



## Drivers of domestic politicisation of European issues: explaining low politicisation of differentiated integration in Czechia

Hubert Smekal & Vratislav Havlík

To cite this article: Hubert Smekal & Vratislav Havlík (2023) Drivers of domestic politicisation of European issues: explaining low politicisation of differentiated integration in Czechia, Journal of Contemporary European Studies, 31:3, 979-994, DOI: [10.1080/14782804.2022.2106952](https://doi.org/10.1080/14782804.2022.2106952)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14782804.2022.2106952>



Published online: 12 Aug 2022.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 204



View related articles [↗](#)





View Crossmark data [↗](#)



Citing articles: 2 View citing articles [↗](#)



# Drivers of domestic politicisation of European issues: explaining low politicisation of differentiated integration in Czechia

Hubert Smekal <sup>a</sup> and Vratislav Havlík <sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>School of Law and Criminology, Maynooth University, Kildare, Ireland; <sup>b</sup>Department of International Relations and European Studies, Masaryk University, Brno, Czechia

## ABSTRACT

This article contributes to the debate on domestic politicisation of EU issues by suggesting hitherto overlooked explanation of (non)politicisation. This paper uses Czechia as an intriguing case in which the mainstream explanations of a low level of domestic politicisation of EU issues do not apply. The Czech case illustrates that, first, even in the context of high public Euroscepticism, EU issues do not necessarily become politicised, particularly so when the public does not consider them to be important. Second, high politicisation does not occur when there is a path dependency of a mismatch between positions of political parties and significant parts of their electorates on EU issues. Finally, the rise of catch-all populist parties prevents a high level of politicisation of EU issues.

## KEYWORDS

Politicisation; differentiated integration; multi-speed Europe; Czechia; Euroscepticism

## Introduction

The 2017 White Paper on the Future of Europe presented by the Juncker Commission resonated not only among scholars of European integration but also among EU member states' governments and in elections campaigns (Sergio and Schmidt 2019). Emanuel Macron further underlined the importance of this debate and openly discussed in his speeches on the European future one of the most plausible scenarios – multi-speed Europe. 'If the eurozone has not made progress in recent years, it is because it is ashamed of itself and because it is afraid to face up to those that preferred to stay on the balcony or in the entrance hall. Let's dare to go for a multi-speed Europe' (Robert 2017), said Macron. His words warranted a response from those states, which have not shared the enthusiasm for deeper integration. It concerned particularly the Visegrád countries (Czechia, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia), perceived as a Eurosceptic regional coalition (Ágh 2016) standing against the deepening of European integration.

The vision of multi-speed Europe might accommodate divergent views on the preferred depth of European integration. However, Visegrád countries have not fully embraced Juncker's and Macron's nudges. While Slovakia's then-Prime Minister Fico admitted multi-speed Europe was a reality (Janková 2021), the Hungarian Prime Minister Orbán refused a two-speed Europe (Kyriazi 2021), and so did the two biggest Polish parties (Walecka and Gagatsek 2021). The Czech reaction was rather lukewarm and did not offer a clear position on multi-speed EU integration (Havlík and Smekal 2021).

The Czech position in relation to multi-speed Europe is interesting not only from a Central European point of view. The existing research uncovered that differentiated integration was a rather polarising<sup>1</sup> topic for political parties in period 2008–2020. Research using the same types of sources as this article (parliamentary debates, party, and government manifestos) shows that, for example, the Italian (Volpi 2021), Portuguese (Ferreira da Silva 2021), Romanian (Badulescu 2021) or Bulgarian (Markova 2020)

parliamentary debates were clearly negative towards the idea of multi-speed Europe while, for example, Latvian debates were rather positive (Bukovskis, Palkova, and Varna 2021). Meanwhile, for example, the French (Michel 2020) or German (Nagel 2020) debates contained a number of positive and negative statements clearly outweighing the number of neutral positions.

From a broader perspective, Czechia counts only among three EU countries (with Greece and Estonia) where parliamentary debates have not perceived differentiated integration (multi-speed Europe and multi-end Europe) either positively or negatively but rather neutrally (Telle, Badulescu, and Fernandes 2022, 11). The puzzle thus arises – how to explain such a divergent reaction from concerned member states? Why, in some countries, has the issue become highly polarising, while in others, it has not?

The scholarly debate on the politicisation<sup>2</sup> of EU issues has massively expanded in the last decade, particularly due to the Euro- and migration crises. Scholars sought to explain why the politicisation of EU affairs occurs (e.g. Grande and Hutter 2016; Holzinger and Tosun 2019; Zeitlin, Nicoli, and Laffan 2019; Zürn 2019) and under which conditions parties decide to politicise EU issues (Green-Pedersen 2012; Hoeglinger 2016).

Our contribution adds nuance to existing scholarship on variables, which arguably lead to the (non)politicisation of EU issues. We focus on Czechia as a case where configuration of variables leads to a different result than theoretical expectations suggest. Supposedly crucial variables, such as the Eurosceptic electorate (Green-Pedersen 2012), the dominant economic cleavage in the party system, and a relatively structured party system (Hutter and Kriesi 2019) shall lead to the politicisation. However, in Czechia, they do not, at least not in the debate on differentiated integration, as our research shows.

Differentiated integration has become one of the vital EU debates since 2017 and as such has a large divisive potential (Bellamy, Kröger, and Lorimer 2021, 628). Yet, in Czechia, it has not led to politically polarising debates, which is comparatively quite rare as we show above.

Differentiated integration is only one of the topics in which Czechia demonstrates low levels of politicisation (see Kaniok and Brusenbauch Meislova (2021) for Brexit, Dandashly and Verdun (2018) for adoption of Euro, Havlík and Havlík (2018) for generally low salience of EU issues in Czech party manifestos or Auel and Höing (2015) for Czech parliamentary debates on Eurocrisis). Given the characteristics of the Czech party system (dominant economic cleavage, relatively structured party competition) and highly Eurosceptic electorate, the lack of politicisation is surprising. We propose an explanation which enriches scholarly debate on the variables contributing to the non-politicisation of EU issues. We argue that the existing literature omits path dependency of low domestic politicisation of EU issues after 2004, associated with a high mismatch between parties' and their voters' positions, and the emergence of catch-all populist parties.

The following section reviews the literature on the politicisation of EU affairs. We formulate theoretical expectations flowing from the literature and show Czechia as an intriguing case from the perspective of ongoing theoretical debate. A section on the method follows. We elaborate on the politicisation of differentiated integration in Czechia and analyse the data from parliamentary debates. We discuss why Czechia does not behave as expected by the literature and offer an alternative explanation. Finally, we present findings from Czechia in the wider CEE context and then conclude.

## **European integration as a domestic political issue**

### ***Domestic politicisation of EU issues***

Recent years witnessed a rising academic interest in the politicisation of EU affairs. The shift of European issues 'from the backrooms of political decision-making to the public sphere' is quite a new phenomenon (Hutter and Kriesi 2019, 997). There is an agreement in the literature about a very long period of 'permissive consensus' (Hooghe and Marks 2009, 5), a period till the Maastricht Treaty in

which discussions about Europe were not part of domestic party competition and public debate. However, the permissive consensus became 'constraining dissensus' (Hooghe and Marks 2009) in the following decades.

This turn required a comprehensive explanation. The ongoing scholarly debate has deepened over the last few years, providing findings on triggers of the EU issues politicisation (e.g. Grande and Hutter 2016; Holzinger and Tosun 2019; Zeitlin, Nicoli, and Laffan 2019; Zürn 2019). First, European integration has not been politicised in national debates continuously, but rather in certain 'politicising moments' (Hutter, Grande, and Kriesi 2016; Hutter and Kriesi 2019). Incidence of such moments intensified in the last decade, with two major crises – Euro- and migration crisis – significantly affecting EU member states and their national politics (Hutter, Grande, and Kriesi 2016; Hutter and Kriesi 2019). Looking at the EU member states in general, the European 'polycrisis' increased the salience of EU issues and polarised political actors (Zeitlin, Nicoli, and Laffan 2019, 965). The implications of the Euro- and migration crises considerably changed the party competition in some EU countries, but this new development remains underresearched. Hoeglinger (2016) noted that our knowledge still relies only on anecdotal evidence, for example, from the EU Constitutional Treaty referenda or the Eurozone crisis.

The discussion has deepened since then and there have been several waves of 'politicisation debates' (De Wilde, Leupold, and Schmidtke 2016; Hutter, Grande, and Kriesi 2016; Zeitlin, Nicoli, and Laffan 2019; Zürn 2019; Hutter and Kriesi 2019). These debates clarified the circumstances under which politicisation occurs and the reasons that lead to non-politicization. However, some gaps remain in our understanding of the domestic politicisation of EU issues as existing theories do not satisfactorily explain some cases. Czechia illustrates this point. Auel and Höing (2015, 388) count Czechia as one of few countries (Czechia, Estonia, Lithuania, and Slovenia) with powerful parliaments but little activity during eurocrisis, however, without offering any explanation.

### ***Explaining diverse levels of politicisation across EU member states***

Under normal circumstances, political parties do not have many reasons to politicise EU integration since this topic poses difficulties. Parties generally strive for a simple and coherent programmatic package based on few core concerns. On the contrary, European integration comprises a very specific bulk of issues, and, therefore, parties often have to cope with ambivalent attitudes and cross-cutting lines of conflict, which makes politicisation unattractive (Hoeglinger 2016, 58–59; Whitefield and Rohrschneider 2015, 14). For traditional parties, EU issues sometimes do not fit the major conflict dimension of party systems (Green-Pedersen 2012, 119). Catch-all parties that aim to attract people with diverse political viewpoints will generally try to reduce polarisation (Zürn 2019, 979) to attract diverse parts of the population, including lowering the politicisation of EU issues (see more on this below). Catch-all parties will try to avoid polarising debates on the EU because some parts of their diverse electorate can dislike their firm stance on the topic. Populist parties have a specific position in this debate. In principle, populist parties can be expected to politicise EU issues, particularly when they embrace right-wing or left-wing ideologies (Zulianello and Larsen 2021). However, with newly emerging catch-all, or valence, populist parties (Surel 2019; Zulianello and Larsen 2021), we anticipate quite the opposite. Similarly to traditional mainstream catch-all parties, also these parties emphasise non-positional issues; hence, depoliticisation of EU issues can fit their strategy (Zürn 2019).

Many works explained the non-politicisation of EU issues in the past (e.g. Hooghe and Marks 2018; De Wilde, Leupold, and Schmidtke 2016). Van der Eijk and Franklin (2004) spoke about the voters as a 'sleeping giant' whom the parties prefer not to wake up by politicising the EU issues. Yet, the European polycrisis changed the state of affairs and brought increased domestic politicisation of EU matters. Topics such as austerity measures, the Fiscal Union, the financial help to Greece, and the migration crisis were sensitive enough to stir national political debates and polarise the domestic public. However, the politicisation of these topics vastly differed across EU member states. Scholars sought to find variables (i.e. particular characteristics of member states) associated with these diverse

domestic political responses. For example, Green-Pedersen (2012, 126) concluded that 'the more [euro-]sceptical the population is, the more likely politicisation will occur. It will make it more certain for the mainstream parties that they will have the electorate on their side if they break the pro-EU consensus'. For example, Hungary, Poland, and Romania displayed a comparatively low level of public Euroscepticism (European Commission 2016) and a low level of politicisation of EU issues (Hutter and Kriesi 2019), thus fitting Green-Pedersen's explanation. On the contrary, we can find countries from the CEE region, such as Czechia, with a high level of public Euroscepticism<sup>3</sup> (European Commission 2016) but low politicisation of EU issues (Havlík and Havlík 2018). In Slovakia, public Euroscepticism is relatively low (European Commission 2016), yet the EU future became increasingly politicised since late 2016 (TASR 2017). Hence, high Euroscepticism is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition of high politicisation of EU issues.

Further complications arise when we look at partisan Euroscepticism, which supposedly closely corresponds to public Euroscepticism (Ray 1999). De Wilde, Leupold, and Schmidtke (2016, 6) expect politicisation to be driven primarily by critics of the integration process rather than by its supporters. This statement does not easily agree with Hutter and Kriesi (2019), who found low politicisation of EU issues in the CEE region in times of polycrisis.

The ongoing debate concerning the EU polycrisis studies both its impacts on party systems as a whole (e.g. patterns of party competition) and on single parties within the party system. Braun, Adrian Popa, and Schmitt (2019, 808) found that mainstream parties adapt their tone towards the EU in response to the EU crises, however, they shift towards Eurosceptic stances less than ideologically polar parties. Similarly, Zürn (2019) does not expect catch-all parties to increase polarisation. Yet again, these findings are robust in comparing politicisation trends of macro-regions (such as CEE, Southern Europe, Northwestern Europe) but weaker in distinguishing among individual party systems within the regions. Broad generalisation risks significant distortions; therefore, case studies remain a valuable tool for finding variables that may enrich existing models.

Hutter and Kriesi (2019) studied politicisation in 15 countries located in three European regions as a reaction to the economic and migration crisis. They found that the so-called polycrisis led to the politicisation of the EU issues in Northwestern and Southern Europe, but not as much in CEE countries. Their explanation focused on the degree of structuration of the national party systems and dominant cleavages. CEE states have relatively low partisan structuring around European issues, and political parties are primarily divided across lines of cultural liberalism and nationalism (i.e. socio-cultural cleavages). In contrast, party systems in Northwestern and Southern Europe are much more structured according to EU issues and have a considerably stronger economic cleavage when compared to CEE states (Hutter and Kriesi 2019, 1012).

The CEE region comprises quite diverse countries. Whereas the cleavage cultural liberalism vs nationalism seems to hold in Hungary and Poland, Czechia offers a different picture,<sup>4</sup> with political competition accentuating the economic divide more than the cultural divide, despite some shifts in recent years (Balík and Hloušek 2016, 109; Linek, Chytilík, and Eibl 2016; Hájek 2020). All three states politicise EU issues at a low level, although not necessarily for the same reasons. Czechia, Hungary, and Poland do not differ only in prevalent cleavages in party systems but also in other variables, including the level of public Euroscepticism and party Euroscepticism, the performance of populist parties, their post-1990 development, etc. Hence, while Czechia typically counts among CEE countries, it does not share their characteristics, except the low level of politicisation of EU issues. Studying Czechia should help us to discover hitherto omitted drivers of (non-)politicisation.

To sum up, the scholarship on (non)politicisation of EU issues focused on the following variables: (1) the level of public Euroscepticism (Green-Pedersen 2012); (2) the triggering role of Euro- and migration crises (Grande and Hutter 2016; Zeitlin, Nicoli, and Laffan 2019); (3) the existence of certain types of political parties in respective party systems (i.e. mainstream parties versus ideologically polar parties, Braun, Adrian Popa, and Schmitt 2019); or (4) more explicitly, the presence of a catch-all party (Green-Pedersen 2012), including populist (valence) (Surel

2019; Zulianello and Larsen 2021), in the party system; (5) the role of predominant cleavages in domestic politics (economic or cultural) (Hutter and Kriesi 2019); and (6) the partisan divides over European integration (Hutter and Kriesi 2019).

### ***Theoretical expectations concerning the politicisation of differentiated integration***

Differentiated integration belongs among prominent scenarios for the EU's future (European Values Study 2017), as it stands as one of the most preferred alternatives to the EU disintegration (Rosamond 2019). It came to the forefront, particularly in connection to the EU post-crisis management (Leruth, Gänzle, and Trondal 2019). It offers states to choose their speed of integration and opens possibilities for deeper integration among those who opt to do so. One can thus expect that domestic political elites will actively present their positions on such a scenario for the EU. Political parties should clash, first, if they support Europe of different speeds, and second, if they want to participate in the core, or rather stay out of it.

A response to this topical challenge could have been expected mainly from new member states because their policy preferences (see below) often differ from those of the old member states (Schimmelfennig 2014, 682). In a situation when Poland and Czechia experienced problems with the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, when many CEE states have remained reluctant to introduce the single currency,<sup>5</sup> when all four Visegrád countries vehemently opposed the quota system on migrants and three out of four voted against it, one could anticipate very serious debates on the depth and speed of the country's involvement in the European integration. However, the opposite seems to be the case (Hutter and Kriesi 2019; Telle, Badulescu, and Fernandes 2022).

Based on the literature review, we identified the following variables leading to high domestic politicisation of EU issues: high public Euroscepticism, presence of a right-wing or left-wing populist party, presence of ideologically polar parties, predominantly economic cleavage in the party system, and relatively structured party competition. Czechia shares all of these variables, yet, against expectations, it exhibits low levels of politicisation of EU issues (Dandashly and Verdun 2018; Auel and Höing 2015; Havlík and Havlík 2018; Kaniok and Brusenbauch Meislová 2021). Levels of public Euroscepticism belong among the highest in the EU (European Commission 2016–2020)<sup>6</sup>; economic cleavage<sup>7</sup> is more important than cultural (Balík and Hloušek 2016); right-wing populist party is present (Úsvit/Dawn and then SPD); and the political system is quite structured, with ideologically profiled, both Eurosceptic and Eurooptimistic, parties. In other words, the 'sleeping giant' (Van der Eijk and Franklin 2004) should be under such circumstances awake, only that he is not. Especially a high level of public Euroscepticism which has not translated into high politicisation of EU issues represents an intriguing puzzle.

Czechia does not conform expectations of the current scholarship. The configuration of Czechia's characteristics should lead to the domestic politicisation of European integration. As an outlier, that is, case not conforming to the predictions made by the theory (Bennett and Elman 2007, 176–78), Czechia promises a fruitful case for more in-depth exploration, particularly to discover new explanatory variables (Doorenspleet and Kopecký 2008, 708–710) and hypotheses (Bennett and Elman 2007, 176–78).

The Czech political approach to the EU has long been criticised as unpredictable. The country was characterised as a troublemaker of EU integration (Vratislav Havlík 2019b) on many occasions, and Czechia frequently articulated its clear opposition against a deeper European integration (ČTK 2019). Political support for differentiated integration could accommodate high public Czech Euroscepticism. Under the multi-speed scenario, Czech Eurosceptics would have a chance to opt for a slower integration pace and prevent Czech participation in the deepening of EU integration. Eurosceptics should be intensely engaged in debates on differentiated integration with their ideological counterparts who support deeper European integration and want to be part of it.

The presence of a populist catch-all party represents the most promising avenue to explore from the variables on offer. In the period coinciding with the grand debate on the European future after the Commission's 2017 White Paper publication, a populist catch-all party ANO 2011<sup>8</sup> (Vlastimil



Havlík 2019) dominated the Czech political scene.<sup>9</sup> ANO 2011 adopted a pragmatic approach towards EU politics: it focused on domestic problems and tried to downplay EU issues. Such tactics go in line with the behaviour of catch-all parties (Green-Pedersen 2012; Zürn 2019), also because of their very heterogeneous electorate (Maškarinec 2019). A low level of politicisation of EU issues in the Czech debate might, therefore, have something to do with the role of a successful catch-all party. However, ANO 2011 represents a quite recent phenomenon; therefore, we need more insight into long-time low levels of politicisation of EU issues in Czech politics.

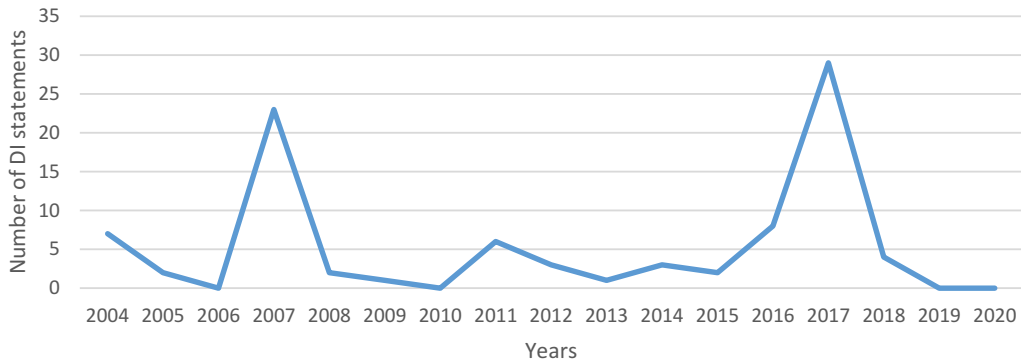
## Methodology

Politicisation acquired different meanings in academic debates. However, most scholars agree that issues become politicised when their salience rises, and so does polarisation when political actors speak about given topics (Leupold, and Schmidtke 2016; Zeitlin, Nicoli, and Laffan 2019; Zürn 2019). Some definitions of politicisation include additional criteria, such as the number of actors participating in the debate (Zürn 2019) or the ability of actors to mobilise public opinion (Zeitlin, Nicoli, and Laffan 2019). We define politicisation as a process when EU issues (here, specifically, differentiated integration) become salient, and political parties polarise their positions on them. Following Zürn (2019), we consider the number of actors debating the issue as an important element in politicisation. We understand polarising speeches as those being not neutral. Hence, in connection to differentiated integration, polarising statements either endorse or refuse differentiated integration. On the contrary, neutral statements do not contain any evaluative element. They typically mention differentiated integration descriptively and do not provide any clear preferences for or against it. To remind, differentiated integration belongs among the most important topics of EU integration in the last decade. Therefore, from studying this topic, we may get a picture on the level of general politicisation of EU issues, especially when enriched by results of research covering other issues.

In order to discover variables that matter in the process of domestic politicisation of EU issues, we focus on a case study of Czechia, which exhibits unique characteristics (see above the specific reasons). Czechia is characterised by generally low levels of domestic politicisation of EU issues (dependent variable). Yet, it resembles other regions, which exhibit much higher politicisation of EU issues, as regards explanatory variables. By closely studying this case of Czechia, we shed light on this case of equifinality.

For studying the debate on differentiated integration in Czechia, we followed a similar approach as Telle, Badulescu, and Fernandes (2022), who studied politicisation of differentiated integration by analysing parliamentary debates (similarly, see for politicisation of Eurozone crisis Auel and Höing (2015) or Auel, Eisele, and Kinski (2016)) and programmes for government. Moreover, we followed Green-Pedersen (2012) by studying party manifestos. We first collected stenographic records of all parliamentary debates (in both the Lower and the Upper House of the Parliament) since the Czech accession to the EU and sorted them by years (2004–2020).<sup>10</sup> We extracted from the whole corpus of stenographic protocols the speeches that included at least one of three differentiated integration keywords (multi-speed Europe, two-speed Europe, Core Europe).<sup>11</sup> We coded individual statements according to the speaker's position towards differentiated integration (positive, negative, or neutral). To avoid the multiplicity of the same codes within a single speech, we assigned the same code only once to each speech. In addition to coding positions on differentiated integration, we also attributed to every speech the speaker's party affiliation, relation to the executive (government vs opposition), and a seat in the Lower or Upper House of the Parliament.

We focused on the periods of 'politicising moments' (Hutter and Kriesi 2019) in the years 2006–2007 and 2017, when Czech parliamentary debates on differentiated integration, and generally on EU issues, peaked (see Figure 1). In other years, differentiated integration reached only very low salience or was not discussed at all. These 2007 and 2017 politicising moments coincide with the



**Figure 1.** Salience of differentiated integration in parliamentary debates 2004–2020.

Lisbon Treaty adoption process and the White paper on the future of Europe, respectively. We analysed both the contents of the Czech parliamentary debates, and party election manifestos and programmes for government.

In 2007 and 2017, we focus on the extent of polarisation of the debate, contexts of differentiated integration discussions, and the speaker's party affiliation. By doing so, we assess whether the Czech debate on differentiated integration is being politicised and who are the main drivers of politicisation. Moreover, when including the remaining years, we get a picture of the main trends/changes in time.

### (Non)politicisation of differentiated integration in Czechia

The Czech parliamentary debate on differentiated integration reached only very low salience in most of the years after the 2004 EU accession, hitting typically less than five mentions per year. This finding supports Hutter's and Kriesi's (2019) assertion that the EU is not politicised continuously but rather in 'politicising moments'. The Czech political debate on differentiated integration recorded only two peaks – in 2007 and 2017, when more than 20 relevant speeches occurred (see Figure 1). In the remaining years, parliamentarians have debated models of differentiated integration, such as two-speed/multi-speed/core Europe, only rarely.<sup>12</sup>

Two main topics dominated parliamentary debates on differentiated integration. In 2007, Czech parliamentarians discussed multi-speed Europe when speaking about the Lisbon Treaty and its consequences. In 2017, the White Paper on the Future of Europe sparked the multi-speed Europe debate again.

The number of speeches has not differed according to the author's affiliation with a party in government or opposition. Both Houses of the Czech Parliament witnessed a similar level of activity in differentiated integration debates (see Table 1); however, the Lower House consists of 200 deputies, whereas the Upper House of only 81 senators.<sup>13</sup> In both Houses, neutral statements on differentiated integration prevailed, although negative views appeared quite frequently as well.

**Table 1.** Polarising and non-polarising speeches on differentiated integration in the Czech Parliament (2004–2020).

(n = 91)	Negative	Neutral	Positive
Lower House (n = 48)	15	33	0
Upper House (n = 43)	18	22	3

Source: Authors



Positive comments occurred very rarely: only three speeches (out of a total of 91) indicated support for differentiated integration, and all of them were heard in the Senate. In the Chamber of Deputies, no one spoke in favour of two-/multispeed Europe (see Figure 2).

When closely reading individual speeches, one can observe differences between both Houses. In the Lower House, the place of day-to-day politicking, no in-depth debate on differentiated integration was pending. Deputies mentioned the topic merely haphazardly as a subsection of speeches on various topics. The Upper House heard much longer and more elaborate speeches on differentiated integration, which also happened in the case of Brexit (Kaniok and Brusenbauch Meislova 2021). However, neither House witnessed a genuine debate, including a lively exchange of opinions. With few exceptions, the statements did not react to each other, and many speakers mentioned the models of differentiated integration just because they inquired more information.

The comparison of the two parliamentary Houses provides us with interesting information on the nature of the debate. The less important decision-making body shows more polarisation and more depth, while the Chamber of Deputies, as the focal point of Czech politics, witnesses mostly neutral statements without much reasoning. Media follow the Chamber of Deputies more and parties can more easily compel deputies not to deviate from party positions.

Figure 2 shows decreasing polarisation of the Czech parliamentary debate on differentiated integration. While until 2016, speakers voiced their evaluative stances, typically opposing multi-speed Europe, starting from 2016, neutral statements have dominated the parliamentary discussion. Even one of the most prominent scenarios of the future of Europe, as presented in the 2017 White Paper, has not led parties to articulate their positions clearly.

Not only do parties rarely take sides in the debates on the European future, but some do not even participate in the discussion on differentiated integration at all. In both crucial years under study (2007 and 2017), only very few parties were ready to contribute. In the year 2007, two main competing parties at that time (Social Democrats (ČSSD) and Civic Democrats (ODS)) dominated parliamentary exchanges on the issue. Strikingly, the same two parties were by far the most vocal in the debate also a decade later, even though their relevance waned as numbers of their deputies and senators significantly decreased. On the contrary, members of ANO 2011, a government party since 2014 and the unrivalled political force between 2017 and 2021, have almost

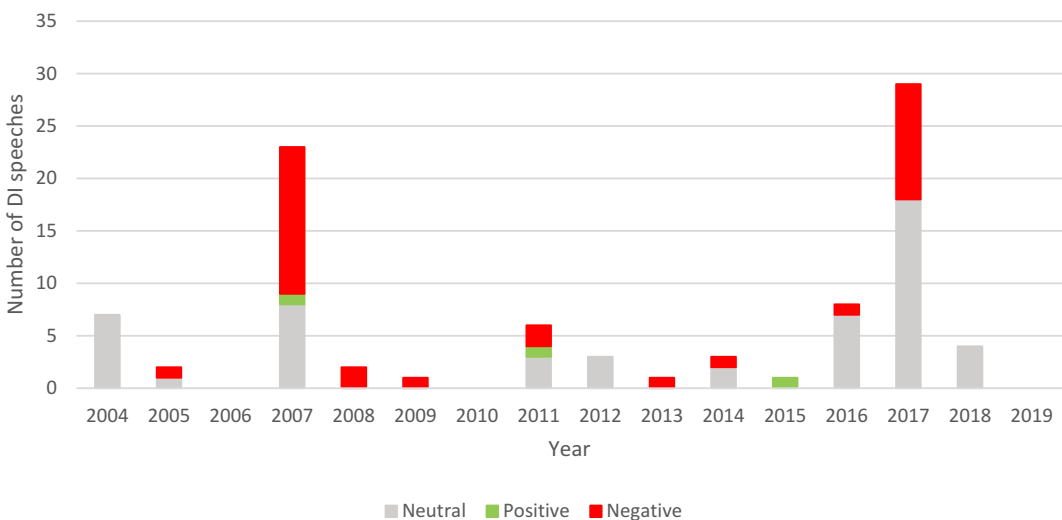


Figure 2. Development in polarising and non-polarising speeches on differentiated integration in the Czech Parliament (2004–2020).

Party	Year 2007	Year 2017
ODS	13	9
ČSSD	9	10
Non-affiliated	1	0
ANO 2011	-	1
Other parties	0	9

**Figure 3.** Parliamentary debate on differentiated integration in 2007 and 2017. Source: Authors

never discussed differentiated integration (see [Figure 3](#)). ANO 2011 resisted the issue both before and after 2017, when they emerged as the clear winner of the parliamentary election, formed the government and its chair Andrej Babiš earned the position of the Prime Minister.

In sum, we observe low salience of differentiated integration in Czech parliamentary speeches. The issue is discussed only rarely, and when it arises, it is voiced predominantly by members of only two parties (ČSSD and ODS). Social Democrats and Civic Democrats used to be leading parties on the left and on the right, respectively, and their rivalry structured the whole party system. Even though their position has receded in the last decade, ČSSD and ODS still dominated discussions on crucial EU affairs. Recently, the emergent new political stronghold, ANO 2011, ‘unpolitical’ pragmatic managerial, political actor, has not shown willingness to tackle vital EU issues.

Political parties’ manifestos corroborate our findings from parliamentary debates. Czech parties election manifestos did not elaborate on differentiated integration even in ‘politicising moments’ (the years 2007 (resp. 2006) and above all 2017). In the 2006 election, with the exception of minor Christian Democrats (KDU-ČSL), who moreover mentioned the core of the EU’ only in passing, no parliamentary party discussed the topic at all. Correspondingly, the programme of Topolánek’s government completely omitted differentiated integration. In the crucial year 2017, when the European debate on the issue surged, the strongest party ANO 2011 did not mention the issue even once, followed by Communists (KSČM), Christian Democrats (KDU-ČSL) and hard-Eurosceptic SPD. Remaining relevant parties, such as Civic Democrats (ODS), Social Democrats (ČSSD), liberal Pirates, conservative TOP09 and centrist Mayors (STAN) mentioned differentiated integration (or its manifestations such as core/two-speed/multi-speed Europe, etc.) only incidentally. The 2017 programme of the ANO 2011 and Social Democrats coalition government did not discuss the issue, except its disapproval of any discrimination of Eurozone non-members.

## Discussion on politicisation variables

The literature review lists the variables that the current scholarship associates with the level of domestic politicisation of EU issues. We demonstrated that Czechia does not conform to theoretical expectations. Here, we elaborate on variables and mechanisms better explaining the situation in Czechia.

As shown above, the Czech political debate on differentiated integration existed only in 2007 and 2017, when it discussed two European mega-events: the Constitutional Treaty and the Lisbon Treaty and its consequences, and the 2017 White Paper on the Future of Europe.

The very low politicisation of differentiated integration or Brexit (Kaniok and Brusenbauch Meislova 2021, 95–97) in Czech parliamentary debates represent two clear examples of a broader phenomenon: even crucial European topics have never played a significant role in the Czech party competition and have not become a real cleavage. Only exceptional issues, such as the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty or the migration crisis, influenced the Czech political debate, yet only for a short time (Vratislav Havlík 2019b). The overall shallowness of the domestic debate of EU issues and its low impact on party competition has persisted since the EU accession (Hloušek and Kopeček 2008, 531; Havlík and Havlík 2018). Czech political parties ignore visions of the EU future and instead focus on short-term advantages of EU integration, namely EU funds (Havlík and Havlík 2018, 32). That corresponds with the low importance of EU issues for Czech voters, who manifest relatively high levels of Eurosceptic attitudes, but at the same time, do not consider European matters highly relevant (Drulák 2008, 15; Hanley 2008; Hloušek and Kopeček 2008, 531).

The dominant explanatory variables of the level of politicisation, such as the level of Euroscepticism and the nature of the main political cleavages, had not worked very well in the Czech case even before ANO 2011 triumphed in the 2017 Lower Chamber election. A brief look into history provides an explanation. According to expectations of scholarly literature, high levels of Czech Euroscepticism should lead to high politicisation of differentiated integration. However, a peculiar disconnect between Czech political parties and their electorate prevented the parties to raise European issues. Paradoxically, then-leading Czech parties held very different attitudes towards the EU than their voters. Traditionally, Eurosceptic Civic Democrats drew support from economic liberals of various kinds, business people, self-employed, etc., who generally benefited from the European integration and supported it. On the contrary, self-portrayed Eurooptimistic Social Democrats attracted voters among workers and pensioners who generally opposed deeper European integration (Hanley 2008; Haughton 2009). Therefore, neither of the two leading parties from the mid-1990s till the mid-2010s era accentuated European topics in order not to alienate their voters. Thus, downplaying EU topics by strongest Czech parties started at least two decades ago and has persisted for the same reasons in years after.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, the extent of agreement on European issues between the strongest parties and their electorates appears as a variable worth exploring.

As a result of the mismatch between political parties and their electorates' positions on EU issues, ANO 2011 of billionaire Andrej Babiš entered the political arena with an already attenuated discussion of EU affairs, which played in its favour. Originally, a catch-all party,<sup>15</sup> ANO's electorate comprised various social segments, not easily grouped according to a single clear cleavage. Hence, a harsh critique of, or praise for, the EU might have displeased part of ANO's supporters. Therefore, ANO sought to avoid debating European issues altogether. The path-dependency of low politicisation of EU issues, generated by the misalignment between ODS, ČSSD, and their electorates, facilitated ANO's silence on differentiated integration. ANO has not entered a lively political arena in which it would be pushed to take sides. ANO could have continued its vague pragmatic rhetoric of supporting Czech national interests without actually articulating them.

New catch-all parties, such as ANO in Czechia, strategically downplay European issues. ANO does not participate in discussions on differentiated integration, arguably because it does not want to polarise its voters who do not share the same opinion on this issue. ANO in its early years attracted both left and right, and Eurooptimist as well as Eurosceptic voters.<sup>16</sup> Hence, even the high level of Czech Euroscepticism, providing opportunities for a Eurosceptic political programme, remained initially unused by a catch-all populist ANO, which refused to clearly position itself on divisive issues (Hloušek and Kopeček 2017).

Following De et al. (2021), one could argue that ANO, as a previously challenger populist party, should politicise EU issues, yet the opposite is true. ANO could have been seen as a challenger party only for a very short period before the 2013 election. The party had from the beginning a catch-all strategy, and its preferences soared from less than 5% to 25% in less than one year (2013–2014). Thus, even as a short-term challenger party, ANO has never aspired to offer an alternative in EU topics because it adopted a catch-all strategy. ANO further deepened the already existing trend of EU

policy-making in Czechia, characterised by the lack of vision in EU politics beyond pure accounting calculations on how much money Czechs will contribute to the EU budget and how much they will receive (Dostál and Nič 2017).

The existing scholarly debate on politicisation omits the recent emergence of catch-all populist parties, such as ANO in Czechia, Igor Matovič's OĽANO, and Boris Kolár's Sme rodina in Slovakia, or Five Star Movement in Italy (Zulianello and Larsen 2021). Many of these movements share catch-all populist leanings (Kneuer 2019), and polarising the electorate on EU issues does not fit the parties' strategy. ANO counts among successful new catch-all populist parties since it decisively won the 2017 Lower House election with 39% of seats, and its CEO Andrej Babiš earned the Prime Minister office. ANO is thus the best example of such politics since it is more successful than similar parties in other countries. In 2017, ANO aspired to be a catch-all party without a strong orientation in any direction, emphasising pragmatism over ideology (Zulianello and Larsen 2021). This element distinguishes ANO from strongly identitarian Polish PiS or Hungarian Fidesz.

Similarly, new populist catch-all parties differ from traditional Western European catch-all parties. A catch-all party with an ideological orientation may support a pro-European approach when the population supports EU integration (see CDU in Germany). A populist catch-all party, especially in a country with a strong Eurosceptic population (such as Czechia), tends to downplay EU politics and depoliticise the EU issues. The reason is apparent: politicisation could lead to public polarisation on EU issues and implicitly to the risk of losing either Eurosceptic or Eurooptimist voters (Hobolt and de Vries 2016, 422). Strong political entrepreneurs with a nationalist program can challenge hitherto low domestic politicisation of EU issues (De Vries 2021, 12–13); however, Czechia has been so far spared from such a political actor with high popular support (say, over 15% of voters). The Freedom and Direct Democracy Party (*Svoboda a přímá demokracie*), a xenophobic nationalist party, came in as the fourth-strongest party in the 2017 Lower Chamber election with 10.64% votes.

Depoliticisation typically happens by turning issues into highly technical affairs or delegating them to technocratic authorities (De et al. 2021, 28). Czech Prime Minister (2017–2021) and ANO leader Andrej Babiš peculiarly downplayed differentiated integration. Instead of decreasing its salience or treating it in a neutral form, he rather explicitly denied its existence. Before the Czech Upper House, Babiš stated: 'Why do we speak about the Eurozone? The two-speed Europe does not exist. Our speed is great'. ANO approached the issue similarly in its election manifesto: 'We will do everything so that we are not second-category Europeans'. The EU rhetoric of the Czech strongest party is thus typical for the populist style of making politics. 'National interests' symbolically stand in the forefront, yet ANO has never defined their content. Besides, ANO avoided any explicit articulation of its ideological stances, be it Eurosceptic, Eurooptimist, left or right.

The domestic and the EU level have remained firmly detached inside ANO 2011 intra-party politics. In Europe, ANO presents its EU-friendly face through Commissioner Věra Jourová and the party's members of the European Parliament, who sit in Renew Europe, a liberal, pro-European political group. Ex-Prime Minister Babiš has, until recently, mostly refrained from opened personal attacks on EU elites, which distinguishes him, for example, from Viktor Orbán.

Therefore, the presence of a strong catch-all populist party represents the second additional variable worthy of attention. Such parties do not articulate positions that could antagonise parts of its very diverse electorate. The strategy of depoliticisation works particularly well in an environment, such as the Czech one, characterised by a path-dependency of low politicisation of European issues. Czechia shows, moreover, one peculiarity – companies connected with Andrej Babiš belong among the biggest beneficiaries of EU funds disbursements which might contribute to the ANO's tendency not to talk about European issues.

The position of a country outside the European core, nowadays associated primarily with the single currency, represents a tricky puzzle for the government. The Czech population have largely opposed the adoption of the Euro,<sup>17</sup> and Czech governments followed the public opinion. At the same time, political parties refrain from presenting Czechia as a country outside of core Europe (despite some minor exceptions, such as the MEP Jan Zahradil – see Kazharski 2019, 429–30),

arguably because governments generally dislike labels of laggards. Thus, it is tough to square the position outside the Eurozone with the insistence on the country's belongingness to core Europe. Not to talk about multi-speed Europe at all represents a much more attractive option.

Finally, Czech political parties operate in the environment of high public Euroscepticism, which should be, according to the literature, a reason for high politicisation. However, high levels of public Euroscepticism are not a sufficient condition for high politicisation. The Czech case shows that the public needs to be highly Eurosceptic and at the same time consider European issues important in order to create a conducive structure for high domestic politicisation of European issues. The Czech public manifests its disinterest in European issues, for example, by a meagre turnout in the European Parliament election, in which Czechs decide predominantly on domestic issues.<sup>18</sup> Czech disinterest in European issues is quite surprising given the country's central location and active involvement in the European internal market. On the other hand, the Czech working-age population does not take advantage of arguably one of the biggest achievements of European integration – the free movement of workers. Again, Czechia is an outlier in the CEE region, with data on the EU-mobile working population showing more resemblance with Scandinavia than with other Visegrád Four countries.<sup>19</sup>

## Conclusions

The paper shows that the existing literature on domestic politicisation of EU issues omits some essential elements, which help to explain levels of politicisation. We demonstrate shortcomings of research on drivers of politicisation on the intriguing case of Czechia: it exhibits low politicisation in the simultaneous presence of variables associated with high politicisation. We explain why, contrary to theoretical expectations, low politicisation appears in Czechia and suggest the inclusion of additional variables for further research.

The EU polycrisis, as a crucial politicising moment, did bring not only the trend of politicising EU issues but also a wave of party populism, which may lead to the exact opposite. In some countries, we observe a rise of catch-all populist parties which tend to downplay potentially polarising topics. The character of such a catch-all party plays a crucial role. New managerial-style political entrepreneurs (Babiš in Czechia-see Hloušek et al. 2020, etc.) pragmatically do not take strong positions on issues that might produce a rift among their vastly diverse electorate. They vaguely invoke undefined national interests without directly attacking the EU. This feature distinguishes new catch-all populist parties from identitarian populists who rhetorically challenge the EU.

In Czechia, the strategy of depoliticisation of EU integration by a big non-ideological catch-all party found fertile ground. Interestingly, the two previously strongest political parties – Social Democrats and Civic Democrats – held different positions on European integration than their electorates. Therefore, they have rather not actively engaged in polarising debates on the EU. This trend has been intensified in recent years with the arrival of the successful catch-all party, ANO 2011. ANO, the strongest political party of the second half of 2010s, largely ignored debates on differentiated integration, which was striking given the topic's prominence in current European discussion.

In sum, incongruent positions between two leading political parties and their electorates on the EU in the early years after the EU accession triggered the practice of side-lining the EU agenda as a salient political issue. Following path-dependency is one of the strong variables explaining the low salience of European issues in years after. Future research thus should not omit the long-term match between political parties and their voters as regards the position on European integration. Such mismatch discourages parties from articulating their strong views, which leads to low salience and consequently to low politicisation of the issue.

Moreover, high public Euroscepticism is not sufficient to politicise EU issues in the partisan debate. Czechia belongs among countries with the highest public Euroscepticism, yet domestic party politicisation of EU issues has remained low. This unexpected result is partially due to the fact

that the Czech public does not find European matters important. Therefore, it is not enough for high politicisation to have a Eurosceptic public, but rather a Eurosceptic public which at the same time considers European issues to be important.

Our conclusions hint towards the importance of domestic context. Other case studies may discover new important variables explaining levels of domestic politicisation of EU issues in a given country. The phenomenon of politicisation might thus serve as an example of equifinality, which also invites methods other than dominant statistical analysis to be used. Future studies may apply, for example, some variants of QCA to find out more about necessary and sufficient conditions and their configuration. Also, different sources of data could be included in studying politicisation processes. Nowadays politics increasingly moves political communication to social media platforms, such as Twitter or Facebook.

## Notes

1. Polarising in the sense of not neutral. These are debates containing clearly supporting or clearly rejecting statements, or both types of statements.
2. Under politicisation, we understand a process of an increase in polarisation of opinions, interests or values and the extent to which they are publicly advanced (Wilde 2011, 560). The politicised issue becomes salient, debated by several actors, and political parties polarise their positions on it (Hutter and Kriesi 2019, 999).
3. According to a Eurobarometer survey, in late 2019, the European Union conjured up a positive or fairly positive image only for 31% of Czechs, compared to 53% of Hungarians, 52% of Romanians and 50% of Polish.
4. Czechia was not included in Hutter's and Kriesi's sample of CEE countries.
5. We assume that CEE Eurozone members are closely attached to the 'core countries'. On the contrary, for CEE states outside the Eurozone, the multi-speed Europe scenario shall open space for a big political debate whose outcome will determine the position of a country in the EU for years ahead.
6. See, e.g. (Eurostat 2020b), which shows that Czechs mistrust European institutions.
7. The presence of economic cleavage in the system should also play a role in the Czech case. Indeed, differentiated integration involves economic issues, such as the Eurozone.
8. Classification of ANO 2011 as a catch-all party was common in years around the publication of the 2017 White Paper (Zulianello and Larsen 2021).
9. ANO 2011 won the most mandates in the October 2021 election, however, a coalition of five hitherto opposition parties managed to form a government coalition and oust ANO from the power.
10. The whole corpus of speeches in the Chamber of Deputies consists of 34,773,559 words (i.e. ca 2 million words per year) and in the Senate of 14,003,378 words (ca 820,000 words per year).
11. The template has been developed by Stefan Telle under the framework of the InDivEU project, which received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement number 822,304.
12. We included in the analysis only parliamentary speeches, therefore some contemplations on differentiated integration remained outside the scope of the research (see, e.g. those of MEPJanuaryZahradil or then-President Václav Klaus). Moreover, we do not map the voluminous discussion on the single currency, which remains the single most debated EU issue in Czechia. However, it is typically detached from the multiple-speed vision of the EU. The discussion on costs and benefits of euro prevails over the discussion of euro as a manifestation of differentiated integration. For a more inclusive view than ours, see Kazharski (2019).
13. The Czech Parliament consists of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. The Chamber of Deputies plays the role of the main ideological battlefield, while the Senate acts as a safeguard with partial veto powers.
14. The social-democratic ČSSD presents itself as a Eurooptimistic party, but only 25% of its voters trust or tend to trust the EU. On the other hand, over 30% of voters of the soft Eurosceptic ODS tend to trust the EU, which is one of the highest shares of EU supportive voters among Czech parliamentary parties ('European Values Study 2017).
15. The ANO 2011's populist turn came only later.
16. The shift towards left-leaning populism appeared in ANO's case only after the 2017 election (Lysek, Pánek, and Lebeda 2021).
17. Since 2011, public opinion surveys consistently show that around 20% of Czechs support the adoption of the single currency, while ca 70% oppose it (CVVM 2020).
18. Only 10% of respondents believe that European issues are more important than domestic issues in the European Parliament election (CVVM 2019, 6).
19. Only 1.3% of the Czech population between 20 and 64 resides abroad, which is only slightly more than citizens of Denmark or Sweden. In contrast to Czechia, ca 5% of Polish, Hungarian and Slovak citizens reside abroad (Eurostat 2020a).



## Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the anonymous reviewers for their insightful comments.

## Funding

This work was supported by the Grant Agency of the Czech Republic under Grant no. GA22-15856SDisclosure statementNo potential conflict of interest was reported by the author; Czech Science Foundation.

## ORCID

Hubert Smekal  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-7960-0559>

Vratislav Havlík  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-2701-7171>

## References

- Ágh, A. 2016. "The Decline of Democracy in East-Central Europe." *Problems of Post-Communism* 63 (5–6): 277–287. doi:10.1080/10758216.2015.1113383.
- Aspen 2014. "Ten Years in the European Union: The Czech Republic." *Aspen Review Central Europe* 3. <https://www.aspen.review/article/2017/ten-years-in-the-european-union%3a-the-czech-republic/>
- Auel, K., and O. Höing. 2015. "National Parliaments and the Eurozone Crisis: Taking Ownership in Difficult Times?" *West European Politics* 38 (2): 375–395. doi:10.1080/01402382.2014.990694.
- Auel, K., O. Eisele, and L. Kinski. 2016. "From Constraining to Catalysing Dissensus? The Impact of Political Contestation on Parliamentary Communication in EU Affairs." *Comparative European Politics* 14 (2): 154–176. doi:10.1057/cep.2015.38.
- Badulescu, C. 2021. 'The Politics of Differentiated Integration : What Do Governments Want? Country Report - Romania'. Working Paper. European University Institute. <https://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/70622>.
- Balík, S., and V. Hloušek. 2016. "The Development and Transformation of the Czech Party System after 1989." *Acta Politologica* 8 (2): 103–117.
- Bellamy, R., S. Kröger, and M. Lorimer. 2021. "Party Views on Differentiated Integration." *Comparative European Politics* 19 (5): 622–641. doi:10.1057/s41295-021-00250-9.
- Bennett, A., and C. Elman. 2007. "Case Study Methods in the International Relations Subfield." *Comparative Political Studies* 40 (2): 170–195. doi:10.1177/0010414006296346.
- Braun, D., S. Adrian Popa, and H. Schmitt. 2019. "Responding to the Crisis: Eurosceptic Parties of the Left and Right and Their Changing Position Towards the European Union." *European Journal of Political Research* 58 (3): 797–819. doi:10.1111/1475-6765.12321.
- Bukovskis, K., A. Palkova, and I. Varna. 2021. 'The Politics of Differentiated Integration : What Do Governments Want? Country Report : Latvia'. Working Paper. European University Institute. <https://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/70476>.
- ČTK. 2019. 'Chceme Méně Evropy, Více Národních Států, Řekl Babiš Na Světovém Ekonomickém Fóru'. Aktuálně.Cz. Accessed January 24 2019. <https://zpravy.aktualne.cz/domaci/chceme-mene-evropy-vice-narodnich-statu-rekl-babis-na-svetov/r~1ba20f6c200c11e9a66a0cc47ab5f122/>.
- CVVM. 2019. "Voličské preference, faktory rozhodování a témata voleb do Evropského parlamentu v dubnu 2019". CVVM. [https://cvvm.soc.cas.cz/media/com\\_form2content/documents/c2/a4911/f9/pv190425.pdf](https://cvvm.soc.cas.cz/media/com_form2content/documents/c2/a4911/f9/pv190425.pdf)
- CVVM. 2020. 'Občané ČR o budoucnosti EU a přijetí eura – červenec 2020'. CVVM - Centrum pro výzkum veřejného mínění. 9 2020. [https://cvvm.soc.cas.cz/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=5277:obcane-cr-o-budoucnosti-eu-a-prijeti-eura-cervenec-2020&catid=34:mezinarodni-vztahy](https://cvvm.soc.cas.cz/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5277:obcane-cr-o-budoucnosti-eu-a-prijeti-eura-cervenec-2020&catid=34:mezinarodni-vztahy).
- Dandashly, A., and A. Verdun. 2018. "Euro Adoption in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland: Laggards by Default and Laggards by Choice." *Comparative European Politics* 16 (3): 385–412. doi:10.1057/cep.2015.46.
- De, V., E. Catherine, and B. H. Sara . 2021. "Politicizing International Cooperation." *The Mass Public, Political Entrepreneurs and Political Opportunity Structures*. *International Organization* 75: 306–332.
- De Wilde, Leupold, and Schmidtke 2016. "Introduction: The Differentiated Politicisation of European Governance." *West European Politics* 39 (1): 3–22. doi:10.1080/01402382.2015.1081505.
- Doorenspleet, R., and P. Kopecký. 2008. "Against the Odds: Deviant Cases of Democratization." *Deon or Renationalisation? The Czech Repmocratization* 15 (4): 697–713. doi:10.1080/13510340802191045.
- Dostál, V., and M. Nič. 2017. *Andrej Babiš Is Not Central Europe's Game-Changer*. AMO.CZ. Praha. [https://www.amo.cz/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/AMO\\_Andrej-Babis-is-not-Central-Europes-Game-Changer\\_-1.pdf](https://www.amo.cz/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/AMO_Andrej-Babis-is-not-Central-Europes-Game-Changer_-1.pdf).
- Druhlák, P. 2008. *The Czech EU Presidency: Background and Priorities*. Notre Europe. [https://institutdelors.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/etud67-pdrulak-czecheupresidency-en\\_01.pdf](https://institutdelors.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/etud67-pdrulak-czecheupresidency-en_01.pdf).



- European Commission 2016. Eurobarometer. Question: In General, Does the European Union Conjure up for You a Very Positive, Fairly Positive, Neutral, Fairly Negative or Very Negative Image? *Public Opinion* 2019 2016 <https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Chart/getChart/themeKy/19/groupKy/102>.
- European Values Study. 2017. European Values Study. 2017. <https://europeanvaluesstudy.eu/>.
- Eurostat. 2020a. "EU Citizens Living in Another Member State - Statistical Overview." *Eurostat* 2020. [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/EU\\_citizens\\_living\\_in\\_another\\_Member\\_State\\_-\\_statistical\\_overview](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/EU_citizens_living_in_another_Member_State_-_statistical_overview).
- Eurostat. 2020b. "Population with Confidence in EU Institutions by Institution." *Eurostat* 2020. [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/refreshTableAction.do?tab=table&plugin=1&pcode=sdg\\_16\\_60&language=en](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/refreshTableAction.do?tab=table&plugin=1&pcode=sdg_16_60&language=en).
- Ferreira da Silva, F 2021. 'The Politics of Differentiated Integration : What Do Governments Want? Country Report : Portugal'. Working Paper. European University Institute. <https://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/69997>.
- Grande, E., and S. Hutter. 2016. "Beyond Authority Transfer: Explaining the Politicisation of Europe." *West European Politics* 39 (1): 23–43. doi:10.1080/01402382.2015.1081504.
- Green-Pedersen, C. 2012. "A Giant Fast Asleep? Party Incentives and the Politicisation of European Integration." *Political Studies* 60 (1): 115–130. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9248.2011.00895.x.
- Grzybowska-Walecka, K. A. G., . 2021 <https://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/70397>. 'the Politics of Differentiated Integration : What Do Governments Want? Country Report : Poland'. Working paper. European University Institute.
- Hájek, L. 2020. "Dynamic Roll Call Analysis of Parties' Ideological Positions in the Czech Republic." *The Journal of Legislative Studies* 26 (1): 133–157. doi:10.1080/13572334.2020.1726645.
- Hanley, S. 2008. *The New Right in the New Europe: Czech Transformation and Right-Wing Politics 1989-2006*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Haughton, T. 2009. "For Business, for Pleasure or for Necessity? The Czech Republic's Choices for Europe." *Europe-Asia Studies* 61 (8): 1371–1392. doi:10.1080/09668130903134806.
- Havlík, V., and V. Havlík. 2018. "From the Return to Europe to Easy Money: Europeanization of Party Manifestoes in the Czech Republic." *Acta Politologica* 10 (1): 17–35.
- Havlík, V. 2019a. "Europeanisation or Renationalisation? The Czech Republic Facing the Euro-, Economic and Refugee Crises." In *Europeanisation and Renationalisation: Learning from Crises for Innovation and Development*, edited by U. Liebert and A. Jenichen, 49–64. Opladen: Verlag Barbara Budrich.
- Havlík, V. 2019b. "Technocratic Populism and Political Illiberalism in Central Europe." *Problems of Post-Communism* 66 (6): 369–384. doi:10.1080/10758216.2019.1580590.
- Havlík, V. and H. Smekal. 2021. 'the Politics of Differentiated Integration : What Do Governments Want?. European University Institute. <https://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/69375>
- Hloušek, V., and L. Kopeček. 2008. "Cleavages in the Contemporary Czech and Slovak Politics between Persistence and Change." *East European Politics and Societies* 22 (3): 518–552. doi:10.1177/0888325408315833.
- Hloušek, V., and L. Kopeček. 2017. "Entrepreneurial Parties: A Basic Conceptual Framework." *Politologický Casopis - Czech Journal of Political Science* 24 (2): 83–91. doi:10.5817/PC2017-2-83.
- Hloušek, V., L. Kopeček, and P. Vodová. 2020. *The Rise of Entrepreneurial Parties in European Politics*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hobolt, S. B., and C. E. de Vries. 2016. "Public Support for European Integration." *Annual Review of Political Science* 19 (1): 413–432. doi:10.1146/annurev-polisci-042214-044157.
- Hoeglinger, D. 2016. "The Politicisation of European Integration in Domestic Election Campaigns." *West European Politics* 39 (1): 44–63. doi:10.1080/01402382.2015.1081509.
- Holzinger, K., and J. Tosun. 2019. "Why Differentiated Integration Is Such A Common Practice in Europe: A Rational Explanation." *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 31 (4): 642–659. doi:10.1177/0951629819875522.
- Hooghe, L., and G. Marks. 2009. "A Postfunctionalist Theory of European Integration: From Permissive Consensus to Constraining." *British Journal of Political Science* 39 (1): 1–23. doi:10.1017/S0007123408000409.
- Hooghe, L., and G. Marks. 2018. "Cleavage Theory Meets Europe's Crises: Lipset, Rokkan, and the Transnational Cleavage." *Journal of European Public Policy* 25 (1): 109–135. doi:10.1080/13501763.2017.1310279.
- Hutter, S., E. Grande, and H. Kriesi. 2016. *Politicising Europe. Integration and Mass Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hutter, S., and H. Kriesi. 2019. "Politicizing Europe in Times of Crisis." *Journal of European Public Policy* 26 (7): 996–1017. doi:10.1080/13501763.2019.1619801.
- Janková, K. 2021. 'The Politics of Differentiated Integration: What Do Governments Want? Country Report : Slovakia'. Working paper. European University Institute. <https://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/70357>
- Kaniok, P., and M. Brusenbauch Meislova. 2021. "Not Quite What You Expected: The Curious Case of Brexit Scrutiny in the Czech Parliament." *Parliamentary Affairs* 74 (1): 79–101. doi:10.1093/pa/gsz026.
- Kazharski, A. 2019. "Two Kinds of Small? The "EU Core" in Slovak and Czech Geopolitical Imagination." *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 27 (4): 424–438. doi:10.1080/14782804.2019.1598340.
- Kneuer, M. 2019. "The Tandem of Populism and Euroscepticism: A Comparative Perspective in the Light of the European Crises." *Contemporary Social Science* 14 (1): 26–42. doi:10.1080/21582041.2018.1426874.
- Kyriazi, A. 2021. 'The Politics of Differentiated Integration : What Do Governments Want? Country Report : Hungary'. Working Paper. European University Institute. <https://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/69704>

- Leruth, B., S. Gänzle, and J. Trondal. 2019. "Exploring Differentiated Disintegration in a Post-Brexit European Union." *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 57 (5): 1013–1030. doi:10.1111/jcms.12869.
- Linek, L., R. Chytilík, and O. Eibl. 2016. "Obrana, akvizice, či nesoutěž? Jak se měnila podoba a intenzita soutěže mezi českými stranami v letech 2006–2014?" *Sociologický časopis/Czech Sociological Review* 52 (5): 647–677.
- Lysek, J., J. Pánek, and T. Lebeda. 2021. "Who are the Voters and Where are They? Using Spatial Statistics to Analyse Voting Patterns in the Parliamentary Elections of the Czech Republic." *Journal of Maps* 17 (1): 33–38. doi:10.1080/17445647.2020.1819901.
- Markova, E. 2020. 'The Politics of Differentiated Integration : What Do Governments Want? Country Report – Bulgaria'. Working Paper. European University Institute. <https://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/69140>.
- Maškarinec, P. 2019. "The Rise of New Populist Political Parties in Czech Parliamentary Elections between 2010 and 2017: The Geography of Party Replacement." *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 60 (5): 511–547. doi:10.1080/15387216.2019.1691928.
- Michel, E. 2020. 'The Politics of Differentiated Integration: What Do Governments Want? Country Report - France'. Working Paper. European University Institute. <https://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/69318>.
- Nagel, L. 2020. 'The Politics of Differentiated Integration : What Do Governments Want? Country Report – Germany'. Working Paper. European University Institute. <https://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/69241>.
- Pieter De, W. 2011. "No Polity for Old Politics? A Framework for Analyzing the Politicization of European Integration." *Journal of European Integration* 33 (5): 559–575. doi:10.1080/07036337.2010.546849.
- Ray, L. 1999. "Measuring Party Orientations Towards European Integration: Results from an Expert Survey." *European Journal of Political Research* 36 (2): 283–306. doi:10.1023/A:1007009106184.
- Robert, A. 2017. "Macron Outlines Plans for Multi-Speed Europe". Euractiv.Com (blog). Accessed March 3 2017. <https://www.euractiv.com/section/elections/news/macron-outlines-plans-for-multi-speed-europe/>.
- Rosamond, B. 2019. "Theorising the EU in Crisis: De-Europeanisation as Disintegration." *Global Discourse* 9 (1): 31–44. doi:10.1332/204378918X1545393450591.
- Schimmelfennig, F. 2014. "EU Enlargement and Differentiated Integration: Discrimination or Equal Treatment?" *Journal of European Public Policy* 21 (5): 681–698. doi:10.1080/13501763.2014.897744.
- Sergio, F., and V. A. Schmidt. 2019. "Introduction: Differentiation and Beyond." *Comparative European Politics* 17 (2): 173–175. doi:10.1057/s41295-019-00163-8.
- Surel, A. 2019. "'How to Stay Populist? the Front National and the Changing French Party System'." *West European Politics* 42 (6): 1230–1257. doi:10.1080/01402382.2019.1596693.
- TASR. 2017. 'Slovensko Vo Viacrychlostnej Únii? Fico Ho Chce V Centre Integrácie'. SME, Accessed March 3 2017. <https://domov.sme.sk/c/20473966/fico-chce-v-novej-unii-rychlejsie-slovensko.html>.
- Telle, S., C. Badulescu, and D. Fernandes. 2022. "Attitudes of National Decision-Makers Towards Differentiated Integration in the European Union." *Comparative European Politics*, May. doi:10.1057/s41295-022-00303-7.
- Van der Eijk, C., and M. N. Franklin. 2004. "Potential for Contestation on European Matters at National Elections in Europe." In *European Integration and Political Conflict*, edited by G. Marks and M. R. Steenbergen, 32–50. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Volpi, E. 2021. 'The Politics of Differentiated Integration : What Do Governments Want? Country Report : Italy'. Working Paper. European University Institute. <https://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/70211>.
- Whitefield, S., and R. Rohrschneider. 2015. "The Saliency of European Integration to Party Competition: Western and Eastern Europe Compared." *East European Politics and Societies* 29 (1): 12–39. doi:10.1177/0888325414567128.
- Zeitlin, J., F. Nicolli, and B. Laffan. 2019. "Introduction: The European Union beyond the Polycrisis? Integration and Politicization in an Age of Shifting Cleavages." *Journal of European Public Policy* 26 (7): 963–976. doi:10.1080/13501763.2019.1619803.
- Zulianello, M., and E. G. Larsen. 2021. "'Populist Parties in European Parliament Elections: A New Dataset on Left, Right and Valence Populism from 1979 to 2019'." *Electoral Studies* 71. doi:10.1016/j.electstud.2021.102312.
- Zürn, M. 2019. "Politicization Compared: At National, European, and Global Levels." *Journal of European Public Policy* 26 (7): 977–995. doi:10.1080/13501763.2019.1619188.