MILAN HRUBEŠ AND JIŘÍ NAVRÁTIL *

Constructing a Political Enemy: Anti-Communist Framing in the Czech Republic Between 1990 and 2010

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* [milan.hrubes@uhk.cz] (Department of Political Science, University of Hradec Králové; Institute of Sociological Studies, Charles University); [jiri.navratil@econ.muni.cz] (Masaryk University)

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Abstract

The Communist era and its legacy became an important part of Czech (political) culture and identity after 1989. This phenomenon is especially powerful in relation to the meaning making of the communist era after 1989 and the way Czechs are getting over it. Labels such as *communist*, *Bolshevik*, *normalization, nationalization of property* and many others related to the communist era became powerful vehicles for stigmatization and creating a public enemy in almost any sphere, be it political, show business, or public. What makes it especially powerful is that the cultural and historical legacies (understood as deliberately propagated representations of selected fragments of the group's past), when expressed explicitly, offer models of or for behaviour and thinking. In other words, public memory is often one of the constitutive factors of contentious and politically motivated mobilizations undertaken by different actors like political parties, social movements or individual agents when seeking public support or legitimacy, or just aiming to achieve their goals. In post-communist countries these actors often strive to mobilize participants, supporters or even opponents using legacies of the Communist past. In this text we seek to uncover how various situations, events or people are constructed as public enemies by using the communist legacy. In particular, we ask the following questions: How is anti-communist framing constructed and how does anti-communist framing resonate with popular images and understanding of Communism, the Communist era in the Czech Republic and related matters? We analyse anti-communist framing (i.e. directly or indirectly identify the situation, adversaries, institutions or activities with the Communist regime) and via constructing metaphors provide readers with deep understanding of how particular Communist legacies in specific contexts create public enemies who lose sympathy and support from the public.

Keywords: Anti-communism; Post-communism; Framing; Political Claims; Czech Republic.

(1) Introduction

Public memory is often one of the constitutive factors of contentious and politically motivated mobilizations undertaken by different actors, be they political parties, social movements or individual agents when seeking public support or legitimacy, or just trying to achieve their goals. In post-communist countries, these actors often strive to mobilize participants, supporters or even opponents using legacies of the Communist past. In other words, mobilization implies imposing a particular understanding of the situation and consequent agency related to the shared definition of history. Interrelation between memory, the past and its symbols, and contemporary collective action has been subjected to social science inquiry (e.g. Edy, 2006; Harris, 2006; Meyer, 2006; Polletta, 2006; Zelizer, 2008; Mayer, 2014), however, there is still only a small number of studies dealing specifically (and at least partly) with anti-communist framing in post-communist countries (e.g. Sükösd, 1999; Eyal et al., 2001; Gjuričová et al., 2011; Koubek and Polášek, 2013), especially those showing how anti-communist framing is used to label political opponents as public enemies, no matter what they promote.

In this paper we provide an analysis of anti-communist framing used during mobilizations in the Czech Republic after 1989. We understand anti-communist framing as directly or indirectly identifying the situation, adversaries, institutions or activities with the Communist regime. Our goal is to analyse and provide thorough understanding of the way anti-communist framing was used during the peak years of various mobilizations in the Czech Republic to construct the meaning of political opponents as public enemies. We want to answer following question: How is anti-communist framing constructed and how does this anti-communist framing resonate with popular images and understanding of Communism, the Communist era in the Czech Republic and related matters so it constructs the meaning of political opponents as public enemies?

In our analysis we proceed as follows: first, we outline our theoretical framework consisting of constructivist aspects of collective action. Second, we introduce our data and methods. Third, we analyse anti-communist framing in four selected years to see how it was constructed, on what occasions it was used, and how it has changed over time. Finally, we draw conclusions from our analysis and discus further implications.

(2) Framing political protest

Since the 1980s, social movement scholars and researchers have focused their attention on framing tasks when trying to understand why certain social movements are successful in attracting new supporters while others are not. In particular, the major question of social movements' research focused on when arguments used by social movements were accepted by those who were not involved in their activities. The framing concept in social movement research is basically associated with the frame alignment process originally proposed by David Snow and his colleagues. They define frame alignment as the 'linkage of individual and SMO interpretive orientations, such that some set of individual interests, values and beliefs and SMO

activities, goals, and ideology are congruent and complementary' (Snow et al., 1986: 464) while borrowing Goffman's concept of frame – 'schemata of interpretation of a kind that can be called primary... ... one that is seen as rendering what would otherwise be a meaningless aspect of a scene into something that is meaningful' (Goffman, 1974: 21). In other words, this means that social movements' activists strive for providing such explanations of given situations so that what they say and how they say it corresponds to the recipients' belief and serves as an incentive to action in various situations. In this sense, framing is a strategic activity which is applied by social movements' activists to mobilize potential adherents and bystanders or demobilize antagonists. As these activities are sometimes successful and sometimes not, the core question is: why are people sometimes mobilized and sometimes not; and under what conditions does the social movements' framing resonate within the recipients (Snow and Benford, 1988: 198)?

These questions are central to the frame resonance concept. Frame resonance refers to 'conjunction of the frame content and ideational elements present in the wider cultural milieu' (McCammon, 2013: 525), while 'the higher the degree of the frame resonance, the greater the probability that the framing effort will be relatively successful' (Snow et al., 1986: 477). Thus social movements' activists are exposed to a continuous struggle for making their framing resonant with the recipients. They invoke dominant ideas embedded in culture, myths, narratives, ideology as well as certain values and beliefs to appeal to potential adherents. These could be seen as components of the tool kit (Swindler, 1986). In this sense, culture is understood as public symbols which display system of meanings and that are external to the minds of particular individuals. Social movements' activists select different pieces of the tool kit to give meaning to their demands and action (Swindler, 1986: 277). Meaning itself is defined as a context here, as are the other practices in which the component is embedded. The task of the activists is then to identify e.g. a text or symbol, and then situate it in the rich web of associated cultural practices, beliefs, social structural realities and others that allow its recipients to find it meaningful (Swindler, 1995: 28). This is exactly the case for using Communist legacy (anti-communist) framing. Choosing symbols of the Communist era, be they slogans, labels, texts or banners and using them in post-communist countries, e.g. the Czech Republic, in various situations might resonate quite well because of the presence of anti-communism as a part of the cultural hegemony in the way Gramsci conceptualized it (Koubek, Buben and Polášek, 2012: 58-64).

The Communist era and its legacy is an important part of the Czech (political) culture and identity after 1989. Generally, anti-communism has only rarely become the object of systematic empirical reflection in post-socialist societies. Anti-communist rhetoric has been conceptualized as a political strategy of the new political elite against both hard-line communist bureaucrats and communist technocrats negotiating the political transition, which conflated all actors into the one and interpreted socialism as 'not only as a failure, but a Gulag' (Eyal et al., 2000: 130-131). Similarly, Gjuričová et al. have illustrated how the anti-communist sentiments and framing have been part of the process of the establishment of post-1989 political traditions and the images of the past, which was 'in no way arbitrary or accidental' (Gjuričová et al., 2011: 382). In other words, the process of the establishment of political anti-communism was

determined by both the historical development of political elites and community, and by pragmatic political decisions (ibid.). In the Czech Republic, the phenomenon of anti-communism is especially powerful in relation to the meaning making of the Communist era after 1989 and the way Czechs are getting over it. Labels such as *Communist*, *Bolshevik*, *normalization, nationalization of property* and many others related to the Communist era became powerful vehicles for stigmatization in almost any sphere; be it a political, cultural, business, or generally the public sphere. What makes it especially powerful is that the cultural and historical legacies (understood as deliberately propagated representations of selected fragments of the group's past), when expressed explicitly, offer models of or for behaviour and thinking (Kubik, 2003: 319). These legacies expressed by: 'symbols, stories, rituals, world views which people may use in varying configurations to solve different kinds of problems' (Swindler, 1986: 273), are also used to: 'stake positions in power struggles and to exercise power over others by redefining (or attempting to redefine) the world for them' (Kubik, 2003: 321). Carefully selected cultural and historical legacies then become important elements of the political struggle because they frame demands and activities in a resonant way. In other words, they might be used to construct a quite complex image of a public enemy.

To sum up, the post-communist context in the Czech Republic gives clear meaning to Communist legacy frames and framing used by activists when seeking support or trying to delegitimize political opponents. From the activist's point of view this way of framing seems to be a rational and pragmatic choice because it raises the chances that the framing will be highly resonant and successful, at least during some periods of political development.

(3) Data and methods

This paper draws on the news reports retrieved from the electronic archives of The Czech News Agency (ČTK) between 1990 and 2010. These reports refer to protest events (mobilizations) defined as gatherings of at least three people convened in a public space in order to make claims that bear on the interests of an institution/collective actor. Only real episodes of collective action are included; threats of resorting to collective action, such as strike warnings, were excluded. At the same time these mobilizations had to incorporate some anti-communist feature or symbol, which was identified based on two criteria: first, news reports had to contain at least one of certain words[1] (communist, totalitarian, KSČM/KSČ,[2] estébák/STB,[3] Bolshevik, comrade, normalization, 1950s,[4] nationalization of property, 1989 and November[5]). Consequently, these notions of Communism were analysed and further validated in terms of their reference to direct or indirect identification of the situation, adversaries,

[1] As well as its modifications.
[2] KSČM refers to the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia which is in fact the former Communist Party of Czechoslovakia which ruled until the Velvet revolution in 1989.
[3] STB refers to pre-1989 state security service (counterintelligence), formal part of state uniformed forces including police. Estébák is a slang expression for state security agent.
[4] 1950s refers to the period of the totalitarian socialist regime in Czechoslovakia in the 1950s.
[5] Both 1989 and November refer to the Velvet revolution.

institutions or activities with the Communist regime. It means that we proceeded with reports containing only anti-communist framing no matter in which kind of protest event they appeared. If the news reports met both criteria they were included. Finally, the sample consisted of 81 protest events where anti-communist framing was employed.

Frame analysis was carried out in the peak years of the protest events where anti-communist frames were present in order to increase variability of data and validity of our analysis. Peak years are the years in which protest events in which anti-communist frames were present were the most frequent. These peak years were: 1991, 1997, 2000 and 2006. First we proceeded with the news/reports retrieved form the electronic archives of The Czech News Agency that were identified by the coders as events with anti-communist framing (for the definition of anti-communist framing see above). We checked these news/reports once again and excluded those that did not provide rich material for framing analysis. In this way we identified events where anti-communist framing was used in the years under study. Then we searched for these events in the electronic archive of Czech Anopress IT media database,[6] specifically in the newspapers with nationwide coverage. We collected news/reports related to these events where anti-communist framing was identified to extend the corpus for frame analysis.[7] The corpus then comprised 70 news/reports in total, covering all the analysed events. Within the frame analysis we focused on identifying various micro-frames that constitute an anti-communist master frame and on identifying the core framing tasks: diagnostic and prognostic (Benford and Snow, 1988; 2000).[8] By diagnostic task we understand identification of a problem and the attribution of blame and causality; by prognostic framing, suggesting solutions to the defined problem and also identifying strategies, tactics and targets, in other words, what is to be done (Benford and Snow 1988: 200-203). Reconstructed micro-frames are then contextualized and explained in terms of their contribution to constructing the target of the protest as a public enemy by using specific meanings related to the Communist era.

We analysed framing in two steps. First we identified what the problem was (diagnostic framing) and who is responsible for it (prognostic framing). Basically, we used coding for this (see Donati, 1992; Koenig 2004). Then we (re)constructed a conceptual metaphor that gives meaning (as well as a name) to the micro-frame. Here we draw on the experiences and methods of Yanow, who links metaphors and metaphorical concepts to the concept of framing (Van Hulst and Yanow, 2014; Yanow, 1996). Constructing the conceptual metaphor proceeded as follows: because conceptual metaphors need not necessarily be part of ordinary language, we had to identify them with the aid of metaphorical expressions. These are defined as linguistic expressions (e.g. words, phrases, sentences, etc.) that we use regularly in our everyday language without assigning any usual meaning/significance to them (Lakoff, 1993: 203, 209). Therefore, we searched for these expressions. Based on them we

[6] There are no news/reports available for the year 1991 in electronic archive of Anopress IT, since the archive collects news /reports only since the year 1996.

[7] Texts retrieved from this source were mostly helpful in contextualizing protest events under study.

[8] We did not opt for motivational framing because of its contested conceptualization and lack of rich text data to retrieve it from.

(re)constructed conceptual metaphors. Individual metaphorical expressions are the expressions that refer to the source system. It is thus not possible to focus solely on the expressions that we find in a text, but rather it is always necessary to think about and interpret the given expressions in the sense of how they form a particular system. This is because it is not just individual aspects but the entire system that is conveyed, even though in a given instance it may be only individual aspects that are mentioned.

(4) Understanding the anti-communist mobilizing grievances

As mentioned above, we focus on the peaks of anti-communist mobilization in particular years, starting with 1991. Analytically we can differentiate between the protests that took place in the year 1991 based on their focus. There were two categories. The first one was protest concerning foreign affairs, the other one oriented on domestic affairs, specifically on the post-1989 political situation in Czechoslovakia.

(4.1.) The year 1991: Communism persevering

(4.1.1.) 'Communism against nation'

Protest events concerning foreign affairs related to two incidents that occurred in 1991. The first one was the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait (Iraq-Kuwait War) and the second one was the January set of events in Lithuania. In both cases, diagnostic framing identified the problem as an invasion by a foreign state (Iraq and the Soviet Union) of some other, independent (ethnic) nation state. These states were blamed for unjustified and illegal intervention in independent states.[9] In terms of prognostic framing, suggested solutions consisted of declaring solidarity with the affected states and of addressing declarations of disagreement with the intervention by the intervening states. In fact, there was no call for any direct act; rather it was an appeal for declaring disagreement with such an act of intervention.

In all these protest events the activists framed both incidents with the label *1968 intervention/occupation*:

> *'Remembering of inauspicious and tragic consequences of military intervention in Czechoslovakia in the year 1968, we declare our categorical disagreement with violating sovereignty [...]'* (ČTK, 15.1.1991)

They tried to persuade people to understand ongoing incidents as the intervention/occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968 by the states of Warsaw pact, well known as the Prague Spring. To understand why they did so, we need to look at the meaning of the Prague Spring in the early 1990s as well as the context.

Czechoslovakia in 1991 was a state that has only recently gained its independence from the Soviet Union and started its democratization process. Although in the year 1991 Czechoslovakia was making huge progress both in terms of

[9] Lithuania declared independence early in the year 1990, although formally still remaining part of the Soviet Union.

domestic development as well as in terms of its *return to Europe,*[10] there were still Soviet troops present in Czechoslovakia. They entered Czechoslovakia in 1968 to secure the *normalization*, that is the restoration of the leading role of the Communist party and eliminate contra-revolutionists. Presence of these troops still reminded Czechoslovaks of their former affiliation to the Communist bloc and kept them to a certain amount uncertain about the final result of the Velvet Revolution.[11]

The meaning of the Prague Spring and the invasion by the Warsaw pact troops enables us to understand this particular use of the 1968 micro-frame. According to Holubec (2015: 132-135), the Prague Spring became a much discussed issue in 1991 and 1992, involving emotional debates between its sympathizers and opponents about its essence and its legacy. The Prague Spring was perceived as an era attempting significant democratization driven by a part of the political and cultural elites and supported by most of the citizens as well as the media. This was a dominant meaning of the Prague Spring in Czechoslovak society even though anti-communists were trying to portray it as a clash between two oppositional wings within the Communist party (Holubec, 2015: 205). In this context, the Soviets were perceived as the ones who intervened and stopped the national democratization process and secured the restoration of Communist Party dominance from abroad. Thus they were seen as the first agent of the following era of normalization, which is considered as one of the most unjust and painful eras of Czech (and Slovak) history. To get the full understanding of this particular frame, we need to look at how people perceived Communism at that time. Holubec (2015: 125) found out that shortly after the Velvet Revolution the label *Communism* was associated with adjectives like: insane, perverse, outrageous, blinded and substantives like: juggernaut, decay, gutter, utopia, experiment, genocide, oppression, cancer, epidemic, totality and dictatorship. Moreover, after the Communist reign Czechoslovakia was characterized as economically destroyed, physically devastated and morally ill. The discourse on Communism has been homogenized, although some aspects of its components have been stressed in different phases of the post-1989 development in Czechoslovakia and later in the Czech Republic (Holubec, 2015: 129).[12]

Interpreting the above mentioned incidents in terms of the Prague Spring aimed at describing the situation in Kuwait and Lithuania as highly unjust and to describe the situation in terms of morality. It might be indicated by the public attitude towards Russia, which turned from negative to very negative after the January events in Lithuania (Holubec, 2015: 199).

[10] *Return to Europe* was one of the main slogans of the Velvet Revolution in 1989. The meaning of this slogan was to adopt western – democratic traditions again as well as to become part of the ongoing European integration process that later resulted in establishing of the European Union.

[11] The departure of the Soviet troops was a long-lasting process that started early during the transition in 1989 and finished in summer 1991.

[12] We will continuously further elaborate on this in the following paragraphs introducing micro-frames.

(4.1.2.) 'Communist conspiracy'

Protests events framed in terms of *Communist conspiracy* were directed mostly at the then Czechoslovak and Czech governments. These institutions were diagnosed as the problematic elements causing poor social conditions for many Czechs, while the prognostic framing called on the governments to resign immediately and stressed calling early elections.

The *Communist conspiracy* micro-frame was used in a political contest to gain support for oppositional parties and movements. Activists who were using this way of framing tried to construct the image of the situation then as a *de facto* continuation of the Communist regime with only minor changes in the political elite. During protest meetings they called governmental officials' names and associated them directly with the Communist party or State Security service, spoke about revolutionary Civic Forum (Občanské fórum, OF) officials as crypto-communists, accused court and state officials of being former Communists and accused journalists of being the servants of the new totality:

> *'[Benda] stated that secret collaborators of State Security not only live among us but also work in various positions. According to him they are even still tasked by both former and contemporary rulers both from within and outside the state and the slow work of the cabinets, Parliament, and the bad performance of the media are due to these people. As Václav Benda said, it is possible to forgive but first it is necessary to disable and defeat the enemies.'* (ČTK, 25.2. 1991).

They constructed the reality as totally penetrated by the Communists and the change of the regime in 1989 as an illusion imposed by the then governmental politicians. What was tacitly implied was the activists' self-portrait of the only reformists and democrats in Czechoslovakia.

There are two important factors that provide understanding of this way of framing, besides the abovementioned associations of Communism that were established in the early 1990s and persisted over time. The first one is the context of the starting process of extensive economic reforms (e.g. small privatization) and further institutional changes that initiated tangible social stratification clearly differentiating between what would later at the end of 1990s be called the losers and the winners of the transformation process. Losers in the context of the transformation meant people who were willing to change the regime and expecting that their economic and social status would increase after that, but who had not succeeded and struggled with their economic situation and social status. These comprised the target audience of mainly (extreme) right parties and movements (Mareš, 2000: 164) concerning e.g. Coalition for Republic – Republican Party of Czechoslovakia (SPR-RČS), a party considered as extreme right-wing populist and nationalist. The other factor was one of the prevailing discourses which dominated in early post 1989 development, the year 1991 included. This discourse was radically critical of the Velvet Revolution, calling it a *puppet theatre* and a *huge deception* on the Czech nation orchestrated by the Communists from the backstage (Holubec, 2015: 196-197). This was enabled also by the pressure from parties, movements as well as individuals,

who started to express strong dissatisfaction with the Communist era settlement (Holubec, 2015: 128). This discourse opened an opportunity for *Communist conspiracy* framing as it made use of discontent to amplify the frame.

(4.1.3.) 'Communist Disease'

Within the discourse of the discontent we identified another micro-frame which we called *Communist disease*. The problem was seen in that people affiliated with the Communist regime were still holding important offices as well as having influence in business. Prognostic framing very clearly stated that these people must be removed from these positions and they must lose their influence. Generally, some form of 'cleansing' or 'curing' the politics and society from Communism was proposed. This included also a ban on the Communist party and punishing its members guilty of 'crimes of Communism'. The *Communist disease* micro-frame was constructed with the use of labels such as: State Security, Communists, de-bolshevisation; adjectives like: criminal and totalitarian and verbs like remove, clear away, destroy and cleanse. The idea of Communism and its advocates were presented as annoying insects...:

> *'Miroslav Macek mentioned the problem of the existence of the Communist Party. He said that Communists are clothes moths and it is not possible to eliminate them one by one but it is necessary to create such an environment that is unfriendly to moths.' (ČTK 25.2. 1991)*

... or something thoroughly inhuman, lethal and destructive:

> *'Over the last year and a half the devastation of the Czechoslovak Republic continued; it has destroyed everything that was not destroyed by the Communists and it is high time to stop the raging of the Communist State Security-Civic Forum's clique.'* (ČTK, 6.4. 1991)

Although people who were labelled by the activists as *Communists* were not directly associated with the parasites or destruction, the way they were described together with the actual discourse gave them the meaning of the disease that must be cured. It was because of one particular meaning that the Communist era was given after 1989. This was the meaning of an illness, which destroyed almost all values of all of us (Holubec, 2015: 125). The link is then obvious. Former Communist officials and State Security agents were seen as bacteria or viruses that caused and fed the disease. 'Normal' people – meaning everyone else – were seen rather as the victims and those paralyzed by this disease (Communism) (cf. Blaive, 2011: 164).

(4.2.) Year 1997: Communism reloaded

(4.2.1.) 'Communism as a zombie'

While the framing of the year 1991 was influenced by the reverberation and the discourse of the Velvet Revolution, the anti-communist framing in 1997 was significantly influenced by the development of the political sphere as well as the economic situation. Expectations of the citizens were quite high concerning both political and economic development and when the first serious crisis came, the disappointment of the citizens quickly deepened and the responsibility for this situation needed to be attributed to someone or something. This was the case of the *Communism as a zombie* framing which was present in the framing of the protest events in the year 1997:

> *'He arrived in a 1950s jeep with People's Militias symbols, equipped with a cannon, a machine gun and other tools of the 'armed fist of the working class'. The aim of this parade was to 'show the people what it felt like then and how it could maybe even come back again if the Communist Party won again.'* (ČTK, 1.5. 1997)

This quote illustrates how using labels such as *Communist* were used to construct the meaning of an opponent who is not legitimate and eligible for discussion. This construction was enabled by the discourse that was accepted shortly after the revolution by the majority.

It promoted the idea that the exact opposite of socialism (Communism) was the best for society (Holubec, 2015: 255). In the Czech Republic, this 'best for society' was represented by conservative political parties, mainly Civic democrats (ODS) led by Václav Klaus. He used the anti-communist rhetoric strategically as a political manoeuvre (Blaive, 2011: 164) to gain political support as could be seen in the following Klaus quotation commenting on the situation when people criticized his politics:

> '*I don't believe that these men were rattling keys [...]*' (ČTK 2. 6. 1997)[13]

Communism as a zombie framing was also used by ordinary people or people who did not participate in politics. This is a significant change in comparison to the year 1991. It was also manifested in prognostic and diagnostic framing. Diagnostic framing shows that the way public institutions (courts, police, etc.) acted was perceived as a problematic aspect of the democratic functioning of the state. This was so in one

[13] Rattling keys in the demonstrations against the communist regime during the 1989 revolution in Czechoslovakia – meaning 'this is the end of story, Communists should go' became one of the symbols of the Velvet Revolution. Generally, this rhetoric further illustrates another important aspect of anti-communism, which is its exclusivism. Similar practices such as the isolation of the Communist party in parliamentary politics have soon become embedded in the broader society and culture thus creating a 'second society' with explicit – but allegedly immoral and illegitimate - nostalgia for the era of socialism or some of its features.

legal case in which a publisher was accused of propagation of drug addiction and later of an attack on the state authority because he commented on the way the court decided in the first instance:

> *'I consider it as fragments of fascist, restricting and totalitarian behaviour. We are again controlled by the posthumous children of Communism.'* (ČTK 20.1.1997)

In general, various institutions were blamed for acting against democratic principles be it e.g. freedom of speech or the use of violence. This shows how the diagnostic framing changed. In 1997, public institutions, often the ones constituting everyday direct experience of the democracy for citizens, were blamed for violating basic principles of democracy. It shows how the construction of the frame turned to incorporate the living experience of democracy. Within prognostic framing there was the dominance of stressing the need to follow and respect democratic principles, such as freedom of speech.

(4.2.2.) 'Communism as left wing Fascism'

The *Communist as a zombie* micro-frame was often amplified by comparing Communism to Nazism or fascism. This was something that was present mainly in the radical anti-communist discourse, but later in 1995 also appeared in Havel's talks (Holubec, 2015: 221) and became widely shared.[14] This amplification was constructed by simply adding labels *Nazism* or *fascism* next to the label *Communism* thus providing Communism with the meaning of Nazism and fascism as well. It could be seen in the above mentioned quotation or in the following one:

> *'[...] the Ministry of Finance [...] fits into the category of German fascists [...] and Czech Communists [...]'* (ČTK 1.5. 1997)

When trying to understand the use of Communist legacy in the protest framing in the year 1997, we have to bear in mind the context of the protest. As has already been mentioned, the Czech Republic experienced its first serious political and economic crisis in that year which seemed to contribute to the restoration of anti-communism after its decline in the mid-1990s (Holubec, 2015: 199). The political and economic crisis was something unexpected due to high expectations of citizens raised by politicians after the 1992 elections and because of the official discourse of non-problematic and smooth development of recently renewed capitalism and democracy. When all these factors met, taking into account the meaning of the then government as genuine and indisputable democrats, the question of who might have

[14] Actually, we would expect this frame to be one of the most prevalent anti-communist frames as this symbolical equivalence has penetrated the entire society and has become one of the most frequent common-sense arguments against any actor or strategy related to Communism. This equivalence sometimes builds on the claim that both Communism and Fascism/Nazism were left-wing ideologies (while often referring to the terms "Socialist" and "Workers'" in the name of the German Nazi party, NSDAP).

been responsible for this situation appeared. According to the framing analysed, it was the Communists.

(4.3.) Year 2000: Communism resurrected

In 1999, ten years after the Velvet Revolution, huge protests against the existing political order broke out. These protests concentrated on initiatives called 'Thank You, Time to Go' and 'Impulse 99'. These activities were mostly organized by former Velvet Revolution activists, some of the pre-1989 dissidents (from non-socialist dissent groups) and their sympathizers. They criticized the then politics and society and demanded changes that would lead to an improvement in the political situation (Dvořáková, 2003). These activities and other similar ones were very resonant and attracted quite a lot of supporters who were willing to openly and actively support its organizers, e.g. come to a meeting or sign a petition (Dvořáková, 2003: 130-152). These activities persisted into the year 2000, although decreasing in intensity with time. Another important factor seems to be the support for the Communist party which was reported by the election polls. At the end of the year 1999, elections polls showed the highest support for the Communist party since the Velvet Revolution reaching nearly 20 per cent (Vandrovcová and Přiběnská, 2012).

We identified three micro-frames in this year. Two of them are already known to us, one is *Communism as a zombie* and the other one is the *Communist disease*. The third one is *Communism as a technology of power*.

(4.3.1.) 'Communism as a zombie' and the 'Communist disease'

These micro-frames occur in the protests simultaneously. The *Communism as a zombie* micro-frame was mostly supplemented by the micro-frame *Communist Disease* and together they reinforced the meaning which these micro-frames built. The problem was diagnosed as Communists not having been punished for their crimes as well as their 'normal' occurrence within the society with ambitions to carry out various public activities. It was suggested and vehemently claimed that Communist despotism must be commemorated but *also* punished, Communism must be banned and its adherents prevented from any *return* to the public space:

> '*Ruml said it was very sad that none of the Communist crimes has been punished yet. "It is a debt we have to repay. It is also an invitation to Czech politicians to think about themselves," Ruml told ČTK. He also thinks that it is still not too late to get even with Communism.*' (ČTK, 27.5.2000)

The *Communism as a zombie* micro-frame is constructed based on using the label *crime(s)*, which is directly associated with the term Communism usually followed by stressing that Communists are again talking about taking over. In this way anti-communists are creating a discourse of fear:

'Not only have Communist not been punished for their crimes, but they have not even left public life and their current representatives are again talking about taking over.' (ČTK 30. 7. 2000)

There are no particular former Communist politicians or State Security agents and collaborators mentioned to be accused of any crime and then punished. The activists portray Communism as a criminal agent, in other words, it is Communism that is responsible for the crimes. People are usually the victims of the Communist ideas; they are the ones who were infected by this nasty disease:

'According to Kyjovský Communism is "against human beings, against their nature. It is a parasitic, malignant ideology that must be extirpated. If it is not extirpated, it will bother us for a quite long time."' (ČTK, 1.5. 2000)

'We asked for de-bolshevisation but bold lines below history were drawn.' (ČTK, 27.5. 2000)

The micro-frame of the *Communist disease* is related to the depersonalization of the Communist regime in Czech public discourse (Holubec, 2015: 136). The regime is thus not associated with any people, there are neither particular individuals nor any groups of people who could be identified. Moreover, this depersonalization is evident in the fact that the representatives of the pre-1989 Communist regime had been out of the focus of the media and there had hardly been any mention of them. Our framing analysis shows the same, the focus is not on particular individuals accused of committing a crime but on Communism itself as can be seen above in the text.

The *Communist disease* micro-frame was constructed explicitly as well as implicitly. This means that Communism was directly described as a disease or infection as could be seen in the previous quotation. Implicit constructions of this micro-frame were built with the help of using verbs like *purge, remove* and *clear away*:

'*Purging the political realm as well as business from former Communists was claimed on the protest gathering [...]*' (ČTK, 21.8.2000)

This way of constructing the meaning of the situation of 2000 was exactly the same as was used in framing in the year 1991. In seems to be not very surprising because this way of framing was used by the same activists or groups of anti-communists mostly recruiting from former dissidents, political prisoners and the like.

(4.3.2.) 'Communism as a technology of power'

As was mentioned above, the year 2000 was a year with a high number of various political activities and an increased sensitivity to social and political affairs. There was an impression of a deeper political and social crisis caused by political elites and their way of understanding democracy. The situation was perceived as a crisis of democracy in the public discourse (Nekvapil, 2003). At the end of the year a

crisis in the Czech Television (public television broadcaster) burst out because of disagreements between the employees of the Czech Television (Česká televize - ČT) and the newly elected management. ČT employees considered it as an attempt by the political elite to take control of ČT.

The *Communism as a technology of power* micro-frame was the most common frame used in the framing of the protest events organized to support ČT employees dissatisfied with the new management. During the year 2000 when the crisis in ČT burst out the problem was diagnosed as a threat to the independence of the public service and as an attempt on the part of political elite to take control over ČT. The ones to be blamed were first of all the new management and the political elites who had put them in charge. Prognostic framing was very extensive and elaborated in this case. The solution of this problem was seen in the resignation of the disputed management and later even more fundamental changes in the way the management of ČT was elected.

> *'Normalization purges have been triggered in the Czech Television and there is a danger that Czech Television will become an obedient tool for those who hold the power at the moment [...]'* (ČTK 23. 12. 2000)

This quotation shows the way the *Communism as a technology of power* micro-frame was constructed. The main label giving the meaning to the situation was *normalization* – the historical period of 1969-1987 in Czechoslovakia. This era is mostly interpreted as one of the worst in Czech history representing mainly political purges, manipulation of the media and the total political suppression of society (Holubec, 2015: 135). The interpretation of the situation as a threat of normalization was also reinforced by the involvement of former dissidents and former student leaders of the Velvet Revolution (*again*) in the protests, and also by protest strategies which included demonstrations, petitions; occupying the public television building, as well as the public reading of the protest proclamation in *theatres* (recalling the events of 1989) and looking for *celebrities'* support among e.g. famous athletes, pop stars or scholars.

The micro-frame also appeared in the discussion on the decision on important technical-political issues (here on the construction of a nuclear power plant):

> *'Bolsheviks still decide on Temelín.'* (ČTK, 29.9. 2000)

(4.4.) The Year 2006: Communism imagined

There are two important events that constitute the context for the framing in the year 2006. The first one took place a year earlier. It was a techno party organized in the summer of 2005 which was violently broken up by the police. The police intervention was defended by the then prime minister Jiří Paroubek calling the techno party participants 'dangerous people'. The intervention and the question whether it was adequate became part of the public discourse and remained current during the next year, 2006. In this year parliamentary elections were held in the beginning of the summer and the election campaign opened an opportunity for using various means of

political contest. One of them seemed to be framing with Communism. To be more specific it means associating political opponents with Communism in various aspects while constructing and using *Communism as a disease* and *Communism as a zombie* micro-frames.

(4.4.1.) 'Communism as a zombie' and 'Communist disease'[15]

The common denominator of nearly all of the protests organized in this year is the Czech Social Democratic Party (Česká strana sociálně demokratická - ČSSD) and it's the then leader and prime minster Jiří Paroubek and his fellow party member, the then Minister of Health David Rath. These two men and their political activities were identified as the main problem in the diagnostic framing. Both of them were accused of trying to concentrate power in their own hands by means of their office and political capital. Prognostic framing focused on the resignation of both of them, ideally resignation from the government and from the leadership of the party (Paroubek) and complete withdrawal from politics. In other words, both of them were seen as a *persona non grata*:

> *'We want to avert the return of the Czech health care system to its state before the year 1989 [...]'* (ČTK, 14. 4. 2006)
> *'Paroubek and Rath stands for the return to before 1989.'* (ČTK, 25.2. 2006)

These two quotations illustrate the construction of the *Communism as a zombie* micro-frame. The activists associated the politics of ČSSD with the persisting negative image of the era of Communism. What is interesting is that when the protests against ČSSD and its politics started, they used a particular era of Communism: the early 1950s. This era of Communism is associated with the hardest repressions and nationalization, but later they associated it with the whole era of Communism. In this case, the activists extended the frame to let more people to identify with it. This seems to be strategic act because more people remembered the era of normalization rather than the era of early 1950s.

The other way this framing was constructed is associating ČSSD with the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (Komunistická strana Čech a Moravy - KSČM):

> *'According to him [Jehlička], there is almost no difference between ČSSD and KSČM. He thinks that the situation in this country is the same as it was before the revolution in 1989.'* (ČTK 31. 5. 2006)

Explicit portraying of these two parties one beside the other constructed the meaning of them as close allies with a common ideological base. In the context of approaching parliamentary elections this meant that voting for ČSSD is voting for KSČM as well.

[15] As this framing share a lot with the one used in the previous analysed year, we focus only on the difference between these two.

This is exactly what was perhaps well-recognized by several conservative parties. Shortly before the parliamentary elections that took place in summer 2006, they and their youth organizations organized several anti-communist protest events. During these events they used the same micro-frames – *Communism as a zombie* and *Communist disease*. They constructed them in a similar way as was mentioned in the analysis of the year 2000 with the help of many elaborated labels, catch phrases, likening and metaphors while adding the information about forthcoming elections:

> *'"We claimed allegiance to this idea to express our determination to face criminal Communism. Our anti-communism is not cheap. Also, today we are threatened by ostensible democracy. That is why we called for the mobilization of force," said the chair of KDU-ČSL.*[16] (ČTK 1. 5. 2006)

> *'The manifestation under the placard which says: "Use your vote as long as you have time to" should warn of the danger of Communists coming into the government.'* (ČTK 1. 6. 2006)

It seems that these activists made use of the previously built discourse which portrayed Communists as a serious threat because of its solely negative meaning and reproduced it to harm their political opponents. While reproducing it they tried to associate Communism in its various aspects with their opponents to persuade voters to not to vote for left wing parties. Implicitly they constructed their own image as the real guardians of democracy who can secure it.

(4.5.) Framing with Communism

Framing analysis shows that anti-communist framing has changed over the years (see Table 3) while some of the identified micro-frames persisted for years. These are the *Communism as a zombie* and *Communist disease* micro-frames.

[16] Křesťanská a demokratická unie – Československá strana lidová - The Christian and Democratic Union – Czechoslovak People's Party.

Table 1: Micro-frames used in protests

Year	*Phase*	Micro-frame					
		Communism against nation	*Communist conspiracy*	*Communist disease*	*Communism as Zombie*	*Communism as left Fascism*	*Communism as a technology of power*
1991	Communism Persevering	x	x	x			
1997	Communism Reloaded				x	x	
2000	Communism Resurrected			x	x		x
2006	Communism Imagined			x	x		

Source: Authors

Both these frames are widely used when anti-communist framing appears. Since 1997 the *communism as a zombie* micro-frame became one of the dominant components of anti-communist framing. Later in the year 2000 this micro-frame was supplemented with *Communist disease*, a micro-frame that appeared just after the Velvet Revolution and then for some period disappeared from the discourse.[17] First of all, these two micro-frames draw from the prevailing discourse in which Communism stands for the very bad experience as Holubec (2015) elucidates in his research. This experience is usually expressed in various aspects of Communism, according to the context. That means according to what the problem is and in which circumstances this problem appears. If there is some well recognizable aspect that can be associated with any well-known and clearly defined aspect of Communism then another, specific frame might appear. These are the *Communist conspiracy, Communism against the nation and Communism as a technology of power* micro-frames. While the meaning of Communism is negative, evoking the feeling that this era could return raises fear among people. This seems to be the basis of the *Communism as a zombie* micro-frame. The *Communist disease* micro-frame works similarly. Associating any phenomenon with Communism and then interpreting Communism as a disease constructs an emergent need to get rid of it. It seems that political actors are aware of

[17] Even though these two ways of framing might seem to be in contradiction we argue that they are compatible. The communism as a zombie frame reflects the meaning that communism should be 'dead' but it somehow again rises from the dead. The communism as a disease frame reflects – comprises the meaning of e.g. cancer, which might happen to be cured, but might appear again. However, there are some differences in these two frames (mentioned in the text) they are compatible in stressing the return of 'something undesirable'.

this, because it was mostly they who used these two micro-frames when waging political battles with their opponents.

(5) Conclusions

In our analysis we have shown how anti-communist framing in the Czech Republic is used to construct the image of public enemy. The answer to the question asking about how it is possible to construct the image of a public enemy by using anti-communist framing lies in understanding of the meaning of Communism in the public discourse in the Czech Republic as well as in the way various situations, problems or actors someone wanted to delegitimize were connected to the discourse.

The discourse on the Communist era evolved in early 1990s of the 20th century. At the very beginning of Czech post-communist politics and despite the peaceful transition and comparatively decent living conditions, a communism/anti-communism (or pro-communist regime vs. anti-communist regime) conflict cleavage arose as it was constructed, interpreted and perceived by the most of the actors as the most important issue in the political landscape. Consequently, it drove the political conflicts in the country and in fact contained other conflict lines such as socio-economic or ethnic ones (Mansfeldová, 2013), The process of differentiation during which different actors with different agendas stepped up appeared with the second democratic elections in 1992 and was paralleled by the split in the broad anti-communist initiative (OF) and the debates on the nature and scope of the economic transformation of the country. Since 1992, the key political conflict in Czech politics was transformed into a socio-economic one (Hloušek and Kopeček, 2004: 11-41), even if it was addressed through different agendas.

In terms of constructing a public enemy, the shift in cleavages was crucial. The analysis shows that anti-communist framing in the year 1991 was mostly used with anti-communist claims, that is with direct demands for getting rid of former Communists holding public administration positions, de-bolshevization, prosecuting of Communist crimes, etcetera. It was in this era that the public meaning of Communism was built. It was not the image of communism in general that had been constructed. Communism was defined and given meaning through various aspects and periods of the Communist regime in Czechoslovakia, e.g. normalization to recall the analysis of the year 1991. The discourse structured as mentioned above has worked as the context that provides activists with a certain (restricted) field of meanings within which they choose and use certain labels, symbols, metaphors and beliefs. This is the Swindler's (1986) tool kit in use. The tool kit (or specific tools) has been used by various actors and activists. They have chosen various aspects of Communism in accordance to the situation to delegitimize their opponents and give them the meaning of a public enemy.

This is the case in all the following years (1997, 2000 and 2006) included in our analysis. We can see how certain situations, problems and actors were strategically framed by referring to diverse discursive components of Communism. Many politicians shared the anti-communist discourse elaborated in the early 1990s. At the same time, they enriched it with their own political goals; thus they started to use anti-communist framing to construct an image of someone or something not connected to

Communism as a public enemy. This is the shift of the early communist vs. anti-communist cleavage to a socio-economic one, because Communism vs. democracy was no longer the conflict to be resolved. There was no fight with Communists, such as democratic forces vs. Communists. There was a political fight between a (democratic) government and the parliamentary opposition over various public policies to be implemented. This can be illustrated by the practice of e.g. Vaclav Klaus, prime minister of the Czech government in the 1997. He was one of the first to use the tool kit mentioned above to delegitimize the ČSSD and its political programme. This means that he directly labelled e.g. the social policy of the ČSSD with central planning and restrictions on freedom by the former Communist regime; thus constructing ČSSD (and the left as a whole) as Communist trying to carry out what they did before 1989 (Holubec, 2015: 221-222). In other words, a public enemy was constructed. More precisely the pattern of anti-communist framing (almost) universally applicable was discovered. The universality was based on the early anti-communist public discourse (as mentioned above), while the contextual component of the framing always had to be re-invented for the specific case. This is the strategic part of the framing, the specific tool in use. Thus, as mentioned in the analysis of the year 2006, the era of 1950s of the 20th century, connected to putting 'almost everything' under state ownership and control was used to give meaning to the ČSSD's health reform proposal which was supposed to strengthen the role of the state and stop privatization.

To sum up, the anti-communist discourse elaborated in the early 1990s of the 20th century provided various actors with some set of shared meaning of Communism. When the communist vs. anti-communist cleavage shifted to the socio-economic plain and various actors started to compete with each other (not all of them against Communists) and they started to employ e. g. symbols, metaphors, labels of Communism strategically. This tool kit, with specific tools used in particular contexts then became a way of delegitimizing opponents. It was quite resonant at least for a certain group of people and at least for a certain period of time. The question is then, if this way of constructing a public enemy is still viable today. Since 2010, the anti-communist public discourse seems to be undergoing major changes, as contemporary (2017) political competition for the office of prime minster seems not be influenced by accusation of one of the candidates of cooperation with the Communist state security service. That is something not even imaginable a decade ago.

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