The Legitimacy of European Union Migration and Asylum Policy among the Czech Public*

JAN KROTKÝ**, BERNADETTE NADYA JAWORSKY, and PETR KANIOK
Faculty of Social Studies, Masaryk University, Brno

Abstract: In this study, we contribute to scholarly work on European Union (EU) legitimacy with regard to migration and asylum policy. We do so through an in-depth exploration of the relationship between attitudes towards the EU and migration among the Czech public. Even though there is a body of literature focusing on this topic, there is a gap when it comes to understanding its complexities, especially concerning 'pro-immigrant' and 'pro-European' positions. We bring a cultural-sociological perspective on meaning-making processes into conversation with theories on the legitimacy of the EU, an analytical move that helps us reveal the nuances in attitudes towards the EU and migration. Our results unpack the narratives surrounding the EU and migration and highlight the apparent cleavage between the 'pro-immigrant' and 'anti-immigrant' discourses that underpin migration attitudes among the Czech public. We find that notwithstanding some divisiveness, there exists considerable convergence along the three dimensions of legitimacy: input, output and throughput. Indeed, both camps challenge EU legitimacy, but they do so for different reasons and focus on different dimensions. The output aspect of EU legitimacy is the most problematic and criticised within both types of discourse. The input dimension is problematic only within the 'anti-immigrant' discourse, and the throughput dimension of EU legitimacy is rather neglected within both discourses. In empirical terms, these findings imply that, in the eyes of the Czech public, the EU—even for those who accept it as a legitimate actor with regard to asylum and migration policy—fails to deliver satisfactory results.

Keywords: EU attitudes, migration attitudes, legitimacy, cultural sociology, narratives

---

** Direct all correspondence to: Jan Krotký, Faculty of Social Studies, Department of International Relations and European Studies, Masaryk University, Joštova 218/10, 602 00 Brno, Czech Republic, e-mail: krotky.jan@mail.muni.cz.

Introduction

In 2015, as a consequence of economic and political instability and armed conflict in the Middle East and North Africa, more than one million people arrived in Europe seeking asylum or searching for a better life (Eurostat, 2021). However, the EU was not prepared for such an influx, and more than nine thousand people died while crossing the Mediterranean Sea in 2015 and 2016 (Statista, 2022). Others ended up in camps or detention centres or continued on to other European states (de Vries & Guild, 2019). This phenomenon was commonly framed as a 'crisis'.[1] As one of the most controversial EU responses to this 'crisis', a 'voluntary' and later 'mandatory' relocation scheme ('refugee quota') was aimed at relocating people from Greece, Italy and Hungary to other European countries (Duszczyk et al., 2020). However, the Czech government refused to participate in the 'mandatory' quotas, accepting just 12 refugees under the scheme. In short, the Czech political response to the 'crisis' reflected prevailing media frames and opinion polls, in which the Czech public expressed worries about the threat of migrants coming from the Middle East and North Africa (Hanzlová, 2018).

In this article, we contribute to the scholarly work on EU legitimacy with regard to its migration and asylum policy through an in-depth exploration of the relationship between attitudes towards the EU and migration. We ask: How do members of the Czech public[2] narrate the input, output and throughput legitimacy of the EU in relation to EU migration and asylum policy? We build upon research that shows that negative attitudes towards migration represent a driver of public opposition to the EU (de Vreese & Boomgaarden, 2005; Hobolt, 2016). Harteveld et al. (2017:173) assert that 'the general inflow of refugees into the EU, as well as the media attention for this phenomenon, have increased euroscepticism', or criticism of the EU. However, Czechia has long been among the most Eurosceptic countries in the EU (Hloušek & Kaniok, 2020). This positioning may help explain why there is no systematic relationship between exposure to

---

[1] The 'crisis' of people moving across borders over the period from 2015 to 2017 has been interpreted as a crisis of migrants or refugees, occurring in Europe or the Mediterranean; for a discussion of such labelling, see Lee and Nerghes (2018). Some highlight that the locus of the crisis lies elsewhere. For example, Niemann and Zaun (2018) speak about a crisis of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS); its dysfunctionalities were revealed by the tremendous increase in asylum applications in 2015 and 2016. Thus, we have chosen to use 'crisis' alone rather than label actual people or places.
[2] We debated how to characterise the research participants (RPs) in our study, considering 'Czech citizens', 'Czech residents' and 'Czech laypeople', and finally settling on 'Czech public'. At the same time, we recognise and acknowledge the potential vagueness of this term. The criteria for selecting RPs included residence in the country for five years or more and fluent knowledge of the Czech language. The sample includes not only (white) ethnic Czechs but also members of minority groups that fit our selection criteria.

information about the negative consequences of immigration and negative attitudes towards the EU (Ringlerová, 2021). In other words, 'anti-immigrant' and Eurosceptic attitudes may already be sedimented. Moreover, there is a gap when it comes to understanding the failures of 'pro-immigrant' and 'pro-European' positions. In our analysis, we explore the relationship between attitudes towards migration and the EU through qualitative research that allows us to probe the connection in depth.

To address the above gap, we reconstruct the meaning-making processes among members of the Czech public in the context of the migration 'crisis' and the EU's response to it through a qualitative analysis of data collected through semi-structured interviews. In particular, we analyse narratives of change (stories of decline or rising) and power (stories of control and helplessness) (Stone, 2012) concerning the EU or Europe as an entity. By bringing a cultural-sociological perspective on meaning-making processes into conversation with theories on the legitimacy of the EU, our study offers a nuanced understanding of the EU and its migration and asylum policy legitimacy among the Czech public. For example, a cultural-sociological analysis allows us to move beyond the brevity of survey answers and examine in depth the meanings that social actors attribute to the EU/Europe and forms of policy legitimacy.

Our results unpack the narratives surrounding the EU and migration and highlight the cleavage between the 'pro-immigrant' and 'anti-immigrant' discourse that underpins attitudes, which is much more complex than might be detected from quantitative studies.[3] In fact, the two types of discourses overlap considerably, and it is only through the careful reconstruction of cultural meanings that we can grasp their complexity. Stories of decline are predominant in both types of discourse, while stories of rising, in which migration is considered beneficial, are very complex and not very salient. Within these stories, migration is narrated as beneficial but only under certain conditions. These findings dovetail with previous research indicating that perceptions of the 'migration crisis' often portray the EU as a 'failure' and a 'security threat' (Ripoll Servent, 2019). In short, neither the 'pro-immigrant' nor the 'anti-immigrant' discourse underlying migration attitudes among members of the Czech public indicates that they are satisfied with the input, output and throughput legitimacy of the EU with regard to migration and asylum policy. In particular, the questioning of the output dimension of EU legitimacy revealed in the 'pro-immigrant' discourse signals a significant aspect of EU migration and asylum policy, in which the EU balances liberal ('refugee quotas') and restrictive measures (enhancing the protection of external borders) regarding migration. This balancing appears rather counterproductive in the perception of the Czech public.

---

[3] We categorise the *discourse* as leaning towards 'pro-immigrant' or 'anti-immigrant', not the RPs or their attitudes per se. Moreover, we enclose these two categories in quotation marks throughout to stress their constructedness and malleability.

The following section sets the context for our study, briefly outlining 'anti-immigrant' and Eurosceptic attitudes in Czechia. We then elaborate on the theoretical framework underpinning our analysis and highlight its main contributions. A methodological statement reveals our epistemological grounding in cultural sociology and the data collection and analysis processes. We present the narrative findings of our analysis in a structured manner, relying on ideal-typical divisions of the discourse underlying migration attitudes into 'anti-immigrant', with the dimension of *securitisation*, and 'pro-immigrant', with the dimension of *humanitarian securitisation*. We reveal the distinct storylines (Stone, 2012) present in the discourse of the narratives. To conclude, we discuss the implications of our analysis and chart some directions for future research.

'Anti-immigrant' and Eurosceptic attitudes in Czechia

As implied in the introduction, Czechia ranks among the most Eurosceptic and 'anti-immigrant' countries in the EU. Even though 'anti-immigrant' sentiments were detected well before the migration 'crisis' (Messing & Ságvári, 2019), the overly negative framing in the media fuelled such sentiments (Kovář, 2020; Štětka et al., 2020), together with the positions of Czech political elites, spearheaded by the 'populist' president (Jaworsky, 2021; Naxera & Krčál, 2018), who securitised the issue, especially with regard to Muslim migrants. Wondreys (2021, p. 736) argues that this increase in 'anti-immigrant' rhetoric 'led to the radicalisation of the political mainstream, which was not yet radicalised like in other countries in the region'. The mainstream parties, both on the right and on the left, opposed and securitised the issue (Krotký, 2019), resulting in the transformation of the Czech political system, which had been dominated by socio-economic rather than sociocultural concerns (Wondreys, 2021).

Whereas 'anti-immigrant' sentiment is a relatively new factor shaping the Czech political party scene, Euroscepticism—either in its soft or hard form (Szcerbiak & Taggart, 2008)—has been influential since Czechia joined the EU. For a long time, there were two pillars. The centre right, represented largely by the Civic Democratic Party (ODS), and its first leader, Václav Klaus (Hloušek & Kaniok, 2014), criticised the EU from a neoliberal position, as creating too many regulations or taking too much power from the Member States. On the left side of the party landscape, the EU was challenged by a more fundamental position, held by the Czech Communists (KSČM), which advocated either Czech withdrawal from the EU, or radical transformation of the EU. After 2013, Czech party-based Euroscepticism became more colourful, as it was enriched by the far-right contribution of the political formations[4] established by Tomio Okamura.

---

[4] Before the emergence of the migration 'crisis', immigration was a marginal issue in Czechia. In 2013, only one political party, Tomio Okamura's Dawn of Direct Democracy

The enduring presence of Euroscepticism in the party system has also re-verberated throughout the general public. Multiple crises, starting with the Euro-zone Crisis around 2009, led to a skyrocketing dissatisfaction with the EU among the Czech public, which reached more than 40 per cent in 2012. Eurosceptic senti-ments decreased in the following years, from April 2013 to April 2015, and did not reach pre-crisis levels (Hloušek & Kaniok, 2020). However, the migration 'crisis', beginning in 2015, again fuelled anti-EU sentiment in Czechia. As Won-dreys (2021, p. 738) suggests, '(T)he rise in Eurosceptic attitudes among the Czech public is related to the increased salience of the immigration issue'. Vochocová et al. (2021, p. 79) have shown that commenters responding to online news are generally opposed to the EU and how it deals with the migration 'crisis', portray-ing the EU as the main culprit behind the 'crisis'. Clearly, there is a link between 'anti-immigrant' and Eurosceptic attitudes in Czechia.

Even though there is a body of literature focusing on (primarily negative) attitudes towards migration or the EU, there is a gap when it comes to under-standing 'pro-immigrant' and pro-European attitudes in Czechia. Several po-litical and non-governmental actors have advocated for accepting migrants or refugees in recent years (Jaworsky & Krotký, 2021). Additionally, most of the re-search on public attitudes in Czechia is quantitative, conducted using surveys or experiments (Eurobarometer, 2021; Hanzlová, 2018; Ringlerová, 2021).[5] Thus, our qualitative, meaning-centred study provides a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between attitudes towards the EU and migration.

The legitimacy of EU migration and asylum policy and the cultural sociology of narratives

Although matters concerning asylum, immigration and border controls have un-dergone the process of *communitarisation*,[6] it hardly led to a change in policy due to the strong voices of the Member States (Trauner & Ripoll Servent, 2016). More-over, the only common policy areas are 'just' asylum policy (the Common Euro-pean Asylum System – CEAS) and free movement within the Schengen Area. De-spite the expansion of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex), responsibility for the management of external borders (Carrera & Den Hertog, 2016), especially with regard to handling labour migration from countries outside

---

(Úsvit) party, sought to increase the salience of this issue (Čaněk, 2013). In 2016, Úsvit split and Okamura created its successor, the Freedom and Direct Democracy Party (SPD).

[5] For an important exception, see Scott et al.'s (2019) qualitative study about the meaning of democracy and attitudes toward immigrants among adolescents.

[6] We understand *communitarisation* as the process of transferring decision-making powers from the intergovernmental level to the supranational level, involving the European Par-liament.

the EU and the eventual integration of migrants, rests primarily with Member States. The combination of populism and Euroscepticism in Czechia has created an atmosphere in which EU legitimacy regarding migration and asylum policy has been widely questioned, either implicitly or explicitly, and is evident in non-common policy spheres. Such framing leads us to the question of what forms of legitimacy (or legitimacy as a whole) are at stake in the case of EU migration and asylum policy.

Departing from the very broad and still evolving literature on EU legitimacy, three important dimensions can be identified. Traditionally, as Crespy (2013) puts it, there has been a longstanding debate between advocates of 'output' or 'input' legitimacy. On the one hand, some scholars have argued that since the EU cannot be compared to its Member States, its legitimacy should be considered in terms of output, that is, the EU's capacity and ability to solve problems and deliver efficient policies (Majone, 1998; Scharpf, 1999), rather than in terms of a democratic institution. On the other hand, several scholars have suggested that in the case of the EU—a supranational political system—it is more appropriate to apply democratic criteria for input legitimacy, that is, representation and account-ability performed vis-à-vis citizens (Beetham & Lord, 1998; Thomassen, 2009). In this context, the well-known debate on the EU's 'democratic deficit' (Follesdal & Hix, 2006; Majone, 1998) enters into the picture, focusing on the performance of the EU's political system and its institutions (Rittberger, 2010). Regarding the link between input and output legitimacy, Lindgren and Persson (2010) find that measures aimed at increasing the input legitimacy of the EU also hold promise for increasing its output legitimacy.

More recently, various authors have argued that the conceptual dialogue among advocates of input and output legitimacy has led nowhere, describing it as a 'dialogue of the deaf' (Crespy, 2013). To overcome this gridlock, they focus on actual interactions between diverse groups, arenas and institutions during the public policymaking process in the EU or, as Schmidt (2004, 2013) puts it, on government 'with the people' or 'throughput' legitimacy. According to Schmidt, throughput legitimacy is judged in terms of the efficacy, accountability and trans-parency of EU governance processes, along with their inclusion and openness to consultation with the people. The result is a three-tier analytical model in which input, output and throughput dimensions are included; for example, Risse and Kleine (2007) applied this model to analyse the legitimacy of EU primary law revisions.

In this article, we examine the legitimacy of EU migration and asylum poli-cies among the Czech public. We understand input legitimacy as the permission given to the EU to act and react with regard to migration and asylum issues. The EU is granted the authority and responsibility to create binding legislation or de-cisions. Regarding output legitimacy, these EU actions and their impact vis-à-vis migration and asylum policy are evaluated, assessing their relevance and quality. As far as the throughput dimension (which featured much less often in our data

than other dimensions of legitimacy) is concerned, we understand it as an evaluation of the EU migration and asylum policy process—namely, its transparency, efficacy and accountability, as Schmidt (2004, 2013) suggests.

Migration issues (together with attitudes towards European integration) are among the main factors creating cleavages among political parties, nation states and the public (Hooghe & Marks, 2018). In particular, the input and output dimensions play a significant role—in the eyes of citizens—because each policy embodies both aspects. The Czech case represents a perfect example of EU legitimacy within migration and asylum policies. Eurobarometer (2021) responses collected during the pandemic recovery indicate that immigration is the most important issue facing the EU, according to Czech respondents (42 per cent); the EU average is 25 per cent. Furthermore, just 44 per cent of Czech respondents support a common European policy on migration, while the EU average is 71 per cent. As indicated, Czechs are not in favour (86 per cent) of the refugee relocation scheme, and they are also against (85 per cent) visa liberalisation with Turkey (SANEP, 2016), part of the EU-Turkey deal to reduce irregular arrivals in Greece. Overwhelmingly, Czechs support (81 per cent) the reinforcement of the EU's external borders, with more European border and coast guards; the EU average is 69 per cent (Eurobarometer, 2021). By examining the input, output and throughput legitimacy of EU migration and asylum policy, we shed light on what underpins these quantitative data. To do so, we employ the analytical tools of cultural sociology, looking, in particular, at the narratives deployed in the discourse underlying the attitudes of our RPs.

A cultural-sociological perspective (as outlined in the following section) privileges the meaning-making process of social actors. Through a deep reading of the discursive contours in our RPs' responses, we uncover the ways in which they attribute meaning to their attitudes about the legitimacy of the EU and about migration through telling stories—namely, narratives (Frye, 1957; Smith, 2005).[7] The plots rely on the actions of distinct characters, which transmit the core of the narrative—often a moral message (Hase, 2021). Yet, few social scientific works on 'peoplehood' take the role of narratives seriously; for exceptions, see Hase (2021) and Smith (2015). It is this gap to which we aim to contribute by putting theories on EU legitimacy into conversation with cultural sociology. We believe that the in-depth reconstruction of narratives brings added value to explanations of issues related to 'peoplehood', which underlie public attitudes. As we have elaborated, European integration and migration are among the most controversial issues among the Czech public. This research brings both issues together and analyses the narratives surrounding them, offering a better understanding of Czech 'peoplehood' and public attitudes towards migration and European integration.

---

[7] We use the terms 'narrative' and 'story' interchangeably.

Methodology

The data for this article come from a three-year (2020–2022) study entitled 'The thirteenth immigrant? An in-depth exploration of the public perception of migration in the Czech Republic'. A total of 80 semi-structured interviews were conducted; our findings are based on a sub-sample of 44 interviews in which the EU or Europe were discussed (see Table A1 in the online appendix), along with other supranational institutions whose presence was marginal, including the United Nations (mentioned in 3 interviews), the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (3 interviews), Visegrád countries (1 interview) or non-governmental organisations (10 interviews). Our interview questions concerned attitudes towards migration, including migration terminology—first associations about people on the move, the visibility of migrants in the country, localised narratives of migration and personal experience with migration; we did not ask directly about attitudes towards the EU. Nevertheless, we found that the topic emerged organically in about 55 per cent of the interviews; accordingly, when it did, we prompted the RPs with additional questions.

The interviews were conducted in 2020 and 2021, throughout five localities: Brno, the second largest city in Czechia and the capital of the South Moravian Region; Kuřim, a large suburb of Brno; Teplice, a spa town on the border of Germany; Vyšší Brod, a town located in the South Bohemian Region on the border of Austria; and a village[8] located in the rural area of the Highlands Region. These localities varied in terms of population size, economic and political power and local histories of cross-border movement. The RPs were recruited through purposeful sampling (Rapley, 2014) and the snowball method, ensuring variety in terms of gender, age and occupational or self-reported social class. We conducted 'comprehensive' interviews (Ferreira, 2014) both face-to-face and online, based on COVID-19 restrictions, which lasted between 60–120 minutes.

After the interviews were transcribed, we engaged in several rounds of open, focused and theoretical coding (Thornberg & Charmaz, 2014), utilising ATLAS.ti software. We also undertook deep interpretive readings of the data to reveal the meaning-making processes of the RPs. Our analysis followed the meaning-centred approach of cultural sociology, which understands meanings as constitutive of social action (Alexander & Smith, 2003; Reed, 2011). In particular, the main premises of the Strong Program in cultural sociology (Alexander & Smith, 2003) informed our research design and analysis processes: (1) the relative autonomy of culture, in which culture is an independent variable; (2) the in-depth reconstruction of meanings through thick description (Geertz, 1973); and the dedication to causal specificity, 'anchor(ing) causality in proximate actors and

---

[8] To ensure the privacy of our RPs, we have decided not to disclose the name of the village. In Vyšší Brod, we also use broader occupational status to ensure the anonymity of the RPs; see Table A1 in the online appendix.

agencies, specifying in detail just how culture interferes with and directs what really happens' (Alexander & Smith, 2003:14). We believe that this reconstruction of meanings helps deepen our understanding of the discourses underpinning migration attitudes and cultivates a more reflexive approach to migration research.

Once the analytical process revealed that the EU was an important topic for our RPs, we focused on our primary research question: How do members of the Czech public narrate the input, output and throughput legitimacy of the EU with regard to EU migration and asylum policy? We highlighted the narratives within migration discourses, following Stone's (2012) typology of storylines ('stories of change' versus 'stories of power'). According to Stone, stories of change are composed of 'stories of decline' and 'stories of rising'. Social actors use stories of decline to demonstrate how things proceed or will get worse, in contrast to stories of rising, which are generally progressive. Stories of power may be subdivided into 'stories of control' and 'stories of helplessness'. In stories of control, social actors highlight preferred solutions, and in stories of helplessness, actors lament how measures are ineffective. The findings are organised based on the relevant codes (see Table A2 in the online appendix).

After we coded the interviews, we interpreted them using the operationalisation of input, output and throughput legitimacy. We found that the codes related to stories of decline and stories of helplessness are generally associated with input legitimacy, and the codes relevant to stories of rising and stories of control play a role in both input and throughput legitimacy. Output legitimacy was, in some ways, narrated throughout all stories. Thus, because our analysis is based on in-depth interpretation, the division of the codes and input, output and throughput legitimacy are not mutually exclusive but only analytically separable; the interpretation of a given particular code often depends on the context of a particular interview.

Analysis

For the purposes of this analysis, we categorised the RPs' responses into 'anti-immigrant' and 'pro-immigrant' discourse.[9] The 'anti-immigrant' discourse compels the *securitisation* of migration and sees migration and migrants as a threat to Czech and European society (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde, 1998). Often, this fear is articulated in the form of a cultural threat, as Petr, one of the research participants, explains.

---

[9] These two configurations should be viewed as ideal types of discourse. In reality, 'anti' or 'pro' immigrant sentiments fall along a continuum, and a social actor may embody one or both at different times. In the Czech Republic, for example, even seemingly 'pro-immigrant' actors nevertheless express sentiments that might be construed as 'anti-immigrant' (Jaworsky et al., 2023).

> I'm afraid of the cultural, hmmm, disparity in the case of migration, for example, from Islamic countries, because I'm worried about the way they interpret their laws in the laws of the country they live in, … so I'm objectively worried also about how Europe will handle Muslim migration. I think it is clearly a big threat to Europe.

Our three-year research project points to, perhaps surprisingly, the salience of 'pro-immigrant' discourse in Czechia. Thus, we cannot say that the Czech public exclusively has 'anti-immigrant', securitised attitudes towards migration. It is much more complex than that; they may be intertwined at different times, even among the same social actors. For this reason, we define 'pro-immigrant' discourse using the concept of *humanitarian securitisation*. Humanitarian securitisation involves labelling migrants as victims and threats at the same time (see Chouliaraki & Zaborowski, 2017). For example, Matt metaphorically argues that fostering solidarity and helping migrants might be risky for Europe.

> Any lifeguard will tell you that the moment they rescue someone and it puts them in danger, they (lifeguards) are no longer rescuing; they are already victims. And I think that Europe should rescue, should be in solidarity, but should not sacrifice itself.

The two discourses are represented almost evenly among the interviews. Accordingly, in the following two sections, we explore this complexity through the ways in which the input, output and throughput legitimacy of EU migration and asylum policy is perceived in these discourses.

Narrative stories about the EU within 'anti-immigrant' discourse

Following Stone's (2012) typology of storylines, we observe three distinct narrative plots (stories of decline, control and helplessness) related to the EU in the 'anti-immigrant' discourse (see Figure 1). This discourse comments on EU legitimacy in migration and asylum policy by treating it as a complex problem. Even though the plots are separable analytically, they are not developed and articulated separately; they overlap in the RPs' discourse, as indicated by the dotted lines in Figure 1. Stories of decline generally begin in 2015, particularly with the 'welcome culture' perpetuated primarily by the German chancellor Angela Merkel (see Trauner & Turton, 2017). They end in a tragic narrative genre with increasing criminality. Thus, in the stories of decline, migration and migrants are seen as a security threat (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde, 1998), which is underscored by integration problems in Western and Northern European countries.

> (W)hat happened at first... with Chancellor Merkel saying, 'We welcome you with open arms, come all of you, we have everything for you,' was not good, I guess,

okay? Because they (migrants) listened to (her) and they all came, and now... Now they're everywhere, right. So... We don't have to, we don't have to go far. We know what the problems are in Sweden, Finland, Norway, with them (migrants) and everything, right? Everywhere, crime and violence have risen several times over the original (rates). (Michal)

Indeed, the narratives about the EU in the 'anti-immigrant' discourse are often related to German politicians who have behaved 'irresponsibly' with regard to the migration 'crisis'. As Vochocová et al. (2021, p. 69) explain, Germany and Angela Merkel 'are the most visible representatives of the European Union, which is perceived as the main culprit of the migration crisis'. For one of the RPs, a story of decline is blended with a story of helplessness in which the leaders of the EU are seen as incompetent, thus questioning the EU's input legitimacy in dealing with the crisis.

(T)he European Union is very weak in its leadership. If Ursula von der Leyen was the minister of defense in Germany and she completely disintegrated the Bundeswehr, and then she was promoted even more (to the presidency of the European Commission), well, like, I don't think we were helped much. Next thing, you know... the Governor-General or the Governor of (momentary pause) Jesus, ECB, the European Central Bank is not an economist. That's so stupid, right? So it's more like... a government of non-experts. (Honza)

In short, the stories of decline and helplessness consist of arguments concerning irresponsibility and incompetence, implying that the EU has flawed or no input legitimacy. We also witness the quite common Eurosceptic argument related to

Figure 1. Narratives about the EU in relation to 'anti-immigrant' discourse
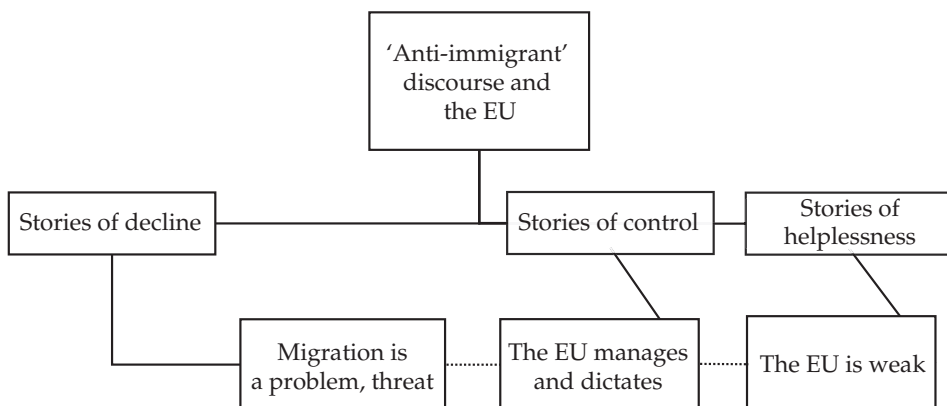
the 'democratic deficit', in which Honza suggests that the EU is led by 'unelected people', again questioning EU input (and, partly, throughput) legitimacy:

> Honza: (A)ll of them who are like, who are the commissioners, they're unelected people, right? Well, they affect everyone's lives, but they do it in a stupid way. Not that migration can negatively affect all of our lives.
> Interviewer: But also the European Union can, by its governance.
> Honza: But also the European Union.

Moreover, in stories of decline and powerlessness, we can observe accusations of clientelism: 'These are politicians who have the benefit of *trafika*; I'd work there (in the European Parliament) for half a million a month' (Milan). Milan more than implies that the position of members of the European Parliament (MEPs) is provided as a benefit (*trafika*) within the national party, namely, being given the job as a reward for good service. The helplessness of the EU is finally highlighted by the EU's bureaucracy and irrational and inefficient transfers between Brussels and Strasbourg, which triggered angry emotions in an interview with Milan:

> They have two offices… (the respondent delivers a blow to the table), and what can they do? Tell me like a normal person when you're in Strasbourg twice a week and you're in Brussels for two days, okay? A lot of people around them, and what are they going to solve? Never anything!

Thus, the EU is perceived as weak, which never solves 'anything'. Thus, its political process—not exclusively associated with migration and asylum policy—is perceived as illegitimate in terms of the throughput dimension. However, some RPs, contrary to their previous claims, develop stories of control in which the EU has the power to 'manage'.

> I wanted to complain about the Union … that it probably doesn't take it (migration) entirely responsibly. … I don't know if this is some kind of plan, of course, like, we're already... in the field of conspiracy theories. But it's just wrong, when people think about it; it just contributes to conspiracy theories. (Honza)

Honza also questions whether the EU is irresponsible on purpose and he self-reflexively argues that it 'contributes to conspiracy theories'. Conspiracy is a specific variation of stories of power; as Stone (2012, p. 167) argues, '(C)onspiracy stories always reveal that harm has been deliberately caused or knowingly tolerated, and so evoke horror and moral condemnation. Their endings always take the form of a call to wrest control from the few who benefit at the expense of the many'.

Stories of control reference one of the most common Eurosceptic arguments, namely, 'We won't let Brussels dictate us', which is also observed in other Viseg-

rád countries (Csehi & Zgut, 2021). This sentiment is the most prevalent with regard to the migration 'crisis' and 'refugee quotas', challenging the EU's output legitimacy: 'No quotas, no quotas. I want to decide for myself how many I want in my state, not quotas' (Halyna). Although the EU has the power to manage, RPs, in their 'anti-immigrant' discourse, do not agree with the EU's proposed solutions. Instead, RPs suggest security measures, not only at the EU's external borders but also within the Schengen Area: 'It is as if those borders are as leaky as a colander ... I don't think the inner borders should ever be lifted' (Honza).

To sum up, stories of decline, helplessness and control detected in the 'anti-immigrant' discourse help us understand the lack of legitimacy in EU migration and asylum policy across all dimensions—input, output and through-put. The 'anti-immigrant' discourse links the consequences of the migration 'crisis' with the irresponsible, incompetent and inefficient behaviour of Western and EU leaders. Moreover, 'unelected' EU leaders and MEPs obtaining seats because of clientelism weaken the EU's legitimacy in managing the 'crisis'. The narrated characters of the EU's leaders elaborate on the risks to the legitimacy of the EU.

Narrative stories about the EU within 'pro-immigrant' discourse

As explained above, the 'pro-immigrant' discourse consists of humanitarian securitisation attitudes. In this section, we elaborate on the ways in which the EU is perceived and narrated within this discourse (see Figure 2). Following Stone's (2012) typology of storylines, we find four storylines, including stories of rising, absent from the 'anti-immigrant' discourse. However, the storylines within the 'pro-immigrant' discourse differ in comparison to the 'anti-immigrant' discourse; stories of control, which dominate the 'anti-immigrant' discourse, are rare within the 'pro-immigrant' discourse. Stories of decline and stories of helplessness predominate, and a few stories of rising are found within the 'pro-immigrant' discourse. The story of decline, in the name of humanitarian securitisation, sees migrants as victims living in poor conditions, which is the fault of the EU (among others).

> They (migrants) certainly didn't imagine that they would end up in a detention camp in Libya, where they might even die or spend the next five years there. It's inconceivable to me that I'd spend five years in a detention camp in Libya. … From a global perspective, this is an unmanageable situation and the consequence is just… bad political negotiations, both within the European Union and others, such as… the global powers that let this happen. (Jirka)

The RPs do not just feel sorry for migrants within this story; they also sympathise with Mediterranean countries that are under pressure from an increasing num-

Figure 2. Narratives about the EU in relation to 'pro-immigrant' discourse
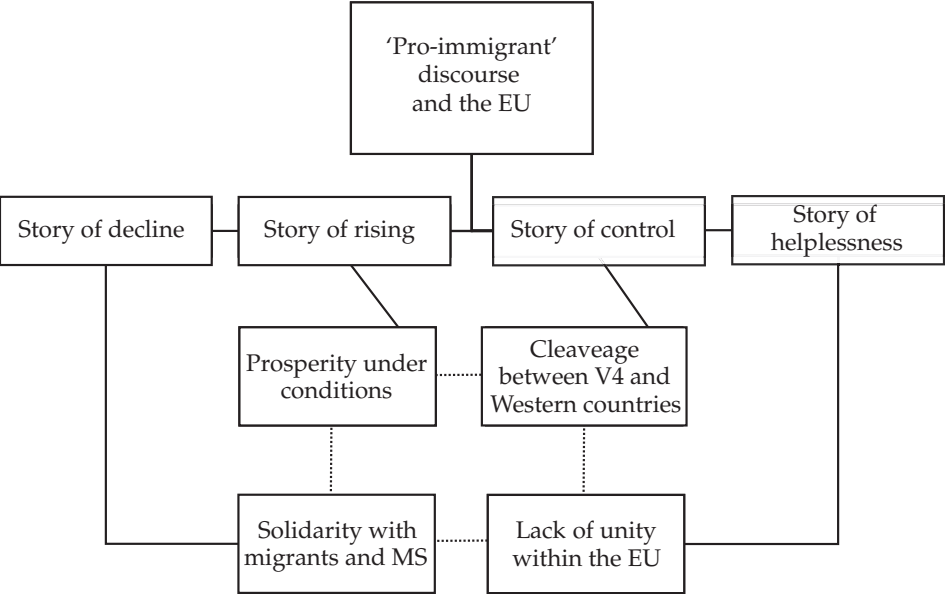
ber of asylum applications. In the following story of decline, David highlights the lack of solidarity with and help for these countries:

> I'm thinking more about those poor Mediterranean states, belonging to the European Union, like Greece and Italy, partly maybe Spain, France, but basically Italy and Greece ... I am ashamed of the displays of non-solidarity from our leaders. I'm so ashamed of that, because I think... there really should be a lot of help from the European Union for those states that are here, (handling) the refugee wave, that they should be helped a lot. The way our current political leaders are doing this is a disgrace. It's a terrible shame … I'm ashamed of it. (David)

The ways in which David speaks about being 'ashamed' of Czech leaders echo the findings of Every (2013), who asserts that advocates for asylum seekers elicit shame as a rhetorical strategy. Similarly, contrary to the prevailing public opinion, Zdeněk agrees with the EU's programme of assigning refugee quotas, narrated as a 'moral obligation' to help Mediterranean countries.

> I have another thing that we have not dealt with here, and that is a degree of solidarity between those recipient states (…). I really think that European countries should

share those refugees, and not abandon this obligation. I consider it a moral obligation; it is not a legal obligation, but by redeeming it somehow and sending them (Mediterranean countries) some money, I do not think that is enough. (Zdeněk)

As we can see from all three quotes above, EU input legitimacy is not questioned at all. The EU is implicitly but strongly characterised as an actor who should engage with the 'crisis'. Thus, in the 'pro-immigrant' discourse, the EU is strong in terms of the input dimension. Nevertheless, its performance regarding throughput and, especially, output aspects is much weaker. The RPs espousing the 'pro-immigrant' discourse, contrary to those expressing the 'anti-immigrant' discourse, do not generally offer 'solutions' to the migration 'crisis', except for Zdeněk, who agrees with refugee quotas. Even though, in the 'pro-immigrant' discourse, humanitarian securitisation is observed, in which migrants are presented as victims and threats at the same time, RPs often criticise proposed security solutions within stories of control, such as building borders and fences or the EU's deal with Turkey. In this regard, the EU's output legitimacy is contested.

I criticise it (sending money to Turkey) because it's not like a solution, is it? … They try to solve it (the migration 'crisis') by having someone (Turkey) solve it for them. … It's definitely not a conceptual solution, as it should be addressed as a migration issue… I'm taking on the fact that I'm a critic now and that I may not come up with a solution at all, but I'm not here at the moment to come up with a solution. … We have the leadership of the Union and the leadership of the state to solve such issues as migration. (Edita)

In sum, the EU-Turkey deal and visa liberalisation are not criticised only within the 'anti-immigrant' discourse, perceived as a fear of the Islamisation of Europe (SANEP, 2016), but also within the 'pro-immigrant' discourse as an externalisation of the EU's responsibilities (Çetin, 2020).

The proposed security measures are also mentioned by Miroslav, who reflexively explains that they created cleavage within the EU.

Europe is gaining a slightly different view than the V4 group had, say, before, it did not want the *dictates* of forcing migrants, but rather to try to secure the European Union's external border. Western societies were more open to migration and tried to help because they perceived it as an important social issue. Today, I think that the views converge and are more oriented to the V4 perspective. Personally, I think, that compromise is somewhere else, and politicians don't talk about it at all. (Miroslav)

Miroslav suggests that security measures are proposed by V4 countries. Such a perception mirrors academic findings, in which MEPs from Central and Eastern Europe incline more strongly towards securitisation than MEPs from Western Europe (Krotký & Kaniok, 2021). However, as Miroslav argues, this compromise, or

rather disagreement, about security measures observed within 'anti-immigrant' and 'pro-immigrant' discourse, is not the main problem. He further explains his views by intertwining stories of control with stories of rising.

> Interviewer: So how do you personally perceive the compromise?
>
> Miroslav: I perceive it as the need to prevent the abuse of social systems that many of those migrants … want, let's say, to take advantage of the generosity of social systems, and therefore most of those migrants have gone to those countries where social systems are more generous. (…) And, of course, (we) must have a dialogue with those migrants that if they want to be migrants, whether political or economic; they need to adapt, to adopt the culture they want to go to, to respect it … because the majority simply has a slightly different cultural perception and background, and there is another system that they should at least respect.

Miroslav does not question the acceptance of migrants. Nevertheless, he favours the assimilation of migrants, similar to the Czech adolescents studied by Scott, Šmahelová and Macek (2019). Then, the story of rising, a bright future, would be possible for both sides, not only for migrants but also for Europe as a whole. This story of rising reveals the complexity of 'pro-immigrant' discourse, often questioned by the broader Czech public.

The 'pro-immigrant' discourse is complemented by a story of helplessness; for example, Eva explains why the EU could not handle the migration 'crisis'. She sees a serious problem in the lack of unity and in the unwillingness of EU Member States to tackle the 'crisis', hence challenging the EU's throughput and output legitimacy.

> I'm saying, it's really, really hard when every country has a different attitude towards it (migration), and then the Union turns out to be so toothless when it can't say, 'We're going to do it this way, and we're going to try it this way, and there's going to be money.' … I am convinced that this is possible, but that it is that it really comes up against the will of some states… (Eva)

Such claims again echo current academic debates, in which scholars argue, for instance, in the case of the CEAS reform, that any progress in the reform depends upon the willingness of the European Council to act (Trauner & Ripoll Servent, 2016). Migration and asylum policy is seen as a 'core state power', more likely to be become politicised and to generate political conflicts among Member States (Genschel & Jachtenfuchs, 2018). In other words, the 'pro-immigrant' discourse consists mainly of a conciliatory view of the migration 'crisis'. In this discourse, migrants (and Mediterranean states) are narrated as victims, and the EU or its leaders in these narratives are framed as culprits. Accordingly, the EU is helpless because of disagreement among Member States. As in the 'anti-immigrant' discourse, the 'pro-immigrant' discourse reflects the fact that RPs do not agree with the EU measures taken to tackle migration (output legitimacy), but for different reasons.

Conclusion

In this article, we offer a nuanced understanding of the linkage between attitudes towards the EU and attitudes towards migration. Moreover, this article places cultural sociology in conversation with the concept of EU legitimacy, which is primarily studied within the field of political science. Thus, we contribute to the scholarly literature on EU legitimacy by focusing on the role of narratives regarding the EU's migration and asylum policies. In particular, through the cultural sociology of narratives, using Stone's (2012) conceptualisation of storylines, we analyse perceptions of the input, output and throughput legitimacy among the Czech public, questioned in both the 'anti-immigrant' and 'pro-immigrant' discourses underlying attitudes towards migration. Such an interpretive analysis allows for a richer and more in-depth understanding of legitimacy based on qualitative data.

Our analysis has revealed that EU legitimacy is a concern for both camps. Nevertheless, each of them—using or emphasising different narrative stories—focuses on different dimensions of EU legitimacy. Within the 'anti-immigrant' discourse, input legitimacy appears to be a major problem, questioning the very right of the EU to deal with migration and asylum issues. Because the EU is considered an illegitimate actor from the input perspective, the throughput aspect is also contested—often in the context of the broader EU political process and rather implicitly. Not surprisingly, the 'anti-immigrant' discourse further problematises the solutions delivered by the EU (output dimension). In such discourse, critiques often point to the lack of appropriate security measures or express displeasure with 'refugee quotas', which serve as a pull factor for migration (Braun, 2020). In the Czech case, the privileged position of the quota system is logical; indeed, it has been the key agenda for Czech political parties across the party scene (Hrabálek & Đorđević, 2017). In sum, within this discourse, input and throughput legitimacy is questioned; meanwhile, security-oriented output legitimacy is desirable.

Within the 'pro-immigrant' discourse, EU input legitimacy with regard to migration and asylum issues is almost taken for granted. The RPs automatically assume that the EU has the right to act (and should do so). This sentiment reflects the most important difference in comparison to the 'anti-immigrant' discourse. Regarding output legitimacy, the EU is heavily criticised for delivering poor policy solutions. Perhaps, somewhat surprisingly, both discourses converge at this point but for completely different reasons. The strong focus among RPs on problematic output legitimacy confirms the crucial relevance of this kind of legitimacy to the EU (Majone, 1998; Scharpf, 1999). The throughput dimension, governance including EU citizens, is referenced only sporadically and in the broader context of the European integration process in both 'pro-immigrant' and 'anti-immigrant' discourse. This finding calls into question Szewczyk's (2020) conception of European sovereignty and legitimacy based on European citizenship and participation in EU governance. Nevertheless, we believe that this finding might

be related to unsettled input and output legitimacy; both the EU's ability to act and its ability to deliver outcomes are strongly challenged within the two discourses, overshadowing more nuanced problems, such as EU transparency or accountability. Future research could address this question.

To sum up, both 'pro-immigrant' and 'anti-immigrant' discourses question the EU's legitimacy regarding asylum and migration policy, albeit differently, focusing particularly on the input and output dimensions of legitimacy. We explain this 'unity in differences'—to paraphrase the famous EU slogan—by the fact that the majority of stories featured in both discourses correspond with the framing of the migration 'crisis' as a failure and a security threat (Ripoll Servent, 2019). For example, the most prevalent plot is a story of decline. However, this story differs based on the position of the RPs towards migration. In the 'anti-immigrant' discourse, the story of decline relates to security issues in receiving countries, such as Czechia or Europe overall. On the other hand, in the 'pro-immigrant' discourse, the decline is meant in terms of the poor conditions facing migrants in detention camps or in relation to non-solidarity with Mediterranean countries.

The fact that stories of rising within Czech 'pro-immigrant' discourse are interlinked with security concerns and conditions under which a 'bright' future can be achieved raises several questions. Is Czechia an exception in this sense? Are there differences among EU countries and regions? Addressing these questions represents a direction for further research. Studies suggest that in other countries, such as Germany, attitudes are quite diverse, including both positive and negative media portrayals of migration (Griebel & Vollmann, 2019). The inclination to see migration as an opportunity might be related to long-term migration experience. For instance, in the case of Germany, which has had time to adapt and institutionalise a country-of-immigration narrative (Hase, 2021), a so-called 'welcome culture' had already emerged as a political concept before the migration 'crisis' (Trauner & Turton, 2017). Thus, in 2015, the German chancellor Angela Merkel worked with an already established positive discursive strategy. Meanwhile, in the case of Czechia, immigration was not a salient issue before 2015, and there was no established positive discursive view upon which political and other actors could build. In our view, agreeing on a united discursive strategy among diverse political and other actors is one of the most important tasks for successful (and not exclusively) Czech 'pro-immigrant' advocacy.

Finally, within the storylines, we observe that the RPs differentiate the various institutions of the EU. Some RPs talk generally about Europe or the EU; others mention concrete institutions, such as the European Parliament or the European Central Bank. We suggest that RPs choose the level that best corresponds to the particular discourse or criticism they developed during the interview. In addition, a lack of unity is presented with regard to negotiations between states within the European Council. Further, Germany as a reference country is apparent in both discourses, which might lead to the imagination of the EU as a 'German-led' social space. However, the RPs did not differentiate whether a par-

ticular policy aspect went through *communitarisation*. This leads to a paradox in which the EU is criticised for a lack of control at the external borders within 'anti-immigrant' discourse, although it is not exclusively a supranational issue. Thus, another direction for further research might be to focus on how EU legitimacy differs based on these institutions and levels.

JAN KROTKÝ *received his PhD from the Department of International Relations and European Studies at the Faculty of Social Studies of Masaryk University in Brno. His research focuses on public attitudes and migration discourse at the EU and national levels. His recent work has been published in European Policy Analysis, Journal of European Contemporary Studies, and European Security.*

BERNADETTE NADYA JAWORSKY *is associate professor of sociology at Masaryk University and Faculty Fellow at Yale University's Center for Cultural Sociology. Her most recent book is A Critical, Cultural Sociological Exploration of Attitudes toward Migration in Czechia (with Radka Klvaňová, Alica Synek Rétiová, Ivana Rapoš Božič, and Jan Krotký, 2023, Lexington Books). Her current research focuses on in-depth cultural sociological analysis and reconstruction of public issues such as perceptions of migration and migrant narratives, and the 'reverse sociology of migration.'*

PETR KANIOK *works as an associate professor at the Department of International Relations and European Studies at the Faculty of Social Studies of Masaryk University in Brno. His research focuses on EU politics. His recent work has been published in the Journal of Common Market Studies, Parliamentary Affairs, Journal of Contemporary European Research and European Review.*

References

Alexander, J. C., & Smith, P. (2003). The Strong Program in Cultural Sociology: Elements of a Structural Hermeneutics. In J. C. Alexander (Ed.), *The Meanings of Social Life* (pp. 11–26). Oxford University Press.

Beetham, D., & Lord, C. (1998). *Legitimacy and the European Union*. Ashley, Wesley, Longman.

Braun, M. (2020). Postfunctionalism, Identity and the Visegrad Group. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, *58*(4), 925–940. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12994

Buzan, B., Wæver, O., & de Wilde, J. (1998). *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*. Lynne Rienner.

Čaněk, M. (2013). *Od vstřícné důslednosti k nepřizpůsobivým imigrantům? Analýza tématu mezinárodní migrace v programech politických stran před volbami do Poslanecké sněmovny.* [From accommodating consistency to maladapted immigrants? Analysis of the topic of international migration in the programs of political parties before the elections to the Chamber of Deputies.] Multikulturní centrum Praha. Retrieved Jan. 16,

2022, from https://migraceonline.cz/cz/e-knihovna/od-vstricne-duslednosti-k-neprizpusobivym-imigrantum-analyza-tematu-mezinarodni-migrace-v-programechpolitickych-stran-pred

Carrera, S., & den Hertog, L. (2016). *A European Border and Coast Guard: What's in A Name?* (CEPS Paper in Liberty and Security in Europe NO. 88). Retrieved June 17, 2022, from https://www.ceps.eu/ceps-publications/european-border-and-coast-guard-whatsname/

Çetin, R. A. (2020). Externalization of the European Union Migration Regime: The Case of Turkey. *New Political Science*, *42*(4), 538–557. https://doi.org/10.1080/07393148.2020.1848341

Chouliaraki, L., & Zaborowski, R. (2017). Voice and Community in the 2015 Refugee Crisis: A Content Analysis of News Coverage in Eight European Countries. *The International Communication Gazette*, *79*(6–7), 613–635. https://doi.org/10.1177/1748048517727173

Crespy, A. (2013). Deliberative Democracy and the Legitimacy of the European Union: A Reappraisal of Conflict. *Political Studies*, *62*(1_suppl), 81–98. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9248.12058

Csehi, R., & Zgut, E. (2021). 'We Won't Let Brussels Dictate Us': Eurosceptic Populism in Hungary and Poland. *European Politics and Society*, *22*(1), 53–68. https://doi.org/10.1080/23745118.2020.1717064

de Vreese, C. H., & Boomgaarden, H. G. (2005). Projecting EU Referendums – Fear of Immigration and Support for European Integration. *European Union Politics*, *6*(1), 59–82. https://doi.org/10.1177/1465116505049608

de Vries, L. A., & Guild, E. (2019). Seeking Refuge in Europe: Spaces of Transit and the Violence of Migration Management. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *45*(12), 2156–2166. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2018.1468308

Duszczyk, M., Podgórska, K., & Pszczółkowska, D. (2020). From Mandatory to Voluntary. Impact of V4 on the EU Relocation Scheme. *European Politics and Society*, *21*(4), 470–487. https://doi.org/10.1080/23745118.2019.1672367

Eurobarometer. (2021). *Standard Eurobarometer 95.* Spring 2021. European Commission, September. Retrieved Jan. 16, 2022, from https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2532

Eurostat. (2021, August 4). *Asylum Statistics. European Commission*. Retrieved Jan. 16, 2022, from https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Asylum_statistics#Number_of_asylum_applicants:_decrease_in_2020

Every, D. (2013). 'Shame on You': The Language, Practice and Consequences of Shame and Shaming in Asylum Seeker Advocacy. *Discourse & Society*, *24*(6), 667–686. https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926513486223

Ferreira, V. S. (2014). Arts and Tricks of Comprehensive Interview. *Saúde e Sociedade*, 23, 979–992.

Follesdal, A., & Hix, S. (2006). Why There is a Democratic Deficit in the EU: A Response to Majone and Moravcsik. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, *44*(3), 533–562. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5965.2006.00650.x

Frye, N. (1957). *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*. Princeton University Press.

Geertz, C. (1973). *Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. Basic Books.

Genschel, P., & Jachtenfuchs, M. (2018). From Market Integration to Core State Powers: The Eurozone Crisis, the Refugee Crisis and Integration Theory. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, *56*(1), 178–196. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12654

Griebel, T., & Vollmann, E. (2019). We Can('t) Do This. A Corpus-Assisted Critical Discourse Analysis of Migration in Germany. *Journal of Language and Politics*, *18*(5), 671–697. https://doi.org/10.1075/jlp.19006.gri

Hanzlová, R. (2018, November 9). *Postoj české veřejnosti k přijímání uprchlíků – říjen 2018*. [Attitude of the Czech public towards the reception of refugees - October 2018.] Public Opinion Research Center. Retrieved Jan. 16, 2022, from https://cvvm.soc.cas.cz/cz/tiskove-zpravy/politicke/mezinarodni-vztahy/4749-postoj-ceske-verejnosti-k-prijimani-uprchliku-rijen-2018

Harteveld, E., Schaper, J., De Lange, S. L., & Van Der Brug, W. (2018). Blaming Brussels? The Impact of (News about) the Refugee Crisis on Attitudes towards the EU and National Politics. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, *56*(1), 157–177. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12664

Hase, J. (2021). Repetition, Adaptation, Institutionalization-How the Narratives of Political Communities Change. *Ethnicities*, *21*(4), 684–705. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468796820987311

Hloušek, V., & Kaniok, P. (2014). Strategic or Identity-Based Euroscepticism? The Euro Discourse of Vaclav Klaus. Romanian Journal of Political Science 14(1), 35-60.

Hloušek, V., & Kaniok, P. (2020). Czech Republic. In V. Hloušek & P. Kaniok (Eds.), *The European Parliament Election of 2019 in East-Central Europe: Second-Order Euroscepticism* (pp. 61–82). Palgrave Macmillan.

Hobolt, S. B. (2016). The Brexit Vote: A Divided Nation, a Divided Continent. *Journal of European Public Policy*, *23*(9), 1259–1277. https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2016.1225785

Hooghe, L., & Marks, G. (2018). Cleavage Theory Meets Europe's Crises: Lipset, Rokkan, and the Transnational Cleavage. *Journal of European Public Policy*, *25*(1), 109–135. https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2017.1310279

Hrabálek, M., & Đorđević, V. (2017). The 'Heretic' Debate on European Asylum Quotas in the Czech Republic: A Content Analysis. *Kontakt*, *19*(4), 321–328. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.kontakt.2017.09.010

Jaworsky, B. N. (2021). The 'Thirteenth Immigrant'? Migration and Populism in the 2018 Czech Presidential Election. In J. C. Alexander, P. Kivisto & G. Sciortino (Eds.), *The Civil Sphere and Populism* (pp. 152–157). Polity Press.

Jaworsky, B. N., & Krotký, J. (2021). 'A Brother Is More than a Neighbour': Symbolic Boundary Work in Czech Pro-Migration Discourse. European Journal of Cultural and *Political Sociology*, *8*(3), 329–354. https://doi.org/10.1080/23254823.2021.1942115

Jaworsky, B. N., Klvaňová, R., Retiova, A., Rapoš Božič, I. & Krotký, J. (2023). *A Critical, Cultural Sociological Exploration of Attitudes toward Migration in Czechia: What Lies Beneath the Fear of the Thirteenth Migrant*. Lexington Books.

Kovář, J. (2020). A Security Threat or an Economic Consequence? An Analysis of the News Framing of the European Union's Refugee Crisis. *International Communication Gazette*, *82*(6), 564–587. https://doi.org/10.1177/1748048519832778

Krotký, J. (2019). When Migration Unites Political Parties: The Securitisation of Migration in Czech Party Manifestos. *Czech Journal of Political Science*, *26*(4), 181–199. https://doi.org/10.5817/PC2019-3-181

Krotký, J., & Kaniok, P. (2021). Who Says What: Members of the European Parliament and Irregular Migration in the Parliamentary Debates. *European Security*, *30*(2), 178–196. https://doi.org/10.1080/09662839.2020.1842362

Lee, J.-S., & Nerghes, A. (2018). Refugee or Migrant Crisis? Labels, Perceived Agency, and Sentiment Polarity in Online Discussions. *Social Media + Society*, *4*(3), 1–22. https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305118785638

Lindgren, K.-O., & Persson, T. (2010). Input and Output Legitimacy: Synergy or Trade-Off? Empirical evidence from an EU survey. *Journal of European Public Policy*, *17*(4), 449–467. https://doi.org/10.1080/13501761003673591

Majone, G. (1998). Europe's 'Democratic Deficit': The Question of Standards. *European Law Journal*, 4(1), 5–28. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-0386.00040

Messing, V., & Ságvári, B. (2019). *Still Divided but More Open: Mapping European Attitudes towards Migration Before and After the Migration Crisis*. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. Retrieved Jan. 16, 2022, from http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/budapest/15322-20190505.pdf

Naxera, V., & Krčál, P. (2018). 'This Is a Controlled Invasion': The Czech President Miloš Zeman's Populist Perception of Islam and Immigration as Security Threats. *Journal of Nationalism, Memory and Language Politics*, *12*(2), 192–215. https://doi.org/10.2478/jnmlp-2018-0008

Niemann, A., & Zaun, N. (2018). EU Refugee Policies and Politics in Times of Crisis: Theoretical and Empirical Perspectives. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, *56*(1), 3-22. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12650

Rapley, T. (2014). Sampling Strategies in Qualitative Research. In U. Flick (Ed.), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis* (pp. 49–63). SAGE.

Reed, I. A. (2011). *Interpretation and Social Knowledge*. The University of Chicago Press.

Ringlerová, Z. (2021). The Impact of Immigration on Attitudes toward the EU: Evidence from a Three-Country Survey Experiment. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, *60*(2), 391–407. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.13237

Ripoll Servent, A. (2019). The EU's Refugee 'Crisis': Framing Policy Failure as an Opportunity for Success. *Politique Européenne*, *65*(3),178–210. https://doi.org/10.3917/poeu.065.0178

Risse, T., & Kleine, M. (2007). Assessing the Legitimacy of the EU's Treaty Revision Methods. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, *45*(1), 69–80. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5965.2007.00703.x

Rittberger, B. (2010). Democracy and European Union Governance. In M. Egan, N. Nugent & W. E. Paterson (Eds.), *Research Agendas in EU Studies: Stalking the Elephant* (pp. 134–167). Palgrave Macmillan.

SANEP. (2016, May). Češi odmítají uprchlické kvóty, uprchlické „výkupné" i bezvízový styk s Tureckem. Panuje obava z islamizace Evropy. [Czechs reject refugee quotas, refugee "ransoms" and visa-free travel with Turkey. Fear of the Islamisation of Europe.] SANEP. Retrieved June 8, 2022, from https://www.protext.cz/english/zprava.php?id=25073

Scharpf, F. (1999). *Governing in Europe: Effective and Democratic?* Oxford University Press.

Schmidt V. A. (2013). Democracy and Legitimacy in the European Union Revisited: Input, Output and 'Throughput'. *Political Studies*, *61*(1), 2–22. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9248.2012.00962.x

Schmidt, V. A. (2004). The European Union: Democratic Legitimacy in a Regional State? *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, *42*(5), 975–997. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0021-9886.2004.00537.x

Scott, Z., Šmahelová, M., & Macek, P. (2019). Our Democracy: Czech Adolescents Talk About the Meaning of Democracy and Attitudes Toward Immigrants. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, *19*(1), 104–132. https://doi.org/10.1111/asap.12175

Smith, P. (2005). *Why War? The Cultural Logic of Iraq, the Gulf War, and Suez*. The University of Chicago Press.

Smith, R. M. (2015). *Political Peoplehood: The Roles of Values, Interests, and Identities*. The University of Chicago Press.

Statista. (2022, December 6). *Number of Recorded Deaths of Migrants in the Mediterranean Sea from 2014 to 2021*. Statista. Retrieved Feb. 9, 2023, from https://www.statista.com/statistics/1082077/deaths-of-migrants-in-themediterranean-sea/

Štětka, V., Mihelj, S., & Tóth, F. (2020). The Impact of News Consumption on Anti-

Immigration Attitudes and Populist Party Support in a Changing Media Ecology. *Political Communication*, *38*(5), 539–560. https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2020.1820647

Stone, D. (2012). *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making*. W. W. Norton & Company.

Szcerbiak, A., & Taggart, P. (2008). Introduction: Researching Euroscepticism in European Party Systems: A Comparative and Theoretical Research Agenda. In A. Szczerbiak & P. Taggart (Eds.), *Opposing Europe? The Comparative Party Politics of Euroscepticism. Comparative and Theoretical Perspectives* (pp. 1–27). Oxford University Press.

Szewczyk, B. M. J. (2020). *European Sovereignty, Legitimacy, and Power*. Routledge.

Thomassen. J. (2009). *The Legitimacy of the European Union After Enlargement*. Oxford University Press.

Thornberg, R., & Charmaz, K. (2014). Grounded Theory and Theoretical Coding. In U. Flick (Ed.), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis* (pp. 153–169). Sage.

Trauner, F., & Ripoll Servent, A. (2016). The Communitarization of the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice: Why Institutional Change does not Translate into Policy Change. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, *54*(6), 1417–1432. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12397

Trauner, F., & Turton, J. (2017). 'Welcome Culture': The Emergence and Transformation of a Public Debate on Migration. *Austrian Journal of Political Science*, *46*(1), 33–42. https://doi.org/10.15203/ozp.1587.vol46iss1

Vochocová, L., Rosenfeldová, J., Zápotocký, J., Průchová Hrůzová, A., & Fousek Krobová, T. (2021). *Na moři, za plotem, na síti. Digitální média a debata o migraci v Česku*. [At sea, behind the fence, on the web. Digital media and the debate on migration in Czechia]. Kniha Zlín.

Wondreys, J. (2021). The 'Refugee Crisis' and the Transformation of the Far Right and the Political Mainstream: The Extreme Case of the Czech Republic. *East European Politics*, *37*(4), 722–746. https://doi.org/10.1080/21599165.2020.1856088