

# THE TRANSFORMATION OF CZECH AND SLOVAK NATIONAL IDENTITY AND CREATION OF THE ‘NEW’ OTHER

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Submitted to  
Central European University  
Nationalism Studies Program

*In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts*

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*Budapest, Hungary*  
2008

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## Introduction

The Czechs and the Slovaks were united in a common state for many decades until the “velvet divorce” in 1993. The 1993 breakup was once again a political decision made without the participation of the public. The public was rather a quiet receiver of contemporary crucial news, and if addressed, then not with a question but rather with an announcement. The establishment of two successor states that followed the breakup, brought about transformation on many different levels – constitutional, political, economic, social, medial and even academic. Among other things the breakup entailed modification of Czech and Slovak national identities in relation, and at the same time opposition, towards each other. In the previous years (before and after World War II) Czechs and Slovaks shared one state which to some extent implied that the boundaries of national identities towards each other were rather blurred. In this thesis I argue that the establishment of two independent states required a new redefinition of the national identities and the boundaries between them to suit the new political setting. I will demonstrate the change via comparative analysis of discursive creation of national identities in Czechoslovak, Czech and Slovak educational materials.

The issue of Czech and Slovak national relations was already analyzed by numerous authors from many different perspectives, ranging from historical perspective (Chmel, 1997; Kamenec, 2007; Pynsent, 1996; Rychlík, 1998) to analysis of the economic consequences (Švejnar, 2000) of the 1993 breakup. However, only a few works were dedicated solely to the issue of national identities and if then they focused merely on Czech or Slovak national identities separately. Comparative analyses are almost fully absent, as well as analysis of the post-1993 situation. At the same time many of the studies take national identity as granted and clear, however I believe that national identity is a highly complex issue and requires a detailed clarification before we can begin to talk about it. I will fill in the existing academic gap and carry out a comparative analysis of post-1993 development of Czech and Slovak national

identities in the light of the available secondary literature as well as literature covering the issue of national identities in general. I will look at how are the Czechs important ‘others’ to Slovaks and *vice versa*? Or whether there are other, more important ‘others’ as some studies propose? And more over what is the national identity we are talking about?

In order to answer these questions we have to return to the beginning. The Czechs and Slovaks were twice united in a unitarian state, once/twice in a federation and twice formed separate states. The changes of political units and nation formation were not results of natural historical evolution or people’s will, as several academics argue (Barány, 2007; Gunčara, 1998; Petruf, 2000; Tesař, 1995), but rather an outcome of various external and internal influences, mainly the elites and groups struggling for power within the entities. As Ivan Kamenec underlines, every new period in Czech and Slovak relation was not a completion of the previous one, as if it was the case then the final climax of Slovak (and Czech) historical development was in the last 100 years present at least six times (Kamenec, 2007:123).

Each political unit had to search for its legitimization and elements that would hold the people (citizens) together. These elements were mostly found in history and served as a basis for national identity. Therefore I believe that the mutual definition of the Czechs and the Slovak national identities during the given periods – e.g. the Czechs and the Slovaks as two nations of the same origin, Czechs as the assistants of the national uprising during the first years of Czechoslovakia, Slovaks as the collaborators and the ‘other’ after the establishment of the first independent Slovak state; Czechs as the ‘unwanted parents’ in the same period, Slovaks as the brothers who defeated the Nazi regime etc. relates to the political changes. The question therefore is, how and to what extent has Czech national identity changed in relation to Slovak and the Slovak national identity to Czech after the breakup in 1993. According to these facts I argue that forming of Czech and Slovak national identity, is not a natural process, but rather a process mainly pursued by the contemporary elites. Therefore I

focus on the materials that are directly or indirectly influenced by their decisions – educational materials, particularly history school books published before and after the establishment of the Czech Republic and Slovakia in 1993.

The main aim of my thesis is to unveil the process of creation and recreation of national identity in the given discourse in the post-breakup situation. I focus on and compare both parts of the picture – the Czech and the Slovak and I am interested in how and to what extent “... *the Czech identity began to understand Slovak identity as one of its significant others, it started comparing itself with it and (in some cases) even defining itself as opposed to it*” (Brodský, 2004) and *vice versa*. This thesis will clarify the post-breakup identity transformation in discourse and answer the two main questions: to **what** extent was the national identity of Czechs and Slovaks defined against the other one? **How** was/is the ‘new other’ created?

According to my previous study of available secondary literature, we might have four different expectations:

1. The identities are constructed towards other, more significant ‘others’, in the case of Slovak national identity – the Hungarians and in the case of Czech national identity – the Germans or any other internal or external ‘others’.
2. The identities are gradually distinguished from each other after the breakup in 1993.
3. The strength of delimitation of boundaries differs in the case of Czech and Slovak national identity. Slovak national identity is created in a sharper difference from the Czech due to the ostensible ‘parental relation’ of Czechs towards Slovaks in the previous periods.

4. The construction of Czech and Slovak national identities and their boundaries did not substantially change, only the ideological alluvium of the previous regime was removed.

To test these expectations, I will look at the issue from the perspective of discursive construction of national identity, using the tools of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). This approach brings into the picture two additional questions: **Which** instruments were used in the discursive construction of Czech and Slovak national identity and **How** can the process be traced in Czechoslovak, Czech and Slovak school books?

CDA was already used for a number of different studies. CDA, namely the Vienna School Discourse Analysis, was for instance adopted by Ruth Wodak, Rudolph de Cillia, Martin Reisigl and Karin Liebhart in their study of Austrian national identity, *The Discursive Construction of National Identity* in 1999. The same approach was also used in a book *A New Agenda in (Critical) Discourse Analysis: Theory, Methodology and Interdisciplinarity* edited by Ruth Wodak and Paul Chilton and e.g. in the Sari Pietikäinen study on indigenous Sami people in Finnish newspaper discourse *Indigenous Identity in Print: Representations of the Sami in News Discourse*.

According to my analysis, the first three expectations are found in the history books, however only up to certain level, as will be analyzed in chapter 3. Basically, Czech and Slovak post-1993 national identities are evidently created against each 'other', though it is not the only 'other' they define themselves against. Among other 'others', the Czechoslovak plays an important role too and not only as an indicator of Czechoslovak state identity, especially in the Slovak case. A completely different approach towards national identities came was found through the comparison with the pre-1993 discourse, which is the reason why the third expectation can not be validated.

The thesis is structurally divided into three chapters. The first chapter provides a brief insight into the Czech and Slovak historical background since the end of World War I. That is followed by a critical analysis of the most distinguished secondary literature dedicated to the issue, with an emphasis on Czech and Slovak identities and their relations, presentation, representation and creation.

The second theoretical chapter will be devoted to the issue of national identity. As was seen from the introduction (and will be also later developed in chapter 1), this issue was largely omitted by the many authors talking and writing about Czechs and Slovaks. Most of them counted on the readers' common sense concerning national identities without warning of its more problematic nature. My aim will therefore be to provide a theoretical framework and knowledge of the general components, necessary for the thesis and point out the main approaches towards national identity as proposed by numerous theorists of nationalism, such as Anthony Smith, Miroslav Hroch, Michael Billig, Rogers Brubaker, Benedict Anderson and others.

The third chapter includes methodology and the original analysis of primary documents: Czechoslovak, Czech and Slovak history school books. These main chapters provide a vivid picture of the given national identities, which I hope will contribute to the contemporary academic knowledge concerning the issue.

## 1. The Czechs, the Slovaks and National Identities

The thesis begins with an insight into the historical events on the Czech and Slovak territory (others would say the Czech and Slovak nations), which is indispensable for the setting of the subject. That is followed by a review of available literature more or less concerned with Czech and Slovak national identities.

### 1.1. Historical Background

Since the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1918, the mutual relationship between Czechs and Slovaks and their political units has changed several times. In the first years after 1918, the Czechs and Slovaks were joined within a common state, the Czechoslovak republic. The unit came into existence due to several reasons. The most important, due to the post-war geopolitical situation on the European continent, seems to be a political decision of the Allied powers<sup>1</sup> which was in accordance with the political orientation of some of Czech and Slovak exile representatives, such as T.G. Masaryk with his adherents (Milan Rastislav Štefánik, Edvard Beneš, Štefan Osuský and others) and *hlasisti [the Voice community]* surrounded around the Slovak magazine *Hlas [The Voice]*<sup>2</sup>. Then Czechoslovakia consisted of the Czechs and the Slovaks (in the contemporary language ‘the state nations’) and several minorities<sup>3</sup>. As the state formation was more or less imposed, the idea of Czechoslovakia had to search for its legitimacy which was found in a state ideology – czechoslovakism, suggested by the above stated political groupings. Czechoslovakism was based on an idea of common Czechoslovak identity and Czechoslovak language, portraying

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<sup>1</sup> The factors influencing the establishment of the first Czechoslovak republic were analyzed by numerous academics. I prioritize the influence of external powers due to the geopolitical situation after World War I, however other interpretation also exist, some authors prioritize the will of Slovaks to divest themselves from the Hungarian influence (Chmel, 2004), the will of a small Czech and Slovak elite community (Kružliak, 1997), the Czech political elites (Kusý, 1997), Czech and Slovak exile movements (Žatkuliak, 2005) etc.

<sup>2</sup> It is important to highlight that the Czech and Slovak elites were not united concerning the issue of Czechoslovakia and that in this period alternative ideas existed as well, such as panslavism based on unity of Slavic nations.

<sup>3</sup> Among them Germans (according to the public polls from 1921 the minority was larger than the number of Slovaks in then Czechoslovakia), Jews, Hungarians, Ruthenians, Poles, Roma and others.



Czechs and Slovaks as two branches of a single nation, referring to their closeness and commonalities, such as their common Slavic origin, the coexistence in the 9<sup>th</sup> century Great Moravia (Mackenzie, 1948: 20-21) and their similar cultural roots. The centralized nature of the state then supported the leading ideology.

Soon after the establishment of Czechoslovakia, the leading ideology was continually rejected by numerous Slovak politicians, especially those around *Slovenská strana ľudová* [*Slovak Peoples Party*] who demanded more responsibilities for the Slovak part of the state. Some claimed that czechoslovakism was an artificial construct having neither historical, language nor spiritual basis (Kružliak, 1997). Firstly only isolated demands were becoming more and more powerful, new demands were for recognition of the equality of Slovak nation within the republic via autonomy. On the eve of World War II, Slovakia (together with Carpathian Ruthenia) gained autonomous status within the republic and Czechoslovakia became Czecho-Slovakia. In 1939 the independent Slovak state was unilaterally declared with the assistance of Hitler and until the Slovak National Uprising in 1944, the Slovak republic was a Nazi satellite<sup>4</sup>. The Czech part of the former republic became a Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia.

After World War II, the Czechs and the Slovaks were reunified in the Czechoslovak Republic<sup>5</sup>. The question of identity once again came to be discussed<sup>6</sup>. Czechoslovakism was obviously discredited. Unfortunately, instead of engaging in the reappeared identity talk, the communist regime pursued centralism. Originally, the state should have been formed on the

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<sup>4</sup> The circumstances in which the Slovak republic was established were largely discussed by many authors, one favour the theory that Tiso (the leader of the Slovak Peoples Party and later president of the first independent Slovak republic) didn't have an alternative and had to establish Slovak state that Hitler threatened him (Bystrický, 2007:53-59), others see the threat as not reasonable and propose that there was an alternative (Čapka, 2000-23-24).

<sup>5</sup> Czechoslovakia changed its name and political form in 1969, becoming a federation – Czechoslovak Socialistic Republic that was constituted by two republics, the Czech Socialistic Republic and the Slovak Socialistic Republic. Though the federation was more a false federation, the state stayed more or less centralized. Therefore during the post-communist times there was the call was for an authentic federation. (Skallnik-Leff, 1997)

<sup>6</sup> The national composition of Czechoslovakia has changed significantly. Newly, the state was composed of 90% of Czechs and Slovaks (Skallnik-Leff, 1997:46). The Czechs mainly residing in the Czech part, Slovaks on the Slovak part (despite the fact that the boundaries between these two entities were not exactly specified).

basis of equal with equal, promoting a real federalization, but it never became so. The state was strongly centralized (the centre was in Prague), despite its formal federalization in 1969, and opposed attempts from the Slovak elites for their own space of influence within the federation. At the same time, development in parts of the federation was slightly different.

After the fall of the communist regime in 1989 Czechoslovakia became a democratic state. The following period of transition was filled with expectations, positive views of the future and demands for a 'fair' solution for the Czechs and Slovaks in an authentic federation. For several reasons the only solution found and agreed on was the breakup of the republic<sup>7</sup>. It took place without a referendum which would reveal the unwillingness of people from both republics to divide the state (31<sup>st</sup> of December 1992). However, in 1993 two new states appeared on the European continent. Since their establishment, they have become members of several international institutions (NATO – The Czech Republic is a member since 1999, Slovakia since 2004, both states became members of the EU in 2004).

## ***1.2. Czech and Slovak National Identities Analyzed***

*“The worst thing is to learn to live with your own identities. And with the neighboring ones”*

*(Thomas Lewis cit. in Zajac, 2004: 80)<sup>8</sup>*

The issue of Czech and Slovak relations and their national identities has been analyzed by numerous authors, from many different perspectives such as historical (Chmel, 1997,

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<sup>7</sup> The list of reasons would be almost indefinite and in the case of each author different and intervenient. Although aim is not to propose another theory of the breakup, I think it is necessary to list at least some of the arguments in favour of the breakup as presented by academics: the loss of meaning of Czechoslovakia (Svoboda, 1999:42), the Czech incomprehension of Slovak requirements (Gunčara, 1998: 43), the lack of political will and understanding on both sides (Pithart, 1999: 12; Gál, 1999:25-27; Zemko, 1999:68), the activities of president Havel and his followers (Tesař, 1995:45; Svoboda, 1999: 38; Kučera, 1999: 61), the activities and ways of political negotiations between Mečiar and Klaus (the leaders of contemporary winning political parties) (Gál, 1999:25-27; Krejčí, 2005: 324-328), natural development of both nations (Petruf, 2000:4; Zajac, 1999:66; Zemko, 1999:68), decision of Slovakia (Třeštík, 1999: 187), the will of the Czech part of the republic to get rid of the underdeveloped Slovakia, the different experience of the previous centralist state, the intransigence of Czech demands, the natural development heading for independent Slovak state (Chmel, 2004:13-15), activities of exile Slovaks (Gunčara, 1998: 43), lack of consciousness about potential conflict nature of Czech and Slovak relations (Pithart, 1999:11), lack of time (Pithart, 1999: 14, Zajac:1999:65-66), the influence of media (Zajac, 1999:64), the blurred idea how shall the republic be formed (Krejčí, 2005:326) etc.

<sup>8</sup> Translations of all the Czech and Slovak documents are made by the author.

2004; Hroch, 2000; Kamenec, 2007; Kandert, 2000; Lipták, 1997; Míšková, Rak, 2000; Pynsent, 1996; Rychlík, 1998; Sayer, 1998; Skalnik-Leff, 1997; Třeštík, 1999 etc.), philosophic (Patočka, 1992), economical (Švejnar, 2000), anthropological (Holý, 2001; Miháliková, 2005), nationalism (Brodský, 2004) etc. It was addressed by numerous academics, politicians and journalists (Gál, 1999; Havel, 2000, 2006; Kuras, 1999; Pithart, 1999) as well as laics. It is not surprising that the number of works grown in the post-revolution times, especially around the time of the breakup. It is also not surprising that among the works the historically oriented prevailed. Both the adherents and opponents of the breakup (slightly more in Slovakia) sought explanations but also de- and legitimization of the new state of art in the previous historical periods. Finally, it is not surprising that the seekers on both sides (pro and against the breakup) found what they were looking for. In the following I will present some of the most significant works and approaches towards the issue of Czech and Slovak national identities.

Despite the enormous amount of literature, only few works were dedicated solely to the issue of Czech and Slovak national identities. Among them, possibly the most famous study about Czech national identity was written by an anthropologist Ladislav Holý, *The Little Czech and the Great Czech Nation* in 2001. Holý critically analyses the cultural meanings of components of Czech identity in the historical process with a special emphasis on the post-revolution situation. Stating that the Slovaks were the most important ‘others’ to Czechs since the end of World War II and the expulsion of the German population from then Czechoslovakia (Holý 2001:6). Czech identity is reconstructed from media, public opinion polls and interviews. His main aim is to discover the hidden meaning behind the Czech historical experience and various national symbols. Czech identity is created within the sphere of culture through a process of constant negotiation influenced by political practice (Ibid: 201). From his point of view, nation and state are culturally constructed. His

conceptualization of the Czech nation is then based on a process of natural development. Nation as an inevitable result of "...common language and culture and remains a nation whether its members inhabit a particular territory or not" (Ibid: 188). Although I will not analyze Czech identity from a cultural point of view, but rather from a political one, I am convinced that his contribution to the issue of identity building is more than evident.

Contrary to Holý, R. B. Pynsent sees identity as a rather politically charged matter. Throughout his study he emphasizes the complexity and political loadedness of Czech national identity. He believes that the conception of Czech identity is based on the 'myth of Slavicism', Czech decadents and the problem of mutual delimitation of Czechs and Slovaks (Pynsent, 1996). These delimitations are caused mainly by historical and, interestingly, also by geographical differences (Ibid). A different self-evaluation is only limited to the pre-breakup period, emphasizing the main differences in historical development. A similar argument is also used by Jiří Brodský. He argues that since the post-breakup situation, Czechs started to perceive Slovaks as the Eastern Europeans, while perceiving themselves as closer to Western Europe (Brodský, 2004). Jiří Brodský analyses the Czech national identity from the revolution in 1989 until the Czech Republic entered the EU. He uses discourse analysis, analyzing samples of political speeches and newspaper articles and interconnects it with certain historical events. He pays attention to the Czech and Slovak identity transformation after the breakup stating that "... the Czech identity began to understand Slovak identity as one of its significant others, it started comparing itself with it and (in some cases) even defining itself as opposed to it" (Brodský, 2004). However, his conclusions are rather difficult to substantiate, as the article does not contain enough sources to confirm his ideas. Another problem is the unstable theoretical basis of his work, as he does not clarify the steps of his analysis. Opposed to his article, I will argue that national identity is not an inevitable part of

human mind and moreover I will bring into the picture also the Slovak national identity and point out how is this particular issue portrayed in educational literature.

A completely different point of view is presented by a philosopher Jan Patočka in *Jsou Cesi? [What are the Czechs?]* from 1992. It is probably Patočka's most complete reflection on the Czech nation. The Czech nation is seen in the light of European development and its importance as being the centre of Europe. The main problem of the Czechs then, according to Patočka, is the lack of elites: "... modern Czech-ness is a society built from below ... because the upper classes usually did not remain within the language" (Patočka, 1992:11) which makes the society weak in moments of crisis. Being a philosopher, Patočka does not address the issue of otherness/identity but emphasizes the efforts of the inner powers to create and survive the external powers.

In other academic works, mainly historically oriented, the issue of national identity serves as a rather minor topic addressed without much concern, rather appealing to the readers' from elsewhere acquired knowledge about what national identity means and what its content is. At the same time these works mainly focus on the pre-1989 and pre-1993 situation. It seems that once Czechoslovakia was divided, the interest in Czech and Slovak national identities and their relation either disappeared or was only preserved in a few sociological studies. However, a careful reader can trace certain similarities and differences among the authors' understanding of the issue, which can be applied also to the post-breakup situation. According to these differences the available literature can be divided into three main groups that are further internally differentiated. Although the authors are not theorists of nationalism, their works can be more or less put into the theoretical frames of nationalism conceptions:

1. Works that perceive Czech and Slovak nations as something natural and national identity as a rather unchanging basis of the nation. This approach in the terminology of

nationalism would equal perennialist and also primordialist approach (Please see chapter 2).

2. Works that understand Czech and Slovak nations and their national identities as something inevitable and at the same time shaped by the internal and external influences. As will be seen on the examples of works, some of these authors are very close to ethno-symbolism (Chapter 2).
3. Works that perceive Czech and Slovak nations and national identities as something rather created. These works would belong to the realm of modernists, especially those favoring its constructionist version (Chapter 2).

To the first group belong authors such as Imrich Kružliak, who understand nation as a live organism, with distinct historical and cultural identity, having its own interests, goals, psychological mentality and soul (Kružliak, 1997: 485-490). Kružliak, and also Valerián Bystrický (2007), emphasize the long duration of the Slovak nation (basically from the Great Moravia). Rudolf Chmel goes with his argumentation even further, stating that “Slovaks are the oldest Slavic nation” (Chmel, 2004:11). These authors emphasize only positives about the nation, in extreme position they tend to glorify the first Slovak state and its representatives. Not surprisingly they understand the establishment of Slovakia in 1993 as a natural climax of distinctive Slovak nature, which is apart of different soul and psychological tune composed of language, historical background and religiosity (Kružliak highlights the Slovak Christian tradition in comparison to Czech Protestant tradition<sup>9</sup>). This approach encounters several difficulties. Primarily the link between Great Moravia and Slovak nation is doubtful and based on an imaginative link established on the basis of territory without any archeological

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<sup>9</sup> Which however can not be thematized so simply and would indeed need more clarification.

evidence<sup>10</sup>. Another deficiency is the non-problematic, optimistic and narrative presentation of the nation's history, as from their interpretation the only darker period of modern Slovak history, the expulsion of the Jews during World War II, was only made by a small group of 'bad' Slovaks. Which is connected to another problem – they omit the inner differentiation within the nation. Further, there is a logical slip, prevailing in the works of Kružliak and Bystrický – while Slovak national identity is expressed in positive colors, the Czech national identity is expressed only in negatives and while stating that for the Slovak nation the independent Slovak state is the best possible solution, for the Czechs Czechoslovakia was suitable. Only Rudolf Chmel points out some negatives as a part of Slovak national identity, however commits another slip while stating that if there is something negative it is because the people do not understand their nation, as their identity was deprived. This implies that there is nothing negative about the national identity anyway; it is just that people do not understand it correctly.

A different approach towards Slovak national identity can be found in the second, possibly the largest group of works. These authors, such as Vladimír Mináč (1997), do not date the Slovak nation the 9<sup>th</sup> century, but rather connect it with the establishment of Slovak language in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Although they emphasize natural needs of national identity, they do not claim that different needs are products of natural order, but of a different historical development, different reactions to change, its tradition, experiences and internal and external development (Petruf, 2000: 3). An interesting concept can be found in the work of Lubomír Ďurovič, in whose understanding the Slovak nation has distinctive national identity however "... the attributes of political and territorial identity and peculiarity have we, Slovaks, gained due to activities of small group of our nation, that somehow and sometimes rested on the Czech culture and politics – which was usually happening with a passivity of huge numbers of

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<sup>10</sup> There are no archaeological proves for this theory, not even mentioning that the Slavic tribes inhabiting that territory had very unlikely something in common with the present Slovaks or Moravians and even the name Slovaks was invented only in the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

our nation or even against their will” (Ďurovič, 2007: 40). In other words, there is something behind culture and politics that makes a nation a distinctive group, which is later modified with the endeavor of elites.

These works usually perceive Slovak and Czech national identity as composed of two layers – something given and something added, due to events influencing the nation as such. There is at least one major deficiency of these works – the lack of ability to articulate what is Slovakness and Czechness. What are the parts of national identity and which are those changing and according to which criteria they are chosen.

In the third group of works are those which perceive national identities as something rather created. Among them Ivan Kamenec (2007), who despite not talking about national identities as such, makes a few important points about them, primarily about Slovak national identity. He highlights that political parties and anyone craving for power are looking towards history, selectively choosing events and figures and interpreting them in the way they like. National identity then appears as a rather operational construct of contemporary elites. Similarly, Dušan Třeštík, in connection with Czech national identity, highlights that “[n]ation is not eternal, it is the result of similar and at the same time still changing ‘circumstances’ (that means modernization), but most of all intellectual work. It is necessary to take care of the nation; otherwise it does not exist, because it resides after all in our heads” (Třeštík, 1999: 45).

Another historical reconstruction of Czech national identity, based mostly on novels, official documents, ceremonies, street names, guide books etc., rather than repeated and “innovative” interpretation of breaking historical events<sup>11</sup>, such as wars and revolutions, is offered by Derek Sayer. He emphasizes the elite driven foundation of the national identity construction in the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, stressing the influence of the

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<sup>11</sup> Breaking historical events as presented by the common sense.



contemporary political environment. Unfortunately, the study ends in the 1960's, though providing interesting comparison of the Czech and Slovak relations in the pre 1960's decades stating that "...Slovaks had been frequently incorporated in within the discourse of Czech nationalism" (Sayer, 1998: 170).

According to these authors, Czech and Slovak identities do not exist independently of human minds; on the contrary, they are produced and constantly reproduced by elites, those who hold the power in the state. And as seen from the work of Sayer, they are produced in many different ways. This provides fruitful soil for my own analysis and this approach seems meaningful when it comes to Czech and Slovak national identities, especially if we remember the numerous changes of political units and regimes that occurred on the Czech and Slovak territory in last 100 years (see Chapter 1.1.).

Further, works can be differentiated according to the delimitation of boundaries of the national identities, in other words their definition of the 'other' towards which the given national identity is defined or created. Many works highlight the Germans as the main historical 'other' for Czechs (Kandert, 2000; Míšková, Rak, 2000) and the Hungarians as the most important 'other' to the Slovaks (Kusý, 1997). Other works see the Slovaks as the closest to Czechs (Chmel, 2004; Svoboda, 1999) or Slovaks as the main important 'others' to Czechs (Brodský, 2004; Holý, 1997). Most of these works are based on simple historical assumptions of their authors, however they obviously differ in the choice of the historical period they base their assumption on. Few authors remind that the 'others' were changing throughout history and that certain features of national identities link the nations also to other neighbors – religion that brings Slovaks closer to Poles than Czechs.

Sayer brings another dimension into the picture – the inner and outer 'others'. He argues that in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century the outer 'others' to the Czech national identity were the Germans and inner 'others' were the Jews. A similar approach is also taken by Carol

Skalnik-Leff in *The Czech and Slovak Republics* from 1997, focusing mainly on the post 1989 situation. She argues that the problem of national identities after the breakup is connected to the questions of inner ‘others’ – the state minorities, claiming that “[t]he central national questions in the two successor republics revolve ... around the treatment of minorities and the search for an international niche that will safeguard the newly evolving national identities of both majority and minority population” (Skalnik-Leff, 1997: 143-144).

A different view is offered by a historian, Miroslav Hroch. In his article from 2000, he does not emphasize the national identity as created in opposition to another nation; rather he offers a much wider view pointing out the crucial difference between state and national identity. What Hroch sees is the problematic formulation of Czech national identity that was never purely national but was interwoven with the state identity, within which the old czechoslovakism was surviving. Similarly Rychlík also refers to the fact that Czechoslovakia did not become a political nation mainly because Czechs perceived “Czech” and “Czechoslovak” as the same. The Czechs were Czechs as much as they were Czechoslovaks (Míšková, Rak, 2000). These findings will be partly revealed and reflected in my analysis.

To conclude, most of the presented studies focus only on Czech or Slovak national identities, a comparative approach towards them is rather missing. Studies that would trace the development of development and change of their mutual relationship since the breakup are almost fully absent. Despite there is an enormous number of historical studies and many of them highly contributive, national identity is only at the edge of their interest and usually taken as granted. Even in the case of the third group of works, authors usually do not explain what they mean by the term ‘national identity’. Finally there is the question of ‘other’. The picture sketched by the authors might correspond to the historical reality, but how far does it correspond today? What is the relation between Czech and Slovak national identities in the present, post-1993 breakup situation?

To fill in one of the lacking respects of most of the stated work, the next chapter is going to bring into the picture 'national identity'. National identity was largely omitted in the works concerning Czech and Slovak issues. I believe that it is necessary to clarify what national identity is, how it can be approached, what is its content, how it is transmitted, constructed, remembered and kept alive as analyzed by numerous theorists of nationalism.

## 2. National Identity

*“I felt Slovak...”* T. G. Masaryk, the first Czechoslovak president

*(Čapek, 1929:30)*

National identity and its transformation is the central theme of my thesis. It is a complex phenomenon that raises permanently growing interest. The on-going European integration, the growing number of immigrants in the European countries, the re-appearance of the Flemish-Walloon discussions in Belgium, the recent independence of Kosovo and several other events not only on the European continent indicate that the issue of national identities is still on the agenda. National identities are daily discussed and neglected, used and misused, reminded and curtailed, worshiped and rejected, liked and disliked, commemorated and condemned. Despite the fact that they are not always consciously perceived by their bearers (Miller, 2002), they are never forgotten (Billig, 2005). In the current world they even became one of the most crucial identities a person (shall) possess. The question, ‘where are you from?’ is usually the second question after ‘what is your name?’ which people ask while you are working, living or traveling outside your home country. The question is not a mere question about nationality; it contains a certain added value. The answer usually activates a mental chain reaction of stereotypes, negative and positive characteristics connected to the given nationality. However, the answer usually does not mean something only for the receiver of the information<sup>12</sup>, but also, and foremost, for the bearer of the given national identity, as it primarily connects him with a certain group – his co-nationals.

National identity was analyzed from various points of view, such as psychology (Smékal, 2002), social-psychology (Castano, 1998; Bar-Tal, 1998), history (Hroch, 2000), ethnology (Sayer, 1998) etc. Because it is almost impossible to cover all the academic contributions, I limit myself to one course of study. Due to the orientation of the thesis, I have

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<sup>12</sup> I am not saying that the mental chain of reaction comprehends reality, I only refer to the stereotypical ascription of certain values, types of behaviour, customs and habits to certain nationalities. For more information concerning stereotyping please see Pickering (2001), Brown (1995) etc.

decided to focus primarily on the works of various theorists of nationalism, bearing in mind that many of them use explanations from other connected fields.

Primarily, many authors agree that national identity is a collective identity. Collective identity is socially constructed and is based on social construction of borders (Eisenstadt, Giesen, 2003:363), in other words it differentiates a community of ‘us’ from a community of ‘them’ (Eriksen, 2005; Gilroy, 2005; Hroch, 2000; Nedomová, Kostelecký, 1996; Salazar, 1998; Spencer, Woolman, 2005) while having a specific and unique content. Collective identities are then multiple (Hroch, 2000; Wodak et al. 1999: 16-17), as also Anthony Smith reminds (1991, 1999) there are gender, ethnic, class and religious identities as well. National identity is only one of them.

Further, national identities are quite new identities, taking into account that the modern nations came into existence at the dusk of the 18<sup>th</sup> century; however they are truly powerful as seen from the examples above. They are complex and multilayered, meaning that there is no single element of ‘a national identity’ that would be the same for all the worlds’ national identities, but that there are different identities in different countries and historical periods (Mistřík, 1998; Spencer, Woolman, 2005b: 209). Furthermore, as most of the authors agree, national identities are fluid and changeable (Brubaker, 2003; Smith, 1991, 1999; Spencer, Woolman, 2005a; Wodak et al., 1999:11). These arguments oppose the general perception of Czech and Slovak national identity as presented by Kružliak (1997) and Bystrický (2007), and other authors perceiving national identity as something stable and unchanging (See Chapter 1.2.), taking national identity as granted and rather a stable basis of the nation.

What the scholars of nationalism mostly do not agree on is how national identities emerge/are created, what their basis and content are, what their main functions are and how they are transmitted, which in a certain manner corresponds to their approach towards nation-building and nationalism as such.

## ***2.1. National Identity: Emerged or Created?***

Among the different approaches towards nations and national identities, the currently most influential are the modernists and the ethno-symbolist theories in contrast to perennialist and primordialist theories that were influential especially in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Briefly, perennialists (Renan, 2003) understand nation as something immemorial and national identity as something rather unchanging. Primordialists (Geertz, 1973) see nations as a part of natural order and national identity as an inherent part of the order. Modernist theories (Hobsbawm, 1992; Gellner, 2003) contradict these claiming that nations and nationalism are part of modernity and therefore perceive national identities as something else, usually something more or less created in favor of the new state of art, though each author emphasizes different features. For ethno-symbolists (Smith, 1991, 1999, 2001) nation is based upon myths, symbols and traditions of the previous ethno-history of the given nation and therefore national identity is not understood as something chosen, but rather something inherited.

Although ethno-symbolism is the answer to modernist theories, I will present it as the first one. The most famous ethno-symbolist is Anthony D. Smith, author of many books concerning nation building and national identity (1991, 1999, and 2001) that are based on the precondition that nations are rooted in ethnic myths, symbols, traditions and national histories. According to him, national identity is “the continuous reproduction and reinterpretation of the pattern of values, symbols, memories, myths and traditions that compose the distinctive heritage of nations and the identification of individuals with that pattern and heritage and with its cultural elements” (Smith, 2001:18). It is not purely invented but is growing out of its ethnic roots as “no persisting ethnic identity can emerge without bedrock of shared meaning and ideals ...” (Smith, 1999:57). However, this does not mean that Smith understands national identity as something static and given, on the contrary, he states that there always exists a certain, limited number of possible “...counter-myths of origin and alternative

memories of national culture, even if some of them might become temporarily predominant – and official ... National identity was always being reinterpreted and refashioned by each generation” (Smith, 2001: 129). Similarly, David Held (2002) states that the community that will become a nation is a historical and cultural community on a particular territory with particular traditions, rights and duties and that national identity even when in some cases it is a purely political, elite driven project, it is never invented from nothing (Held, 2002: 319). Ethno-symbolism obviously builds upon an idea of collective memory of a group that has always been a distinct group, which is not necessarily the case, as presented by Rogers Brubaker (2003). Another weakness of this approach is the missing emphasis on the present situation. Present political activities and the role of elites within influence strongly the shaping of national identity and in the specific case of Czechs and Slovaks played a considerably important role. To support my critique with evidence, the first Czechoslovakia was obviously a political product of the post- World War I situation which was subsequently supported by the idea of Czech and Slovak as a branch of one nation, stressing the common roots – Slavic origin, similar culture, similar language etc. The same territory a few years later experienced an elite driven successful attempt to differentiate these two by stressing different features, such as the different religious views. After World War II another change accompanied with the change of regime, brought about another redefinition of Czech and Slovak mutual relations.

Modernists, on the contrary stress the role of elites, at least in certain parts of national appraisal, though their approach is differentiated as will be seen. Among modernists there are authors that understand national identity as something objectively existent and resulting from the historical processes the nation-to-be went through, such as Miroslav Hroch, historian and political theorist, who understands national identity as something created via historical process that begun before the establishment of modern nations; something that was shaped by

the experience of the main battles, victories and losses the nation went through in its centennial existence. According to his interpretation, during the historical process, several national stereotypes were born (such as in the case of Czech national identity in opposition to the German) and others were forgotten (such as in the same case of the fear from USSR) (Hroch, 2000). Similarly, Spencer and Woolman (2002) emphasize the influence of nations past over shaping the national identity. They bring up an interesting perspective on British national identity that is always constructed against the dangerous one, dangerous entity – in the past the French and nowadays the immigrant. However contributing this approach is, it fails to explain why a nation refers only to some historical periods and some events and not to other periods or other events as was the case of Czecho-Slovakia. Moreover, it is based on an idea that there exists something as a nation-to-be, a group that was always objectively distinct from other groups, closer to some and more distant to others.

The explanatory gap in the previous theories can be filled by modern constructionist theories. These understand national identity as something systematically constructed. A historian, Raymond Grew, in his work from 2003, *Concepts of National Identity – and Interdisciplinary Dialogue* argues that national identities are shaped by those historical events that are chosen among others. It was the state, I would say mostly the state elites, who were choosing the most suitable building blocks of national identities and its symbols. Grew calls this process the ‘war of symbols’ (Grew, 2003: 210). A constructionist approach can be further found in the works of Ruth Wodak, who emphasizes the socially acquired nature of national identity, that is in her understanding a „...complex of emotional dispositions and attitudes and of similar behavior conventions...”(Wodak et al, 1999:4). The word ‘conventions’ refers to the fact that national identity is nothing naturally, gradually emerging, but rather something chosen in the given historical period. Another constructionist and thought-provoking theory is shaped by Rogers Brubaker, who addresses the basic concepts in



a different manner. He does not understand national and ethnic groups as objectively existing groups, but rather as options or possibilities and therefore national identity is established in different manners. In his book, *Nationalism Reframed. Nationhood and the national question in the New Europe*, he proposes a more constructionist approach, treating groupness as something created, accidental and fluid (Brubaker, 2003: 376), something that did not necessarily happen. National identity is then an institutionalized form and practical category (Ibid: 379). National identity then is also something that is invented to serve the needs of the nation that is also invented, generated by certain political, cultural or economic spheres (Ibid: 380).

The constructionist approach is useful, especially when it comes to the issue of Czech and Slovak national identities. In the last 100 years several political projects have taken place on the Czech and Slovak territories that required slightly different national identities to be activated: either common Czechoslovak, or Slovak and Czech, or Czechoslovak (See chapter 1.1). The choice was not made by people but by the internal and external elites or, better to say, the leading elites or elites craving for power, as elites are not necessarily united. National identity is then something useful for the state, something that holds the people together without any natural connection. Brubaker's approach is even more useful as it shakes the common sense of natural distinctiveness of Czech and Slovak nations. Applying his point of view, it will not be possible to argue, as many authors do, that the Czech Republic and Slovakia as two independent countries are the natural and best solution for the two entities. As simply because there are no natural groups that shall possess natural units.

To provide evidence I would like to briefly look at one of the main features of nation – the language. Czech and Slovak languages generally have slightly different grammar, some words and most of all the pronunciation differs. In the Czech Republic there are at 7 main dialects and 7 sub-dialects, based on two slightly different bases – the Bohemian and the

Moravian which are different in pronunciation but also several words differ. Especially in Eastern Moravia, the border region with Slovakia certain sub-dialects tend to be closer to Slovak language than Czech (*Valašsko* and *Slovácko* regions), while people from other regions tend to have problems understanding it. In Slovakia there are 3 big groups of dialects, the western, the central and the eastern group, which again differ mainly in pronunciation and some words used. People using western dialect tend to have difficulties understanding the eastern one, especially certain local sub-dialects that are very close to Ukrainian, while the western, *záhorácký*, sub-dialect is very close to Czech. As Rogers Brubaker argued during his visit at CEU in Budapest: “the difference between language and dialect is that language has an army” (Brubaker, 2008). Difference is not as much a question of natural order but a question of definition of the difference and the history is loaded with various symbols, traditions and myths and therefore the project of national identity creations seems to have rather infinite sources. The constructionist approach therefore seems to be the most promising.

## 2.2. *National Identity: the Content and the ‘Other’*

From the above stated analysis it is clear that national identity may become various things for various authors. Different approaches and theoretical frameworks of the authors affect their understanding of the national identities’ content and the importance of the borders, the ‘other’ against which the national identity is shaped. The approach found in many works about Czech and Slovak nations and their national identities that counts upon common sense is indeed academically inappropriate.

For ethno-symbolists, such as Anthony Smith, who understand the nation as rooted in culture symbols, national identity is composed of cultural features inherited from the nation’s ethno-history, such as certain traditions, customs and value systems that are unique for every ethnic group that lies as the basis of a nation group. Contrary to him, modernists highlight features connected to the modern establishment of nation-states and civic values. Among

them David Miler, in his understanding national identity consists of three parts: belief (nationality exists as long as the people believe in it), historical continuity and activity, as “[n]ations are communities that do things together...” (Miller, 2000:29). According to him, activity is a very important part of the identity, distinguishing national identity from other passive identities, such as the religious one (Ibid: 29-30).

For Ernest Renan, a famous 19<sup>th</sup> century *perennialist*, national identity includes a fair amount of forgetting. Forgetting of the nations iffy chapters is, according to him, necessary (Renan, 2003:27). Interestingly enough, we can find a similar idea in the work of the constructionist, modernist, Michael Billig, who emphasizes that “[p]ast is forgotten, as it is ostensibly being recalled, but so there is parallel forgetting of the present” (Billig, 2005: 185). In other words, national identity is composed of certain versions of past and certain version of the present. However, in Renan’s understanding, the forgetting is rather a natural component of people’s memory and in Billig’s version it is a process influenced from outside.

For Rogers Brubaker, national identity would be a non-accidental content of an accidental conjunction of nation and state, a practical category including practically anything. For other constructionists, such as Raymond Grew or Ruth Wodak, it would be anything from the previous historical or cultural past, precisely chosen by the state to serve the functions it desires, for example if it needs to pursue democratic ideals, or to be reminded of the democratic traditions of the given country (if any). It seems that there is nothing as *the* content but various contents and various approaches to it. As I choose to analyze national identity in discourse, I am looking for content that is promoted by the state elites, the so to say official content as presented in the history books. At the same time I am aware that if I was analyzing different type of materials, the outcome might slightly differ.

### 2.3. *The Main Functions of National Identity*

As I have argued before, national identity is a very successful and widespread identity, therefore it is necessary to look at the sources of its success. Basically, national identities shall hold and bind the nation together, emphasizing features that connect the co-nationals and overshadowing features that differentiate them, differentiating them from the others behind the borders, emphasizing their uniqueness and specificity. The exact functions however may be various, as presented by the following works that despite taking different approaches complement each other.

According to Smith, the world is a world of nations. Identities, among them national identity, help us to place ourselves within this world and further function as legitimization of the rights and duties of legal institutions, underpin the state institutions, provide social bonds between individuals, help socialization of members of the community – community of nationals and citizens. Somehow similarly is the problem approached by Ernest Gellner. In his understanding, shared cultural basis, a necessary condition for a nation, serves as the nation's legitimization (Gellner, 2003: 405).

The fundamental function of national identity, according to Miller, is the solidarity among people that it creates (Miller, 2000:32). As he claims, national identity has a positive function as "...nationality answers one of the most pressing need of the modern world, namely how to maintain solidarity among the populations of states that are large and anonymous..." (Ibid: 31-32). Further, "[n]ationality, precisely because it aims to be an *inclusive* identity, can incorporate sub-groups in this way without demanding that they forsake everything they already hold dear" (Ibid:35).

Billig emphasizes another function of national identity, namely the possible call for ultimate sacrifice (Billig, 1995: 8). Being from the same nation, sharing the same national identity, also includes answering the call to lay down one's life for the nation. Despite the call

not being needed to be articulated and present in times of peace, in times of crisis the call is intensified. Another modernist, Eric Hobsbawm, introduced his theory of ‘invented traditions’ – flags, memorials, public ceremonies and other activities organized and invented by the elites to promote national identity. Among them are those that symbolize social cohesion and membership, those legitimizing institutions and those functioning as means of socialization (Hobsbawm, 1992: 9), which are all the functions of the current national identity.

According to the Czech and Slovak case study, I believe that the crucial function is legitimization, legitimization of the nation, or a nation state. The other functions, although they are certainly essential, such as solidarity, social cohesion and numerous others are subsequent results of the primary function. The nation or nation state ‘stands and fall’ with believe of people in its legitimacy. People are not born with national identity, they are taught to (or acquire during socialization) national identity as they are taught to other gender, ethnic, religious and other identities. In the times of crisis, the main function of national identity stays the same, but the identity itself has to be redefined, as will be seen from the analysis of Czechoslovak, Czech and Slovak history books, the change was very clear (Chapter 3).

#### ***2.4. Transmitting National Identity***

National identity is not a part of natural humans’ genetic disposition so it is endangered by forgetting. Therefore, it has to be transmitted and actively passed from generation to generation and internalized by the members of the given state. As Wodak states „national identity“... [i]s internationalized through socialization (education, politics, media, sports or everyday practice“(Wodak et al., 1999:4) is not only maintained but also shaped by „... state, political, institutional, media and everyday social practices...” (Ibid: 29).

There exist numerous ways of transmitting national identity, Renan states that nation is a daily plebiscite (Renan, 2003:34), a conscious activity, however I argue that national identity is mostly transmitted non-consciously, as described by Michael Billig (2005) and the

‘flagging theory’. Billig states that “[n]ational identity is not something which is thought to be natural to possess, but something natural to remember” (Billig, 2005: 184) and it is remembered primarily by numerous signs around us, such as flags hanging on buildings, symbols on currencies, things that we usually do not consciously perceive but that are all around us, silently reminding us of our national identity. The model example, Billig argues is the flag hanging unattended on a building. On a similar basis the national currency or national postmarks, art works even architecture also work, as Monroe Price, media theorist, highlights (Price, 1995: 40). Similarly, Eric Hobsbawm highlights the state public activities, what he calls ‘invented traditions’ such as public ceremonies, memorials, anthems etc. as efficient means of transmitting national identity (Hobsbawm, 1992).

A very effective way of targeting large audience, is also public education, newspapers (Held, 2002; Hroch, 2000; Smith, 2001), television and radio broadcasting. Public education, especially elementary and secondary schools, always have nationally tuned subjects, especially national literature, national history, civic education and even music lessons. Newspapers and television broadcasting obviously supports spreading national identity, not only because usually a large part of the news is dedicated to national news, the national news is the most detailed and the other parts of news are also nationally focused, such as sport and weather, but also because of the discourse used. Discourse (see Chapter 3), is only rarely consciously reflected, however it consists of highly important almost subliminal information. We read the newspapers or watch the news and we know that the ‘we’ in the reports are ‘we living in a particular country’; we listen to the news and know that the sentence ‘tourists arrived safely back home’ means that our co-nationals arrived back to our home country etc. We absorb the information with nationally tuned message daily from numerous resources, more or less consciously and therefore it is almost impossible to forget it.

## ***Conclusion***

From all the above stated information, it is clear that the issue of national identity is complex and difficult to analyze. However, for the purpose of the thesis, oriented towards specific Czech and Slovak national identities, I apply a more constructionist approach, stressing the role of the national elites, which, as I have argued before is the most promising. I will understand national identity as a phenomenon that is produced and reproduced by human actions, influencing and influenced by the social reality; a phenomenon that is not naturally given but constantly created and recreated. Not out of nothing, but out of the more or less available myths, historical occurrences and traditions, despite many of them may be being invented<sup>13</sup>. I will focus not only on the content but also on the ‘other’ against which every national identity is created, as there is no ‘us’ without ‘them’, which in the Czech and Slovak case is an important respect. I will focus on the most evident carrier of national identity, the public education materials and examine the ways in which is the ‘other’ created.

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<sup>13</sup> The pioneering concept of invented traditions was introduced by Eric Hobsbawm, for more information please see his remarkable work *The Invention of traditions* (1992).

### 3. Analysis

In the following chapter I provide the analysis of the chosen materials from Czechoslovakia, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Before I approach the analysis I explain the method used in this thesis.

#### *Methodology*

Because my aim is to discover the numerous ways in which the Czech and Slovak national identities were/are constructed in discourse, it is necessary to provide a brief overview of the issue.

Discourse and *discourse analysis* is a very diverse field and therefore it is quite complicated to present a definition that would be approved/agreed by most academics<sup>14</sup>. However, for the purpose of this thesis, I adopt the more or less general perception of discourse as “anything ‘beyond the sentence’” (Schiffrin, Tanne, Hamilton, 2001:1), that is primarily about the language used, as it is the language that “...provides a medium for the establishment and renegotiation of identities...” (Tilly, 1996:7), but also a process of understanding and comprehending the message by those communicating (Van Dijk, 1997: 2), because discourse is always a part of a wider social reality in which it is transmitted. Moreover, the communicators possess certain societal roles that influence their access to the discourse. Therefore it can be assumed, as Van Dijk highlights that in discourse analysis, apart from syntax, semantics and stylistics, the contextual placement and the question of power should be taken into account as well (Van Dijk, 1997:11-25). This is an important point as I will analyze school books that include only on-way communication, from the creator of the message to the receiver, which implies a clear power structure.

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<sup>14</sup> For in-depth analysis of discourse please see Deborah Schiffrin (2001:10-41).



For discourse analysis several methods may be used, such as comparative/cross-cultural, practice focused, cognitive, methods of media/communication studies or critical methods (Cotter, 2001:418-419). Among them I have chosen the critical discourse analysis (CDA) which is the most suitable for my intention to trace the identities pursued by the social actors creating the discourse, in another words, the discourse created, maintained and used by the elites to influence the perception of a certain national identity.

### **3.1.1. Critical Discourse Analysis**

CDA understands discourse as a “... practical, social and culture phenomenon [in which] language users ... accomplish social acts and participate in social interaction [that is embedded in a certain context] ...” (Van Dijk, 1997: 2). What makes CDA different from other discourse analyses is the two-sided relationship between the discourse and society, meaning that discourse is both creating and created by the social reality in which it is communicated (Fairclough, Wodak, 1997:258) and the importance of the quest for power over discourse that is highlighted by the numerous critical discourse analysts (Fairclough, Wodak, 1997; Van Dijk, 1997; Wodak et al. 1999 etc.). This implies that those who have access to discourse obtain power over it and may communicate the message they choose, but at the same time they are influenced by the social reality they are in and therefore, I assume, their power is inner-limited, or better to say it is a vicious circle/spiral. The discourse is changing but not dramatically, only in times of crucial societal changes, the power structure changes and the circle/spiral is gashed and the discourse may be changed more visibly.

CDA implies a plurality of methods and strategies that were systematically organized into three dimensions of analysis by Ruth Wodak et al. in 1999 that I will be using for my data as well. These dimensions are further closely interwoven (Wodak et al. 1999: 30) and are as follows:

- Content analysis

- Strategies
- Means and forms of realization

*Content analysis* in this case implies qualitative method of text analysis; *strategies* imply the intention of the text and at the same time the language user and *means and forms of realization* signify the linguistic features used for the purpose of the strategy. I will follow this three-model structure and will adapt the analysis to my specific data and orientation of the thesis - the creation and maintenance of difference towards other nation and therefore I will use only some of the *strategies* they propose. Primarily, the *constructive strategies* that „...attempt to construct and to establish certain national identity by promoting unification, identification and solidarity, as well as differentiation...” (Ibid: 33) and *strategies of justification* directed at justification or relativisation of the group or other groups (Ibid: 33-34).

The final dimension, *means and forms of realization*, then focuses on those syntactic devices that serve to construct unity, uniqueness, sameness and continuity or differentiation, variety and change (Ibid: 35). These are expressed by using certain styles such as „...vagueness in referential or other expressions, euphemism, linguistic hesitation and disruption, linguistic slips, allusions, rhetorical questions and the mode of discourse representation (direct or indirect, or other forms of reported speech)” (Ibid: 35-45) and metonymy, synecdoche and personification.

### **3.1.2. Selection of Materials**

For the purpose of the thesis I have chosen history school books that were published after 1993 both in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. In order to trace the change of the discourse, I have to also look at the school books that were published before 1993.

### 3.1.3. Materials from pre-1993 Period

In order to be able to trace the different discourse used in the post-breakup period, it is necessary to analyze schools books that were used before the break up and see how the Czech and Slovak national identities were then constructed. For this purpose I have chosen several books, approved by the contemporary Ministry of Education and subsequently distributed to local schools. They written both in Slovak and Czech language, published either in Slovak or in Czech state publishing houses in the following years: 1962, 1971, 1981, 1984, 1987 and 1988. Two books were in Slovak, two in Czech language and two were in Slovak but translated from Czech. They were mainly for the last grades of elementary schools and one book for secondary school, written by various contemporary authors.

### 3.1.4. Materials from the Czech Republic

School books in the Czech Republic have to be authorized by the Czech Ministry of Education. From the authorized books each school or each teacher (depends on the internal school regulations) decides which book will be used during his/her lessons.

For my analysis I have chosen mainly books for the last grades of elementary schools and one book for secondary school, one book, *Dějepis v kostce II [History snapshot II]* was is not officially authorized, but according to the recent history school books research widely used (Gracová, 2007). The books were written by different authors, such as Pavel Augusta, Marek Pečenka, Jiří Jožák and František Čapka and published in different years (1995, 1996, 1999, 2000 and 2004) by different publishing houses, such as Scientia, SPL and Práce.

### 3.1.5. Materials from Slovakia

School books in Slovakia have to be authorized by the Slovak Ministry of Education. After they obtain the authorization they are selected by each school or the history teachers according to their internal rules or decision.

For my analysis I have chosen school books both for the elementary and secondary schools. Again, one book was not authorized by the Ministry of Education but serves as a history snapshot for students in the last grade of secondary schools.

The books are written by various authors, such as L'ubomír Lipták, Anna Bocková, Eva Chylová and Róbert Letz and published in different years (1994, 1997, 2003, 2005 and 2006) by different publishing houses, such as the Orbis Pictus Itropolitana and SPN.

### **3.1.6. The Scope of the Research**

Due to the extent of the thesis I had set the boundaries of my research and not analyze the whole books from prehistoric times until presence. I will focus only on the interpretation of the following historical periods:

- The establishment of Czechoslovakia in 1918
- The establishment of independent Slovak state in 1939
- Re-establishment of Czechoslovakia after World War II
- The breakup of Czech and Slovak Federative Republic 1993

Not all the books cover all the above stated periods, some present only the period of World War I or II etc. However, I have attempted to use books that focus on the whole set of periods or unified school books series.

## **3.2. *Analysis***

The analyzed school books contain several similarities and differences when it comes to the discursive creation of Czech and Slovak national identities. Although the main difference is definitely between the before-1993 and post-1993 discourse, it has to be noted that the discourse in the books from the separate periods is also differentiated. The differentiation, however, does not have an unequivocal character of development from smaller distinction to a greater distinction between the nations, as some might expect. In the case of

post-1993 school books, the differentiation is higher than in the books from the previous period, however the differentiation within this category has only slightly growing tendency (especially in the period right after the breakup and especially in the Czech books) and is rather random. Differentiation in the pre-1993 books also show only a slightly increasing tendency that, however, does not continue over a certain border.

Interestingly, the same discursive strategies are used in both the periods, although with different frequency and intentions. In the pre-1993 period the *constructive strategies* moderately prevail, in the post-1993 Slovak books the *justification strategies* prevail and in the post-1993 Czech books the strategies used are rather balanced. Furthermore, according to detailed study of the documents, major discursive trends can be detected as seen below:

1. Stressing similarities or common approach of Czech and Slovak nations, peoples, territories, goals, intentions, fates and avoiding differences between Czech and Slovak nations, territories, politics, cultures etc. This approach can be found especially in the pre-1993 books, however it is also present in the post-1993 Czech and Slovak history books, even though rather rarely, especially in connection with certain historical events.
2. Emphasizing differences between Czech and Slovak nations, territories, politics, cultures etc. and avoiding information about the ‘other’. This approach can be found especially in the post-1993 history books, however its intensity varies in both the Czech and Slovak books. This approach is almost absent in the pre-1993, despite some examples were found too.
3. The use of ‘Czechoslovak’ or ‘Czecho-Slovak’ language, by which I mean the use of ‘Czechoslovakia’ and ‘Czechoslovak’ and its hyphenated versions as a label for the name of the country, its citizens, people, soldiers etc. It certainly served in the pre-

1993 period as an indicator of state identity, however I argue that it has additional functions too. I have defined the use of Czechoslovak language as a specific category for two reasons. Primarily because it encompasses both trends – stressing differences and similarities. And secondarily, as will be seen in the analysis of separate Czech and Slovak books Czechoslovak language and its categorization is one of the main difference of the Czech and Slovak discourses – available in Czech books, rather not-available in Slovak books and if then in the hyphenated version irrespectively on the historical period.

### 3.2.1. Similarities and Commonalities

As I have announced before it is widely used in the pre-1993 history books, although it is also somehow present in the post-1993 books. Emphasizing similar approach and common will in the pre-1993 books attains various forms, the most ‘extreme’ one can be found in the book from 1962 that almost completely disregards differences between Czechs and Slovaks. The other school books are rather moderate; however the trend is also evident. For this purpose both the *constructive* and *justification strategies* are used.

Among the *constructive strategies* the most used are the strategies of inclusion, sameness and similarity evident in the use of vague referents – when it is impossible to distinguish whether it refers to Slovak or Czech lands, peoples, such as ‘in many cities Czechoslovakia was proclaimed’ or ‘the masses’. Similarly, the use of personal pronouns – ‘our people’, ‘our soldiers’, ‘our enemies’, ‘our lands’, ‘our own homeland’, especially when talking about the establishment of the first Czechoslovakia in 1918. Interestingly the usage of toponyms (names of places) and anthroponyms (names of people) varies – either the names are left out (in order to not bring into the picture differentiation, because Czech and Slovak names are usually easy distinguishable) or brought in the picture, but balanced, meaning, that

both Czech (e.g. T.G. Masaryk, Prague, Pilsen) and Slovak names (e.g. R. Štefánik, Bratislava, Rimavská Sobota) are mentioned, although sometimes Czech names prevail.

Similarly the continuation of the nations is stressed and the differentiation between now and then, such as ‘the centurial subjection of the nations in the Austro-Hungarian Empire’ and the ‘new freedom for both the nations’ after the establishment of Czechoslovakia. Another strategy, the strategy of singularisation, emphasizing positives and idyllic relations of the nations and within the common state is obviously mainly present while describing the post-1918 situation. Similarly, the cohesion and unification and the ‘will of people’ to unite in Czechoslovakia is emphasized, such as in the following: ‘the Czech and Slovak peoples decided’, emphasized are also the fraternal links between the nations, solidarity and cooperation ‘they wanted to defend their homeland’ and their common threat – inner state minorities or neighboring countries. These entities also serve as the ‘other’ to both the nations. Sometimes it is written that Germans were a bigger threat for Czechs and Hungarians a bigger threat for Slovaks, the common problem – the common threat is emphasized. Further, among the *constructive strategies*, frequently strategies of avoidance can be found, especially when it comes to the inner crisis of the first Czechoslovakia and the establishment of the first independent Slovak state. Differences and different approaches are suppressed, information about Slovak people’s party and its representatives are left out of the picture and vague language is introduced. An attempt to ignore and avoid the events is evident also from the discourse used for the post-war period ‘crippled Czechoslovakia’, ‘Czechs and Slovaks ... fighting for it (Czechoslovakia – comment by author) again’.

On the issue of the first independent Slovak state, but not only on that, strategies of *justification supporting* are also used, especially the strategy of shifting responsibility and scapegoating – on France, United Kingdom, Munich, Hitler, Germans in Sudetenland etc. Ignored again is the inner problematic situation of the republic, the differences between Czech

and Slovak territories, ignored are the autonomist claims of certain Slovak politicians and political parties. Naturalizing metaphors and metonymies are used, such as ‘Munich meant the end’ of Czechoslovakia. Similarly, the language of ‘order’, the inability of another solution is introduced – for Czech lands and Slovakia only one possibility. The external threat also symbolizes the rationalization strategy – only one chance left and the avoidance strategy – they only did what they were told to do. Similarly, minimization is introduced – in the Czech and the Slovak part of Czechoslovakia were only ‘a few collaborators on both sides’.

To summarize, among the pre-1993 books the similarities of the two nations and their territories, is highlighted by various means, while their differences are mostly (but not always) suppressed, avoided or left out of the picture. I am aware that contemporary discourse was attached to the state identity, however in the same time it crucially influenced the mutual relationship between Czech and Slovak national identities. What seems to be the most important message of these books is that even though there might be/were/are some differences, they are rather minor and covered with the ‘common will of Czech and Slovak people’ to live together, expressed during the establishment of Czechoslovakia in 1918 and re-establishment of Czechoslovakia after World War II, which created the certain border they never cross I mentioned in the beginning of the chapter.

The similarities and commonalities between the nations and national identities are much less common in the Czech and Slovak books published after 1993. Some of the Slovak books mention the political and cultural closeness, while at the same time they emphasize different historical development. In a few books the common will of the two nations to be together and united in 1918 is emphasized. Similarly, it is stressed that both ‘Czechs and Slovaks did not agree with Munich’, however, these are rather minor arguments. Similarly in the Czech books the similarities with Slovakia and Slovaks are rather not expressed, only in a few cases during the first Czechoslovakia is stated that ‘our republic’, meaning belonging



both to Czechs and Slovaks, has the same ‘troubles’ – the neighbors. Similarly, their common goal after World War II, the punishment of Nazis and collaborators, is emphasized. The common will of exiled Czechs and Slovaks wanting the re-establishment of Czechoslovakia after the war is present both in the Czech and Slovak books. Obviously, the uniting discourse strategies in both the post-1993 sets of books are present, but are rather minor compared to the pre-1993 books. This implies that the national identities after the breakup were re-shaped and the differences between the two entities evidently distinguished. To see how they were distinguished and how they define themselves against the ‘other’ it is necessary to closely look at the strategies pursuing differentiation and the way they are used in both the Czech and Slovak books. This is the aim of the coming sub-chapter.

### **3.2.2. Differentiation**

As I have argued before, the pre-1993 books contained discursive features that served mainly to emphasize similarities and commonalities of the two nations and their national identities. The only repeated strategy I have detected in the creation of the difference was the strategy of avoidance. In some cases Slovak anthroponyms and toponyms were left out of the picture. But this tendency was rather minor and the emphasis of commonalities largely prevailed. Differentiation was then aimed usually at the other ‘others’ – Germans, Hungarians, Poles and inner minorities.

Contrary to the pre-1993 books, the books published after 1993 contained a different picture. If we leave aside the discursive creation of the content of national identity (the positive self-identification, singularization, autonomization, emphasis on unification and cohesion, legitimization, minimization and many others) and focus merely on the creation of the other, in other words, if we look solely at the relation of the two entities within the analyzed books and the *justification strategies* used, we encounter the following similarities and also differences.

Primarily, in both sets of books we encounter strategies of shifting blame and responsibility, emphasizing the difference between ‘us’ and ‘them’, such as in the Czech books describing situation before establishment of the first independent Slovak state ‘Those who were looking twenty years ago at the borders of Czechoslovakia for protection from hungarianism and bolshevism, were today tearing the republic apart’, or in the establishment of the second Slovak state ‘in Slovakia the call for independence was more and more loud’. In the Slovak books, the Czechs were mostly blamed in the same cases. Interestingly, not always was the blame shifted to the other nation as a whole, but at political representatives or political parties – in the case of Slovakia, the main traitor was identified as Beneš (2<sup>nd</sup> Czechoslovak president), Hácha (3<sup>rd</sup> Czechoslovak president, during World War II), alternatively Prague (Czech and Slovak Czechoslovak) governments, in more recent times Havel (1<sup>st</sup> Czechoslovak president after 1989); in some Czech books the traitors was Tiso (1<sup>st</sup> Slovak president) or Slovak Peoples Party and unnamed recent Slovak politicians unwilling to compromise before the 1993 breakup. However, it is necessary to mention that external influence, the other ‘others’ were emphasized as well – the Germans, the Hungarians, less the Poles and in the case of Slovakia the blame is also sometimes into the Slovak own ranks, as will be seen later.

Another strategy frequently used was trivialization, bringing into the picture co-responsibility and leveling comparison. Therefore in the Slovak books we can read about ‘employment growth’ in the first independent Slovak state before any other information, about Hácha summoning the meeting on which the independent Slovak state was established, Slovaks being forced to proclaim the autonomy, Czech politicians not willing to understand Slovak demands etc. And similarly in the Czech books the Slovaks that refused to lower the influence of church in the republic that led to the division of the state, Slovaks were culturally inferior to Czechs, Slovaks were using primitive agricultural tools in comparison to developed

Czechs, Slovak politicians were against the traditional name of the republic after 1989 etc. In most historical cases it is almost impossible to find out ‘who started what’, basically, all breaking events of the history since 1918 were described with at least partial discursive accusation of the co-responsibility of the ‘other’.

The discourse in both examples lacked balance, especially in the Slovak case, which is primarily clear from the orientation of the books – usually only on Slovakia and Slovak history, leaving aside not only information about Czechoslovakia as such, Czechs, but also the external world. The history books were mainly purely oriented towards national history, which highly influenced the content of the texts – overrepresentation of Slovak issues, versus brief information about the rest of the world. In the case of Czech books, the lack of balance is not that apparent, however the information about Czechoslovakia and Czechs partially prevails.

Another *justification strategy* used was the rationalization strategy, mainly presented in the case of the 1993 breakup. In both Czech and Slovak books was stated that there was no other possibility, only to divide the republic and finally rest. Sometimes the inability of political representatives is stated, sometimes supported by the argument that a referendum would not solve anything, as there simply was no other way. A very similar approach is used in the Slovak books in connection to the establishment of the first independent Slovak state – ‘there was no other way if Slovakia was to be saved from invaders’. Interestingly, similar language was used in some Czech books, however slightly differently – stating that ‘due to the external occurrences there was no other option for Czechoslovakia’. In both the books the external threat was emphasized as well. What is different in the Slovak case is the frequent usage of allusions and fictive scenarios (‘what would have happened if’), which are also a part of the rationalization strategy.

Another strategy used in both the sets of books was the strategy of minimization, emphasizing the small number of people who caused something. As I have argued before, in some Slovak books, Slovaks were blamed for the events during the first Slovak state. It is here where we encounter the strategy of minimization – it was just a small political group that caused everything, sometimes only two people, Slovak politicians from the period of first independent Slovakia, Tuka and Mach. Similarly in the Czech books, while addressing the so-called second Czecho-Slovak republic before the war minimization was used. Only small groups of ‘the worst demagogues and moral dregs’ were causing ‘injustice’.

Another very frequent strategy used in the books was the strategy of avoidance, basically avoiding negatives about the nation and avoiding information about the ‘other’ nation, its representatives, political parties, inner conditions etc. In the Czech books we come across Czechoslovakia and Czechs, Czech territory, Czech people and their political representatives, Slovaks and others are expressed vaguely. They are usually depersonalized or anonymous. Identically the Slovak books leave out information about the Czechs but also Czechoslovak period (as will be analyzed later).

Finally, an often used strategy is that of legitimization. In the case of the post-1993 schools books it is not only about the quotes of famous politicians and quotes from a contemporary documents, but also about the additional visual information in the books, about the choice of photos of events, such as in one Czech school book the photo from demonstration in Bratislava with people holding banners with the inscription ‘We want our Slovak state’; photos of important figures, such as in one Slovak book the photo of the pope just next to the information about the 1993 breakup; politicians – whether representatives of both or only one nation; state symbols – which flags would be put etc. Analysis of these additional visual materials would deserve much more detailed attention, however due to the limited scope of the thesis I am not able to present it.

To conclude this sub-chapter, as was seen from the numerous examples, national identities were clearly divided in the post-1993 school books. Although several similar tendencies were used to differentiate the two nations, the differentiation was not made with the same intensity and directed at the same entities – while Slovak books emphasized the differentiation from Czechs and as will be seen in the next chapter also Czechoslovaks, Czech books stressed the differentiation from Slovaks too. Further, Slovak history books were slightly less balanced when it comes to the content of the information, usually lacking Czech and Czechoslovak part during the times of common history, also more examples *justification strategies* were found, especially the rationalization strategy aimed at justification of certain historical events.

### 3.2.3. ‘Czechoslovak’ and ‘Czecho-Slovak’ Language

Czechoslovak language is, apart from an indicator of Czechoslovak state identity, a substitution of differences and similarities between the nations covered by the uniform term ‘Czechoslovak’. The use of Czechoslovak and Czecho-Slovak language is obviously present in the pre-1993 period, as Czechoslovakia was the official name of the state and as Hroch (2000) would argue, it served as a basis for creation of the state identity, which is certainly the case. However, I believe that in the discourse it also symbolizes the willingness or unwillingness to present the similarities and differences between the Czech and Slovak nations and their territories. Moreover, the use of the hyphen between Czech and Slovak is, according to my findings, also important and reflects not only the proper historical name (Chapter 1.1), but also the approach towards the two nations<sup>15</sup>.

In the pre-1993 period Czechoslovak language was used without the hyphen for all the historical periods in both books written in Czech and Slovak. The use of it was semi-frequent,

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<sup>15</sup> The issue of the hyphen in the name of the republic was a part of the post-1989 political negotiations between Czech and Slovak representatives. Slovak representatives favored the hyphen version, Czech representatives the version without hyphen. In the end compromise name was adopted, The Czech and Slovak Federative Republic.

such as ‘Czechoslovak people decided’ or ‘Czechoslovak soldiers wanted to defend’ and as an element of the *constructive strategies*, it expressed the singularity and unification of the goals and intentions of the named, but closely unidentified Czech and Slovak peoples. In other words, it significantly supplemented the discursive features used for the emphasis of similarity during the pre-1993 period as analyzed previously in this chapter.

Czechoslovak language was also significant in the Czech school books, both as a part of *justification* and *constructive strategies*, usually without hyphen, only rarely with the hyphen and only while addressing the proper historical period. Within the *justification strategies*, we come across legitimization strategies, using quotes, such as ‘Czechoslovak people your dream has come truth’ and full maps of Czechoslovakia. Within the *constructive strategies* we come across the unification strategies, such as expressing the ‘will of Czechoslovak people to unify’, ‘Czechoslovak ideas of borders’ or unification strategies such as emphasizing the common external threat. Further, the picture of Czechoslovakia was expressed in positively connotated words, the use of naturalizing metaphors and personifications was quite frequent, similarly to the idyllic depiction of Czechoslovakia as such. In several books is it emphasized the voluntary junction of Czechs and Slovaks in Czechoslovakia, in few, however, the will of Czech people is stressed as opposite to the will of Slovak political representatives. Sometimes also the utility of Czechoslovakia is stressed.

Contrary to the Czech books, the Slovak books provide quite a different picture and more or less differentiate Slovakia from Czechoslovakia and Slovaks from Czech and Slovak Czechoslovaks. Almost uniformly the hyphen version is used and not only for the historically correct periods. Czechoslovakia is usually framed in negatively connotated words, use of shifting of blame – ‘peoples would fight, but the Czechoslovak government was against’, minimization ‘Slovakia was only the wedge to break Czechoslovakia’, maps in the books included only Slovakia. Similarly the toponyms and anthroponyms were only Slovak.

Czechoslovak was almost never used as an adjective addressing a group of people, not even in the times of Czechoslovakia and if then almost exclusively with the hyphen. According to my findings, the hyphen in these cases was not meant to unify, but express the difference between the Czechs and Slovaks.

To conclude, Czechoslovak language before 1993 was on one side way to veil the differences between Czechs and Slovaks (whatever they are) and in the same time it was way to create state 'Czechoslovak' state identity (Mišková, Rak, 2000; Suda, 1995). In Czech post-1993 books it was used as a strategy of similarity and avoiding differences between Czechs and Slovaks, preventing negatives of the Czechoslovak era in connection to Czechs and Slovaks and neglecting demands and requirements of Slovaks, but it also symbolizes the state continuity. In Slovak books it was used as a strategy of dissimilarity, stressing the differences and signifying the oppression of Czechoslovaks (without hyphen) and Czechs caused on Slovaks during the years of coexistence in one state. Moreover it symbolizes the dissimilation from the previous multi-national state, Czechoslovakia.

## Conclusion

The chapter has shown that the discursive creation of Czech and Slovak national identities has significantly changed after the 1993 breakup, while using the same discursive strategies. In the pre-1993 period, similarities and commonalities were emphasized. The most important, I believe, is the common will of the two nations to be together, that at the same served as a basis for the contemporary state Czechoslovak identity. The post-1993 discourse emphasized the opposite. Especially in the Slovak case national identity was created not only towards the Czechs as the other nation, but also against Czechoslovak as the other state. Although the Czech national identity was created against Slovak, the opposition was not always that sharp, and it did not differentiate itself from the previous Czechoslovak state identity so sharply.

The analysis also provided answers for the two subsequent questions of the thesis, namely: **Which** instruments were used in the discursive construction of Czech and Slovak national identity and **How** can the process be traced in Czechoslovak, Czech and Slovak school books? As was seen from the analysis numerous discursive instruments were used, such as minimization, trivialization, scapegoating, shifting of responsibilities, avoiding, lack of balance etc. Interestingly, the same strategies were used in all three sets of books, those written before 1993 and both Czech and Slovak written after 1993. The use of those instruments unveiled the process of national identities construction in the discourse.



## Conclusions

The aim of the thesis was to unveil the process of creation and recreation of Czech and Slovak national identities after the breakup of Czech and Slovak Federative Republic and subsequent establishment of two independent states, the Czech Republic and Slovakia in 1993. Although number of authors writing about Czech and Slovak relations is relatively high, most of the works contained three major difficulties – they took national identity as granted, they focused only on the pre-1993 period and described only one part of the picture – either Czech or Slovak national identity. This thesis fulfilled the gaps and provided a well structured analysis of the issue of national identity in general and a comparative analysis of post-1993 Czech and Slovak national identities' discourse that unveiled the changes in national identities.

National identities as powerful collective identities of contemporary world deserve a lot of attention. As I have argued in the theoretical chapter, the complexity of national identities' issue and possible approaches towards it are almost indefinite, however in the case of Czech and Slovak national identities the constructionist approach seemed to be the most promising. The numerous changes of political settings and regimes in the last 100 years and subsequent redefinition of the identities is certainly a strong argument against primordialist and perennialist theories that understand national identity as something immemorial, unchanging or as a part of either natural order. Similarly, the ethno-symbolist theories with the lack of interest in the present situation somehow fail to explain the numerous changes of national identities on the Czech and Slovak territories. Therefore I adopted the constructionist approach as presented in the works of Wodak (1999) or Brubaker (2003).

The materials chosen for the discourse analysis were the history school books published before and after the 1993 breakup. As I argued in the theoretical chapter concerning

national identity, educational materials are one of the most efficient ways how to communicate/transmit messages, in this case national identity, to the widest public possible.

By the means of the analysis two major questions of the thesis, namely: to **what** extent was the national identity of Czechs and Slovaks defined against the other one? **How** was/is the ‘new other’ created? were answered and subsequently the four major expectations were either approved, partly approved or disapproved.

Concerning the extent of ‘othernesses’ between the Czech and Slovak national identities after the breakup in 1993, from the above stated analysis it is clear that construction of Czech and Slovak national identities has significantly changed. The school books published before 1993 almost univocally supported the inner closeness of both the nations. The ‘other’ was usually defined as German, Hungarian, to smaller extent Pole or minority member (in the period 1918-1939 usually Sudeten German). Interestingly, the ‘other’ was never characterized as Austrian or Ruthenian/Russian, nor Roma or Jew. Which, I believe is partly caused by the limited scope of the thesis and by the choice of the historical periods that were analyzed in the schools books. I believe that it would be interesting to pursue this topic further in later researches.

On the contrary to the pre-1993 books, the post-1993 books emphasized differences between Czechs and Slovaks and frequently created national identities against each other, although not with the same intensity. The Slovak national identity was created mostly against Czechs and interestingly also against Czechoslovaks, both Czech and Slovak Czechoslovaks, which is something that was completely missing in the secondary literature concerning Slovak national identity. Slovak national identity in the analyzed documents is also not that evidently created against Hungarians, as Kusý suggests (Kusý, 1997), which however might be again caused by the scope of my research. Concerning the Czech national identity, it was created against the Slovak, as Brodský (2004) and Holý (1997) argue, however the delimitation was

not always that sharp. Other ‘others’ are mentioned; however the Czechoslovak other is not present in the discourse. This also corresponds to the ideas of Hroch (2000) and others that Czech national identity does not differentiate itself from the Czechoslovak state identity and I would add as much as the Slovak identity does.

As was said before, it is important to emphasize that the ‘other’ is not uniformly created in all the pre- and post-1993 books, but that there are certain differences, some books tend to accentuate the difference and compare the two, while other tend to leave out the ‘other’ and concentrate rather on the content of the national identity.

To answer the question, how is the new ‘other’ created; I think it is evident that the ‘other’ in all the analyzed books is created with the same discursive strategies. Mostly used strategies are shifting of blame, trivialization, minimization, legitimization and other strategies as well. More interestingly, the ‘other’ is also created via a hyphen in the Slovak discourse that is used irrespectively of the proper name of the republic in the given period. More over it is important to stress out that in the analyzed books not only the discourse created closeness or distance of the two entities, but also the visual materials used. The choice of pictorial material, the choice of maps (In Slovak books prevailingly Slovakian territory only, even in the chapters about Czechoslovakia, in Czech books the whole maps including division between Bohemia, Moravia, Slovakia and Carpathian Ruthenia while addressing the same period.), the choice of photos and dates on the improvised calendars would deserve more attention than the scope of this thesis enables.

It is also evident which expectations based on the preliminary study of secondary literature can be approved – the expectation of differentiation of Czech and Slovak national identity after the breakup, which was obviously correct as the differentiation occurred in the discourse after 1993 was substantive. The expectation concerning the different strength of mutual delimitation of national identities can be also approved as the analysis unveiled. The

third expectation concerning the construction of the given national identities towards other 'others' can be partly approved too, although this trend was in the studied materials only rather minor. The last expectation concerning the changeless relation between Czech and Slovak national identity did not appear to be right.

It is also necessary to point out the limitations and possible weaknesses of the study, primarily, the choice of materials and the historical periods. As I have argued elsewhere in the thesis, the choice of materials up to certain level influences the outcomes of the analysis. Similarly, if the choice of periods was different, the outcomes would also slightly differ (especially in the case of other 'others'). However, I believe that even if the sources were different, the main trends will be very similar (Taking into account the function of national identity as presented in chapter 2).

I have two final remarks. As was seen from the historical overview and the analysis, it seems to be obvious that there is nothing as natural and inevitable direction of history, nothing as naturally possessed national identity and nothing as unambiguously discursively articulated national identity. In the pre-1993 period similarities between Czechs and Slovaks were largely reminded, in the post-1993 the differences prevailed and similarities somehow disappeared from the picture. One might argue that the sudden change was caused by the actual change of national identity in the real world; however the timing of the change seems to refer to opposite process. As I have argued in the first sentences of this thesis, people were silent receivers of the 1993 breakup and as sociologic research indicate mostly against the split of the republic. Therefore it seems more likely that the change of national identity did not precede the breakup. Similarly the change of discourse occurred only after 1993. Therefore, I argue that both the pre and post-1993 relations of Czech and Slovak national identities are primarily constructed to assist and legitimize the contemporary regimes. The proximity and distance are produced not natural.

This leads me to my final remark. Although I am convinced that the change of national identities was primarily a question of legitimization of the new political setting and new regime, it has to be noted that the 'return to the nation' after the fall of communism was a more complex issue. The post 1989 transformation encompassed both economic and social transformation of society, economic was characterized by liberation of prices and markets, growth of competition on labor markets, rationalization of production, relocation of sources, privatization of many state enterprises, reduction of purchasing power (Potůček, 1999), increase of salary conditions in certain occupations and decrease in others and social transformation mainly by change of social benefits and the social system. Therefore, after the initial optimism and rise of hopes, many people were negatively influenced by these changes, unemployment was growing, their lifestyle was decreasing, and values were being disrupted. In this overall situation of uncertainty, nation was 'disposable' as a source of values, positive historical examples and stability in the unstable times.

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