University of West Bohemia
Faculty of Philosophy and Arts

Master's Thesis

Dissolution of Czechoslovakia, Exploring the Velvet Divorce from Critical Studies Perspective

Ognjen Mrđa

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Ognjen Mrđa

Thesis Supervisor:

Mgr. Ľubomír Lupták, Ph.D.

Department of Political Science and International Relations

University of West Bohemia

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I declare that I prepared the Thesis individually and used only the listed sources and literature.

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1 Introduction

On 1 January 1993, the common state of Czechs and Slovaks ceased to exist. The separation of Czech and Slovak state happened swiftly and non-violently. This peaceful manner in which the dissolution was completed is the reason why it became known as the Velvet divorce. The "divorce" took place in the midst of turbulent times after the fall of communism followed by a radical change of the political map of Eurasia. The split was agreed by Czech and Slovak prime ministers, Václav Klaus and Vladimír Mečiar in the aftermath of the elections in 1992. There wasn't a popular majority supporting independence in neither country. Explaining dissolution of a state is a complex endeavor, one that asks for a thorough analysis of processes, actors, and mechanisms that lead a state towards extinction. The Czechoslovakian state was created from the ashes of the World War I in 1918 and officially collapsed in January 1993 after peaceful dissolution and in many ways intriguing turn of events. The last decade of 20th century was marked by violent conflict from the dissolution of Soviet Union to bloody conflicts following the Yugoslavian split. However, it was also a time marked by peaceful transition and separation of Czechs and Slovaks. The case of Czechoslovakian split gained much interest from academia and political analytics who were very intrigued precisely by the peaceful nature of the breakup, especially in contrast to the events unfolding in former Yugoslavia at the time. This gave traction to the question whether the dissolution was, in fact, inevitable or could have Czechs and Slovaks reconciled their differences and under which circumstances. Nevertheless, the common state collapsed in 1993 and two newly independent nations emerged.

This Thesis aims to find the reasons behind the anomaly that peaceful dissolution of Czechoslovakia represents, and tries to explain the events leading to the Velvet divorce as well as the factors that caused it. In the theoretical part of my Thesis, I will try to locate the crucial events that led to the dissolution of Czechoslovakia.

As for the theoretical framework, I will try to apply the securitization theory, which I believe will help me grasp the particular mechanics of the non-violent split. I believe that this theoretical approach combines a focus on power and strategy on the on hand, but as well the focus on identity politics, group realignment and structural change on the other. I believe that this kind of approach is needed to analyze and explain the process as complex as a dissolution of a state.

In order to apply the theory to the case of Czechoslovakia, I will try to identify the causes of the deteriorating climate, the calculated steps taken to capitalize on these developments, as well as the relationship between the two. Analyzing social aspect of the breakup and the relationship between Czechs and Slovaks will be an important factor in this regard. Post-communist misconceptions and misunderstandings between the two nations presented a convenient platform for manipulation and further division of Czechoslovakia. Furthermore, what was the role of ethnicity in Czechoslovakia and how was national identity manipulated as a driver for disintegration is another important aspect that I will focus on. The rise of post-communist nationalist ideologies represented a powerful tool for division of Czech and Slovak element in the state and had a considerate negative impact regarding national cohesion. Questioning how these nationalist forces gained immense political influence and what is the connection between the two is crucial for helping understand some factors that caused the split. Thus, the revival of nationalist sentiments and its impact on the existence of the Czechoslovak state cannot be ignored. I will focus on the concepts such as securitization, sector approach to security and identity. I will try to analyze the events that preceded the dissolution of Czechoslovakia based on a wider understanding of identity and identity realignment as political processes as well as the wider understanding of security. In the last part of my Thesis, I will evaluate the results of applying the theory to this particular case. I am going to work with different type of sources on this subject and the research will be based on chronicles relevant for this period in time, as well as other relevant publications.

The key research question framing my Thesis will be: "What are the key factors underlying the peaceful dissolution of Czechoslovakia?" In order to be able to provide a sufficiently complex answer, I will have to deal with a set of secondary research questions, asking about practices and discourses of members of the political elite who negotiated the dissolution, their particular interests, structural economic factors underlying the process, as well as the mechanics of the negotiation.

Therefore, I will try to single out the most important actors and crucial breakpoints which contributed to a structural change and dissolution of the state. As far as main actors are concerned, political elites played a significant role in the breakup and I will try to assess their contribution as well as motives that finally led the state towards dissolution. Indeed, elite behavior will be one of the crucial components of the research as I will try to assess to what extent did actions or inactions of members of Slovak, Czech, and federal governments, as well as the leading members of major political parties, lead Czechoslovak state towards the breakup. The main focus will be directed towards main protagonists of the split, then Czech Prime Minister Václav Klaus and his Slovak counterpart Vladimír Mečiar. Questioning the motivation that drove these two men to take action that would eventually lead to dissolution of the Czechoslovakian state, as well as questioning their motives, whether they were strictly economical or were they motivated by questions of ethnicity and identity, will be crucial for understanding the issue. In this regard, I will focus on the post-communist economic transformation as well as economic inequality between the two nations as another important factor that potentially led the common Czech and Slovak state to the point of breakup.

Furthermore, I will question whether economic inequality de facto existed or was it promoted as an actual source of conflict by agents of disintegration. How different Czech and Slovak economies actually were after the change of the regime and in what measure did the perceived difference affect the collapse of the common state are questions at the core of the issue.

2 Explaining Czechoslovakia's Dissolution

2.1 The Role of Political Elites and Institutional Challenges

When trying to dissect the issue of state dissolution, it is prudent to analyze the role of the most influential actors in the state, its political elites. After the fall of communism in Czechoslovakia following the Velvet revolution, the establishment of new political actors began. It is important to note that Czechoslovakia, since its inception, never had a single multinational leadership nor autonomous ethnically divided elites. The configuration included tripartite elite groups which always included both Czech and Slovak element. Nevertheless, the Slovak element wasn't homogenous as one part of Slovak leadership cooperated with Czechs in governance and the other part was formed by the Slovak nationalists, who presented a very different perspective on Slovak political agenda (Leff 2000: 52). Therefore, even though there wasn't an official Slovak alternative in the leadership, there was a clear split among the ranks which made a legitimate problem regarding the quarrel over which of these groups represented real Slovak interests.

Thus, even though Slovaks had legitimate participation and enduring voice in the governance, many of them felt that the official leadership failed to represent their interests (Leff 2000: 53). As a result, the trilateral form of elite relation presented a considerable barrier to managing the issue of state organization as well as the effective functioning of the state. It was obvious that this tripartite consensus would not last and its breakdown after the end of Soviet occupation was predictable. The political system in place had much to do with the viability of the triadic structure of political elites as communist grip proved to be crucial in keeping the structure from breakdown. Nevertheless, according to Leff, post-communist democratization and federalization proved to be critical factors that led towards the end of the triadic pattern (Leff 2000: 62). The mentioned triadic pattern represented a legitimization for the Czech-Slovak relationship until its demise as it had a historical continuity and presented an excuse to avoid the more important issue of change in the distribution of state power between the sides (Leff 2000: 61).

The breakdown of the triadic pattern meant an institutional crisis which will haunt the Czech-Slovak relations till the final breakup of the state. In this regard, the experience of the short-lived Second Republic which existed from 1945 to 1948 provides some explanations for the latter development of parallel party systems in the Czech and Slovak republics. During this time, occurred the separation of the Czech and Slovak electoral politics which could be seen as a consequence of increased Slovak national awareness. The democratization of both political systems proved to be an opportunity for a split along republican lines and emergence of two separate party subsystems. Here it is important to note that during the Communist reign despite the existence of Slovak communist party, the regime was able to bridge the national divide by forcing the national agenda to both sides (Shepherd 2000: 133). Thus, in line with Leff's argument: "Emerging democratized Czechoslovak state which gave voices to the leaderships of sub-state republican governments did not survive the new realities of a more liberal political order and competitive elections" (Leff 2000: 61–62).

According to some authors, the crucial component needed for the success of federalism in Czechoslovakia was consensual and concerted effort to sustain it both by the Czech and Slovak political elites. In order to understand the lack of this effort on both sides, one must take into account the conditions under which elites operated. According to Petr Kopecký, these conditions did not motivate either side to compromise but on contrary gave them no reason to. The volatile pattern of elite-mass linkages is one important aspect of the issue. The author further argues: "During the post-communist period of democratization, very few voters had pre-existing party and social loyalties. Therefore, the emergence of the open electoral market encouraged an atmosphere of intense competitive behavior among members of the political elite. What this provided was a substantial motivation for avoiding the compromise and competing for the biggest share of the electorate while potentially destabilizing the process of democratic politics" (Kopecký 2000: 121).

What this further meant was that the increased competition not only increased the stakes of early elections but also made space for opportunism of party behavior. The issues that were open to political exploitation and gained much traction were above institutional squabbling and ethnical division as this was a viable way for elites to gain distinctive political profile. In Kopecky's words: "Fierce competition among the elites was, therefore, to be expected, as they did compete not only for the available voters but also for favorable rules of the game under the emerging institutional system" (Kopecký 2000: 122).

Considering that in Czechoslovakia there was less possibility to exploit religious or class dimension of society, the obvious choice for manipulation was the ethnicity card which proved to be a very effective weapon in the hands of political elites. This trend was especially noticed in Slovakia where ethnicity and the Czech-Slovak relations became an occurring theme of many parties' political agenda. This nationalist shift in Slovak political space became more and more prominent creating more room for conflict with their Czech counterparts (Kopecký 2000: 121). The newly formed Slovak party, Movement for a Democratic Slovakia led by Vladimír Mečiar, emerged on Slovak political scene after the split of Public Against Violence party (VPN) in 1991. The emergence of a new party which would represent Slovak national interests dramatically changed Slovak political spectrum. Motivated by the success of Vladimír Mečiar and his new party, the other parties in Slovak political arena adopted similar Slovak oriented rhetoric. One of those parties was The Slovak Christian Democrats led by Ján Čarnogurský, who, according to Kopecký, made a move that took many of the members of the Czech political elite off guard (Kopecký 2000: 122). Čarnogurský presented an alternative perspective of Slovak future, constructing the vision of independent Slovakia within Europe. KDH's platform for future constitutional forms was expressed by their slogan "For a little seat and a little star in the European Union" (Čarnogurský 2000: 355).

Another example of change in Slovak party politics was The Party of Democratic Left, formed from the former communist core, which broke with its Czech counterpart because it showed support for the national politics of Vladimír Mečiar.

Therefore, it was obvious that change in the rhetoric of one part of the political elites presented a challenge to the stability of the whole system. Thus, Kopecký argues that the relationship between the Czech and Slovak political leaders was starting to be increasingly divisive and focused on their own ethnonational political agendas (Kopecký 2000: 122-123).

In many ways, the breakup of Czechoslovakia differed from the dissolution of other former Communist states especially when it comes to the character of the process that generated the split. One of the most evident and significant differences was the degree of implication of Czechoslovakia's political elites and its' exclusive power to make decisions about the future of the state. As mentioned, what was evident was that ethnic divides were getting more space in the political arena and that political elite was very successful in mobilizing citizens on the basis of ethnic affiliation. Slavomír Ravik argues that the future of the common state was decided long before the final count of electoral votes. According to Ravik, the public surveys and popularity of certain candidates were enough evidence to understand that the future of the state will be negotiated between the two dominant figures of the political arena. The figures in question were Slovak and Czech prime ministers, Vladimír Mečiar and Václav Klaus who, according to Ravik, were not the type of men who would go out of their way to seek compromise (Ravik 2006: 204). The author mentions another important political figure at the time, the former president of the Czechoslovak federation and former dissident Václav Havel. The author claims that Havel along with the other two members of the Czech and Slovak political elite formed a triangle that would decide the future of the state. According to an illustrative metaphor by Ravik, the trio formed a sort of "Bermuda triangle" as far as the common future of the state was concerned (Ravik 2006: 163).

2.2 Slovak Nationalism

Before addressing the central issues which explain the mechanics of the split, it is necessary to take a very brief look at some of the evidence of the rising Slovak national consciousness. According to Robin Shepherd, contrary to the impression given in some writing and most talk at the time, calls for independence did not arise out of a vacuum. When exactly a national consciousness acquires the critical mass required to produce statehood is difficult to assess. The author claims that: "What is absolutely clear about the 1993 separation is that *Czechoslovak* national consciousness had been edging into a state of meltdown ever since the end of communism in 1989" (Shepherd 2000: 133). However, according to Leff this national sentiment emerged from the existence of the wartime Slovak state which gave a significant institutional foundation to the Slovak nationalist aspirations. Thus, this Slovak experience may have led to the issue of bipolarity of Czech and Slovak party systems in the post-communist years (Leff 2000: 62).

Regarding the issue of Czechoslovak dissolution, Václav Havel wrote in the foreword of the book "Irreconcilable Differences" that the citizens of Czechoslovakia have always identified with Czechoslovak statehood and felt that Czechoslovakia was their natural home. Havel continues to say that the very idea of its division was a *harsh assault on our sense of identity*. That is why, he claims, many expended considerable effort in the attempt to rebuild the existing formal federation in a genuine and democratic federation in which all would feel at home. However, this effort was unsuccessful he admits. Former Czechoslovak president concludes by saying: "With the passage of time, historians will judge whether it was unsuccessful because it lacked a clear vision, because it was inconsistent or somehow flawed in its very points of departure, or because *face to face with Slovak aspirations*, it quite simply could not have been successful" (Kraus 2000: 6). The former Czechoslovak president mentions a *harsh assault on our sense of identity* meaning an assault on the idea of common Czechoslovak identity. However, the last point Havel makes, where he blames so-called Slovak "aspirations" for dissolution of the common state is perhaps most revealing.

Therefore, the question regarding what kind of effect Slovak nationalist aspirations had on the common sense of identity is at the core of the issue. As Wolchik notes, in the post-1989 political climate, leaders as Mečiar, who, according to the author was the main figure in negotiating dissolution along with Klaus, derived part of his support from voters who supported him because he was more successful in articulating Slovak grievances than other politicians. Wolchik explains that there were few institutional mechanisms that encouraged contact between Czechs and Slovaks on a regular basis or in a way that could influence political developments. Furthermore, considering that electoral system was organized along republic lines, the lack of such mechanisms meant that it was much easier for political leaders to mobilize voters along ethnic lines and around ethnic grievances. Similarly, considering the limited powers of the republic governments, the federal government became one of the main issues of contention as the perceived defects of the federation became one of the most important sources of Slovak dissatisfaction. Finally, Wolchik claims that Slovakia's disadvantaged position within the Czechoslovak federation inflamed popular support for nationalist movements and politicians in Slovakia in the post-communist years (Wolchik 2000: 151).

It is important to mention that, even though the ethnically oriented agenda was very successful at the time, many of the Czechoslovak citizens continued to be against the breakup of the state. Nevertheless, as Wolchik notes: "As in other contexts, elite articulations of ethnic aims were also conditioned by mass responses" (Wolchik 2000: 141). Furthermore, many Slovak voters voted for members of the political elite who propagated some form of Slovak independence, whether as a new state or with a changed position within Czechoslovakia. In addition, Wolchik argues that given Slovakia's history which saw the organization of most political parties along ethnic lines during the pre-communist times, it was to no surprise that the revitalized political parties formed within rather than across ethnic lines (Wolchik 2000: 151).

Therefore, the rise of support for the two most vocal political parties that advocated national interests, Slovak National Party and Vladimír Mečiar's Movement for Democratic Slovakia, demonstrated the power of nationalism as an effective political tool.

In his book "Czechoslovakia: The Velvet revolution and beyond" Robin Shepherd looks for the sources of the above-mentioned Slovak nationalism. In the book Shepherd claims: "When nationalist parties in Slovakia looked for the proof that Slovakia can manage itself and its own affairs without the help of Czechs, they found it in a very troubling place" (Shepherd 2000: 128). The source of their inspiration was the Slovak wartime state under the regime of Jozef Tiso. Shepherd takes the reader back to the aftermath of Tiso's Berlin meeting with Hitler in 1939 where he gave his address to the Slovak Provincial Assembly. At this time, the motion concerning the future of Slovakia was proposed and accepted. The motion represented the end of Czechoslovakia and emergence of independent Slovak state for the first time in history. Therefore, the author argues: "It is not hard to understand why nationalists looked for inspiration in the wartime Slovak state. Independence, regardless of the circumstances it was achieved in, represented a big source of national pride for a certain part of the Slovak nation. It is true that many Slovaks were against this state entity and did not agree with the regime, however, the country was safe and it provided a fertile ground for voicing national aspirations" (Shepherd 2000: 128). The most important aspect was the fact that Slovaks, under complicated circumstances, showed they were capable of governing their own country (Shepherd 2000: 128). Wolchik weighs in on the issue as well and claims that the creation of the separate Slovak state in 1939 is one of the most controversial issues in Slovak history. Furthermore: "For many Slovaks the creation of an independent Slovak state represented the fulfillment of their national aspirations despite the way in which it was created" (Wolchik 2000: 148). Thus, whatever the conditions under which it was formed, experience of having their own state contributed to Slovak state building process according to Wolchik (Wolchik 2000: 148).

Regarding the Slovak wartime state, Shepherd further notes that on the one hand Slovak government was formed successfully, the economy was on the rise, universities had expanded and cultural life had benefited generally. On the other hand, there was the troubling aspect of Slovakia being a vassal state of the Third Reich, which meant systematic anti-Semitism as well as collaborating with Nazi regime in their war effort. As the author notes: "History books had to be rewritten" (Shepherd 2000: 128).

In an interesting example of how the regime change affected the writing of history books in Slovakia was a book by Milan S. Durica, a professor of Central and Eastern European history at the University of Padua in Italy. After the book was written it became a handbook for all Slovak primary schools on instruction from the Ministry of Education. The book contained many controversial statements regarding the wartime Slovak state and it was criticized for being historically incorrect as well as too lenient on the wartime Slovak regime. Slovak Academy of Sciences, in a letter sent to the Education Minister, pointed out that more than a quarter of Durica's work had been devoted to the six years of Tiso's rule. This was troubling because it contained almost as much text as the part on developments in the nearly nineteen centuries up to 1848. The authors provided a vast number of Durica's historical errors and misinterpretations. The most important points address Durica's treatment of the ruthless persecution of Slovak Jews under the Tiso's regime and the deportation of tens of thousands of them to Nazi death camps. The controversial book was intended to be a handbook for teachers of 10-year-old children (Shepherd 2000: 129).

This whole affair was even more relevant as it concerned Mečiar's Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS). In the midst of the controversy, HZDS released the following statement: "The HZDS has been attentively following the campaign, initiated with hatred and arrogance, against the university Professor, Milan S. Durica [...] This book should become an educational supplement for public school students. In no case can the historical truth about Slovakia and the Slovaks be undermined or concealed. The HZDS has the deepest respect for everything that professor Durica has done for Slovakia and its well-being and for making Slovakia more visible abroad" (Shepherd 2000: 129).

The controversial book was eventually withdrawn but the most troubling aspect was the support it received from the ruling Slovak party. This incident showed the trend of drawing inspiration from a fascist dictatorship which, according to Shepherd, fueled the expression of Slovak nationalism in a democratic environment. To conclude, Shephard notes that: "Right from the outset, the nationalist consciousness was tainted by what it obviously perceived as a need to distort and deceive" (Shepherd 2000: 129). This leads the author to point out that it seems plausible to suggest that some of the aberrations of the Mečiar years could be traced back to this initial flaw (Shepherd 2000: 129).

However, it would not be helpful for the aim of this Thesis to give too much credit for the dissolution of Czechoslovakia to the rise of Slovak nationalism, as the breakup of Czechoslovakia wasn't solely a product of actions and decisions made by the Slovak citizens. The year 1991 brought a big change in both Czech and Slovak political arenas. On 24 February 1991, Civic Forum split into Civic Democratic Party (ODS) led by Václav Klaus and Center-Left Civic Movement (OH) led by Jiří Dienstbier. On the Slovak side, Mečiar broke with his former party VPN and created the already mentioned, new political platform Movement for Democratic Slovakia. These two splits in major Slovak and Czech political parties had enormous implications for the future breakup of the common state. The split gave rise to two leading actors in both Czech and Slovak political space and their mutual interaction represented a beginning of the end of the Czechoslovak federation. The important moment in this regard and arguably the turning point in the balance of political power came when Mečiar's HZDS officially adopted the notion of Slovak *svrchovanost* (Rychlík 2000: 90).

2.3 Breaking Points – 1992 elections and Declaration of Slovak "svrchovanost"

An important moment, which contributed to the change of balance in regards to political power in Slovakia was split in the ranks of Slovak Christian Democrats. Similar to the VPN breakup, group which advocated nationalist-oriented agenda led by Jan Klepač split from the KDH. The new political grouping asked for a change of institutional organization and advocated the establishment of a confederation knowing that Czech side was adamantly against such arrangement deeming the proposal unacceptable. On 4 November 1991 Movement for Democratic Slovakia, Slovak National Party and Klepač led platform submitted a proposal for declaration of Slovak sovereignty to the Slovak National Council, the proposal was made public on 12 September 1991. However, this doesn't indicate the support of Slovak population for the breakup nor confederation model. It is important to note that after the emergence of the proposal for Slovak sovereignty, another petition was created in reaction to it, the one which supported the existence of the common state and received almost equal support (Rychlík 2000: 91). Therefore, the division was obvious not only among the Czechoslovak population but individually between Czechs and Slovaks as well. The direct consequence of this situation was that Čarnogurský was forced to find a compromise with the Czechs and the parties involved were the Civic Movement on the Czech side and KDH with VPN on the Slovak side. The Czech government led by Petr Pithart was willing to accept a treaty between the Czech and Slovak republics which was supposed to precede the federal constitution. On 3 November 1991, the top representatives of all three governments and parliaments gathered informally at the private villa of President Václav Havel in Hrádeček near Trutnov where they were supposed to reach a compromise with the goal of overcoming the institutional crisis (Rychlík 2000: 91).

The outcome of the gathering was predominantly positive and an agreement was reached to form a binding Czech-Slovak treaty. Nevertheless, solution regarding legal incorporation of the treaty into the national and federal constitutions remained unsettled. Furthermore, another unsolved issue was how to make the treaty binding so that future constitutions would not be able to abolish it. The compromise was not reached until January 1992 when members of both Czech and Slovak National Councils met in Prague and decided that the treaty would be signed by both republics which will be represented by their National Councils. According to Rychlík, significant effort was invested in the creation of a draft treaty, with a special focus on treaty language in order for it to be acceptable for both sides (Rychlík 2000: 92).

On the one hand, KDH compromised and gave up its demand that the treaty had to be signed by both republics as it would legally form an international treaty between two independent states. On the other hand, Slovak side was pleased as the treaty specified the framework of the future federal constitution which was in accordance with their demands (Kraus 2000: 92). However, the proposal was finally defeated as it didn't pass the voting of the presidium of Slovak National Council. Ten members of the presidium voted for the proposal, and equal number voted against preventing it from being submitted to the Slovak National Council as a whole. In reaction to the results from Slovakia, the Czech National Council deemed any further negotiation with the Slovak side pointless. In Slovakian political space, failed proposal meant definitive split within the KDH. The grouping led by Klepač officially broke from the party and formed a new party the Slovak Christian Democratic Movement (SKDH). The future of Czechoslovak relations was left to the victors of next elections (Rychlík 2000: 93).

One of the crucial moments regarding the future of the common Czechoslovak state came in June 1992 when new elections to Federal Assembly and National Councils took place. The coalition between ODS led by Václav Klaus and Christian Democratic Party (KDS) won in the Czech Republic with a clear agenda of accomplishing economic reform as well as moving the country towards democratic and capitalist society. As far as the constitutional framework was concerned the coalition put forward the slogan: "Either a functioning federation or the division of Czechoslovakia into two states" (Rychlík 2000: 93). Meanwhile, in Slovakia, Vladimír Mečiar's HZDS won on the basis of populist sometimes even contradictory statements about the future of the common state. His take on constitutional framework was a confusing mix of demands for sovereignty, international recognition for Slovakia as well as maintenance of the common state (Rychlík 2000: 93).

Therefore, Mečiar walked the line between sovereignty and federation while trying to present both options as if they were not mutually exclusive. This strategy proved to be very efficient for Mečiar as it helped him win a substantial number of votes from voters who actually supported the common state, especially those with lower education (Rychlík 2000: 94). It is important to note that leadership of the party didn't seem to be concerned with any possible objections coming from the Czech side when presenting their variants of constitutional arrangements. This was true despite the Czech side being adamant and claiming that it would not accept any other form other than a federation. In addition, Civic Movement was defeated in the Czech Republic which demonstrated a significant shift in the Czech political arena as well as an unpredictable future for the common state. The backbone of pro-federal Czech political wing failed to win seats in either the Federal Assembly or the Czech National Council (Rychlík 2000: 94).

The other possible breaking point was proclamation of Slovak "svrchovanost" on 17 July 1992: "In this historical moment, we declare the right of Slovak nation to self-determination, as it is embedded in all international conventions and treaties on the right of nations to self-determination. Recognizing the right of nations to self-determination, we declare, that we as well want to freely establish the manner of national and happy life, where we will respect the rights of all, every citizen, nations, national and ethnic minorities, democratic and humanistic legacies of Europe and the world. With this declaration, Slovak National Council declares svrchovanost of Slovak republic as a foundation of Slovak sovereign state" (Rychlik 2012: 313). According to Rychlík, the term "svrchovanost" is a translation of the term sovereignty, thus the terms have identical meaning. What it entails is that the state holds the right to decide about all issues which are or could be subjects of international law. The sovereign state, therefore, has the right to act by itself internationally and enter into treaties with other states but also guarantees to fulfill the treaty obligations by itself. Therefore, genuine "svrchovanost" is possible only as an attribute of independent states (Rychlík 2012: 313).

According to Rychlík, there is a possibility that a de jure independent state is not de facto sovereign. This situation occurs when a domestic or foreign policy of the state is influenced by another, more powerful state through coercive treaties, for example, mid-war Slovak state which was subjected to Germany. However, it is not possible that a state would be a part of a federation and stay fully sovereign. In that case, part of its sovereignty passes to the supranational entities (Rychlík 2012: 201). Thus, this profoundly anti-federal position formed by nationalist Slovak parties, including the Slovak National Party in 1991, asked for the immediate transfer of all competencies to Slovak organs. This move represented a shift in Mečiar's politics as he was regarded as federalist up to this point (Rychlík 2000: 90).

2.4 Economy behind the Breakup

Many social scientists find that ethnic conflict is often generated as a consequence of increasing regional economic imbalance or applied to the case of Czechoslovakia when one republic is discriminated against economically by the federation. Therefore, a very important aspect that many authors highlight when discussing the Czechoslovak split, is the assumed difference regarding economic growth and strength of both states. Jan Svejnar considers this economic heterogeneity of Czech and Slovak republics, only a perceived difference which, nonetheless, significantly contributed to the dissolution. The author notes that the introverted nature of the Czech-Slovak debates was so myopic that elite leaders failed to acknowledge the vast number of similarities between the Czech and Slovak economies when compared to other economies in the region (Svejnar 2000: 276).

Here it is important to add that in 1918 the First Czechoslovak Republic inherited over 60 percent of the entire industrial production of the Austro-Hungarian empire and that Slovakia representing only 21 percent of the Czechoslovak population, accounted for maximum 8,5 percent of common industrial production (Svejnar 2000:277). However, the communist regime's effort to invest in Slovakia's industry and significantly increase country's economic development resulted in a considerable reduction of the historically large Czecho-Slovak economic disparity. According to the analysis by Josef Kotrba and Karel Kříž, the relative per capita income differential between the two republics was 47 percent in 1953 but this considerable gap narrowed to mere 9 percent in 1990 (Svejnar 2000: 279). Further study showed that in 1989 the relative distribution of labor force across principal sectors was very similar. As an illustration, the proportion in agriculture was 11 percent in the Czech Republic while in Slovakia it was 14 percent. As for the industry, Czech Republic accounted for 39 percent of the total and Slovakia for 33 percent (Svejnar 2000: 279).

Therefore, the research results point to somewhat more balanced economic output and not very different level of economic growth in both republics during the first post-Soviet years. This 40 years long Communist investment in Slovakia's economic development seems to be crucial in this regard and one of the defining factors why in 1989 both republics were very similar from an economic standpoint. Slovakia managed to practically close the output and income gap between the two republics in what Svejnar calls: "A rare example of successful economic development from a low to a middle-income country under economy planning" (Svejnar 2000: 289). The author concludes by claiming that, with the exception of unemployment, the economic performance of the Czech and Slovak republics has been very similar in the period before, as well as after the partition of the common state (Svejnar 2000: 289).

Slovakia's experience with high levels of unemployment during 1991 and 1992 (in comparison to the Czech lands - the ratio being 3:1) has fueled the arguments that the economic ministries in Prague dominated by Czechs are not concerned with serving Slovak interests (Kraus–Stanger 2000: 31). On the other side, the Czechs felt that their revenues, which were being poured into Slovakia, were not appreciated by the Slovak side. Thus, at the time of elite negotiations which decided the future of Czechoslovakia this considerable economic similarity of both economies was essentially ignored. The main points of debates were focused on differences rather than similarities. Focusing on aspects such as high unemployment rate in Slovakia and a bit weaker economic performance of the country, enabled the leaders to exploit these differences and present it as unsolvable barriers to the further existence of federation (Svejnar 2000: 290). Therefore, the breakup of the state was a convenient solution for political elites of both republics as it permitted the Slovak leadership to proceed with more moderate and socially oriented policies, and at the same time allowed the Czech government to go through with rapid economic transformation. The post-1993 economies of both states also indicated how uninterested the political leaderships of both republics were in the possibility of common future, as statistics showed a very similar pattern of growth according to Svejnar (Svejnar 2000: 290).

Here it would be helpful to include Petr Pithart's following comment about Václav Klaus: "I believe that he made his mind long before the elections how to deal with the federation and that is to dissolve it. However, only if it wouldn't be possible to centralize it, that is 'unfederalize' it. Federation in any form or shape represents only complications and burden for economists like Klaus. Division of authority is a burden, regardless of conditions of the division" (Ravik 2006: 204). In this sense, this perceived regional economic disparity played a part in leading the state towards the breakup.

Petr Zajac provides further insight on Czech-Slovak dissolution from an economic standpoint, when he argues that one of the key obstacles to the resolution of the constitutional impasse was the issue of economic transformation. Zajac claims that Slovakia had a different character of economic transformation from the beginning because of its higher level of unemployment. Furthermore, many Slovaks were suspicious of Klaus' reforms and his solutions for economic transformation including liberalization of prices, restitution, and privatization. This, according to Zajac, produced a sentiment of nostalgia for the old regime in Slovakia. The author further stresses the different modernization experiences both republics had (Zajac 2000: 388-389). "Communist investment in Slovak economy helped Slovaks reach economic development, but contrary to the Czech side, it did not foster a rise of democratic political culture. Therefore, Slovakia diverged from the general strategy of transformation which was identified with the federation" (Zajac 2000: 388-389). Robin Shepherd also finds that process of modernization was the essential difference between the Czech and Slovak nations. The fact that modernization had taken place at different times and under different conditions made all the difference according to the author. Modernization refers to the processes of industrialization, urbanization, literacy, demography, political pluralism and secularization (Shepherd 2000 133–134).

Hence, according to Svejnar, apart from national issues, the unsatisfying constitutional arrangement, impact of political transition, the assumed difference between Czech and Slovak economies influenced the willingness of Czech elite leadership to agree to a breakup of the federation. Moreover, faced with the issues over the form of the state as well as the continuous conflict over the pace and nature of economic reform in the first three years after the fall of Soviet regime, Václav Klaus along with his colleagues in the Czech leadership, had not only political but also economic reasons to incline towards the breakup of the common state (Wolchik 2000: 158). Thus, being faced with accelerated rising unemployment as well as somewhat faster rate of decline in the Slovak economy when compared to the Czech one, Slovak leadership supported the idea of a steadier approach to the transition from plan to market economies. On the other hand, the Czech perspective focused on historically less-developed nature of the Slovak economy. This made many Czech leaders perceive the Slovak economy as a stumbling block to Czech rapidly growing economy (Svejnar 2000: 276).

One important factor which influenced the higher rate of unemployment in Slovakia according to Svejnar could be the difference in demand conditions. The author notes that: "Nationally, as well as at the level of individual districts, the Czech Republic had more job openings than Slovakia. Considering that vacancies signal demand for workers, the Czech Republic had more favorable demand conditions" (Svejnar 2000: 288). Furthermore: "The more rapid creation of small private firms that tend to engage in labor-intensive production as well as the more significant inflow of foreign direct investment are plausible product market causes of this labor market phenomenon" (Svejnar 2000: 288). Jan Rychlík further notes that nationalist opposition, primarily SNS, used the unsatisfactory economic situation for anti-Czech political propaganda. Above all, the ongoing reform was criticized along with federal minister of finance and vice prime minister Václav Klaus. Not only in the ranks of SNS but also part of VPN and KDH, an idea of specific reform for Slovakia emerged. This was an already known idea of independent Slovak market functioning with its own regulatory mechanisms (Rychlík 2012: 270-271).

Above all, it was Jozef Kučerák, the Slovak vice prime minister who advocated for stronger republic control of economies, but he claimed that was not because of political but only economic reasons (Rychlík 2012: 270-271). Moreover, Rychlík claims that appeal for independent economic reform was very difficult to put in praxis as it meant eliminating Czechoslovakia as integrated tax, custom and monetary area. This would effectively end any debate about the existence of the common state. Another rift as mentioned was the issue of privatization, namely so-called big privatization which consisted of selling shares of government firms to citizens. One of the biggest proponents of privatization in the Czech Republic, Tomáš Ježek, afraid that part of Czech property would end up in the hands of foreigners, started supporting separate privatization in both republics. "I started thinking that if privatization would go federal and then the state would fall apart. That would be a big mess. It would mean that part of Czech property we gave out for free to foreigners. That is why I supported Čarnogursky's idea that we should divide privatization beforehand. It wouldn't be a problem. Both processes would run parallelly along national lines and we would explain to people that Czechs should invest in the Czech Republic and Slovaks in Slovakia" (Rychlik 2012: 273).

Former HZDS vice president Augustin Marian Huska, a man very close to Mečiar, commented on Klaus' economic reform predictions in "Literarny tyždennik" newspapers in 1992: "Instead of economic decline of 5 percent as Klaus predicted, by the end of 1991 economic decline was 12 percent and halfway into this year it will be 20 percent. Instead of 30 percent inflation, that Klaus predicted, inflation reached the rate of 70 percent. As for the unemployment rate, it is 5 to 15 percent higher than Klaus predicted. In conclusion, Klaus either deliberately underestimated recession, inflation, and unemployment, or his conception of the invisible hand is ineffective, I assume it is the latter" (Ravik 2006: 241). This stance from the Slovak side shows the growing split in opinion regarding the economic transformation of the country as well as Slovak dissatisfaction of the federal course.

According to Robin Shepherd, radical economic shock therapy was an appropriate policy platform for a country with the kind of economy the Czechs lived in. In Slovakia, the contrary appeared to apply. Economic policies were formed distinctively, applicable to different kinds of economies and countries. "There is the idea held by some authors which claim that had the programs for transition, especially economic transition been more flexible, greater accommodation of the national conflict would, perhaps, have been possible. The different national economic priorities in each cannot be disassociated so cleanly from other aspects of nationhood" (Shepherd 2000: 142). In conclusion, Shephard claims it is important to stress that the discrepancy regarding economic policy was not some issue which the nationalist cause simply latched on to as economy is a crucial part of what the nation is (Shepherd 2000: 142).

3 Applying the Theory

3.1 The Copenhagen School

The concept of security was traditionally tied with concepts of strategy and power. Especially in the period after the World War II, it often seemed that this is all security is about. According to the teachings of strategic studies, the main focus was on the defense of the territorial state, military and material power. This kind of thinking made it almost impossible to see security through another lens. However, the past several decades have presented an immense challenge to this perspective on security and security analysis. The concept of state-centrism, rationalist assumptions about agency and action as well as limited materialist visions of structure and power have all been challenged and criticized by the new emerging schools of thought. Moreover, the focus was now on the inherent and deep connection of security thinking and action with politics and power. Thus, the focus was on the actors trying to reframe issues and on the political and cultural impact of their successes and failures (Williams 2007: 1).

In addition, a need for broadening the analytic and methodological agenda of security studies, but also simultaneous concern regarding widening its scope and introducing concepts of identity, human security, environmental security, and many others has given rise to new interpretations of security and new captivating debates in the field. At the core of this shift, has been a systematic change that occurred after the end of the Cold War and systematic reconceptualization of security relations in the following period. The part of academia advocating for a more constructivist approach to analysis was most vocal in arguing that the change which post-Cold War period generated showed the inadequacy of narrow rationalist and materialist understandings of state action and a growing need for more sociologically complex theories of security. The theory would focus on concepts such as culture and identity and analysts would place these concepts at the center of their inquiry (Williams 2007: 1). Consequently, a number of new theories concerned with different, more complex approaches to security have emerged and taken place in contemporary security studies. One of those most prominent voices of this new vibrating field were the voices of the Copenhagen school led by Barry Buzan and Ole Weaver as its most prominent representatives.

In terms of the most applicable theory regarding the dissolution of Czechoslovakia and achieving the primary goal of this Thesis, the most helpful contribution of the Copenhagen School has been the concept of "securitization". Security is, according to Copenhagen School, a speech act and by saying "security" a state representative declares an emergency condition, thus claiming a right to use whatever means are necessary to block a threatening development. (Buzan – Wæver – de Wilde 1998: 21). "The Securitization Theory focuses on the intersubjective process through which 'threats' manifest themselves as security problems on the political agenda. Threats in that sense are 'objective' when they are accepted by significant political actors, not because they have an inherent threatening status. Security is, in short, a self-referential practice" (Buzan – Wæver – de Wilde 1998: 24).

The Copenhagen School categorizes various security threats according to sectors, which include: military, political, economic, social, and environmental (Buzan – Wæver – de Wilde 1998: 22). "In the political sector, existential threats are traditionally defined in terms of constituting principle – sovereignty, but sometimes also ideology – of the state. Sovereignty can be existentially threatened by anything that questions recognition, legitimacy, or governing authority. In the societal sector referent object is large-scale collective identities that can function independent of the state, such as nations and religions. Given the peculiar nature of this type of referent object, it is extremely difficult to establish hard boundaries that differentiate existential from lesser threats. Buzan adds that: "Collective identities naturally evolve and change in response to internal and external developments" (Buzan – Wæver – de Wilde 1998: 23). However, it is important to stress that security cannot be projected on everything. "Primarily, due to the fact that not all political issues can be prioritized and given security importance simultaneously, and because the creation of a discourse of security threats will be determined by various factors such as state's history, or geographical and structural position. Last but not the least, because it provokes reactions from other actors, internationally as well as domestically" (Buzan – Hansen 2009: 34). Furthermore, Buzan asserts: "If security speech acts are to be successful, they also need to convince their relevant audiences" (Buzan – Hansen 2009: 34).

"Securitization refers more precisely to the process of presenting an issue in security terms, in other words as an existential threat: The way to study securitization is to study discourse and political constellations: When does an argument with this particular rhetorical and semiotic structure achieve sufficient effect to make an audience tolerate violations of rules that would otherwise have to be obeyed? If by means of an argument about the priority and urgency of an existential threat the securitizing actor has managed to break free of procedures or rules he or she would otherwise be bound by, we are witnessing a case of securitization" (Buzan – Wæver – de Wilde 1998: 25).

Thus, the Copenhagen School claims that securitization is the move that takes politics beyond established rules of the game and frames the issue either as a special kind of politics or as above politics. Securitization can therefore, be seen as a more extreme version of politicization meaning that the issue is presented as an existential threat requiring emergence measures and justifying actions outside the normal bounds of political procedure (Buzan – Wæver – de Wilde 1998: 23–24).

Securitizing actors are defined as: "Actors who securitize issues by declaring something – a referent object – existentially threatened", referent objects as: "Things that are seen to be existentially threatened and that have a legitimate claim to survival" (Buzan – Wæver – de Wilde 1998: 36). Here it is important to add that according to Buzan: "While securitization theory was in principle open for anyone to make the 'securitizing move', in practice the most common securitizing actors are political leaders, bureaucracies, governments, lobbyists, and pressure groups, and referent objects usually middle-range collectivities" (Buzan – Wæver – de Wilde 1998: 40–41).

Therefore, issues become securitized when leaders (whether political, societal, or intellectual) begin to talk about them and gain an ear of the public and the state in terms of existential threats against some valued referent object. Buzan gives more insight on what can be labeled as a securitizing move when he claims that there is a certain ambiguity in securitization theory because: "The utterance of the word security is not the decisive criterion and securitization might consist of only a metaphorical security reference" (Buzan – Wæver – de Wilde 1998: 27). Furthermore, the author asserts that constituting something as a security problem might be a problematic or even dangerous strategy because it grants privilege to official leaders and legitimizes the suspension of civil and liberal rights (Buzan – Wæver – de Wilde 1998: 27).

However, a discourse that takes the form of presenting something as an existential threat to a referent object does not by itself create securitization – this is a securitizing move, but the issue is securitized only if and when the audience accepts it as such. In other words: "The existential threat has to be argued and just gain enough resonance for a platform to be made from which it is possible to legitimize emergency measures or other steps that would not have been possible had the discourse not taken the form of existential threats, point of no return, and necessity" (Buzan – Wæver – de Wilde 1998: 25).

Societal security was defined as: "The ability of a society to persist in its essential character under changing conditions and possible or actual threats" (Wæver a kol. 1993: 23). While the state was the referent object for political, military, environmental and economic security, it was society that constituted the referent object for societal security (Wæver a kol. 1993: 26). This opened up opportunities for the study of "identity security" and pointed to cases where state and societies did not align, for instance when national minorities were threatened by their state, or where the state, or other political actors, mobilized society to confront internal or external threats (Buzan – Hansen 2009: 213).

In more detail, societal security according to Copenhagen school concerns: "The sustainability, within acceptable conditions for evolution, of traditional patterns of language, culture and religious and national identity and custom" (McSweeney 2004: 59). The indicators of strength and weakness of a state are summed up in the concept of "socio-political cohesion" which is labeled as the essence of statehood. Another important aspect of the theory is concerned with economic threats to particular groups within a society, which can affect the security of society as a whole. According to Copenhagen school's one of the most prominent critics Bill McSweeney: "This observation is made analytically true, if one accepts the definition of society in terms of 'individuals identifying themselves as members of a community'." (McSweeney 2004: 72). Furthermore, the author claims that the crucial and sole value, which the Copenhagen school conceives as vulnerable in the event of economic threats is the societal identity (McSweeney 2004: 72).

Wæver argues that: "Security problem is something that can undercut the political order within a state and thereby alter the premises for all other questions." (Wæver 2007: 73). As Buzan shows, the literature largely treats security as "freedom from threat" both objectively and subjectively. "Threats seen as relevant are, for the most part, those that effect the self-determination and sovereignty of the unit" (Wæver 2007: 73).

Furthermore, the author explains that trying to press the kind of unwanted fundamental political change on a ruling elite is similar to playing a game in which one's opponent can change the rules at any time he or she likes. "Power holders can always try to use the instrument of securitization of an issue to gain control over it. By definition, something is a security problem when the elites declare it to be so" (Wæver 2007: 73). Thus, Wæver claims, those who administer this order can easily use it for specific, self-serving purposes which is something that cannot easily be avoided (Wæver 2007: 73).

Finally, Wæver argues that: "Elites frequently present their interests in 'national security' dress, these claims are usually accompanied by a denial of elites' right to do so. Their actions are then labeled something else, for example, 'class interests,' which seems to imply that authentic security is, somehow, definable independent of elites, by direct reference to the 'people'" (Wæver 2007: 75). However, the author asserts that security is articulated only from a specific place, in an institutional voice; by the elites (Wæver 2007: 75).

3.2 Analysis of Speech Acts

In order to successfully apply the theory of securitization on the case of the dissolution of Czechoslovakia I will try to analyze the elite relations in the country prior to the split. I will analyze the speech acts made by the key protagonists of the split as well as their mutual interaction.

Already in June 1990, mentions of state dissolution were existent in the Czechoslovak political arena. For example, in the following speech Mečiar mentions three orientations that would, according to him, decide the future of Czechoslovakia: "Today we can say that three orientations emerged during the electoral campaign. It is the unitary orientation, the officials who believe that federal government is the foundation of republic prosperity and see republic merely as regions, then there is the separatist orientation which claims we need to split from the Czechs and build independent Slovak state and there is the third orientation, which should be the most prominent one, the one presented by VPN that we are for the coexistence inside the common state of Czechs and Slovaks within the federation, but not one created by Husak's communist party but federation where there will be guarantees of republic rights, where republics will have certain powers and state functions" (Historie.cs 2008, 06:00).

Even though Mečiar labeled the federalist stance as the one that should be the most prominent, he introduced the idea of independent Slovakia in the Czechoslovak political discourse as well. This represented the beginning of political securitization of sovereignty by political elites. According to Buzan: "State security has *sovereignty* as its ultimate criterion, and societal security has *identity.* Both usages imply survival. A state that loses its sovereignty does not survive as a state; a society that loses its identity fears that it will no longer be able to live as itself. There are, then, at the collective level between individual and totality, two organizing centers for the concept of security: state and society" (Wæver 2007: 83).

Sovereignty is arguably one of the main concepts that led the whole Slovak nationalist narrative since the 1990 till the final dissolution of the state. "Svrchovanost" was at the core of Slovak demands for independence and a major factor that led to the breakup. The concept was manipulated by several figures in the Slovak political elite circle. First and foremost, by Vladimír Mečiar, who expressed the significance of sovereignty multiple times.

In the following statement on negotiations with the Czech side he claims: "We didn't have much choice, when we discussed constitutional form of the state I went very far, and I was criticized by my fellow Slovaks for it, and I said all right let's talk about the form of the federation, what is your idea, how should it look like, I agree…when they explained us their vision, one government, one state, one parliament, one economy, centralized state where there would be no talk about national issues, about no Slovak svrchovanost nor Slovak economy we found ourselves in a situation where we had no room for our interests" (Historie.cs 2007, 22:42). Here Mečiar puts sovereignty and economy at the heart of Slovak national interests. Not long after, Mečiar adds that Slovak side is willing to negotiate with Moravia separately and then the Czech Republic can join the negotiations. Furthermore, he affirms that the main issue and the only Slovak condition is subjectivity in the terms of International Law, while everything else is open to the negotiation with the Czech side (Ravik 2006: 213). Here it is important to note that Wæver argues that security problem is something that can undercut the political order within a state and thereby "alter the premises for all other questions." In addition, as Buzan shows, the literature largely treats security as "freedom from threat", both objectively and subjectively, and threats seen as relevant are, for the most part, those that effect the self-determination and sovereignty of the unit (Wæver 2007: 71).

3.3 Evolution of Rhetoric

In order to illustrate Mečiar's and Klaus's contribution to the final dissolution, I will try to present former Slovak and Czech PM's speech acts and how they changed during the years. It is intriguing to follow Mečiar's comments on Czech and Slovak relations since 1990 and the enormous difference in rhetoric two years can make. Already in August 1990 he dismisses the possibility of confederation and proclaimed that for the Czechoslovak system and the contemporary system of international relations it was unacceptable. He dismissed the idea of a state treaty as well and claimed that that sort of arrangement more suits a confederation (Ravik 2006: 213).

In October 1990, the Slovak prime minister again proclaimed his allegiance to the Czechoslovak state and claimed that he stood for the coexistence of Czechs and Slovaks in one common state. Furthermore, in March 1991 he comments that even declaration of Slovak sovereignty wouldn't be the end of the Czechoslovak state. In April of the same year, Mečiar goes on to say that only Czechs can push the Slovaks towards the creation of independent Slovak state. Not exactly Czechs, meaning regular Czech citizens, he affirms, but only Czech politicians (Ravik 2006: 213). However, September of 1991 brings a significant shift in Mečiar's rhetoric when he claims: "Recognition of our sovereignty and Slovak constitution are two fundamental steps that will take us toward confederation, meaning coexistence of two sovereign republics on the basis of a treaty" (Ravik 2006: 213). Here, Mečiar again sets the issue of sovereignty at the basis of Slovak aspirations and demands.

Buzan gives more insight on what can be labeled as a securitizing move when he claims that there is a certain ambiguity in securitization theory: "The utterance of the word security is not the decisive criterion and securitization might consist of only a metaphorical security reference" (Buzan – Wæver – de Wilde 1998: 27). Vocalizing the growing need and urgency for Slovak sovereignty and Slovak constitution by the leading Slovak politician can, therefore, be interpreted as a securitizing move.

Moreover, examining the evolution of Václav Klaus' rhetoric gives us more insight on the issue. Contrary to what one would think about Klaus, in 1991 his pro-federalist comment was noted in Reflex magazine where he claimed that he did not take the dissolution of the federation into account and that he planned to do everything in his power to prevent it. Klaus even labeled the assumptions as "catastrophic movie scenarios" which he was not planning to entertain (Ravik 2006: 205).

It was a very different comment from the one he gave in "Mlada Fronta" newspapers: "There is a chance that federation will survive, but I have to admit there is very little chance that will happen. The negotiation and the result of meetings with HZDS nor the potential referendum results in each republic don't matter that much. In my opinion, the process of state dissolution is already two years under way. Recently, the process only accelerated. The economies of both republics are moving apart unstoppably. I cannot conceive the political will that could roll it back. It is like pushing a cart down a steep hill – after a while, you struggle to hold on and you don't even think about driving or stopping" (Ravik 2006: 207). Here, leading Czech politician suggests that the federation is unlikely to "survive" while dismissing the idea of citizen participation on the issue.

The interesting fact is that Klaus was aware of the nation's sentiment as far as dissolution was concerned and was very well informed on the issue. Klaus also claimed that public surveys don't indicate people's support for the state dissolution (Ravik 2006: 207). In addition, on the issue of citizen participation, Mr. Klaus adds that neither ODS nor he refuses the referendum but that they would go through with it only if they would be able to keep the status quo, which means that some sort of federation had to exist (Ravik 2006: 208). There wasn't a lack of fighting words as far as Klaus was concerned and despite being aware of nation's disapproval of the ongoing politics he proclaimed that for almost three years, Czech side faced continuous Slovak pressure with the goal of state dissolution. It's actual dissolution, Klaus said he would regret, but again, that he would not allow the existence of a caricature in the form of duplex or Czechoslovak Union, that was being forced on him by the Parliament. In his opinion, that kind of state structure would not be in the interest of the citizens of Czech Republic. Klaus along with the rest of Czech political elite had no intention of creating it (Ravik 2006: 208). Klaus's apparent disregard for referendum was strongly shared by one of his closest associates and another prominent member of Czech political elite, the Czech Deputy Prime Minister Miroslav Macek.

I will cite an interesting comment Macek provided in "Občansky denik" newspapers on 17 July 1991, one year before the 1992 elections. "Among the ODS members, there is a prevailing opinion that Czechoslovakia will consist of only Bohemia, Morava and Silesia. Politicians from Slovakia are aware that most of the population is for the preservation of the common state. All right, but if we decide to do that we will find ourselves in the same position we are right now" (Ravik 2006: 201). Furthermore, Macek argues: "I find that calling for a referendum is absurd because both Czechs and Slovaks elected the members of Federal Parliament. They provided them with a mandate, which means that the above-mentioned process should occur in premises of the Federal Parliament. To bypass the institution of Federal Parliament is absurd" (Ravik 2006: 201).

What one can take from the words of former Deputy Prime Minister is that already in 1991, ODS leadership was keen on the idea of state dissolution and certain that the common state would be hard to sustain. As a matter of fact, after the dissolution of Czechoslovakia was finished the same politician made the following comment: "I feel fine, for it is known that I was striving for the dissolution of Czechoslovakia. I have a feeling of profound satisfaction" (Ravik 2006: 201).

One year later, Milan Uhde, another man close to Klaus and member of parliament from 1990 to 1992, commented the outcome of 1992 elections as well as the possibility of potential referendum in the following words: „Slovak elections turned out the way they did unequivocally and now we hear again that there is a need to ask the people, a need to turn to the citizen, because obviously, political representations don't represent the citizen. [...] I repeat: The Slovak voter has clearly voted for the international sovereignty of Slovakia. Everything that follows has to derive from this politically motivated aspiration. Therefore, one needs to hold on to reality and not dream about some citizen with the big C, who will change the whole outcome of the elections by voicing his opinion in a referendum" (Ravik 2006: 227).

On the topic of securitizing actors, Wæver notes that one cannot predict who will voice "societal security" concerns; but one can only see, with hindsight, how much legitimacy an actor possessed when she or he tried to speak on behalf of society. When applied to the case of Czechoslovakia, both Mečiar and Klaus, judging on the results of the 1992 elections, felt they had enough legitimacy to start the process of state dissolution. The author asserts that: "Various actors try this all the time, but the attempt becomes consequential on a different scale when society more or less actively backs up the groups speaking" (Wæver 2007: 86).

Whether society backed up the Czech and Slovak elites is a complex issue, one that is still very much debated. Even though political leadership never dismissed referendum as a possibility, no referendum was ever held. Therefore, the possibility to consult the Czechoslovakian public on the federation's constitutional future was deliberately disregarded. Despite the fact that over two and a half million of Czech and Slovak citizens signed a petition demanding a referendum to be held it never happened, not in the Czech Republic nor in Slovakia (Kraus–Stanger: 2000a: 436).

However, this elite behavior was expectable, if one takes into consideration that various polls consistently indicated that while Czechs and Slovaks might have disagreed on the desired path of political and economic transformation, the majority of both Czechs and Slovaks favored preserving Czechoslovakia right through the June 1992 elections (Kraus–Stanger: 2000a: 436). In a way, voters had a referendum of sorts by participating in those elections and, where the Czech lands threw their support behind Václav Klaus's Civic Democratic Party (ODS), which had minimal support in Slovakia, and Slovak voters endorsed Vladimír Mečiar's Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS), a party that had no organizational structure whatsoever in Bohemia and Moravia (Kraus–Stanger: 2000a: 437). In other words, Czechs and Slovaks voted for the political leaders who led the country towards the breakup. Yet one can argue that even though that might be true, will for state dissolution in public political opinion was never a majority position.

3.4 Mechanism of Negotiations

Wæver contends that a new feature in 1989 was the loss of support within the elites, which some characterized as a sudden loss of self-confidence by the regimes themselves. In other words, to explain the change, the author argues that we must look within elites and the ways in which the question of legitimacy among elites are being translated into the capacity to act. An important part of an order-maintaining action occurs by sustaining a shared worldview within some minimum inner-circle (Wæver 2007: 78).

As far as the Czech and Slovak shared worldview is concerned, I will cite the comment Václav Klaus made on the issue in 1992: "I don't know why we should compromise with the Slovak side when they lack in elemental truthfulness and basic negotiation existing among normal people" (Ravik 2006: 202). It is obvious from this comment of Czech head of the government that relations between the two political elites were far from harmonious and that this kind of language was freely used to describe the other side. Furthermore, Klaus argued: "When we sail the open sea, every sailor can learn to navigate the helm, but when the storm hits, only captain can be at the helm and there shouldn't be any question about whether the gorge or the reef should be avoided by turning to the right or to the left" (Ravik 2006: 202). What Klaus supposedly wanted to convey with this sailing allegory was that Czech side needed a powerful and decisive leadership that would lead the state in the right direction without unwanted public interference.

As for the Slovak perception, when describing the negotiation process with the Czech side Mečiar gave this illustrative depiction: "Do not open your dirty mouth about Slovak representation or we will pack and you can negotiate by yourselves! Or in another meeting Czech official tells me: Don't be silly, we will not provide you with coal. And I said: Gas could not be provided as well! Him: We will make electricity more expensive! Me: Then perhaps oil won't come as well! And that is how we negotiated in a friendly manner" (Ravik 2006: 212).

During another interview, given in July 1991 Mečiar proclaims: "The position, that Czech officials put themselves in is very disadvantageous for them. It is a position in which only extreme measures can be used and one that gives no space for maneuver" (Ravik 2006: 212). The mention of *extreme measures* as the only alternative in the negotiations represents the securitizing language which arguably influenced the outcome of the whole negotiation process. Soon enough things took turn for the worse, rhetoric got even more conflict-oriented and it was hard to assess which side seemed to be pushing the state towards the brink harder. Slovaks proclaimed "svrchovanost" and it seemed that the country was on the verge of breakup. Therefore, declaration of Slovak sovereignty gave new momentum to ongoing rhetorical conflict.

Here it is important to take note of Ivan Gašparovič's proclamation on the day of the declaration of svrchovanost: "We, democratically elected Slovak National Council solemnly declare that a thousand-year effort of Slovak nation for independence is completed. In this historical moment, we declare the natural right of Slovaks to self-determination in the way it is embodied in all international treaties which speak about the right of nations to self-determination" (ČT 2012, 7:30). By referring to a thousand-year effort of Slovaks for reaching independence and self-determination Gašparovič effectively put concepts of sovereignty and self-determination of Slovak people above all other political or social ambitions in an effort to mobilize citizens around these concepts instead of those that would inspire Czechoslovak cohesiveness. When discussing culture, Ole Wæver, suggests that, if one's identity seems threatened by, for example, internationalization or in this case federalization, the answer is a strengthening of existing identities. "In this sense, consequently, identity can become a security policy" (Wæver 2007: 84). Therefore: "It is possible that national identities might be exploited and revived in terms of non-state, cultural self-defense" (Wæver 2007: 85).

Furthermore, in an interview which took place right after the voting process, one of declaration's biggest proponents, Vladimír Mečiar gave his comments on the future of the common state. When asked, whether endorsement of the declaration meant the end of Czech and Slovaks coexistence, Mečiar responded: "We can have a common existence - one state, or coexistence and cooperation, so we will look for the answer whether it will be one state or two states which act internationally as two subjects, and we will look for the answer on the inside. New quality of cooperation and new degree of cooperation can be achieved but that is cooperation based on an agreement between two states, defined common apparatus and newly defined common interests. And if there is a problem today, then, it is the issue of defining common interest" (ČT 2012, 48:00). Here Mečiar stresses the problem of "common interest" between the two republics as a crucial issue in the relationship of both political elites.

 In addition, when asked if he can confirm that with the declaration approval another step was made toward proclaiming Slovak independence, Mečiar replied: "Today gives a new dynamic to two subjects who need to redefine their relationship, that is a two-party affair, not only Slovak and it does not represent a response to nationalism, it is about creating new realities […] however the atmosphere in Slovakia is not anti-Czech nor anti-Hungarian and we do not see Czech politics as anti-Slovak, this is about seeking self-determination in new terms. We do not want to build borders" (ČT 2012, 49:00).

Mečiar's talk about creating new realities and building borders, even though he claimed he had no intentions of doing it, added more securitizing language to the discourse. However, Mečiar was not alone in this endeavor as Václav Klaus reacted followingly to the proclamation of Slovak svrchovanost: "I have to say, the fact that in this declaration they speak about Europe and the world but not Czechoslovakia, not even a word containing 'Czech' is mentioned here, I find extremely significant and I find it immensely surprising. I am using these two neutral adjectives only because I wouldn't want to use a stronger word" (ČT 2012, 17:00).

In addition, Mečiar claimed: "In Slovakia, we debated whether to proclaim svrchovanost, accept the constitution or not and then since December 1990 under the command of Petr Pithart, Czech government systematically and in an organized manner prepared state dissolution. I saw and read all these programs containing economic consequences and everything else. Therefore, despite the fact that today we are represented as those responsible for this situation, I don't perceive that as guilt but as a solution to a real situation which gives us an opportunity to decide for ourselves by ourselves" (Historie.cs 2007, 23:24). Here it is important to note that when discussing the elite behavior Weaver claims that: "Historically the decisive question, in regards to the securitizing move, was not the truth of the act but rather, the truth was given by the act being said from a specific position, thereby regenerating a loyal elite following, (re)installing the truth, and reimposing the center's will on the majority" (Wæver 2007: 78).

This pronounced dichotomy of "us" as Slovaks and "them" as Czechs is crucial to the securitizing debate. Here Mečiar's words regarding the opportunity for Slovak people to decide "for ourselves by ourselves" can be interpreted as a securitization of identity questions by political elites. For example, Wæver argues that the key to society is the set of ideas and practices that identify individuals as members of a social group. "Society is ultimately about identity, about the self-conception of communities and of individuals identifying themselves as members of a community" (Wæver 2007: 83). A society's survival is, therefore, a matter of identity according to the author (Wæver 2007: 83). Buzan notes that in the societal sector, as Copenhagen school defined it: "The referent object is large scale collective identities which can function independently of the state" (Buzan – Wæver – de Wilde 1998: 23). In this regard, Buzan gives examples of nations or religions. The author further argues that given the distinct nature of this referent object, it is very challenging to differentiate existential from lesser threats. In addition: "Collective identities naturally evolve and change in reaction to internal and external developments and these changes can be perceived either as invasive or heretical or they can be regarded as part of the evolution of identity" (Buzan – Wæver – de Wilde 1998: 23).

Therefore, given the conservative nature of identity, it is always possible to perceive challenges and changes as threats to identity (Buzan – Wæver – de Wilde 1998: 23). The author claims this is due to the fact that: "We will no longer be us, no longer the way we were, or the way we really ought to be to be true to our identity" (Buzan – Wæver – de Wilde 1998: 23). Thus: "The question regarding the issue whether rival identities are securitized depends on whether the so-called 'holders of collective identity' take a relatively close minded or open minded view about how their identity is constituted and maintained" (Buzan – Wæver – de Wilde 1998: 23). Therefore, I argue that by securitizing the identity questions by the Slovak elite, some Slovaks may have perceived the Czechoslovak federation as a threat to Slovak identity and in response voted for the nationalist parties and aspired for a sovereign, independent state which finally contributed to the state dissolution.

Furthermore, there is some rhetorical evidence to suggest that elites engaged in securitization of economic issues as well. Economy, as mentioned, was a major issue between the two political elites and it showed growing tensions and disparities between the two sides. Regarding the dissatisfaction of some parts of the Czechoslovakian political arena with economic reform, Miroslav Macek, during an interview in the political magazine Respect, warned: "The left is preparing a general attack against the government and economic reform in autumn or winter" (Ravik 2006: 251). During the same interview, Klaus added: "Its triggering has a clearly stated goal – attempt to block the privatization and complicate everything" (Ravik 2006: 251).

In addition, Macek elaborated on the Czech-Slovak divide while having a guest appearance on Czech television in leading political television show "Co týden dál" by saying that all he ever did was simplify what the Slovak side wanted from the beginning but never expressed it that way. Furthermore, Macek described Slovakia's aspirations for a looser economic-defense union as "independence with Czech insurance" (Ravik 2006: 202).

Such appearances in political debates on public television proved to be a very convenient platform for nationalist rhetoric. Thus, if the crucial and sole value, which the Copenhagen school conceives as vulnerable in the event of economic threats is the societal identity then securitization of economic issues had a direct impact on Czechoslovak identity (McSweeney 2004: 72). Furthermore, if one accepts the definition of society in terms of "individuals identifying themselves as members of a community", the identification of Czech and Slovak citizens with Czechoslovak identity most likely suffered a significant blow. What this means is that rhetoric which involved highlighting differences between the two economies and claims such as Macek's that Czechs would be paying for Slovak independence, did little to alleviate the tensions. On the contrary it contributed to the strengthening of "us" and "them" dichotomy as well as individual nationalist aspirations.

Moreover, the amount of distrust that existed between Slovak and Czech political elites illustrates the following remark made by Václav Klaus published in Mladá Fronta newspapers in October 1992. "It is starting to show, it is as some little details suddenly become increasingly important. It concerns, for example, the issue with customs, where instead of 'all customs duties will be abolished' formulation, the Slovak side provides a new formulation 'customs duties will be abolished'. For us, this means a very fiddly and delicate job to interpret what does leaving out one sole word in the Slovak proposal actually mean" (Ravik 2006: 262). And furthermore, Klaus claims: "Again, from the perspective of a common citizen some additional trifles occur. Nevertheless, these trifles can cause problems for the experts. For example, to compensate actives and passives in one banking system is not a problem. However, to find some key regarding how to achieve this after the split of the banking system in two will be complicated" (Ravik 2006: 262). Here Klaus warns about the complications that will occur after the practical implementation of the framework agreements between both sides. This kind of rhetoric shows that going into October 1992 Czech and Slovak elites were at a point where further negotiations that would lead to the continuance of common state weren't realistic or perhaps not even welcomed.

In those last moments of negotiation Mečiar proclaimed that: "Almost till quarter to 4 in the morning I was trying to convince Czech partners not to leave and not to declare independence" (Ravik 2006: 264). On the other side Klaus claimed: "On the contrary it is the Slovak side which found itself in a very complicated situation when it started several games and now will have a lot of problems to hold those games under control" (Ravik 2006: 264). In the midst of this rhetorical blame game played by the chosen few a state fell apart and changed lives of millions.

In addition, Federal Prime Minister J. Strasky gave some valuable insight regarding the role of his cabinet in the final dissolution of the common state: "This government was formed only so it could prepare the state for breakup in legal and organizational terms. It cannot solve any problem where Czech and Slovak interests collide precisely because it was formed so it wouldn't be able to" (Ravik 2006: 263).

Here I would like to add former Slovak prime minister's recent interview published by idnes.cz which gives more insight on the mechanics of state dissolution and the power distribution among the elites. In a revealing interview, Mečiar claims: "I made 90 percent of Slovak delegation, Václav Klaus 80 percent of Czech delegation, the rest were various advisors" (IDNES 2016). Furthermore, Mečiar explains why elites orchestrated the split and why citizens were left out: "Václav Klaus told me at the time, that he can split the federation, that he has all legal rights to do so and doesn't need to ask anyone. He also said that if there would be a problem with the split in Slovakia, we could organize a referendum. The only problem was the law as it said that if Czechoslovakia is to be broken apart then the republic which generated the split would have to forfeit all property in favor of the other. Therefore, in the case of a one-sided referendum, there was a possibility that in Slovakia, all property would be forfeited in favor of Czech Republic" (IDNES 2016). In addition, he argues: "Slovaks had to gain independence, there was no other way. We had to experience, how is it to fight and live alone. Today the relations between both countries are very advanced, we can set an example for the European Union" (IDNES 2016).

If we go back to the securitization definition: "Securitization refers more precisely to the process of presenting an issue in security terms, in other words as an existential threat: "The way to study securitization is to study discourse and political constellations: When does an argument with this particular rhetorical and semiotic structure achieve sufficient effect to make an audience tolerate violations of rules that would otherwise have to be obeyed? If by means of an argument about the priority and urgency of an existential threat the securitizing actor has managed to break free of procedures or rules he or she would otherwise be bound by, we are witnessing a case of securitization" (Buzan – Wæver – de Wilde 1998: 25). Furthermore, the author asserts that constituting something as a security problem grants privilege to official leaders and legitimizes the suspension of civil and liberal rights (Buzan – Wæver – de Wilde 1998: 27).

Thus, I argue that Czech and Slovak political elites securitized the questions of sovereignty and identity and moved the issues outside of norms of regular politics, overstepping their boundaries and dissolving the state without giving the possibility of choice to their citizens who in return tolerated this violation – successfully finalizing the process of securitization.

What followed was the process of "desecuritization", defined by Waever as: "The progressive removal of issues from the security agenda as they are dealt with via institutions and practices that do not implicate force, violence, or the security dilemma" (Waever 2007: 159). Desecuritization process started right after the results of 1992 elections. Regarding the future of the common state Klaus proclaimed: "Everything stands and falls with the possibility of elementary compromise with HZDS" (Historie.cs 2008, 41:47). On the Slovak side Mečiar noted: "We think that ODS along with Mr. Václav Klaus prepared very well for the meeting because for over a year they never attacked us, even though, by doing that, they could have gained easy points in Czech political arena" (Historie.cs 2008, 42:24).

Furthermore, regarding the future of Czechoslovak federation Mečiar proclaimed: "We assume that on 1 January 1993 the Czech and Slovak republic will come into existence as two separate state entities. Unfortunately, although many people are emotionally connected to the current constitutional form, there is a need to realistically and responsibly say that the current situation is unattainable. The situation is in the state of inertia in such a way that it could spin out of control, and staying and defending the current situation is worse than stand up to the new truth, accept it and deal with it" (ČT 2012a, 11:57). Klaus provided some reassuring words as well: "From the Czech Republic perspective I believe that, if that process occurs, as it was planned, regulated, prepared, in a controlled, peaceful form, I believe, ODS believes, that we can build better relations with Slovakia, long-term, more lasting relations than the ones we have now" (ČT 2012a, 12:29).

This sudden change in rhetoric, the unexpected amity between the leaders of both republics had the purpose of deescalating the tension that was building up and preparing a peaceful "divorce". Securitizing language was suddenly gone and all that was left was a divided country.

3.5 Václav Havel and his Role in the Breakup

So far, I have argued that the main protagonists of the Czechoslovak dissolution were Czech and Slovak prime ministers Václav Klaus and Vladimír Mečiar. However, even though Klaus and Mečiar have been the most active and obvious factors behind the split, there is something left to be said about the former Czechoslovak president, Václav Havel's involvement. Ravik's already mentioned metaphor of Czechoslovak "Bermuda triangle" included both Czech and Slovak prime ministers along with Václav Havel. Therefore, it would be prudent to analyze his speech acts and look for the securitizing language within.

The following citation is Havel's address to the nation in November 1991 where he warns about the ongoing tensions and constitutional deadlock between the two sides: "Dear fellow citizens. All indications are that at the moment it is beyond the power of our representatives to timely and reasonably arrange the future of our national coexistence. They are politically split, paralyzed by internal divisions and ever more dangerously distancing themselves from the citizens who elected them. The citizens of our two republics want to finally know in what kind of state they will live, and by present-day's state of constitutional negotiations, they are disappointed and rightly feel threatened by their potential failure. The legitimacy of these concerns, aggravated by the fact that the current constitutional situation inherited from Communism, offers no constitutional ways to deal with such crises and to counter the risk that the deepening contradictions will eventually completely paralyze the functioning of state power" (Vaclavhavel.cz 2017).

He goes on to say: "I urge you to in order to save our country from the chaos, in the interest of democracy and all the ideals on behalf of you rebelled two years ago against the totalitarian regime, far louder than before, express your desire to live in a reasonable and fairly organized, prosperous country and help our quarreling parliaments to find a way out of the impasse into which they found themselves in […] I once said to one of the great manifestation of that truth and love must prevail over lies and hatred. Today I would like to add to that sense, humility and responsibility must prevail over short-sightedness, pride, and self-will. In a sense, today the stakes are much higher than two years ago. Then it was just a question of whether we will have to endure decaying totalitarian system for a while longer, or whether we will tell him the clear 'no'. Today, it is about whether we will become a civilized European democracy or a scorned place full of constant conflicts and confusions" (Vaclavhavel.cz 2017).

Clearly in a situation where Havel did not know how to relieve the ongoing tension, he urges the citizen to take action. A valuable cause indeed, however by using terms such as *threat from failure*, *saving the country from chaos* and by issuing warning about Czechoslovakia becoming *a scorned place full of constant conflicts*, former Czechoslovak president practically helped the ongoing process of securitization. Furthermore, in a speech he made only couple of days later, Havel claims: "I do not want to go to war against parliaments and I don't want to pull you into such a war. Parliaments are fundamental and most important institutions of our newly developed democracy. I ask only of our parliaments - and especially of those MPs who are inclined to complicate, by their own actions the work of others - to quickly agree on the future of our state and respectively, create necessary conditions for such an agreement. These parliaments have adopted dozens of important laws. To make this work meaningful it is necessary to know to what kind of state will the enacted laws apply*"* (Vaclavhavel.cz 2017a). In this passage, there is again a pronounced sense of urgency in Havel's words, he even uses the term "war" to express the gravity of the situation. Thus, by trying to mobilize society so it could confront internal threat of dissolution, Havel likely, even if unknowingly, contributed to the securitization process and the final dissolution of the state.

Moreover, Havel might have played another significant role in the final dissolution of the state. In order to understand the connection, one needs to go back to 1991. As mentioned, relations between main protagonists of Czech and Slovak political elites were not too friendly at the time. As a matter of fact, Ravik notes that Mečiar blamed Czech political elite and especially Václav Havel for his removal from Slovak premiership in 1991. Petr Pithart gives his take on removal and resurgence of Vladimír Mečiar in the Czechoslovak political arena by saying that elimination of Mečiar took six weeks, which he found considerably awkward, violent and he believed that Mečiar "suffered like an animal". However, in his opinion, this unfortunate turn of events must have motivated Mečiar to try to reach premiership again, but in a completely different way, and with many supporters (Ravik 2006: 204).

Furthermore, Pithart claims that Mečiar knew he could bring the new supporters only under a new national flag and that for him to come back, the common state had to fall apart. On the other side, Klaus responded in a manner which showed that he wasn't exactly against the idea (Ravik 2006: 204). Here, Václav Havel's speech prior to the 1992 elections proves to be a very interesting moment, one that didn't help state dissolution "per se" but overall did little to alleviate the existing tension. "I beg you not to support the ones who say they will solve everything for you. That sort of people want you to be silent, to listen and keep up. I beg you, not to support those who have dictatorial inclinations, change their opinion too often, who are not able to negotiate with others, who propose all kinds of adventurous, ill-conceived and irresponsible solutions and those who would prefer to go back to centralistic governance of all our common affairs" (Ravik 2006: 210). President's address was obviously directed predominantly towards the Slovak voters warning them about the consequences of electing Vladimír Mečiar as their head of government. Nevertheless, Havel's words failed to impact the results of elections as well as deescalating tensions among the political elites. On the contrary, Havel possibly made the Czech-Slovak relations even more tense.

In another interview published almost one year before the 1992 elections, Mečiar claims: "According to the information I was provided, Mr. President called Mr. Klaus and asked him: Well, you are going to win in the Czech Republic and 'Mečar' in Slovakia (he could have learned by then what my name was) so, will there be a federation, are you able to communicate to one another? Why wouldn't we be able to communicate? What I mean is, Czechs will be the ones who hinder all policies, who break this state apart" (Ravik 2006: 214). Apparently, Mečiar was very aware of Havel's opinion of him and, unfortunately for the future of the common state Havel did little to alleviate the tension. What is perhaps surprising is that initially the tension was predominantly felt between Havel and Mečiar. For Klaus, on the other hand, Mečiar had some friendlier words mentioning that he thought of Klaus as being: "The only Czech politician, who never criticized the Slovak officials, never offended them and always when negotiations would take turn for the worse Klaus would be the only one silent" (Ravik 2006: 214).

As mentioned, the same day when Slovaks declared "svrchovanost", Václav Havel abdicated as Czechoslovak president and proclaimed that he cannot be responsible for actions he no longer influenced. Havel further claimed that divisive Slovak politics prevailed and as for the Czech side and ODS, Havel affirmed he agreed with Klaus and supported the ODS platform. Former Czechoslovak president also added that organizing a referendum was no longer possible (Ravik 2006: 262).

Arguably, by standing with Klaus and abdicating the seat of president Havel remained a passive spectator of the Czech and Slovak breakup. Nevertheless, his comments may have helped legitimize Klaus' agenda and contributed to the fact that the common state was being dissolved by its political elites, primarily by leadership of its two most powerful political parties and by the two political figures who were given the privilege to represent the country they both helped fall apart. His poor relationship with leading Slovak politician and the securitizing language within his speeches might have been a contributing factor as well.

4 Conclusion

In my Thesis, I tried to find the reasons behind the peaceful dissolution of Czechoslovakia, and my aim was to explain the events leading to the split as well as revealing the factors that caused it. In the theoretical part of my Thesis, I tried to find the breaking points that eventually led to the split. I further tried to single out the most important actors which contributed to the dissolution and aimed to find the reasons behind their action. My main goal was to answer the question: "What are the key factors underlying the peaceful dissolution of Czechoslovakia?"

In the first part of my Thesis I addressed the role of political elites and institutional challenges that were dominating the Czechoslovak political arena. I argued that after the fall of communism in Czechoslovakia began the process of establishing new political actors.

I noted that Czechoslovakia, since its inception, never had a single multinational leadership nor autonomous ethnically divided elites instead the configuration included tripartite elite groups which always included Czech and Slovak element. However, even though Slovaks had legitimate participation and enduring voice in the governance, many of them felt that the official leadership failed to represent their interests. Furthermore, post-communist democratization led to the breakdown of the triadic pattern. This meant an institutional crisis which would present a significant barrier in the Czechoslovak relations. The democratization of both political systems proved to be an opportunity for a split along republican lines and emergence of two separate party subsystems. Furthermore, the emerging institutional system caused competition among the elites and provided a substantial motivation for avoiding the compromise and competing for the biggest share of the electorate.

Thus, the two opposing groups of elites tried to capitalize on ethnic belonging and the ethnicity card proved to be a very effective weapon in their hands. This trend was more evident in Slovakia where ethnicity and the Czech-Slovak relations became an occurring theme of the political agenda. In return, this nationalist shift became more and more prominent creating more room for conflict among the elites. One of the most significant actors in this aspect was the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia led by Vladimír Mečiar, which was the main platform for expressing Slovak national grievances.

In the following chapter I dissect the issue of Slovak nationalism and I look for its source in recent Slovak history. One of those sources was arguably the Slovak wartime state, which provided a constitutional basis of the independent Slovakia and presented the backbone of some nationalist claims for independence in the post-communist years. The establishment of the Slovak state also showed that Slovaks were capable of running their own country without the Czechs, in this regard its heritage is indeed relevant. However, I claim that the rise of Slovak nationalism wasn't the only factor that led to the breakup of Czechoslovakia.

In the next chapter I argue that 1992 elections and declaration of Slovak svrchovanost were likely the breaking points that led to the final dissolution. The major election win of ODS and HZDS represented a defeat of common state aspirations. The coalition between ODS led by Václav Klaus and Christian Democratic Party (KDS) won in the Czech Republic with a clear agenda of accomplishing economic reform and finding the way to an effective federation or dissolution. In Slovakia, Vladimír Mečiar's HZDS won on the basis of populist sometimes even contradictory statements about the future of the common state. Mečiar walked the line between sovereignty and federation while trying to present both options as if they were not mutually exclusive. These events were followed by declaration of Slovak sovereignty in July 1992 which left little room for maneuver as far as sustaining the common state is concerned.

Another important aspect of the Czechoslovak split was the assumed difference regarding economic growth and strength of both states. Jan Svejnar considers this economic heterogeneity of Czech and Slovak republics, only a perceived difference which, nevertheless, significantly contributed to the dissolution. However, the author claims that with the exception of unemployment, the economic performance of the Czech and Slovak republics has been very similar. Thus, during the elite negotiations the considerable economic similarity of both economies was essentially ignored. The main points of debates were focused on differences rather than similarities. Focusing on aspects such as high unemployment rate in Slovakia and a bit weaker economic performance of the country, enabled the leaders to exploit these differences and present it as unsolvable barriers to the further existence of federation. Therefore, the breakup of the state was arguably a convenient solution for political elites of both republics as it permitted the Slovak leadership to proceed with more moderate and socially oriented policies, and at the same time allowed the Czech government to go through with rapid economic transformation.

In the practical part of my Thesis I aimed to successfully apply the theory of securitization on the case of the dissolution of Czechoslovakia. Thus, I tried to analyze the elite relations in the country prior to the split. My goal was to analyze the speech acts made by the key protagonists of the split as well as their mutual interaction.

According to Buzan, state security has *sovereignty* as its ultimate criterion, and societal security has identity thus two organizing centers for the concept of security are state and society. In this regard, I argue that sovereignty is arguably one of the main concepts that led the whole Slovak nationalist narrative since the 1990 till the final dissolution of the state. The concept of "svrchovanost" was at the core of Slovak demands for independence and it was manipulated by several figures in the Slovak political elite circle, mainly by Vladimír Mečiar. Furthermore, based on Buzan's comment on the definition of securitizing move where the author notes that the utterance of the word security is not the decisive criterion and securitization might consist of only a metaphorical security reference, Mečiar's vocalizing of the growing need and urgency for Slovak sovereignty and Slovak constitution can be interpreted as a securitizing move. On the Czech side, Klaus presented a significant actor as far securitizing language is concerned. His claims on bleak possibility of state survival and dismissal of the possible referendum on the state future have likely contributed to the securitization process.

Furthermore, the pronounced dichotomy of "us" as Slovaks and "them" as Czechs is crucial to the securitizing debate. Here Mečiar's words regarding the opportunity for Slovak people to decide "for ourselves by ourselves" can be interpreted as a securitization of identity questions by political elites. Therefore, I argue that by securitizing the identity questions by the Slovak elite, some Slovaks may have perceived the Czechoslovak federation as a threat to Slovak identity and in response voted for the nationalist parties and aspired for a sovereign, independent state which finally contributed to the state dissolution.

Moreover, I claim that there is some rhetorical evidence to suggest that elites engaged in securitization of economic issues as well. Economy, as mentioned, was a major issue between the two political elites and it showed growing tensions and disparities between the two sides. Here the biggest contribution regarding the securitizing language was made by ODS politician and close Klaus' associate Miroslav Macek. His comments regarding the economic attacks by the left, as well as his famous phrase about Slovak independence with Czech insurance, likely contributed to the ongoing securitizing discourse and possibly made the Czech citizen more skeptical about the further existence of the common state. Thus, I argued that if the crucial and sole value, which the Copenhagen school conceives as vulnerable in the event of economic threats is the societal identity then securitization of economic issues had a direct impact on Czechoslovak identity.

Therefore, rhetoric which involved highlighting differences between the two economies and claims such as Macek's that Czechs would be paying for Slovak independence, did little to alleviate the tensions. On the contrary it most likely strengthened the "us" and "them" dichotomy as well as individual nationalist aspirations.

The Securitization concept developed by the Copenhagen school postulates that securitization refers to the process of presenting an issue in security terms as an existential threat and that the way to study securitization is to study discourse and political constellations by analyzing when does an argument with particular rhetorical and semiotic structure achieve sufficient effect to make an audience tolerate violations of rules that would otherwise have to be obeyed. Thus, I argue that the Czech and Slovak political elites securitized the questions of sovereignty and identity and moved the issues outside of norms of regular politics, overstepping their boundaries and dissolving the state without giving the possibility of choice to their citizens who in return tolerated this violation and successfully finalized the process of securitization.

In the last chapter I discuss the possibly overlooked role of Václav Havel in the final dissolution of the common state. Based on his speeches given at the time, I argue that in a situation where Havel did not know how to relieve the ongoing tension, he urged the citizen to take action. By using terms such as saving the country from chaos and by issuing a warning about Czechoslovakia becoming a scorned place full of constant conflicts, former Czechoslovak president practically helped the ongoing process of securitization. Moreover, I mention former president's bad relationship with Mečiar which did little to help the negotiations with the Slovak prime minister.

In conclusion, I argue that by standing with Klaus and abdicating the seat of president Havel remained a passive spectator of the Czech and Slovak breakup. However, his comments may have helped legitimize Klaus' agenda and contributed to the fact that the common state was being dissolved by its political elites.

Finally, the Czech-Slovak debate cannot be seen as a one-sided affair and a product of Slovak pursuit of national goals. Both sides of political elites had their contribution to the final dissolution of Czechoslovakia and the process of dissolution was accelerated when the rhetoric of both parties became more aggressive and conflict oriented. Arguably, radicalization of stance on the Slovak side in return led to radicalization of the stance on the Czech side. More boldly, this phenomenon of aggressive elite rhetoric in challenging political atmosphere might have been the crucial disintegrative factor for the existence of the common state. Nonetheless, the desecuritization process and dissolution of the state negotiated on the elite level and far from the public eye might have contributed to the peaceful character of the dissolution.

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6 Резюме

Цель данной работы состоит в выявлении причин,которые привели к мирному распаду Чехословакии и в изложении событий, привёдших к разделению, а также в выявлении факторов,которые данному разделению поспособствовали. В теоритической части моей дипломной работы я постарался обозначить те переломные моменты, которые привели к распаду Чехословакии. Также я упомянул о тех важных личностях, которые были причастны к распаду и обозначил мотивы их действий. Моей главной задачей был поиск ответа на следующий вопрос: "Каковы ключевые факторы, которые стали причиной мирного распада Чехословацкой федерации?" В рамках теории эта работа затрагивает концепт секьюритизации копенгагенской школы. Теория секьюритизации, разработанная копенгагенской школой, говорит о том, что секьюритизация касается процесса постановки вопроса с точки зрения безопасности как экзистенциальной угрозы. Изучение секьюритизации заключается в исследовании дискурса и политических констелляций путём анализа, когда утверждение со специфической риторической и семиотической структурами достигает того эффекта, когда общество допускает нарушение правил, которые в противном случае бы были соблюдены. Применение этой теории в случае распада Чехословакии привело к заключению о том, что чешская и словацкая политическая элита секьюритизировала вопросы суверенитета и тождественности. Тем самым они вынесли эти вопросы за границы обычной политики и разделили государство без того, чтобы обычные граждане имели возможность выбора. Чехословацкие граждане допустили это нарушение правил и этим был успешно закончен процесс секьюритизации. И, наконец, процесс десекьюритизации с учётом того факта, что решение было принято элитой вне общественного мнения, по всей вероятности способствовал мирному распаду Чехословакии.