

# Securitizing Migration, Europeanizing Czechs?

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Lately, we have witnessed continuing heightened migration to Europe. Despite this not being a new phenomenon, it has been often described as such. One of the possible explanations for this narrative of exception is that migration is being securitised in order to strengthen the EU, and its identity. The article analyses a specific part of Czech discourse in a key period of May 2015 to May 2016 to analyse whether that is true in the rather EU-sceptic Czech Republic. It argues that rather than a sense of EU-ness, a sense of Europeanness is present in the analysed part of discourse. The article further suggests that the main difference between those two concepts is that while Czechs accept that they belong to Europe and European civilization and they accept the EU as a framework of operating, they still tend to perceive the EU as an 'imposed' political project and that there still exists uncertainty about what the shared values of the common European civilization are. Nevertheless, despite the critics of the Czech attitude towards Europe and the EU specifically, a sense of Europeanness is present in the face of the current 'crisis'.

*Keywords: EU, Europeanness, identity, migration, securitization, the Czech Republic, media discourse*

In recent years, we have witnessed continuing heightened migration to Europe. In media discourse, this process tends to be depicted as an unprecedented phenomenon threatening the security of European societies. Surprisingly, this is even truer in the case of the Czech Republic, where recent African and Arab migrants are almost non-existent. While the securitisation process is often used as a tactic in the fight for

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political power, it also has an important side effect of strengthening the in-group identity. In other words, for every 'evil other', a 'good we' exists. Some authors, in particular Jef Huysmans, then see the securitisation of migration as a by-product of European integration and see such discourses as possibly strengthening the political unity of the EU.<sup>1</sup>

While the article accepts the idea of the sense of unity being born in the face of crisis, namely what is labelled the migration crisis, it questions the idea of political unity, or rather of unified 'EU-identity'. Drawing on further authors dealing with Europeanisation and European identity such as Habermas, della Porta and Caiani, Kantner, Katzenstein and Checkel, and others, the article explores the collective European identity as it appears in Czech media discourse securitizing migration.<sup>2</sup> This paper specifically uses the case study of the Czech Republic to show whether and how the securitisation of migration may strengthen a notion of Europeanness, even in a country which is otherwise known for its EU-scepticism. The article uses qualitative analysis of selected Czech media sources to show that in writing about the migration crisis, there is indeed a sense of Europeanness present as well as acceptance of the EU as a structure. Yet, in agreement with the theoretical discussion, it proceeds to add that this 'European identity' or sense of 'Europeanness' is very vague and doesn't hinder criticism of the EU as an actor. Being distinct from the 'EU-identity' it therefore does not serve as a basis for legitimizing the EU. Thus, it differs from what I labelled 'EUNESS'. On the other hand, stating that one's position is in Europe allows one to claim the benefits of belonging to the European club with all its privileges.

## Securitisation and Europeanisation

Securitisation theory, made famous by Weaver and Buzan,<sup>3</sup> was a very innovative concept, bringing constructivist and post-structuralist insights into the realist domain of security studies. It accepts that, to some extent, reality can be constructed and therefore threats are constructed as well.<sup>4</sup> Those same authors broadened the scope of what could be feared even further when they, within the framework of what later was to be known as the Copenhagen school, introduced new security sectors and stated that there might exist not only military threats, but economic, societal, political and environmental ones as well. The scope of threatened referent objects also broadened, since suddenly it

was not only the physical existence of the state which could be threatened, but also its identity or autonomy.<sup>5</sup> Yet, Buzan and Weaver were not the only ones making a connection between securitisation and the dimensions of security, since other authors such as Balzacq<sup>6</sup> developed their concepts even further. In contrast to the well-known military sector and the still tangible economic sector, some sectors of security were a kind of breakthrough in conceptual thinking – especially that of societal security and of identity as a threatened object. This development went hand in hand with new kinds of threat – real or created – being presented by both academicians and politicians. And migration was prominent among those.

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Elspeth Guild, drawing from other authors such as Gellner and Bauman, explains that the exclusion of migrants has roots in the change of society according to nationalist lines and also in the economic changes in the society, because now it is mainly the poor migrants who are being excluded as threatening our culture and system.<sup>7</sup> Her co-authors Bralo and Morrison then add that the tensions in Europe regarding the migrants exist also because of broader problems, not related to migrants as such. Some groups of people feel that they cannot decide on matters which concern them and that the migrants receive more attention than they themselves do.<sup>8</sup> This explanation strikes close to home in the Czech context, where the securitisation of migration is accompanied by a critique of the EU for providing attention and funds to migrants. That is why there might at the same time exist a sense of Europeanness, while there is also persistent criticism of the EU. Even though the constructed threat unifies the people at some level, they still feel marginalised by specific political decisions.

A further explanation is offered by Didier Bigo, who looks at the process of securitisation of migration and relates it to the sense of insecurity after the end of the Cold War (as did Bralo and Morrison), trying to explain how much of this insecurity was caused by the end of the Cold War and the end of a territorialised enemy.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, Jef Huysmans takes an even more philosophical look at the securitisation of migration and its relation to the sense of insecurity and in greater detail analyses how the securitisation of migration helps societies to fight what he calls epistemological fear (fear of the unknown). He also proceeds to scrutinise how during the process of securitizing the migration an identity of those ‘in’ facing the challenge is created. He argues that today’s societies live in a state of epistemological fear (fear

of an unknown enemy) and to curb the fear, a more substantial threat is created and a solution offered.<sup>10</sup> As shall be argued, one of the handy 'scapegoats' lately have been migrants.

According to Huysmans, describing the danger a political unit is in serves to draw attention away from its inner problems, creating an image of 'a harmonious unit that only seems to be experiencing conflict, disintegration, or violence if external factors, such as migration, start disrupting it'.<sup>11</sup> Huysmans further argues that putting an entity such as the EU within a dangerous environment '...is a peculiar process of constituting a political community of the established that seeks to secure unity and identity by instituting existential insecurity'.<sup>12</sup>

This paper draws on this notion that through securitizing migration and migrants a common identity is created, and that the 'benefit' of strengthening the identity in this way is that it doesn't have to be precisely defined. The article further argues that this is precisely the case of the notion of 'Europeanness' in the Czech context, which is more defined by what it is not, while at the same time some concepts of 'uniformity' are generated.

This is in line with the recent discussions on Europeanisation and European identity as presented by della Porta and Caiani. Della Porta and her co-author analyse the different versions and levels of Europeanisation. One of the very key findings is that while the 'EU' as such was somewhat imposed on people from above, and it is more or less taken for granted by now, the true discussions with people on the content of the given framework have only recently started, thus making room for Europeanisation from below.<sup>13</sup> These discussions and inner political conflicts are inevitable for creating a common identity, as Kantner explains.<sup>14</sup> Yet, according again to della Porta and Caiani they bring with them both a strong criticism of the EU and its decisions as much as they show that at this point there is hardly any consensus among societies on what the EU or the new European society should look like.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, Koopmans warns that the debates and the criticism of the EU need to be scrutinized further to ascertain what exactly they mean regarding the scope and aim of the present Europeanisation process.<sup>16</sup>

The inner dilemma of the present state of Europeanisation could also be perceived through previous studies by Habermas who distinguishes between '*Staatsbürger*', the citizens who somewhat accept the

political unit they are part of, and the *'Volkgenossen'*. In Habermas's view, *'Volkgenossen* or nationals find themselves formed by the inherited form of life and the fateful experience of a shared history'.<sup>17</sup> According to Habermas, when the state in its modern form first appeared, it needed a source of legitimacy and therefore the sense of nationalism was awakened in the people. Therefore, there exist two distinct 'statuses' or 'identities' – the technical or political one – the *'Staatsbürgerschaft'* and the 'emotional' one based on values and culture – the *'Volksgenossenschaft'*.<sup>18</sup> We might see this as similar to Kantner's distinction between two kinds of qualitative identities: on one hand, the rather rational cooperation of what Kantner calls the *'we-commercium'* group and, on the other hand, the cooperation based on the shared values of *'we-communio'*.<sup>19</sup> This also corresponds with arguments presented by Katzenstein and Checkel. According to them, there are multiple European identities and even the Euro-sceptic one belongs among them. The major distinction is between the identity created as a social process and as a political project.<sup>20</sup>

This argument is in line with the distinctions made by other authors: Europeanisation from below, as della Porta and Caiani claim, versus the political project (systematically created by those in Brussels or at the national level) of the *Staatsbürgerschaft* waiting for its cultural content, as defined by Habermas.<sup>21</sup> Fukuyama in this regard states, when talking about European identity, that 'European identity remains something that comes from the head rather than the heart'.<sup>22</sup>

Yet, as Kantner and della Porta and Caiani posit, it is exactly in discussions and conflict situations when the collective identity is created,<sup>23</sup> and the migration crisis is exactly such a situation. The analysis of one sector of the Czech discourse presented below seems to conform to this assumption. While at this point there is more or less acceptance of the technical status quo and the EU as a framework to operate within, there is a lack of the *we-communio* or the *Volksgenossenschaft*. However, Europeanisation from below slowly appears in the discussions, although, at this point this identity is very vague, loosely defined, and not very much linked to the EU. Even the politicians themselves have differing views on how the political project of Europe should be conceived and criticise some of the recent actions of the EU. In debates the EU is thus rather the 'criticised other' than the main 'we-group'.

## The Czech Case

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The Czech Republic is a very interesting case study for any issue related to possible securitisation of migration. The actual number of recent migrants and refugees from the most discussed areas such as Syria is nearly non-existent, while the media coverage of the issue is thriving and catastrophic scenarios are presented in relation to migration. The contrast between the real situation and that depicted by part of the media is striking. The Czech Republic is also a good example to study whether a sense of Europeanness might be present in the face of crisis – and whether this Europeanness is different to the sense of belonging to the EU, because the Czech Republic tends to be viewed as EU-sceptic.

Before proceeding further to the analysis itself, a few facts about the situation in the Czech Republic should be presented to illustrate the context in which the discourse on migration and the EU reactions takes place. According to the latest *Basic Facts about Migration* published by the Ministry of the Interior, foreign nationals constituted, as of 30 June 2015, 4.3 percent of the Czech population, most of them being from neighbouring countries or from Ukraine, Russia and Vietnam.<sup>24</sup> Therefore the ‘new’ Muslim immigrants who are the source of the news comprised only a marginal part of the population.

Although in 2014 the number of asylum seekers rose, according to the same source, by 63.5 percent in comparison to the year 2013, the total number was merely 1156 applications. Other statistical data show the same trend – a rising tendency yet low absolute data.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, although the numbers of migrants are rising, the absolute numbers are still hugely irrelevant when compared to a) the situation of countries like Germany or Turkey and b) the size of the Czech population. The continuous presence of migration and migrant-related articles in media shows that attention is brought to the issue on purpose, especially as significant portion of the migrants in the Czech Republic are for example Ukrainians while the news focus mostly on the ‘new’ Arab/Muslim migrants. Sensationalisation of the topic could be one of the reasons why according to the Spring 2016 Eurobarometer survey, 32 percent of respondents in the Czech Republic perceived migration as one of the two most important issues the country faced (immigration ‘won’ over all other problems).<sup>26</sup> That is where we can see the strength of the construction of threat – the migrants are not even present and it is to be discussed whether they are threatening at all, yet the people

are persuaded that the threat is real. To achieve this result, it is not only the Czech Republic which is taken as the threatened referent object, but the whole of Europe. In this way also the sense of the Czechs' belonging to Europe is strengthened, as the idea of a common European problem exists there. Yet, sometimes this also supports anti-EU rhetoric in the sense of 'Why should we suffer for what is not our problem?' Here we can clearly see the lack of solidarity with fellow Europeans, showing that other Europeans are still not taken as the Czech 'in-group' per se. That the migration was perceived more as a problem for the EU was visible also in the Eurobarometer survey, where 67 percent of the Czech Republic respondents perceived immigration as one of the two most important issues the EU was facing at the moment (again, the winner over other problems).<sup>27</sup>

Regarding the Czech attitude towards the EU as such, Czechs are known for their EU-sceptic opinion. The 2016 Eurobarometer statistics show that this is still the case, since 62 percent of Czech respondents do not trust the EU (the EU28 average is 55 percent).<sup>28</sup>

According to the same Eurobarometer factsheet, 40 percent of Czechs are neutral while 34 percent have a totally negative image of the EU<sup>29</sup> – that means the Czechs are more EU sceptic than the average of the EU. The statistics therefore support the idea that there is a base for criticism of the EU, yet as della Porta and Caiani or Katzenstein and Checkel explained, that doesn't mean there cannot be 'Europeanisation' going on<sup>30</sup> and that is what the analysis attempted to find out.

## Content Analysis of Czech Media Coverage of Migration

Due to the large database of articles related to migration and refugees, the analysis covered the four main Czech journals operating at the national level: *Hospodářské noviny*, *Mladá fronta DNES (MF Dnes)*, *Lidové noviny* and *Právo*, and it focused on their printed versions (although accessed electronically). The Newton database was utilised for text, with a time frame set between 31 May 2015 and 31 May 2016. The reason was to collect a larger number of articles from the recent period which were not connected to a single event, as might be the case with a shorter time range, and which might then be influenced by the nature of that event. Therefore, stories were used from the last year preceding the first draft of this article.

The analysis focuses on the securitisation of migration as a base for creating identity, and the possible creation of European identity is examined only in connection to this. To make the base for analysis broad and covering different aspects of the issue, the key words searched were *migrant* [migrant], *migrace* [migration], and *uprchlík* [refugee]. *Asylum* and *asylum seeker* were left out due to their very specific meaning and connotations. The word *refugee* was included because it is widely applied in the Czech media, sometimes irrespective of its true legal meaning. The Czech media in the beginning had a problem with mixing different migration-related terms and with using them rather haphazardly. The logic operator OR was used allowing for the selection of articles with one or more key words. A full text search was applied. As the analysis was qualitative, not quantitative, the results were sorted by relevance (according to Newton) and the analysis focused on the first 100 articles and more in depth on the first 50. From these, the duplicates and irrelevant articles (such as on the migration of frogs) were deleted and the final overview of the analysed articles is listed in the annex to this article (in alphabetical order).

Firstly, the analysis focused on whether and how the threat is constructed, to analyse whether the community is indeed positioned in a dangerous environment. It further scrutinised what the main arguments used to picture the migrant as a threat are, to ascertain what the main characteristics of the opposing society might be. Based on a preliminary study of the materials, as well as the background literature, the main themes of focus were: the language of flood, wave etc. and the threat by huge numbers (previously examined for example by O. Kaleta<sup>31</sup>) and then notions of migrant(s) as problematic or threatening (as criminals, a burden for the economy, etc.)

Secondly, the analysis focused in more detail on who the community facing the crisis is – and specifically it looked for the representations of Europe and Europeaness in the text to analyse whether there are any notions that hint at a common ‘European identity’ present in the times of crisis as well as on what that identity is grounded. Here one of the prominent themes was a territorial one – Europe as one territorial unit. This corresponded with the first part and the language of flood or onslaught – affecting indiscriminately the whole territory. The analysis further focused on notions of common civilisation and values, and examined the texts to find out whether they specified what those notions are.

Thirdly, the analysis proceeded to scrutinise the difference between the sense of Europeanness examined in step two and the attitude towards the EU, to explore whether there is the before-mentioned difference between the EU as a political project, somewhat imposed on the people, and Europeanisation from below. Here the analysis explored the moments in the discourse where the EU has been positioned as the 'other' rather than as the frame for the 'in-group'.

### Is There a Threat?

According to the above-mentioned literature, the first step for strengthening unity is to position the community in a threatening environment. Therefore, firstly it is analysed whether and how the migrants are positioned as a danger in the chosen Czech media.<sup>32</sup>

#### *The Wave, Flood and Numbers*

As other authors analysed before,<sup>33</sup> the popular terms in addressing the incoming migrants to create a sense of danger in the host society are 'flood', 'wave' or 'onslaught', a typical example from the analysed media being the title 'A migration wave is rolling towards Europe',<sup>34</sup> suggesting the apocalyptic vision of Europe being submerged and destroyed. The idea of a 'wave' is especially popular in the Czech media.

Another popular theme is to use the force of statistics or just to make remarks on vast numbers of migrants coming such as 'Taking into account that the numbers of migrants started to rise massively only half a year ago, it is thus not clear how many asylum seekers will settle in Europe for good'.<sup>35</sup> Implications that the system will just not be able to cope with such unexpectedly high numbers of people are added: 'While Europe ponders over what to do with tens of thousands of refugees which roll onto it from the impoverished countries of Africa and the Middle East, one of the biggest immigration waves of this year has been detected at the South-Eastern coasts during the weekend'.<sup>36</sup> In both cases, the main message is that migration in its current form is something very powerful, out of one's control. This way, the feeling of insecurity and fear takes ground.

Now, danger is created. The image of wave or flood is also a useful tool in supporting the mutual solidarity as it is a threat common for all parts of Europe, for the wave does not choose which part of the

continent it hits. It indiscriminately destroys. This imagery enables the writers to include the Czech Republic (which if we speak about rational decisions of refugees is at the very bottom of the list of desired destinations, as the numbers of asylum seekers showed) in the securitizing discourse.

In this first step, the epistemological fear of the unknown, as Huysmans calls it, is turned into objectified fear – a serious threat is presented.<sup>37</sup> Huysmans further proceeds by stating that the process of inclusion and exclusion follows.<sup>38</sup> Therefore, after presenting the threat coarsely, the characteristics that distinguish ‘them’ - the migrants - from ‘us’ (whatever the ‘us’ may be at that moment) are explored. By elaborating on the dangerous characteristics of ‘the excluded them’, we may elaborate on what are the characteristics of those included.

### *The Threatening Migrant*

To intensify the fear and the need of common defence, the migrants tend to be depicted as a *security threat*. Examples are presented to prove the claim that the migrants do not deserve pity, as they are criminals such as the quote: ‘Is it possible to identify with this beaten man [refers to the beaten man from the Biblical *Parable of the Good Samaritan* ... note of the author] also Ahmed H., who was captured in Hungary with nine passports?’<sup>39</sup>

The motive of the migrants being sexual abusers is present, too, for example in the quote: ‘Is Germany really managing it, when women are being raped in the refugee centres? Is Britain coping, when police in middle-sized city tolerate for eleven years that youngsters are being raped because the police fears being labelled as racist?’<sup>40</sup> or in the quote ‘Now more than half of Germans doubt that their country can cope with the problems related to the migration crisis, as the new survey made for ARD television showed. This survey was the first after the New-Year’s Eve scandal with sexual assaults on women in the centre of Cologne.’<sup>41</sup> Sometimes simply the rise in criminality due to migrants is implied. For example in the headline ‘Germany: Migration raised criminality.’<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, links to illegality (being smuggled, illegal organisation involvement, etc.) are stressed. This way an objectified threat, the dangerous migrant, coming to breach the law is presented and therefore it is implied that the ‘area of justice and freedom’ is threatened.

Another dimension is that of economy and welfare. We can find the mentions of the distinction between the refugee and the economic migrant, such as 'She [Angelina Jolie] said that it is necessary to maintain the distinction between refugees and economic migrants',<sup>43</sup> but there are also statements about migrants misusing the welfare system such as 'If the refugees do not want to work here, we cannot solve the situation by letting the ghettos grow, not integrating people into society, but giving benefits instead. The Nordic countries, where the welfare system is the most generous, now admit that some of the migrants misuse their system.'<sup>44</sup> Those more optimistic at least disagree with the argument that more workers bring an economic boost. Yet, the term 'economic migrant' is at the top of the argument – thus denying arriving migrants our pity or compassion, as they come 'only for economic gains'.

It is precisely this idea of the welfare state which is embedded in the perception of life in Europe.<sup>45</sup> It is perceived as something special, nowadays being in danger – yet a benefit envied by many, therefore a privilege to protect. The notion of threat to our income is a specifically sensitive issue in the Czech Republic. Therefore it is stressed, how much money is given – especially by the EU – for different migrant/refugee related causes. As Bralo and Morrison suggested, the migrant is hated because (s)he at least receives attention or some support, while the communities at the periphery do not get even that.<sup>46</sup> An example of the economy related discourse is 'Billions of euros for helping Africa, for financing refugee camps in Turkey and other countries should, according to the European Commission, together with a plan for the return of economic migrants to 'safe countries', be a remedy for the unprecedented wave of refugees which has hit the European Union in the last few weeks.'<sup>47</sup>

All in all, the migration is, as Huysmans writes, reified as 'a force which endangers the good life in west European societies'<sup>48</sup> and we can broaden that to life in European societies. Yet, it is a question of what the good life is and what the characteristics of the societies are. That is where the *cultural distinctiveness* of migrants comes to play a role. The cultural distinctiveness of migrants is mentioned in the Czech discourse (and the religion plays part in that). The fact that they are culturally distinct and hard to integrate is a very important part of the discourse, because by stressing the fact that they are different we imply who we are, that there is in fact some common culture among us –

whatever that 'us' is for this moment – and what 'our' values are. We also stress the distinction between 'us' and 'them'. Examples of such discourse are 'However, for the majority of citizens they [migrants] represent a security threat, the citizens are afraid of them [migrants], many because the migrants threaten their life-style and their standard of life',<sup>49</sup> or 'The German party AfD, which is with 11 percent of preferences the third strongest party of our western neighbours, warns against the change of traditional European society',<sup>50</sup> or 'Citizens may be more worried by the fear that the migrants come from a culturally different environment and that they will not want to integrate into Europe, rather than by the payments they receive, as examples from Belgium and France show',<sup>51</sup>

At this point, we can also comment on what the threatened community is. It can be noticed that it is integrating into Europe which is mentioned, as well as traditional European society, yet closer specification regarding what that means is not provided, with one exception being religion. Religion is sometimes stressed in regard to cultural distinctiveness.

The reasons might be twofold. The first is the mental link people make between Islam and terrorism, which is sometimes even mentioned multiple times. The second is that keeping the 'us-them' logic in mind, defining the other by religion means also defining ourselves like this. If they are Muslims it means that we stress the religion-related side of our own identity, the Christian-related values, yet this is another trait typical for the all-European identity which is said to rest on Christian values. Again, some examples of the religion-based discourse could be 'Most of the Czechs link the word refugee with fear and, among the various worries, that of the spread of Islam clearly dominates.

That is what arises from the STEM agency survey conducted among 925 respondents, published yesterday',<sup>52</sup> or 'On their web page, the group [Soldiers of Odin...Finnish extremist group, note of author] claims that they protect Finns against "Muslim intruders"',<sup>53</sup> or 'Muslims prevail among the migrants. Most of them are ready to spread Islam. According to intelligence services some should even organise terrorist acts',<sup>54</sup> or "I do not like the idea that Islamic migrants will want to change European culture, our values", reasoned Mrs. Jana as an explanation for why she attended the demonstration'.<sup>55</sup> It is then interesting to note that an ordinary citizen (Ms. Jana) says 'change Euro-

pean culture, our values.’<sup>56</sup> This suggests that the idea of some common European culture might pertain in the face of crisis to the ‘broader’ society.

### Who Are ‘We’?

As the previous part of the analysis showed, through media discourse the community is presented as being in a dangerous environment. The image of numerous migrants who are culturally distinct, hard to integrate, misusing the welfare systems while threatening the common way of life is presented. In the face of this crisis a notion of some common European ‘we’ appears. Yet, what is the ‘we’ that figures there? Who exactly is the community which existence is threatened? And if there is really a European identity, which characteristics does it pose, given that Katzenstein and Checkel suggested that there might be many different European identities?<sup>57</sup>

### *The Continent of Europe, the Space of the EU, the European Whole*

This community is a community of shared territory, which is an important part of the discourse. As della Porta and Caiani quoting Anderson explain, ‘territorial dimension will appear as strictly intertwined with various identities’.<sup>58</sup> For Kantner, shared territory is one attribute according to which we can label people as belonging to one group. It is part of the so called ‘*numerical identification*’ – which means a statement that a group of people share some objective criteria by which they can be described.<sup>59</sup> But this does not tell us anything about whether the bearer of such identification truly feels as if they are a member of the group. Nevertheless, shared numerical identifications might be, according to Kantner, a good start for the collective identity to appear.<sup>60</sup>

In the analysed articles, the sense of unity is very much based on the territorial argument. It is the continent of Europe that the migrants are heading to such as in the quotes: ‘...which limits the migration to Europe... Madrid strives for refugees not to get to Europe...’<sup>61</sup> or ‘Ankara will again send the refugees to Europe’.<sup>62</sup>

Furthermore, this shared territory is put into dangerous environment, as the logic of securitization dictates. What more, it is faced with the terms wave, flood, and onslaught: ‘How are those hundreds of thousands of migrants from Africa, which left for Europe different...’<sup>63</sup>

or 'A migration wave is rolling towards Europe [title]'.<sup>64</sup> The image of wave is used as it both dehumanizes the migrants and unifies those facing them, as the wave hits the whole European territory indiscriminately. This way the sense of 'we are all in the same boat' is created, the weaker of the two kinds of qualitative collective identities defined by Kantner as '*we-commercium*'<sup>65</sup>, and it takes root due to the concept of the borderless united territory under threat. The concept of shared borderless territory echoes especially strong in the Czech Republic where 84 percent of Czech respondents of Eurobarometer survey agree with the free movement of citizens (this statement 'winning' over all others offered such as common defence and security policy, common migration policy and etc. and plus EU28 average was 79 percent),<sup>66</sup> so the possibility of free movement is felt as a strong benefit.

When analysing the emerging European identity, we can therefore state that there is agreement on the existence of a shared European territory, yet who are the people residing there? What values do they have in common, if any? While there is also a sense of the shared civilisation being in danger, what this shared civilisation is remains rather unclear.

### *European Civilisation*

We move now from the domain of the 'objective factors' such as territory to the domain of value sharing. There are, so far, not precisely defined common values shared by the group (maybe with the exception of Christianity). It is exactly at this point when identity loses its contours. This is in accordance with Huysmans who points out that the 'benefit' of creating an identity through securitizing is that one doesn't need to be precise about its attributes.<sup>67</sup> Even in the previous section the quotes spoke about 'culture' or civilisation more broadly, without hinting more specifically what it consists of. We can further read quotes such as: 'It [the performance of Grey People] wanted to say to the spectators, that these grey people, the refugees, have their place in European civilisation',<sup>68</sup> or further articles such as Rašek's (who sticks out from the collection of articles as a harsh migration critic fond of catastrophic scenarios), stating 'We cannot forever overlook the argument that we were not able to achieve it [integration] with Roma people, even though they have been in contact with European civilisation

for six hundred years',<sup>69</sup> or 'Some politicians, analysts and commentators are even afraid, due to our friendliness, of the Islamisation of Europe and of the perishing of our civilisation'.<sup>70</sup>

One exception to that might be the idea of 'welfare' and the economic dimension. For example there is the statement that 'The European welfare state is based on the help for the economically weakest members of the society by redistributing the social wealth'.<sup>71</sup> This quote hints at the welfare system as one of the core elements of modern European culture, and this is also in line of presenting migrant as an economic threat as shown in the previous section; nevertheless, this is still only one part of the whole picture. More details on what the shared culture and values are still missing. Furthermore, as visible from the quotes, the felt commonness is related to Europe rather than the EU. But is there really a difference?

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### The EU as 'Us' or the EU as the 'Other'

So far the article has argued that migration is genuinely securitised and that the sense of commonness takes root in the process. In addition, it tried to defend the suggestion that this commonness might have the features of Europeanness, a vague sense of shared civilization resting on more specific knowledge of shared territory. This allows claiming the benefits of being European – linking 'us' to the developed civilisation, welfare provisions, history, Christian values. However, this does not in any way prevent criticism of the EU and its decisions. This is also somewhat mirrored in the discourse of some of the prominent Czech politicians. While they use migration to criticise the EU and score points on the home front, which is as statistics showed rather EU-sceptic, these same politicians never imply leaving the EU – they only suggest its alterations. Even in part of daily media discourse as the analysis above showed, there is a sense of belonging to Europe. Even in the EU-sceptic Czech Republic, a sense of common European identity exists, at least in part of the discourse.

The argument is nicely summed up in the article by Rašek: 'Too much is at stake, Schengen and the EU. Even though we are increasingly dissatisfied with how it functions, and this crisis very clearly showed it, can a disintegrated Europe, crumbled into fifty independent states, face the confrontation with the Islamic world, China, Russia and the

competition of the USA?<sup>72</sup> Thus we might say that the EU as a technical framework of operation was therefore accepted, that the *Staatsbürgerschaft* is there, yet there is lack of agreement over how it should operate.

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What seems to be lacking further so far is the acceptance of shared values or rather their definition, the *Volksgenossenschaft* as described by Habermas<sup>73</sup>, or the *we-communio* according to Kantner<sup>74</sup>. The thing that has to be therefore kept in mind is the difference between the European identity as political project being imposed and that of social process taking place naturally.<sup>75</sup>

### *EU as the Other*

The strongest argument for a division of the European identity as an imposed project vs social process from below is that there are still several examples of the EU being perceived as ‘the other’ rather than as the frame for the ‘in-group’.

Firstly, when speaking about the EU, the term Brussels is used in a sense of an actively (and independently) acting ‘person’. That the actions of the Union are attributed to the personalised centre, which is geographically distant from the Czech Republic shows the felt distinction between ‘us’ on the one side and the other actor – the Brussels – on the other. Short examples are ‘assess the expert the proposal by Brussels’<sup>76</sup> or ‘... for what [strengthening borders of the EU] Brussels wants to relocate over 15 billion CZK in the next year’<sup>77</sup> or ‘However different our opinion on the refugee quota is, Brussels is not interested at all’.<sup>78</sup> The discourse practice of showing the EU as an actor, a kind of person which acts on its own, is multiple, even without the ‘Brussels’ metaphor. The sentences do not read ‘we decided to do’ or ‘it was decided that...’ but rather ‘the EU did that and that’ or more specifically: ‘The EU missed the starting point. Yet, it cannot be blamed for inaction’<sup>79</sup> or ‘The Union pledged to...’<sup>80</sup> and many other examples.

Secondly, far from the discourse showing common action, there is the specific part of the discourse criticizing the fact that the EU doesn’t listen to ‘us’ as seen in the quote ‘However different our opinion on the refugee quota is, Brussels is not interested at all’.<sup>81</sup> There are further examples of that such as ‘If the Czech government declares that it refuses to let Brussels dictate the quotas for refugees (rightfully, in my opinion), but that it instead wants to help in the places where the

people come from, it has now a great opportunity to prove it with its actions'.<sup>82</sup> The term 'dictated' from or by Brussels illustrates quite nicely the 'us' (Czech Republic) and 'them' (EU) position, which is common for the refugee quota case.

Therefore despite the sense of Europeanness, the EU is still to a certain degree taken as the other to be argued with, leading to vocal criticism of different EU actions and positioning against Brussels, as the Czechs try to find their place within this framework of operation. The dichotomy is mirrored also at the political level. While on one hand some of the politicians criticise the present EU, its form, shape or actions and they try to win points at home by 'protecting' independent Czech interests and its position, on the other hand they are painfully aware of the need for European cooperation.

## Conclusion

As can be seen, the migration in at least a segment of Czech discourse is, indeed, described as a threat. The migrants are depicted as illegals, criminals, and economic migrants not needing help but instead coming to endanger our culture, which is so different to theirs that they cannot be integrated into it. They come pouring to Europe, flooding in as a wave. The threat is portrayed as a threat to the whole of Europe and its values. The territory endangered is therefore the whole of Europe and the community put into dangerous environment is 'European'.

The vague sense of Europeanness is present in the analysed Czech discourse, mainly resting on these territorial arguments of one continent and one space. There are also notes on common European culture and civilisation, although those are very broad, without specifying what the precise characteristics are. This is in line with Huysmans' argument that the threats are good in the process of creating identity as this doesn't have to be described as it exists in opposition to what threatens it.<sup>83</sup>

Throughout the discourse we can therefore trace the distinction between what Habermas calls the *Staatsbürgerschaft* and the *Volksgenossenschaft*.<sup>84</sup> While the EU as a political framework is at this point accepted, the values and culture filling this framework are points of contention. The EU tends to be criticized for specific actions or even presented as an independently acting 'other' rather than part of the

'we-group'. This way the benefits of belonging to the European club can be claimed, while the EU-sceptic part of the public is appeased. Yet despite the Czechs being perceived as EU-sceptic and the politicians and media themselves being EU-critical, there is, at least in these 'times of crisis' a sense of Europeanness, of the Czech Republic belonging to Europe and Czechs to European civilisation. Whether and how this vague sense of Europeanness will converge with the more specific political sense of EU-ness remains a question for the years to come.



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## Annex I: Overview of the analysed media articles

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5. Dan Drápal (2015), 'Církev a migrace,' *Lidové Noviny*, 25 September.
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19. Miroslav Hradil (2016), 'Odborníci probírají rizika migrace,' *Právo*, 12 May.
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22. Blahoslav Hruška (2016), 'Turci přijali uprchlíky s porozuměním,' *Lidové noviny*, 10 May.
23. Blahoslav Hruška (2016), 'Zimní přestávku migrace nezná,' *Lidové noviny*, 04 January.
24. Lukáš Jelínek (2015), 'Hledá se ideální uprchlík,' *Právo*, 18 July.
25. Martin Jurečka (2016), 'Další vábničky pro migranty,' *Právo*, 14 January.
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