse, this specific link between state success and a membership that would entail taking part in the various steps of the European integration process needs to be challenged if a non-membership of the third phase of the EMU can be made a real and legitimate possibility.

The wider dichotomy between tradition and sovereignty in Slovakia and Poland was merely suggested in this study, and clearly this is a topic which would also be suitable for further investigation. For this reason, a more in depth analysis of the political discourses in these two countries is necessary to draw any final conclusions.

Obviously, it would also be beneficial for our understanding of European discourses on European unity if the proposals outlined in this study, as well as the ideal types presented, could serve as a basis for studies of the European unity discourses in other European countries. This study has only dealt with recent member states (newcomers). Therefore it would be beneficial for our understanding of how the EU is conceptualised in Europe at large to use the findings of this study for an analysis of the discourses on European unity in some of the founding states of the post-World War II European integration project. Can we find the same constellations of the two concepts of modernisation and sovereignty in these discourses? It might be desirable to do the same with the political discourses of current EU member candidates. Would we find a similar constellation of the two meta-narratives in Turkey?

Thus, there are several ways in which the research undertaking which was started off in this book can be continued. As is often the case in grounded theory, the research does not necessarily reach a definite end and leads to many new questions.

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