NEW STAGE, OLD ROLES? HOW AND WHY GERMAN AND CZECH ROLE-TAKING LIMITS EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

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1 Introduction

Role theory has recently attracted attention as an interdisciplinary approach for understanding foreign policy decisions. Sociology, psychology and political science scholars have identified common characteristics of roles in diverse social domestic and international settings (Turner 2006; Thies 2010). Despite considerable interest in role theory, especially in changes in national role conceptions, and despite its obvious nexus with institutionalism, foreign policy scholars have only recently started to explore the interaction between role (change) behavior and the stability of international institutions. Role theoreticians have also not yet exported their insights and knowledge of political role taking to either institutionalism or sociology.

In this paper, we aim to begin an exchange between foreign policy role theory, institutionalism and EU studies by addressing two interrelated questions: 1) How have Czech and German national roles changed over time and how do they relate to each other? How do these national role conceptions shape the countries’ respective foreign policies towards the European Union?

We make two general arguments focusing on the process of role taking in international institutions based on the history of the two nations in and outside the EU: First of all, historical experience, conceptualized as a “significant other” in current national role conceptions, is a powerful explanatory tool for the policies of today’s EU member states. Thus, national role conceptions should be viewed as patterns of role taking vis-à-vis current and historical others, thereby shaping the
ends towards which the roles and counter-roles collectively move. Historical role experiences, which do not “dissolve” easily, are prone to reproduce historical patterns of cooperation and conflict and thus may lead to considerable role conflict as “historical animosities” become self-fulfilling prophecies in current policy making. This hypothesis is based on the classical interactionist argument that the more roles of others an individual or group can take up, the greater the capacity of the individual or group is to create and maintain lasting patterns of social organization (see below). Accordingly, our conception of roles considers the differences in composition between national role conceptions, taking into account the characteristics of the domestic processes of role taking and making and thereby linking foreign policy roles as social positions of an agent in the international realm to roles as structures of many political agents in the domestic realm.

Secondly, roles are also emergent properties of institutions. In this domain, we suppose that in the early membership phase, acquired national role conceptions oftentimes compete with newly assigned roles. At this stage, institutional membership is associated with a loss in autonomy, i.e. choosing specific significant others rather than taking over the role of several organized or generalized others. Again, we take cues from symbolic interactionism; we hold that the higher and the more contradictory the expectations of various organized others are, the higher the likelihood is that “self-restraint” is lost and the “I-”part is superimposed upon the “Me-”part to stabilize the self (see below).

In the cases of the Czech Republic and Germany we thus argue that it was much
more tolerable, at the time, for Post World War II Germany to accept intrusive alter expectations from its neighbors than it was for the Czech Republic to do so in 2004. Role acceptance capacity obviously has nothing to do with the inherent “goodness” of one nation over another. Rather, we argue that the Post World War II social structure left very few other constructive options for the “rogue state/society Germany” than to accept substantial restrictions to its autonomy (in the European Coal and Steel Community, ECSC) in exchange for its re-introduction among “civilized nations”. Nor do we think that the social and political structure of the ECSC (or the Czech Republic for that matter) of 1950 compares to that of the EU in 2004. Although we do not argue that the institutional accessions are incomparable, we nonetheless find that these and other path-dependencies have to be taken into account.

This paper is not a test of coherent propositions from either role theory or sociological institutionalism. Rather, it is more of an exploratory hypothesis-generating study based on a role theorist’s reading of institutionalism. Part I briefly surveys and extends role theory from the point of view of institutionalism. Part II examines the importance of historical experiences/grievances of “significant others”, the ego-alter composition as well as the role commitment in today’s national role conceptions by analyzing the evolution of respective role along tripartite role typology. Part III analyses the respective EU policies of Germany in the development of the Lisbon treaty and the current Euro crisis.
2 Role theory and European Integration

Role theory has its origins in sociology, more specifically in symbolical interactionism, which has its philosophical roots in the American pragmatism of George Herbert Mead, John Dewey and Charles Sanders Peirce (Stryker/Statham 1985, Stryker 2006). With the rise of interdependence as a real world phenomenon in the late 1960s, international roles (Holsti 1970) such as superpower roles (Jönsson 1984) gained prominence (Walker 1987). Unfortunately, role theory has thus far not systematically explored the nexus between national role conceptions and institutionalized roles such as those present in the European Union.

2.1 Interactionist Role Theory

Roles are social positions which are constituted by ego and alter expectations regarding the purpose of an actor in an organized group (Harnisch 2011a: 8). The position’s function in the group is limited in time and scope and it is dependent upon the group’s structure and purpose. Whereas some roles are constitutive to the group, as such being a recognized member of the international community, other roles or role sets are functionally specific, e.g. balancer, initiator etc. Thus, in role theory, roles are typically treated as varying along two related dimensions: 1) an ego-part, which consists of the impulsive, irreducible part of the self (in the Meadian conception the “I”), and those internalized expectations that the self envisioned when it was taking the role of the other (in the Meadian conception...
the “Me”). The “Me” thus pertains to our self-image when we import into our conduct the “perceived” attitudes of the other (Harnisch 2011b: 39-40). 2) The alter-part, which consists of the expectations and actions of the “other”.

As Wendt notes, “not all others are equally significant, however, so power and dependency relations play an important role in the story” (Wendt 1999: 327). George Herbert Mead introduced the concepts of the “generalized and significant other” into the symbolic interactionist framework of role theory. The generalized other is an abstract social category, such as ‘human being’, through which the role holder relates to a certain group and takes up the “common identity” of the members of that group.1 The significant other, however, often describes a primary socializing agent, such as parents or siblings, or a specific actor who holds sway over another actor through their material or immaterial resources.

Mead purported that the “self-understanding” of an actor depends on the ability to distance him- or herself from his or her self by taking the perspective of the other. Consequently, he reasoned that the more roles of others an individual or group can take on, the greater the capacity of that individual or group is to create and maintain lasting patterns of social organization (Mead 1934: 264). Practicing norms and rules within an organization is thus not only consonant with social order, but is also

1 “Each individual has to take also the attitude of the community, the generalized attitude. One of the greatest advances in the development of the community arises when this reaction of the community on the individual takes on what we call an institutional form. What we mean by that is that the whole community acts towards the individual under certain circumstances in an identical way. It makes no difference, over against a person who is stealing your property, whether it is Tom, Dick, or Harry. There is an identical response on the part of the whole community under these conditions. We call that the formation of the institution” Mead 1934: 167.
“civilizing” its members by teaching them self-restraint through continuous role-taking (cf. Adler 2008; Williams 2001: 538f.).

According to Mead’s logic, an actor’s role-taking capacity and thus that of a social organization depends upon three factors; first, the degree to which actors can hold a common generalized other; second, the degree of consistency among multiple generalized others; and third, the degree of integration among types and layers of generalized others (Turner 1981: 144).

Mead further specifies that an actor’s role taking capacity corresponds to a certain socialization pattern, i.e. the interaction type between the role holder and the significant, generalized or organized others (see Graph 2: Symbolic Interactionism: Socialization patterns). A complex social structure such as the European Union thus requires a constant role taking behavioral pattern to be practiced by its member states. This behavioral pattern must be directed towards a “generalized other”, i.e. an abstract norm, rather than a significant other, an actor who uses personal gratification to induce appropriate role taking behavior.
The occurrence of significant others, i.e. former colonial or occupation powers, is often tied to crisis or (external) shock situations in which given role conceptions are challenged, either materially or immaterially or both (Folz 2008: 14). Roles can then be defined as social positions which are differentiated by their composition of ego- and alter expectations as well as the number and type of “significant others”.

Each role is then likely to possess a unique pattern of ego-alter composition that, as a dynamic social structure in itself, constantly changes and evolves over time. Although we do not analyze the degree of ego-alter variance in our two cases
systematically, we do find that the two national role conceptions differ considerably along the “I” and “Me” and alter-dimension as well as across time. In addition, we suggest that both role sets are constituted by different sets of historical and current “significant others”, thus leaving ample room for role conflict and role learning within each role set and between them.

We thus apply the insights of role learning literature, acknowledging that roles may change on three dimensions. A robust shift along two or more of these dimensions is identified as “role learning” (cf. Harnisch 2012). In this conceptualization, role learning may first involve a (dramatic) change from an ego-dominated role conceptualization in which the “I” rejects social obligations altogether and constructs itself as prior or above the obligations of society, to an alter-oriented orientation. Or role learning may consist of the change of an alter-dominated role set towards a more ego-dominated set which could be related to a shift from a more elite-based role towards a demos-based conceptualization.

On the second dimension, role learning can be constructed as a variation in the scope of role taking experiences. Role taking may shift from a few historical “significant others” towards one or more “generalized or organized significant others”. Thus, many role holders are identified as “novices” or “apprentices” after taking up assigned or acquired roles (Thies 2012). Or they may be characterized as “Atlanticists” or “Europeanists”, depending on the geographic and ideational locus of the significant other.

On the third dimension, the relative importance of the other two dimensions may
also fluctuate along a temporal and numeral spectrum. Learning in this sense implies a shift from a role that is anchored vis-à-vis a generalized or organized other, i.e. a highly internalized (institutionalized) role in which the external commitment is strong – e.g. membership in a supranational organization – towards a role set in which the numeral and temporal extension is low and autonomy is preferred (see Graph 2: Dimensions of role expansion).

Conceptually, our typology is thus based on a temporal (past – present – future) and a numeral dimension (oneself – two significant others – several organized others), while the “I-Me” composition of the ego-part of the role developed during the process of self-identification provides the third component. In contrast to more traditional role typologies, this typology does not directly address the material basis of roles. But we insist that material resources must be put into a social/relational perspective of purpose before they may constitute rights and/or obligations.

Graph 2: Dimensions of role expansion
Although relevant to many institutions, role theory as it is developed today has not systematically addressed the issue of compatibility between institutionalized roles and national role conceptions. Implicit in many role typologies are assumptions that civilian powers fit into highly institutionalized role settings much better than great powers or novices do (Maull 1990/91, 2010; Harnisch/Maull 2001). Also Lisbeth Aggestam (1999) has argued that the higher the degree of “Europeanization” is - meaning in her interpretation the extent to which a nation state has taken on a “position role” - the more predictable the respective role behavior and the stronger the EU actorness in foreign affairs is:

“The stability of the EU as a foreign policy actor is dependent on the
member states modifying their behavior according to each other’s roles and expectations. The more the ‘Europeanization’ of foreign policy becomes formally institutionalized within the EU, the more foreign policy perceptions will be influenced by position roles. In contrast to a preference role, a position role increases the predictability of foreign policy behavior and stable expectations. Yet, it provides the policy-maker with less scope of interpretation and thus less flexibility in managing potential role conflicts. It certainly undermines the notion of national independence in foreign policy” (Aggestam 1999: 9).

But recent comparative research done on EU presidencies suggests that no clear pattern can yet be identified as to why some nations may be much more successful in taking up positional roles, in this case the presidency, than others (Leal 2010).

2.2 Role typologies

Although important to many operationalizations of role theory, no convincing typology of roles in international relations has thus far been established. When Kalevi Holsti started foreign policy role theory, he identified role segments that are behavioral components of a larger role set to establish a quantifiable set of categories in order to implement large scale comparative role research (Holsti 1970, Walker 1987, LePrestre 1997). Subsequently Christer Jönsson and Hans Maull established ideal-types - the super power and civilian power ideal-types - which consisted of larger compositions or role segments and were bound to specific structural conditions, i.e. super power competition during the Cold War and semi-sovereign US allies during the same period (Jönsson 1984, Maull 1990/91). Other role scholars have since classified national role conceptions according to their resource endowment
(Hudson 1995??) or primary orientation towards some “significant other” (Longhurst/Zaborowski 2007; Frank 2011). Alexander Wendt identifies three master roles (enemy, rival, friend) which characterize respective prevalent “cultures of anarchies” in international relations. He holds that the predominant role enactment shapes the constitutive relationships among actors and thus determines the interpretation of the type of “anarchy actors are making” (Wendt 1999).

At the core of these role typologies lie two different assumptions: 1) roles are primarily shaped by domestic/elite perceptions of different anarchic (bipolar) environments. Thus, Holsti (1970) identifies role segments along an active passive spectrum which are oriented towards a bipolar power structure with an adversarial alliance system. Maull’s and Jönsson’s ideal-types also reflect systemic configuration and do not offer generic categories that allow for more than dichotomous typologies, i.e. “civilian- and non-civilian-powers”; 2) roles are primarily shaped by their association with significant others, i.e. colonial- non-colonial powers, Atlanticists vs. Europeanists etc.

We agree that variance in national role concepts stems from variation in the composition of the self between “I-Me” patterns, othering patterns and commitment patterns. At this time we will not enter into the debate as to whether these juxtapositions of factors are warranted by a certain strain of foreign policy role analysis. Rather, by speaking of inference, both causal and constitutive, we propose to augment these conceptualizations with a comprehensive and integrated approach.

We affirm that our integrated approach can augment the existing role typologies
because contemporary research shows that national role concepts do vary considerably across time, policy realms and institutional settings. As conceptions of social purpose in groups, roles provide reasons for action in a justificatory sense. In terms of purpose, through arguments in discourse, roles provide goals for action, i.e. to save a “nation” from dominance, to end war in Europe proper etc. In terms of justification, roles include reasoning as to which policy action can be rationalized, i.e. “as Czechs, as Germans, as Europeans, we must do this...” etc. In both senses, roles exist prior to interests, as national roles define “who the actor actually is” and “what he or she may/should do “in and for the group”. Roles are thus relational entities, because they always define a “self” vis-à-vis an “other” in a given group (Wendt 1992: 398).

We assert that role typologies, conceptualized properly, consist of relational assertion along the three dimensions outlined above: First, I- Me compositions shape states’ interests as to how far external cues may legitimately delimit national autonomy and competences. If, for example, the ego-part of a national role is based on a historical understanding of the nation as a “victim of great power politics” an external expectation to assume a great power role may pose intra-role conflicts. Secondly, if roles enable or curtail common identification and/or action with a specific “significant other”, this sends strong signals as to what the likely behavior of that role holder will be in the future, thus affecting whether and to what extent external actors are willing to cooperate in common institutions. Thirdly, we claim that the degree to which the state is committed to a certain role - the salience of the role so to
speak - is important for respective role behavior (Stryker 1980: 59-62). Commitment thus “reflects the extent to which important significant others are judged to want the person to occupy a particular role position” (Hogg et al. 1995: 258). This commitment may entail an internal commitment that is a legally binding or politically opportune requirement to pursue a certain role, or an external commitment - a membership or a treaty obligation etc. - which substantially shapes the role conception and/or behavior of a state (e.g. Europeanization) (Aggestam 2004, 2006).

Table 1: German and Czech role types: Dimensions of role expansion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Composition of the Self</th>
<th>Significant others</th>
<th>Organized Other / Commitment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Germany</strong></td>
<td>Negative ego-part demarcation</td>
<td>Split European-/Transatlantic othering</td>
<td>Strong domestic + external commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive alter-part attribution</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Czech Republic</strong></td>
<td>positive ego-part attribution</td>
<td>Evolution of negative othering vis-à-vis great powers</td>
<td>Growing domestic + weak external commitment??</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>negative alter-part demarcation</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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The Czech role is history and autonomy driven with a clear historical alter Germany and treacherous European Great Powers. Germany has tried to learn from its alter (NAZI Germany) and has established a US-European integrating role, because both were instrumental for its return into the community of civilized nations => Europeanization because FRG shapes EU more and more....
3 Germany: European Dilemmas of a Civilian Power

Germany’s national role conception shifted dramatically during the 20th century. After three expansionist wars in the 19th and 20th centuries (1870-1871; 1914-1918, 1939-1945), all of its neighbors harbored serious reservations about a unified Germany, resulting in different strategies to address the so-called “German question”. In the late 19th century, the German Reich under the Chancellorship of Otto von Bismarck was enmeshed in an intricate net of bi-and trilateral alliances, the collapse of which triggered World War I. Then, in the 1920s, the continental powers and the United States tried to both contain – through reparations and territorial revisions in the treaty of Versailles (1919) – and integrate Germany’s first democracy, the Weimar Republic, into the League of Nations. However, the League’s incipient system of collective security did not stand up to the challenge of German and Italian fascism and Japanese militarism. In 1945, the allied nations – later the United Nations – finally defeated the German Wehrmacht and occupied all the territory of the so-called “Third Reich”.

After World War II, West Germany pursued a foreign policy role concept premised on self-restraint and its own history as the negative significant other. The primary objective of the founding fathers and mothers was to build a polity that was both bound internally to a strict set of checks-and-balances (including federalism) and externally by embedding the young democracy in Western institutions. Given the intense mistrust among its neighbors, this foreign policy role concept - often referred
to as that of a “civilian power” (Maull 1990/91; Harnisch/Maull 2001) - supported strong international institutionalization as a means of restricting power to specific, legitimate purposes.

3.1 The Civilian Power ideal type

The Civilian Power role concept as an ideal-type is based on the assumption that interdependence between states as well as between states and societies has left foreign policy makers incapable of achieving ‘power and plenty’ by unilateral means. Systemic interdependence therefore favors certain administrative designs which translate these systemic pressures into a viable policy of securing a stable international environment for the ‘politics of interdependence’, i.e. division of labor, lowering of transaction costs through liberalization, institutionalization to avoid free riding etc. In this context, ideal-type Civilian Powers are states which actively promote the ‘civilizing’ of international relations. Taking the domestication of the use of force in democratic communities as a matrix for international behavior, Civilian Powers try to achieve six interrelated objectives:

1. Constraining the use of force in settling political conflicts, both within and between states, by initiating and lending support to co-operative and collective security arrangements (monopolization of force);
2. Strengthening the rule of law by developing international regimes and international organizations via multilateral co-operation, integration, and partial transfers of sovereignty (rule of law);
3. Promoting participatory forms of decision-making both within and between states (democratic participation);
4. Promoting non-violent forms of conflict management and conflict resolution (restraints on violence);
5. Promoting social equity and sustainable development to enhance the legitimacy of international order (social justice); and

6. Promoting interdependence and division of labor (interdependence) (Maull 2000).

Over nearly 50 years the practice of civilian-power politics by Germany evolved dramatically and was tailored to regional and global circumstances, creating different but compatible policy behaviors such as Westpolitik (Chancellor Adenauers strategy in the 1950s to bind the Federal Republic into both European and transatlantic institutions) and Ostpolitik (Chancellor Brandt’s strategy in the 1970s to open West Germany for interaction with Eastern European communist states, most notably the German Democratic Republic (Haftendorn 2006)).

3.2 The “Virtuous Others” and “the negative Self”

Despite its many variants, the basic characteristics of the German civilian power role concept remained relatively constant along the three proposed dimensions until 1989: 1) a clear negative demarcation vis-à-vis the country’s own history - the Hitler period in particular. This, in turn, resulted in a strong anti-nationalist sentiment in German society which considered significant parts of its own national history as the negative significant other (Langenbacher 2010); 2) a strong positive attribution of civility vis-à-vis the new significant others in Western institutions, most notably the United States (Doering-Manteuffel 1999) and 3) a strong preference for
institutionalization as a means for self-restraint and cooperative problem-solving (Hellmann 1996).

Consequently, under the first chancellor Adenauer, the civilian power role developed into a symbiotic relationship with the United States. Conservative West German elites accepted tight restrictions on any autonomous action, including overtures to unify with communist East Germany, while the United States and its Western European allies in turn accepted West Germany’s political and economic ascension (Lake 1999: 128-197).

Until 1989, absolute defeat and negative self-demarcation went hand in hand with a legitimating narrative of liberation and a (very) positive alter attribution vis-à-vis the West. Given this role reorientation and the internal denazification, the new German democracy held a peculiar form of national interest which stressed the nexus between the negative self, the positive alter and the willingness to accept semi-sovereignty in both internal and external affairs (Green/Paterson 2005). In the wake of Germany’s unification, this concept of “interdependent German national interests” was deftly described by Werner Link:

“The active participation of Germany in the development of federal structures in Europe is in its very own interest; indeed, European federalism can be regarded as the foreign policy “raison d’état” of Germany because in deepening European integration and in creating a European Union [it] can make best use of its power and increase its security without appearing threatening and without provoking counter-balancing coalitions. As a result, the foreign policy imperative is to do

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2 Consider the following statement by German Foreign Minister H.-D. Genscher: “Our foreign policy is a rejection of all forms of power politics, in accordance with the requirements of our constitution, it is really responsibility politics “Verantwortungspolitik” Genscher 1989b.
During the Cold War, German membership in several Western institutions was the single most important source of legitimacy for the Federal Republic. The evolution of “special relationships” with France, the State of Israel and Poland both stabilized the negative self-demarcation and the positive alter attribution as these societies came to accept most Germans as partners rather than “eternal perpetrators”.

The intricate German role pattern of self-identification through positive alter attribution and identification is reflected in the following quote from the former German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, who tried to reassure skeptical European neighbors during the unification process:

“Our membership in the Western World’s community of values, based on freedom and human dignity, is an absolute necessity for our self-image as a nation” (Genscher 1989a).

Since the beginning of conscious role acquisition in international relations, successive German governments have been engaged in dialogues over who should be the most significant other or organized other Germans themselves want to relate to. Such debates occurred during the early 1950s, when Chancellor Adenauer pursued military alliance memberships both with European and transatlantic partners, in the 1960s, when different factions in the government quarreled over the meaning of the German-French Elysee-treaty, and in the 1970s, when the Brandt government opened up for regular contact with Eastern European communist regimes, most notably the
Soviet Union.

3.3 Domestication: the European dilemma of a Civilian Power

Historically, Germany has been more willing than other large Western European democracies to grant authority to international institutions by empowering them to act on its behalf. But this strong commitment to delegating sovereign powers has recently come to haunt the political system that has made self-restraint a virtue. The transfer of both national and federal competences to the European level has tilted the Federal Republic’s intricate system of domestic checks and balances in favor of the executive branch and triggered a forceful response by the legislative and judicial branches.

Following a period of strong European integration dynamics in the 1990s, the ego-alter composition of Germany’s role has changed. In what has been dubbed the domestication of Germany’s EU Policy - i.e. “the limitation of executive prerogatives by legislative and judicial actors to clip and tie international delegation of competences to domestic core norms through procedural and normative rules” (Harnisch 2009) - the ego part of Germany’s EU role has become so prevalent that it has lost some of its traditional self-restraint.

Domestication has transformed the role taking process and content of Germany’s European policy in two profound ways. First of all, the ego part in Germany’s European role has placed a new emphasis on a structural resemblance between core norms of the German political and economic systems, i.e. Bundesbank model for the
ECB, the subsidiarity principle for local autonomy or the “Schuldenbremse” (debt brake) in the current Euro crisis, and those on the European level.. From an interactionist perspective, this lessening of self-restraint could well be interpreted as an attempt to superimpose one’s own self-conception onto the organized other in order to reduce conflicting domestic and external role expectations. This shift was reflected in the prominent role of the German parliament (both chambers) and the Federal Constitutional Court (FCC) in the EU reform treaties in the 1990s which featured a new “contingent Europeanism” rather than the “unlimited pro-federalist” position of earlier decades (Harnisch/Schieder 2006).

Secondly, Germany’s traditional strong commitment to international institutions has become weaker and leaner, because the reconciliation of ego- and alter expectations is often postponed until either the Bundestag/Bundesrat or the FCC challenge the government’s role taking. By raising the specter of “involuntary defection” from the executive’s role taking, the social structure of EU institutions and counter-role taking by its partners has become more volatile.

We hold that these two innovations have already set in motion a process of structural change in counter- or complementary roles, such as the French-German axis or Germany’s traditionally close relations with smaller EU member states. Instead of being viewed as pursuing common European interests, a chiffre for the German elite’s earlier evocation of interdependent interests, the Federal Republic is now perceived as pursuing more national or parochial interests (Guérot/Leonard 2011). We find that this role taking interaction has taken its toll on the European integration
process which has come to a halt in the latest major treaty revision process; the Lisbon reform treaty.

4 The Czech Republic: European Dilemmas of an Heretic

Before assessing the contemporary role set, we will briefly examine the Czech historical role experience in light of our three-dimensional role typology. Since its formation in the 19th century, the Czech self-understanding has been formulated in opposition to a singular significant other. For the intellectuals, philosophers, writers, politicians and early nationalists of the Czech national movement, the powerful other was represented by the German element in the then Austro-Hungarian Empire and Europe as such (Holý 1996: 5).

On the first dimension (“I” vs. “Me”), the Czech national revival of the 19th century was a period characterized by ego-dominated national role conception, centered on the self-determination vis-à-vis the German element in Austria-Hungary. A sense of a universalistic (humanist) mission (“philosophy of Czech history”) gained firmer footing (and became official thanks to Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk) only after the Versailles treaty and the establishment of Czechoslovakia. Masaryk followed (elaborated and propagated) an idea coined by the Czech historian, politician and writer František Palacký that the Czech nation has a specific task “on behalf of humanity as a whole”, i.e. a mission beyond mere self-determination. More specifically, “Palacký considered Jan Hus’ attempt at reformation of the Catholic Church as an avant-garde version of the European reformation a century later. On
this basis, he interpreted the Hussite movement in universalistic terms as an early advocate of humanistic and democratic values” (Drulák 2006: 424; see also Holý 1996: 81).

After Versailles, Palacký’s and Masaryk’s ideas of the Czech humanist mission overlapped with the expectations of several significant others (the progressive, liberal democracies like the USA and France) and alter-expectations started to play a more important role in the Czech role composition. The best example of the internalization of the alter-expectations was the Czechoslovak Declaration of Independence (drafted by Masaryk) which referred to a few significant others (the allied powers Russia, Italy, France, but especially the United States) with a positive connotation (Masaryk – Štefánik – Beneš 1918). The Declaration praised the principles laid down by President Wilson which were (to certain extent) translated into the post-war status quo in Europe; the Declaration even makes an explicit link between Czech and American founding myths. Czechoslovakia not only internalized alter-expectations, embracing the idea of the League of Nations. It also demonstrated strong external commitment – the Czechoslovak Minister of Foreign Affairs Beneš became one of the strongest propagators of the ideas incorporated in the League.

To sum up, interwar Czechoslovakia internalized the alter-expectations and rules

3 “We, the nation of Comenius, cannot but accept these principles expressed in the American Declaration of Independence, the principles of Lincoln, and of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen. For these principles our nation shed its blood in the memorable Hussite Wars five hundred years ago, for these same principles, beside her allies in Russia, Italy, and France, our nation is shedding its blood today” (Masaryk – Štefánik – Beneš 1918: 6).
associated with the post-Versailles system. Czechoslovak foreign policy was typical in its negative demarcation vis-à-vis relatively few significant others—from Hungarian and later on from German and eventually Austrian revisionism, but it maintained a sense of strong external commitment.

The Munich agreement (1938) between the liberal democratic allies of Czechoslovakia and the “revisionist” others fundamentally deepened the Czechoslovak / Czech anti-great-power sentiments. The Munich agreement thus effectuated a significant shift from a few “significant others” towards “generalized and organized others” (European powers generally). The Munich experience entered the Czechoslovak / Czech historical memory as “Munich betrayal” or “Munich dictate”. It is interpreted as a vindication of the perfidiousness of great powers generally: great powers are associated with a tendency to decide “about us without us”.

The narrative of the “Munich betrayal” flourished after the WWII (during the communist period). The combination of the Palacký’s traditional emphasis on the Czech-German struggle and the narrative of the “Munich betrayal” / “Munich dictate” led to the reconfiguration of the crossline between self (Czechoslovakia) and the other (perfidious / treacherous / aggressive powers). We may argue that the communists simply generalized the representation originally constructed by Palacký specifically for Germany and applied it onto a larger set of Western powers generally (Holý 1996: 81).

The alter-expectations (“Me”) played important role also after WWII, even though
the content of these expectations changed. As Drulák argues, official communist historiography after the WWII <ref nejedlý> simply replaced the liberal-democratic teleology of Palacký and Masaryk with a revolutionary Marxist one (Drulák 2006: 426). Early communist Czechoslovakia thus accepted the social obligations stemming from its membership in the group of countries led by the Soviet Union.

The Prague Spring of the late 1960s could be seen as another important shift in the ego/alter composition of the Czech role, this time in favour of the “I” (ego) element. The Czechoslovak “socialism with a human face” was seen as being the solution to stifling Soviet socialism and the original Czech contribution to humanity (Esparza 2010: 58). On one hand, the Prague Spring embraced and combined Masaryk’s democratic and communism’s socialist, universalistic mission. But while Masaryk formulated his mission in line with the alter-expectations (Czechoslovakia as a loyal member of the family of democratic nations), the Prague Spring diverted from the alter-expectations (Czechoslovak Socialist Republic as a loyal member of the family of socialist nations) by promoting its own, unique, endogenous program.

After the Warsaw Pact invasion in 1968, the general public became largely skeptical towards the official rhetoric; it showed very low commitment and even indifference to the Soviet alter-expectations. But later on the Czech public gradually accepted the dissidents’ political thinking. Against the background of our role typology their political ideas were characterized by:

1. Complete rejection of alter-expectations (domination of the “I” element in the first dimension of our conceptual model)
2. Completion of the shift from a few significant others towards a generalized other (the second dimension of our conceptual model)

3. Upsurge in the external commitment (third dimension).

The best examples of these trends are Milan Kundera and to some extent also Václav Havel. The work of Kundera exposes a deep disillusionment with the great powers generally. He not only rejects the expectations of the Soviet Union vis-à-vis Czechoslovakia, he also fiercely criticizes the West’s (Western-European great powers’) expectations and perceptions vis-à-vis Czechoslovakia and “Central Europe”. According to Kundera, the tragedy of Central Europe (including Czechoslovakia) lies not only in the Soviet / Russian invasion, but also in the West’s negligence. In his bitter and biting critique of the West (Western powers), he scathes that the great tragedy experienced in Prague in the wake of the 1968 invasion “is perceived in Paris as something banal and insignificant, scarcely visible, a non-event” (Kundera 1984).

Kundera’s essay Czech Destiny (1968) provides one of the most powerful and influential reformulations of the Czech self-representation. His image of the Czech nation (and its mission) revolves around the distinction between “the mentality of great powers” and “the mentality of small nations”. Great nations (great powers) generally are associated with permanence, “arrogance of the multitude”, grandness, and the tendency to mistake itself for the world. "Alas, wretched large nation! The gateway to humanity is narrow and so difficult for you to pass through...” (Kundera 1968).
At the same time, Kundera provides an appealing call for action. Firstly, he imagines the Czech lands (or Central Europe) as the moral (cultural / civilizational) heart of Europe. Such a representation of Central Europe and Czechoslovakia induces a strong sense of external commitment – the Czech dissidents (turned politicians) like Václav Havel felt a strong sense of “duty” to defend universal values. The Czech mission was formulated by Kundera in his famous essay Český úděl (Czech destiny) (1968):

“I believe in the great historical calling of small nations in a world that is at the mercy of great powers yearning to smooth its edges and readjust its dimensions. [...] The significance of the new Czechoslovak policies was too far-reaching to expect them to go unopposed.” (Kundera 1968)

This interpretation of the Czech role conception resonates strongly with the story of Jan Hus in the Czech collective memory. Hus stood up against the powerful in the name of universal values, in an attempt to offer remedy to European ills. But he was betrayed by the powers, he was burnt at stake, and the powers unleashed a crusade onto the Czech lands. During his lifetime he was misunderstood by the powers (by Europe), who themselves accepted the very same ideas (Reformation and Enlightenment) several centuries later.

But Kundera’s representation of Czechoslovakia as the heart of Europe has a second implication. If one imagines Central Europe as “a small arch-European Europe” or “Europe’s cultural home” (Kundera 1984), then by losing Central Europe, Europe
loses itself. After 1989, this narrative of the “kidnapped (heart of) Europe” was widely adopted and propagated by Central European intellectuals and politicians. It played an indispensable role in legitimizing the Central European countries’ “return to Europe” (Sjursen 2002; Moisio 2002).

During this period, the “I – Me” composition of the Czech role changed dramatically, because the Czech Republic embraced the alter-expectations of the democratic West. The Czech Republic still positioned itself as the conscience of the world and the moral heart of Europe – in its view, without the Czech membership in the Euro-Atlantic institutions, Europe would not be whole and free. This Czech role-positioning corresponded (see, for example, Václav Havel) to the expectations of significant others – in this sense the post-1989 period could be compared to the post-1918 period, when Czechoslovakia identified with the expectations of others (the Allied powers and the post-Versailles system). But the Czech Republic in 1989 played the role of an “apprentice”5 – it was not ready to take on the role the organized and generalized other.

Thus, after 1989 and especially after the completion of the “return to Europe” in the 2000s the foreign policy of the Czech Republic has been characterized by the

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4 Kundera’s essay sparked a torrent of reactions which centred on his banishment of Russia from Europe (for an overview of this debate see Neumann 1999: 150; Todorova 1996: 12-15), and on his delimitation of Central Europe, which was largely accepted. In this paper, we focus rather on Kundera’s interpretation of Czechoslovakia and Central Europe’s relationship to and position and significance vis-à-vis Europe as such.

5 Our earlier analysis of metaphors in the discourse of the Czech presidents (Václav Havel and Václav Klaus) shows that they often conceptualize the Czech Republic (the self) as a “person seeking recognition” and an “apprentice”, but also as a “missionary”. While Klaus has been sceptical about the metaphor of “missionary”, Václav Havel very often saw the Czech Republic as a person who is seeking recognition but at the same time should be able to carry his or her share of responsibility for Europe and the world (Drulák – Beneš 2008).
country’s decreasing commitment to its role in Europe and a growing indifference on the side of the general public. In contrast to the interwar Czechoslovakia, the Czech Republic does not commit itself to actively shaping European politics, and some authors even argue that the disinterest in and indifference towards contemporary European and world politics has become the defining feature of the Czech foreign policy (Drulák 2010).

5 German European Policy: the Lisbon treaty experience

The German role behavior during the constitutional debate continued earlier policy patterns, combining domesticating interventions by the Federal Constitutional Court with contingent Europeanism by the German executive branch. After the reform process had hit a road block over the rejected referenda in France and the Netherlands (2005), the Merkel government and the German presidency in 2007 were charged with the lion’s share of the difficult negotiations. Against this backdrop, the Grand Coalition became the champion of reviving the reform process. It acted as a broker, pragmatically searching for common ground in order to overcome the reform blockade, but also pursued its own agenda. As stated in the coalition treaty, the German government actively worked to retrieve as much of the Constitutional Treaty as possible.

Initial momentum was achieved by the Berlin declaration, signed on March 25, 2007. It was prepared in cooperation with representatives of the member states – the so-
called “Focal Points” – and EU institutions (Schwarzer 2007). The third part of the declaration clearly set the course for the coming months: “We are united in our aim of placing the European Union on a renewed common basis before the European Parliament elections in 2009” (Presidency of the EU 2007). The cooperation which led to the Berlin declaration and the declaration itself created a positive context for the subsequent preparations of the mandate for the EU summit in winter 2007.

At the end of 2007 the emerging Lisbon Treaty largely resembled the Constitutional Treaty, thereby meeting several of the conditions set by the Federal Constitutional Court in its rulings on the Maastricht treaty (1993) and the European Arrest Warrant Act (2005): The inclusion of the European Charter of Fundamental Rights, the Subsidiarity Principle, the (German) tri-partite scheme of EU legal acts as well as several limits on the delegation of competences in specific policy areas (Harnisch 2009).

With international negotiations of this two-level game proving successful, Germany’s domestic dynamics were also mostly supportive (Bulmer 2009, 10-11). Even top-heavy negotiations through the Focal Points, which largely excluded the parliament and the SPD-led Foreign Office, did not cause vocal discontent. The Bundestag ratified the Lisbon Treaty with an overwhelming majority in April 2008, the Bundesrat followed suit in May.

5.1 Germany’s new positive self-identification

To establish an initial plausibility of our three-dimensional role typology, we
compare the arguments used by supporters and opponents of the Lisbon treaty ratification in the German Bundestag (and the Czech parliament). Using a narrative-based qualitative analysis, we provide a reasoned assessment of the changes in the internal composition of the respective role taking, the respective counter-role taking by other member states and the resulting treaty reform. This is not a test of the new typology or of symbolic interactionist role theory, but more an explorative study about the nexus between role composition and integration policy.

Underlying Germany’s EU treaty reform policy was a strong commitment towards the European Union, but one that promoted the Union as an instrument for shaping Germany’s and Europe’s future rather than its past (Wimmel 2009: 757). During one of the first debates on the Lisbon treaty, the Prime Minister of Rhineland-Palatinate, Kurt Beck, stressed the importance of the Western elite’s decision to give guilt-stricken Germany the chance to integrate into the (Western) community of nations:

“It was a courageous decision in 1945, different than in 1871 or 1918, when the losers of the war were humiliated and the seeds were planted for new conflict, and for war, as we now know. The great ideas of Jean Monnet and Robert Schuman have succeeded. We Germans have understood, on our side that a united Germany can be built only in a united Europe. This dimension must not be neglected at any time in the future because it is a central building block for common ground on this continent.” (Beck 2008: 16458).

However, it is the nexus between the preservation of a positive self – Germany – and the contingent evolution of the organized other – the European Union – that is most distinctive in the new role conception. Hence, several speakers highlighted that the German experience - some of its core values and norms - could and should be a
model for the European Union.

In the debates, the Social Democratic Party (SPD) focused on the social dimension of the Union, describing the EU as a shield against the (nasty) forces of globalization. Also Chancellor Angela Merkel pointed out the Union’s new functions in safeguarding human rights, economic prosperity and social policy, thereby indicating how far the “social-democratization” of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) had come:

“The European Union is no longer only a Union of peace, freedom and security, but with the Charta of fundamental rights the Union makes clear that it professes to the European economic and social model in which economic success and social responsibility are united. For us in Germany, this message is, on the 60th birthday of the social market economy, a very important message: Our European Union is committed to the same values as we are in the German social model” (Merkel 2008: 16452).

But it is important to note that speakers of all other parties, except for those from the radical left, stressed the functional and future-oriented attributes of the European Union when arguing that the treaty should be ratified in parliament. In contrast to Hans-Dietrich Genscher’s earlier attribution of Western institutions as a central component of Germany’s self-conception (see above), the European Union is thus now referred to as an organized other with the primary function of preserving and strengthening the German self (Sarrazin (Greens) 2009: 26353; Westerwelle (Free Democrats) 2008: 16456).

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6 The differentiation between Germany (us) and Europe (them) should not be interpreted in any way as a negative demarcation. The Lisbon debates (still) show a strong undercurrent of historical gratitude for what Europe has done for Germany in terms of peace, prosperity and rule of law, cf. Westerwelle 2008: 16455.
5.2 Safeguarding and exporting “Germany’s core values”

The new positive self-identification bears to consequences with regard to the treaty reform policy: First of all, there is a new and widely shared claim that European integration has gone far enough in many policy areas and that Germany should actively seek to set clear limits for any further integration. While this domestication has grown more prominent in German EU policy making over the past 30 years (Harnisch 2006, 2009), it is noticeable that the chancellor herself, for the first time, stressed during the ratification debates that the Lisbon treaty enabled member states “the transfer of powers from the European level to the nation states, if they can be better implemented there” (Merkel 2008: 16452). Whilst the chancellor did not propagate a “roll back” of competences from Brussels to Berlin, the Christian Social Union (CSU), the CDU’s sister party, which is the centre of EU-skepticism within the ruling coalition, actively sought a debate on “whether and how powers from Brussels could be transferred back to the member states” (CSU Secretary General, Alexander Dobrindt in Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 7.09.2009).

Secondly, safeguarding the German self – being constructed as the “German nation” by a few or “German core values, including the social model” by many – has thus become part and parcel of the supra-partisan discourse on European integration. Conservatives do focus on the so-called “principle of subsidiarity” when checking against European transgressions. As Norbert Röttgen, Environmental Minister in the Merkel government put it; “We should push integration where it is essential and
restrict it where the ‘principle of subsidiarity’ is undermined” (Röttgen 2009: 26256).

In a similar vein, Rainders Steenblock, member of the traditionally pro-integrationist Green Party assisted: “Our experience shows us that we have to think about Europe in more ambivalent terms. Just as much as we need the nation states, we also need European structures” (Steenblock 2009: 29260).

Thirdly, exporting the German model has become the primary strategy of the government when balancing conflicting domestic and external role expectations. To safeguard the German self while enabling the European organized other, the Merkel government has left traditional self-restraint behind and started to export – if not superimpose – various components of the “German model”:

“Let us take the bull by the horns! Let’s seize the moment and develop a real culture of subsidiarity. Germany has had a lot of success with its federal system and that we should promote in Europe” (Merkel 2008: 16454).

The change in the dynamics of the role composition did not go unnoticed. Rather it sometimes drew harsh criticism from the oppositional Social Democratic and Green parties (Steenblock 2009: 26262). Some parliamentarians went as far as speaking out against a “new nationalism”. While this new nationalism had nothing to do with past German excesses, it shifted the goalposts in the debate on Europe. Achim Schäfer (SPD) described this new tone as follows:

“We [the new nationalists, S. H.] are in favour of the EU, but only under certain conditions. We are not in favour of a European Germany, as the

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7 Several deputies of the major parties criticized the Federal Constitutional Court for holding an “antiquated interpretation of sovereignty” in its recent ruling on the Lisbon treaty law, cf. Roth 2009: 26357.
founding fathers and mothers of the Grundgesetz were, we are in favour of a Europe under German proviso” (Schäfer 2009: 26263).

These changes in the German role composition vis-à-vis the EU – from a negative towards a positive self-identification – fit together in an intra-role conflict between ever more diverse domestic and external role expectations. Drawing on our tripartite role typology, we were able to “reconstruct” this role change. Whilst this change has been noticed and criticized by some of Germany’s European partners, it has hardly ignited any divisive counter-role taking. However, when the Merkel government openly and ultimatively demanded the transfer of German budget and financial rules onto the EU level during the ongoing Euro-Crisis, adversarial counter-role taking within the EU took place, not only in Greece but also elsewhere in Europe.

6 The Czech Republic’s European Policy: On a Mission to Reform Europe?

The Czech government adopted an official position towards the institutional reforms on 25 April 2007 (Government of the Czech Republic 2007), anticipating tough negotiations. Although the then government of Mirek Topolánek (Civic Democratic Party – ODS) was no keen advocate of the reform process, it wanted the whole debate to be over soon, so that the EU could focus on more substantive issues,
including the enlargement agenda.

During negotiations, the Czech government was very sensitive to a possible weakening of the voting power within the Council vis-à-vis the large states. Thus, it advocated “the balance between the principle of the equal representation of citizens and the principle of equal representation of states” (Government of the Czech Republic 2007). Secondly, Prague was strongly opposed the state-like symbolic dimension of the institutional reform (which was evident in its use of terms such as “minister of foreign affairs” and “constitution”). Thirdly, the government rejected a stand-alone Charter of Fundamental Rights and proposed that the EU should sign the European Convention on Human Rights. Finally, the Czech government proposed an innovation to strengthen national governments: the so-called “two-way flexibility” should allow for both: shifts of competences from the national to the European level, but also the return of certain competences back to the national level.

The ratification of the Lisbon treaty dominated the agenda for the years 2008 and 2009, and the issue significantly affected both the internal politics of the Czech Republic and its image in Europe. In 2008, the ratification process was the centrepiece of the Czech discourse on European integration. The parliamentary debate began in March 2008, with the Senate referring the treaty to the Constitutional Court shortly after that. The court was asked to review the constitutionality of six specific points of the EU’s reform treaty. On 26 November 2008 the Constitutional Court ruled that the ratification of the LT did not violate the Czech constitutional order. On 26 November 2008 the Constitutional Court ruled that the ratification of
the LT did not violate the Czech constitutional order (Constitutional Court of the Czech Republic 2008).

However, the treaty was not ratified after the ruling, and the parliamentary debate was postponed until February 2009. In the end, the positive ruling of the Constitutional Court convinced and silenced some of the Eurosceptics in the Senate and paved the way for the approval of the Treaty.

Prime Minister Topolánek only very reluctantly backed the treaty, balancing between pressure from the pro-European opposition (Czech Social Democratic Party - ČSSD) and the coalition partners (Christian Democrats - KDU-ČSL and the Green Party) on one side and the Eurosceptical dissidents within his own party (loyal to President Klaus) on the other. In February 2009 the parliamentary debate resumed with a new compromise proposal on the table: the so-called “binding mandate”, which would prevent the Czech government from approving any transfer of powers to the EU without the parliament’s agreement. Afterwards the Chamber of Deputies approved the treaty on 18 February 2009 and the Senate added its stamp after a closely observed vote on 6 May 2009.8

6.1 The Czech Republic’s old positive self-identification

The ratification debates clearly indicate that Czech EU policy is still based on a specific kind of Czech exceptionalism. Compared to the 1990s we can detect a substantial shift in the role composition in favour of the ego part (“I”). The role of an “apprentice”, which was salient in the process of the Czech transition towards

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8 The previous paragraphs are reproduced from Beneš/Braun (2011).
“normal” European democracy and market economy, has in turn been rejected by the contemporary Czech political mainstream. The expectations of significant others (the alter part, “Me”) are largely neglected and “shed away” in favour of a positively assessed self.

The importance of the ego part and the salience of the historical self could be illustrated on the following dialogue between Petr Pithart (KDU-ČSL; the first deputy chairman of the Czech Senate) and Luděk Sefzig (ODS; Chairman of the Czech Senate Committee on the European Union). In a relatively rare attempt to rhetorically challenge the sense of Czech exceptionalism and self-confidence, Petr Pithart asked the following question:

“And finally, I ask the question – it is not a rhetorical question – I do not know the answer, though I would really like to know. Why do we alone see how things really are? [Why is it that only] we see how things go wrong? Many of us see things this way. How is it possible that others do not see it this way? What gave us the exceptional ability to see all the dangers and risks which others do not see? [...] I have the feeling that we suffer from some kind of inferiority complex and that we simply subdue it through bravado.” (Petr Pithart in Senate 2008)

The answer from Luděk Sefzig nicely illustrates the national self-stereotype and the shared Czech role conception described in the theoretical part of this paper:

“I will try to answer [...] the question why it is just we the Czechs who sometimes see further than others, [why we] see different things. I think that it is firstly given by our national personality, which is characterised by cautiousness. Secondly we are a new member of the EU and we have [certain] experiences as a Central European country which was always at the crossroads of history. And that is why we are probably more sensitive than other countries, but of course this is neither an entirely comprehensive nor an entirely original answer.” (Luděk Sefzig in Senate 2008; see also Luděk Sefzig in Senate 2009)

The positive demarcation vis-à-vis the historical self is accompanied by positive self-identification. In order to legitimize the Czech scepticism and reluctance, the
parliamentarians certain unique positive characteristics of the Czechs cautiousness and a dispassionate rationalism (compare with Kundera 1968). In contrast, the significant others—“some European officials”—are depicted as “fanaticized” (Mirek Topolánek in Senate 2009), “ideological”. But generally the contemporary Czech Republic is not conceptualized as somehow more advanced. But this exceptionalism (still) stems from the idea that the Czech history (rather than the Czech present) is exceptional—a unique experience which can (and should) be conveyed to the rest of Europe and the world.

6.2 The “Perfidious Others” and the Kunderian turn

In addition to the growing positive self-identification, the anti-great power sentiments are still clearly present in the arguments of the Czech parliamentarians and government officials. The analysis shows that the stereotypical interpretation of great powers as potentially treacherous and dangerous is widely shared by the Czech eurosceptics, and also by some supporters of the institutional reform treaty. The Czech self-identification reflects its perception of others: Great powers are viewed as (potential) perpetrators and oppressors of other (smaller) states while the Czech Republic is presented as a (potential) victim of the great powers.

Internalized by most of the Czech politicians, these negative alter expectations are being applied not just to the European great powers but also to United States and, of

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9 The Czech Republic is sometimes labelled as „transatlantic“. But even the USA is approached with a certain mistrust so that even the USA is an object of Czech moralization. In fact, even „pro-American“ politicians and media commentators occasionally display their anxiety that the United States may one day “betray us” (Slačálek 2010). Such fears re-emerged after US President Obama tried to “reset” the U.S.-Russian relationship and after he scrapped the plans for the US radar base in the Czech Republic. These plans were seen by many as a deterrent against Russia’s penetration into the Central Europe, thus as a tool for keeping Americans in and Russians out.
course, to Russia and China. Accordingly, the strengthening of the great (most populous) states through Lisbon treaty is singled out by the then Primemister Mirek Topolánek (ODS) and his Deputy Alexandr Vondra (ODS) as the first and most important deficiency of the reform treaty:

“I have no illusion. This principal change in the voting weights [in the Council] was not meant to reduce the so-called democratic deficit. It is just attractive rhetoric. Behind this change is the tough policy of the large member states, who have realized that the [EU] enlargement moved the EU’s centre of gravity towards the East.” (Mirek Topolánek in Senate 2009; see also Alexandr Vondra in Senate 2008).

The (growing) influence of the great powers is automatically seen by all the Czech parliamentarians as harmful and detrimental to Czech interests, and at the same time to European interests as well. Thus, eurosceptic Czech parliamentarians insisted on the intergovernmental model and unanimity in decision-making as a tool for avoiding the Czech Republic being “steamrollered” (Luděk Sefzig in Senate 2008) by the great powers. Supporters of the Lisbon treaty shared the notion that the possibility that the large states could “simply outvote the small ones” is something to be avoided. Yet, they contended that the LT contains ample checks to avoid such situation (Alena Gajdůšková in Senate 2008).

Importantly, those who articulate grave mistrust towards great powers do not differentiate and discriminate between individual West European powers anymore. Germany is no longer singled out as the main perpetrator and only redoubtable great power. In line with our hypothesis (about great powers per se as the generalized...

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10 Other growing powers are usually seen as potential threats to Europe and the Czech Republic. For the analysis of the construction of these threats in the Czech political discourse see Beneš (2010).
other), the three European powers (Germany, France and Great Britain) are usually put on the same normative footing. Their collective reign over Europe is seen as something (potentially) dangerous and harmful for the Czech Republic and Europe as such.

“I simply do not want to be in a union of “equal” members under the rule of England, Germany and France. Maybe I could stand it, but what I really do not want, I really do not want to be under the rule of officials from Brussels” (Jaroslav Kubera in Senate 2008)

“I would like to remind you of what happened in the EU after the outbreak of the financial crisis in America. The biggest ones met and they forgot that the Union has 27 members. They began negotiating rules which were to be applied to all the members. Fortunately this did not happen. But what we see is the instinct of the big ones to decide about the small ones. This is what I fear.” (Jiří Oberfalzer in Senate 2009)

Whilst the Czech political elite shares the fear of great power domination, individual politicians may differ in their assessment which great power is more dangerous. The hard core eurosceptics deem the West-European powers simply too dangerous, too arrogant, too dominating and too perfidious to accept the “Lisbon dictate”. Because the EU is referred to as an organized other, representing some kind of institutionalized form of great power domination, a deeper involvement in the EU is understood as a direct threat to Czech self.

Another, much larger, group of politicians consists of those who do not deny the perfidiousness of the West European great powers, but still see the EU (dominated by those powers) as a bulwark against one even more perfidious and dominating great power - Russia. This line of reasoning (Brussels / the West European powers are bad but Russia is even worst) has been most clearly articulated by the then prime minister Mirek Topolánek. He argued that “the rejection of the Lisbon treaty [...] would drive us into the arms of Moscow” (Mirek Topolánek in Senate 2009; see also Radio Prague 2008).
The other supporters of the LT justify its ratification with three types of arguments. The first one is geopolitical. The above-mentioned fear of the “authoritarian and increasingly assertive” Russia has been recently expressed by Václav Havel (Gazeta Wyborcza 2009), and this geopolitical argument is shared by some (soft) eurosceptics / eurorealists (Alexandr Vondra - ODS) and by many traditionally pro-European parliamentarians (Karel Schwarzenberg), analysts and media commentators. In fact, one of the most common arguments against the anti-EU policy of Václav Klaus (and his followers) is that such a policy pushes the Czech republic eastwards in the hands of Russia.

The second argumentation focuses on the credibility of the Czech Republic. The supporters of the LT often carry on with the post-1989 discourse in the sense that they uphold the alter-expectations - the Czech Republic as a respected member of the European family of nations – while trying to undermine the ego centric role taking by the eurosceptics (see previous section). The best example of the second argumentation line is Alena Gajdůšková (ČSSD) who portrayed the Czech Republic as “a homeless who was accepted as a member of [European] family.”

“He was given shelter and work opportunities but the next day he started to criticize the house, how it is terrible, how everyone else is doing things wrongly” (Alena Gajdůšková in Senate 2008).

But overall, this argumentation does not change the positive self-conception shared by most of the parliamentarians which is based on Czech exceptionalism. Interestingly, neither Czech eurosceptics (who largely reject the alter-expectations and appraise unique Czech experience), nor the pro-European politicians are able to take on the role of the generalized other. In the case of euroscepticism, it is the self-understanding of being a victim of significant if perfidious others (a victim of history) which prevent the Czech Republic to take the role of generalized other. In the latter case the Czech Republic is conceptualized as a novice (a person seeking recognition from others and which is subject to socialization pressure) which means
that the Czech Republic is not yet in the position to take the role of the generalized other.

In hindsight, there actually has been only a relatively short period in which Czech political leaders were keen to embrace the role of the generalized other: that was the first half of the Czech EU presidency which overlapped with the parliamentary debate on the Lisbon treaty. On the one hand, though, Prime Minister Topolánek still did not divert from the traditional “Kunderian” negative interpretation of the significant and organized other – the great powers. Again, this role taking resulted in a defensive and reactive attitude, portraying the Czech Republic as a potential victim of the great-power politics. Thus, in his farewell interview, Topolánek stressed his own ability to stand up against large EU members (“big France”) as the big success of the Czech EU Presidency. “If needed, I sharply stood up against any country. Even against Russia” (Topolánek 2009).

On the other side, however, Topolánek now criticized the policy of “passive resistance”. During the EU presidency he supplemented the traditional defensive anti-great power tradition with an appeal for a more active and constructive foreign policy:

“... we need allies. When I spoke about an active attitude I meant the ability to gain the majority for our aims. [We should become] the subject of solutions for Europe, not the object [of such solutions]. After all, we need to change the EU much more than the large and old member states do because it suits us much less than them. It is not helpful for us to hide behind the veto and try to 'avoid the worst'” (Mirek Topolánek in Senate 2009).

7 Conclusion

Our paper started to explore the scope conditions when and how specific roles shape institutions, the so-called organized other. Equally, if not more important, our tripartite role typology allowed us to compare the two national roles systematically
along the three dimensions outlined above. Our results suggest few universal patterns thus far. Rather our findings show that even small changes in the composition of a role – e.g. the mix of “I”- and “Me-” parts in the process of self-identification – can affect the prospects for integration substantially. Also, after exploring the nexus between roles and organized others, we suspect that European states have established “organized others”, which help to stabilize expectations and the respective cooperation, to compensate for the fragility of their self-identification. Furthermore, the typology enabled us to identify some scope conditions for successful interaction between some specified role types, some significant others and various organized others. It allowed us, for the first time, to track down the effects of the “historical self” on role taking and role making behavior. We now know, or at least suspect with some confidence, that roles which are focused on a specific, i.e. victimized historical self, are prone to hinder deeper integration because self-identification with a positive “organized other” is precarious. We also surmise that strong alter-identification, as in the case post-WWII Germany, has a high potential for breeding intra-role conflicts as growing positive self-identification limits or at least directs further alter-identification.

More deeply, we found the following nexus between role types and integration/organized other: At the broadest level, we hold that we must rethink role theory as a distinct area of foreign policy analysis. The distinction between ego-dominated roles and negligible alter expectations (Holsti 1970), which probably did not make much sense during the Cold War (Jönsson 1984), has become untenable. If role theory
wants to explore its integrative potential as a bridge between foreign policy analysis and international relations proper (Breuning 2011), then it will have to take alter expectations and the question of who is the “significant other” much more seriously. More immediately and methodologically, we found that our tripartite role typology helped us to better understand and track the respective role changes in the Czech Republic and Germany. Key to understand the respective EU reform policies was the nexus between the historical self-identification and the current role composition. In the Czech case the “Kunderian turn” stands for an important two-fold shift in the role composition: First, whilst the Czech establishment and public held a split other identification until 1968 between treacherous Western great powers and the more benevolent Soviet great power, the Prague Spring reversed that alter-identification pattern. Czechs came to mistrust great powers per se, applying the lessons of Munich to European great powers and sometimes even the United States. Second, Milan Kundera infused a certain national pride, a positive self-identification, as the Czech nation became the re-incarnation of a small power standing up bigger powers, thereby righting the wrongs of European (and World) history. The “Kunderian turn” of positive self-identification implied that the Czech Republic will not subject itself to an organized other, if it is established, by supporting institutional mechanisms that do threaten national selfhood, i.e. autonomy vis-à-vis great powers.

The Czech EU Presidency represents an interesting exemption from the overall trend in the Czech role behavior. The relatively short experience at the helm of the EU did not induce a permanent shift in the Czech national role thus far. But it had a
profound impact on the personal experience of the few politicians who were directly responsible for the Presidency (Mirek Topolánek). Whilst the Czech prime minister Mirek Topolánek took on the role as the representative of the organized other, he had to defend the Lisbon Treaty in his own Parliament. For a few month he even clashed openly with President Václav Klaus over the ratification issue. But he lost and was subsequently ousted from within his own party, the Civic Democrats, which immediately returned to the rather defensive policy of 'avoiding the worst'.

In the German case, there is no evidence of a “Kunderian turn”. Rather, as the German traditional role composition featured a negative self-identification and a very positive alter-identification, recent changes in German role composition arise from an intra-role conflict between the self and the “organized other”. This conflict resulted from a collision between the domestic system of institutional checks and balances and the external checks through Western institutions which were put in place after WW II. Thus in the German case growing alter-commitments in the EU impacted upon domestic institutions which grew ever more self-confident as they served the German people well.

Our results thus also suggest that the Czech and German role conceptions converge in a “contingent Europeanism”. Given the challenges ahead, most notably the current management of the Eurocrisis, we surmise that this role convergence may not continue as Germany is expected to lead but is ever less willing to exert self-restraint when doing so.
8 Literature


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