

## A day in the life of a dialogic network. The case of Czech currency devaluation.<sup>1,2</sup>

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In November 2013 the Czech National Bank (CNB) took steps to devalue the Czech currency (koruna) by buying euros, doing so to forestall deflation. The decision and its implementation came to be widely questioned. The conflict concerned the wisdom (or the lack of it) of the decision, its likely success in narrow financial terms, and its broader economic consequences. Some of the debate was in the open, carried out in a variety of both printed and electronic media (e.g. newspapers, radio, TV, internet). This paper is a case study of argumentation in the publicly accessible media following the CNB's decision to devalue. Our aim is to contribute to the knowledge of how central banks discharge their obligations to be transparent. We show that transparency should not be considered an individual accomplishment of the bank itself, but a joint accomplishment involving the bank, media and the public. We find also that in practice, being transparent may be problematic in antagonistic dialogical encounters. Our subsidiary aim is to develop the concept of a dialogical network and to increase its generality by using it in a domain not examined using it before - economic argumentation.

Achieving price stability and a steady financial sector are the primary duties of central banks, and perhaps the reason why they have acquired the prestige they have, and sometimes notoriety. The CNB is one such institution. Like other central banks, it regularly communicates with the public (see Soukup et al, 2004 for a brief history of the CNB). The reasons for engaging the public are both legal and practical. A legal obligation of the CNB, like that of other central banks, is to communicate what it does to the public. It has been argued that central banks actually need to do this in order to influence market expectations. Besides regular reports, statements and statistics, the CNB issues press releases and holds press conferences (for an overview of communication tools used by the CNB, see Bulíř and Šmídková, 2008). The CNB governor and board members often appear in the media and are perceived as influential social figures.

All this follows a general trend in central banking – since the 1990s central banks are said to have become less secretive (see Blinder, 2004; Blinder et al, 2001, 2008; Jabko, 2009; Muchlinski, 2011). Two motives are said to lie behind this trend. First, central banks, as other public institutions, need to appear accountable; and transparency is a part of that (see, e.g., Blinder, 2004). Moreover, many central bankers believe that transparency makes monetary policies more effective (see Bernanke 2004; Blinder 2004). Monetary economists and central bankers have elaborated the idea of transparency, aimed at either formulating further policy recommendations (see Blinder et al, 2001) or developing a methodological framework for transparency measurement (see Eijffinger and Geraats, 2006). Their broad consensus is that besides openness, timeliness and clarity in providing information (Bulíř and Šmídková, 2008), central bank transparency is said to consist in a clear formulation of monetary policy objectives, a regular publication of economic outlooks and forecasts, a disclosure of methods, a regular publication of press releases and minutes of monetary policy meetings, and a regular organization of press conferences and other meetings with media and the public.

This formulation of central bank transparency is based on the idea that communication consists in a signal travelling from the sender, the bank, to the receiver, the public, with transparency being a property of that signal. The model has been criticised by Muchlinski (2011 & 2014) who argued cogently “monetary policy can neither be explained by a linear input-output-transmission nor by pure deductive arguments based on a formal language” (Muchlinski, 2014, p. 323). She pointed out that even central

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bank communication is an interactive process. In her view, everyday language can better cope with changing circumstances and market uncertainties. Although a helpful corrective, her critique remained programmatic.

In our view ‘transparency’ is a prescriptive meta-communicative term, that stipulates that banks should inform the public about their activities, and do so in such a way that their intentionality and likely consequences are clear. In fact the word is usually used in negative – when institutions did not provide information to the public about something topical. Research in pragmatics shows that, all else equal, speakers are obliged to conform to maxims of conversation, which in general include being truthful & evidence oriented, relevant, informative and coherent (see Grice, 1967). Such maxims may vary between different language games (e.g. polemics, advertising, cf. May, 1981) and can become more specific in specific situations. Transparency can be defined in pragmatic terms: to be transparent the bank has to communicate in a truthful, relevant and informative way about its activities and the reasoning behind them. What, however, counts as relevant, informed, and informative may depend on circumstances. Being transparent thus may not be easy - ‘the public’ is heterogeneous with respect to economic interests, and knowledge and communications may need to be formulated accordingly. What needs to be done is to analyse practices which banks use to accomplish transparency (or avoid it), as well as how transparency may be enforced.

Despite a growing body of literature on central bank communication, little is known about actual interactions between central banks’ representatives and the world at large. The majority of studies in economics try to figure out how the effectiveness of bankers’ efforts to influence financial markets through words can be measured (cf., e.g., Reeves and Sawicki, 2007; Hayo and Neuenkirch, 2012; Égert and Kočenda, 2014). Some studies look at how monetary policies are disseminated in the mass media (cf. Berger et al. 2011). A few linguistically-oriented studies focus on selected stylistic features or rhetorical devices of central bankers’ official speeches (cf. Resche, 2004 & 2015). Altogether these studies are, regardless of their scholarly rigour, studies ‘about’, not studies ‘of’ central bank communication, to refer to the useful ethnomethodological distinction (cf. Garfinkel, Lynch and Livingston, 1981). Actors’ relevancies are mostly left out.

In fact, how central banks communicate with different audiences, and explain, justify and defend their activities has not yet been studied systematically or in sufficient depth. To remedy this, we shall analyse in detail communication between the CNB and the Czech public about the bank’s decision to intervene in the currency markets. We are, however, not just after invariant characteristics of transparency/opaqueness in such communications. Our case study preserves an episode in economic history in a way useful to future economic historians, especially since we analyse interactions in a way that preserves the understandings and relevancies of the participants, aiming to reveal the at-the-time implicit grounds of the economic argumentations – what the opponents in arguments share to allow them to engage each other.

Our approach is meant to be ethnomethodological, but even so we use two analytical tools we have been sharpening: one is ‘dialogical network’ (DN), the other is ‘practical historian’. The concept of DN has been designed to study complex communications that typically occur in mass and social media, but not just there (see e.g. Leudar and Nekvapil, 2004; Nekvapil and Leudar, 2006). Their most important characteristic is their geographically and temporally distributed character – participants do not all meet face-to-face. For instance: somebody claims something at a press conference on Wednesday; somebody else disagrees with her claim elsewhere, say on TV, on Thursday. These claims and counterclaims may initiate further ‘branches’ of DN if reported in several newspapers together with comments by journalists and other actors recruited by journalists. The media are networked in that newspapers report what has been said, say, at a briefing or on TV, and people ‘on the air’ refer to newspaper reports (see Leudar and Nekvapil, 2004 for a summary).

The second important property of DNs is that many contributions are duplicated – several actors may make the same point but formulate it somewhat differently, and certainly do so in different contexts. This has consequences. One is that, as both political events and their reports are duplicated, comments, agreements, challenges made in the media become more likely to be noted, acquire gravitas and be responded to. Another is that one claim will become connected to a variety of contexts and so become more and more meaningful.

Third, another important feature of networks is that they may have emergent properties. These are

usually defined as novel properties, which supervene on a network and cannot be reduced to the individual phenomena composing it (e.g. Noble, 2017). We consider whether the network analysed below has any such ‘emergent properties’, how these relate to duplication and how they may affect the character of argumentation.<sup>6</sup>

Our second tool is the concept of the ‘practical historian’. We use the term to refer to how information about the past (‘historical particulars’) is used in talk to manage present and future happenings and their meanings (see, e.g., Leudar and Nekvapil, 2011; cf. Garfinkel, Lynch and Livingstone, 1981; Lynch and Bogen, 1996). A practical historian is not simply somebody who can tell or write stories about the past, that are true, but, and more importantly, someone who makes the past relevant and consequential in the present and for the future. To put it differently, the practical historian uses ‘historical particulars’ for current pragmatic purposes. This is somewhat in contrast to activities of (most) professional or lay historians who seem to dwell on the past for its own sake in order to find out what (actually) happened and arguably taking a theoretical attitude to the world in explaining the past (cf. Schutz, 1962). Doing practical history, on the other hand, is an aspect of ordinary activities; ‘practical historicizing’ is done in and through ordinary activities, and inevitably so. What we observed in our previous studies (e.g. Leudar et al, 2011; Hayes and Leudar, 2017) is that practical historians often manage continuities and discontinuities of the social, political and personal. In this paper, the idea of the ‘practical historian’ will be used to examine how participants formulate continuities and discontinuities in Czech economy and finance, and how these affect the choices they make. So, we are interested in the historicizing methods used by participants in economic argumentation.

So to summarize: we are analysing in detail the argumentation initiated by the decision of the Czech central bank CNB to devalue the koruna. This teaches us something about how banks discharge their obligation to be transparent but also develops the concept of ‘dialogical network’. Previously, we analysed DNs mainly in political domains, now we use the tool to analyse argumentation about the finance and economy (see e.g. Leudar and Nekvapil, 1998; Leudar and Nekvapil, 2007; Nekvapil and Leudar, 2002).

## Materials

The complete database of the project on which this paper draws consists of all the relevant and accessible materials for the day the CNB decided to intervene against the koruna and the 10 days that followed (07/11/2013–17/11/2013), in all about 2,000 texts from printed media and the internet, as well as transcripts of radio and television programmes.<sup>7</sup> Most of these were retrieved from three sources: the CNB official website, a Czech mass media archive and the Czech Press Agency (CTK) archive. The recordings of the governor’s press conference, and radio and television interviews were transcribed by ourselves, following conversation-analytic conventions (see, e.g., ten Have, 2007). Most texts used in this article, which were originally in Czech, were translated by ourselves.

In this working paper we concentrate on the early development of the dialogical network and so use just the texts from the first ten hours or so. Our aim is to provide a relatively complete analysis of the DN emergence. The previously published version covers a longer period and has a somewhat different focus (Kaderka, Leudar and Nekvapil, 2018).

### **(1) The dialogical network before the CNB press conference, Thursday, 7 November 2013: An overview of the contributions (time, publication, and headline)**

07.53 **CTK**, *The meeting of the banking committee of the Czech National Bank – 7<sup>th</sup> situation summary, new prognosis.*

07.58 **CTK**, *The banking committee of the Czech National Bank is discussing changing the interest rates and will debate the possible interventions against the strong koruna.*

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<sup>6</sup> The concept of DN also elucidates some of the journalists’ practices. The journalists report on actual dialogues but sometimes they also initiate them by mediating exchanges among relevant actors; at other times, they may simply juxtapose ‘voices’ of relevant actors, implying dialogical engagements among them (cf. Kaderka and Havlík 2010; Leudar, 1995, 1998).

<sup>7</sup> CTK news reports are available on subscription; only a selection is available for free on [www.ceskenoviny.cz](http://www.ceskenoviny.cz)

- 08.00 **E15**, *The CNB will decide about the interest rates and possibly about interventions.*
- 08.00 **prvnizpravy.cz**, *The CNB is meeting today, the risk of financial interventions is high.*
- 08.00 **Právo**, *The bank board of the CNB will be deciding today on interest rates and possibly foreign currency interventions against the strong koruna.*
- 09.39 **kurzy.cz**, *The key meetings of the ECB and the CNB will take place today.*
- 09.00–12.00 **The CNB Bank Board meeting**
- 10.27 **investujeme.cz**, *A day of storm: ECB, American HDP and CNB.*
- 10.53 **mesec.cz**, *Meetings of the ECB and the Bank of England take place today. [CNB meets today, the risk of foreign currency interventions is high.]*
- 10.53 **mesec.cz**, *A day of storm: ECB, American HDP and CNB.*
- 11.09 **blesk.cz**, *The koruna stays at 25.80 CZK/EUR rate before the bank board meeting.*
- 11.25 **ParlamentniListy.cz**, *Jan Cermak: A day of storm: ECB, American HDP and CNB.*
- 12.00 **CNB press release**, *The CNB keeps interest rates unchanged, [and] decides on intervention.*
- 12:17 **CTK**, *The CNB decided to begin foreign exchange interventions, for the first time since 2002.*
- 13.00 **CTK**, *The CNB decided to begin interventions, for the first time since ...*
- 13.02 **Akcie.cz**, *The CNB is leaving the interest rates without a change, it decided on interventions.*
- 13:06 **CTK**, *The CNB decided to begin foreign exchange interventions, for the first time since 2002.*
- 13:14 **Blesk.cz**, *The CNB decided to begin foreign exchange interventions, for the first time since 2002.*
- 13:17 **CTK**, *The CNB decided to begin foreign exchange interventions, for the first time since 2002.*
- 13:30 **CTK**, *The CNB decided to begin foreign exchange interventions, for the first time since 2002.*
- 13.33 **E15.cz**, *For the first time since 2002 CNB will start foreign exchange interventions, the koruna is falling already.*
- 13:34 **Kurzy.cz**, *The CNB leaves the interest rates in peace, but decided on interventions.*
- 13:35 **Akcie.cz**, *The koruna losses deepen, PX profits increasing.*
- 13:45 **Lidovky.cz**, *The CNB is weakening the koruna. This will strengthen the exports, but may make imported goods dearer.*
- 13:47 **iDnes.cz**, *The Czech national bank wants to weaken Koruna. It is unleashing interventions after eleven years.*
- 14:00 **Mesec.cz**, *The CNB has begun foreign currency interventions.*
- 14:08 **Investujeme.cz**, *The CNB leaves the interest rates in peace, but decides on interventions.*
- 14.17 **CTK**, *CNB increased the economic development estimate for this year.*
- 14:18 **CTK**, *Singer: the CNB is ready for unlimited interventions.*
- 14:27 **Parlamentnilisty.cz**, *The CNB is weakening the koruna. This will make goods and services more expensive.*
- 14:30 - 15.00 **Press conference of the CNB Bank Board**

## Analysis

This episode in Czech financial history started on 7/11/2013 with a scheduled meeting of the Bank Board of the Czech National Bank. The meeting was held in private, and as the statutes require, the minutes detailing the debate and votes taken will not be made public for 6 years. So the meeting was definitely not transparent, but it was hardly a secret – it was announced in Czech media and its agenda anticipated in the headlines (see the first six reports in Figure 1).<sup>8</sup> It was a ‘key’ meeting, paralleling that of the European Central Bank, dealing with financial issues of importance and likely to take controversial decisions.

Following the meeting, a press release, signed by the CNB spokesperson Marek Petruš (MP), was published on the bank’s website. Two decisions made were (1) to maintain the interest rates as they were, and (2) to intervene in financial markets so as to devalue the koruna (see Text 2, lines 1–8 below). The decisions were promptly reported by CTK<sup>9</sup> and then by several internet publications, all of which used the CTK texts. Some of these publications were online versions of Czech national newspapers, others were publications directed at investors. This is an important characteristic of an emerging media network – a happening is reported in parallel in a variety of publications. One question is, are these parallel reports

<sup>8</sup> We do not analyze these ‘announcements’ for a practical reason – one has to start somewhere. What matters is that the meeting did not come out of blue but its outcome was keenly expected. The introduction of the foreign exchange intervention was embedded in broader social happenings.

<sup>9</sup> CTK means Czech News Agency.

independent of each other or does something hold them together (in a network, as we say) and if so, what is it? Let us start the analysis with the CNB press release.

## (2) CNB press release 7/11/2013, 12.00 pm, official translation.

1. CNB keeps interest rates unchanged, decides on interventions
2. 7 Nov 2013
3. The CNB Bank Board decided at its meeting today to keep interest rates unchanged.
4. The two-week repo rate was maintained at 0.05%, the discount rate at 0.05% and the
5. Lombard rate at 0.25%.
6. The Bank Board also decided to start using the exchange rate as an additional instrument
7. for easing the monetary conditions. The CNB will intervene on the foreign exchange market
8. to weaken the koruna so that the exchange rate of the koruna against the euro is close to CZK 27.
9. The history of the settings of the main instruments of monetary policy
10. and the Bank Board minutes are available at
11. [http://www.cnb.cz/en/monetary\\_policy/instruments/index.html#mpi](http://www.cnb.cz/en/monetary_policy/instruments/index.html#mpi)
12. [http://www.cnb.cz/en/monetary\\_policy/bank\\_board\\_minutes/index.html](http://www.cnb.cz/en/monetary_policy/bank_board_minutes/index.html)
13. Repo rate: The CNB's key monetary policy rate, paid on commercial banks' excess
14. liquidity as withdrawn by the CNB in two-week repo tenders.
15. Discount rate: A monetary policy rate which as a rule represents the floor for short-term
16. money market interest rates. The CNB applies it to the excess liquidity which banks deposit
17. with the CNB overnight under the deposit facility.
18. Lombard rate: A monetary policy interest rate which provides a ceiling for short-term
19. interest rates on the money market. The CNB applies it to the liquidity which it
20. provides to banks overnight under the lending facility.
21. Marek Petruš, CNB Spokesman

Several aspects of this press release stand out. The two decisions – to maintain the existing interest rates (lines 2–5), and to intervene in currency markets to devalue the koruna (lines 6–8) – are reported factually. To implement the first decision, the bank does not have to do very much – it can simply announce that the interest rates will remain as they are; that is its prerogative. In terms introduced by Austin (1962), the CNB is exactly the right body to make such a decision, to announce it (here via its spokesperson) and so to implement it. With respect to the second decision, the press release specifies the future activity in terms of its aim (to ease the currency conditions), and the means to achieve it (affecting the exchange rate). It specifies in general how the affecting of currency exchange rates will be done (lines 7–8). The means remain unspecified (it will “intervene”, line 7) but the aim is made clearer by specifying the target exchange rate (lines 8–9).

Even the first headlines present the currency interventions as something controversial (Text 1 - there is a ‘risk’ of such interventions). The press release, however, is informative, rather than argumentative - it omits to mention economical consequences of the intervention, which might well be negative for many people. It does not seem to be formulated anticipating the controversy that can be expected to ensue, but Czech readers might have asked: Why do that and why do it now, and why not something else? These ‘omissions’ will become foregrounded by participants as the network develops.

The press release, however, instead indicates temporal continuities and discontinuities characteristic of, and introduced by, the two decisions. First is to “keep” the interest rates as they were in the past – the words used foreground the continuity of the past and the present and the lack of change (lines 3–4).<sup>10</sup> And this lack of change in an economic measure does not just happen but is deliberate and accomplished (by the CNB). Moreover, one might have expected change rather than invariance in the interest rates – the standard economic tool to control the inflation is to vary interest rates. So saying that the CNB does not have to do much to keep the interest rates the same was not quite correct: the bank needs to justify not changing them (and as we shall see how it does so subsequently, in the press briefing). The second decision, on the other hand, introduces a change and the words used to report it are “start using”, foregrounding a change in practice – something that was not done before will be done. This

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<sup>10</sup> Continuity and discontinuity are contraries, one negates the other; change and continuity on the other hand may be consistent; in complex events apparent discontinuities can be underpinned by continuities in something else; and how are change and discontinuity related semantically? – discontinuity is change but change need not be a discontinuity.

change is again a normative one, because central banks are expected to leave currency markets ‘free’, not to ‘play them’, as the CNB now will. And, like the continuity, this change follows a decision; it is not something that just happened.

And what is it that allows the CNB spokesman to act without much effort as a ‘practical historian’? It is arguably the language and specifically the logic of verbs of action “to keep” and “to start”. “To keep” presupposes that something was done in a particular way before; “to start” doing something on the other hand presupposes that something was not done, but will be. This is obvious, but it means that the verbs denoting continuity and change necessarily say something about the past implicitly in their presuppositions. And, in doing so, they bring something from the past to bear on what is happening in the present. (See Levinson, 1983:167–225 for an early summary of the work on presuppositions in pragmatics). Since that is precisely our definition of being a practical historian, we can count this use of language in the press release as ‘doing practical history’. The press release focuses on what CNB will do in the future but in using ordinary language necessarily grounds that in what happened in the past.

The practical historical work like this can also be done at the level of a text, rather than an utterance, and indeed there is another way in which the CNB press release works with the past. It points the reader to the CNB Webpages for the past ‘settings of the main instruments of monetary policy’ (lines 9-12). Pragmatic implicature is that the CNB has intervened in the currency markets previously. Not many readers will follow up the link and the press release itself does not spell out the experience; the implicature is that intervening in currency markets is not altogether new for the bank. Its competence as an agency is accomplished through practical historical work, and the intervention in exchange markets is not a discontinuity of practice but instead use of old competencies in the new context. The nature of the practical historical work by the CNB is well in keeping with what we noted elsewhere (e.g. Hayes & Leudar, 2018). It establishes continuities of its actions and warrants its competence to do and achieve what it says it will.

The press release also explains the technical terms used (lines 14–21). This is arguably a matter of audience design – it is not good enough to inform the public, one should make sure that what is said can be understood. But who needs the glossary of such terms? Non-specialist readers do (including the writers of this paper), but perhaps not financial journalists. Does this mean that the CNB press release has the general public as a ‘target’ (to use Ervin Goffman’s term)? Not quite: the press release is a broadcast and cannot be designed with all possible recipients in mind, yet it may be written with some, and perhaps several, potential audiences in mind. We shall see presently that tuning the message to particular audiences, where it happens, is in the main accomplished through intermediaries, such as newspapers and news agencies.

So the press release is very much couched in the technical language of finance but it makes some effort to be transparent, if transparency is thought of as a true, pertinent, and clear communication. But there are, inevitably, issues which the press release does not address; for instance, it does not make clear how exactly the foreign exchange interventions will forestall the deflation; nor does it indicate the economic consequences, intended or otherwise, the intervention might have. Do these omissions indicate deliberate lack of transparency? Maybe, maybe not, but in any case they became the heart of the controversy carried out in the DN that ensues – one could say that transparency can be forced on a public body. There is indeed a hint of orientation towards the controversy that will ensue – the argument that the discontinuity in the overt practice is underlined by a continuity of CNB’s competence and experience is defensive.

## **CTK mediation**

Even though the CNB website is accessible to the anyone, it tends to be consulted mainly by politicians charged with economic matters, financial professionals and journalists, and it is they who mediate the information provided. The CNB decision was reported, quoting the CNB press release, even before the press conference that afternoon, by the Czech News Agency (CTK) in several news reports on its website – at 12:17:10, 13:00:12, 13:06:01, 13:17:58, 13:30:30 (see the overview in Figure 1 above). These CTK reports were then disseminated in several Czech publications. So our next step is to determine how the CNB press release was used in the CTK reports – was it simply reproduced verbatim, or changed

stylistically or reformulated or re-contextualised or something else?

These CTK news reports are incremental – the next one usually expands the previous one – it repeats it with some minor editing, but also includes new text. We shall therefore analyse the first three reports in detail, then focus on the additions. The first two reports were brief and contained parts of the CNB press release. The selections were those announcing the currency exchange interventions and providing some of the bank’s reasoning given in the press release. The first piece was as follows:

### **(3) CTK website, 12:17:10**

1. CNB decided to start foreign currency interventions, for the first time since 2002
2. Praha 7th November (CTK) – The CNB Bank Board today decided to begin
3. foreign currency interventions. This was conveyed by the spokesperson of the CNB Marek Petruš.
4. The goal is to weaken the koruna and so to ease monetary conditions even more.
5. The interest rates are in fact at the so-called technical zero. Through the intervention the bank
6. wants to maintain the course of the koruna near the level 27 CZK/EUR.
7. sos rot

The pertinent analytical point is that some texts may appear unique and original when read in isolation but in fact they are aligned with other texts, this through repetition and re-formulation, both of which are consequential. And the connections we have in mind go beyond the here and now. These connections become clear through the analysis of a dialogical network, which consists in part of such relevancies. Here the CNB press release we just analysed will be treated as an original, which becomes reflected, directly or indirectly in the subsequent reports and arguments.

The CTK newsflash indeed reuses the text of the press release (lines 2-4) but without mentioning it; instead its signatory Marek Petruš (MP), is said to have conveyed the decision. Why put it this way? The re-formulation presents the press release as a dialogical act – it may be a formal document but it is used by the CNB spokesperson to inform others of the decisions. The CTK newsflash edited the style of the CNB press release making it somewhat less formal, but even so it re-used some of the expressions, including the key phrases, such as ‘ease monetary conditions’ (in Czech ‘uvolnit měnové podmínky’) (line 4).

This textual reuse has a consequence – it reproduces and adopts some of the practical historical argumentation of the CNB we analysed above and aligns with it. We have noted that CNB, through practical historical work, portrayed the decision to intervene in currency markets as a change in strategy but within its routine. The headline of this CTK newsflash relates to this point. The last such intervention in financial markets was in fact in 2002, eleven years ago at the time – this indicates that the intervention has a precedent but it is in fact not something routine. So through making the past more specific, the CTK implicitly contests the routine nature of the intervention. Note, moreover, that the claim and counter claim are both historically backed. Notice also CTK journalists’ use of the epistemic verb “wants” (in Czech “chce”) in line 6. It indicates that keeping the koruna/euro exchange rate to 27/1 is not just dependent on the bank’s intentions and efforts only but also on some unspecified conditions not under its control (perhaps the markets etc.) This formulation downgrades the certainty of the CNB press release, and the implication is that the financial intervention may not in fact succeed. So CTK does not just report – it subtly initiates controversy. The second CTK news report (text 4) was again brief.

### **(4) CTK website, 7.11.2013, 13:00:12**

1. CNB decided to begin interventions, for the first time since ...
2. CNB decided to begin interventions, for the first time since 2002. The goal is to
3. weaken the koruna and so to ease currency conditions. It wants to keep the exchange rate
4. near 27 CZK/EUR.
5. ...
6. sos rot

The difference is that the phrase “for the first time since” now occurs twice, first in the headline, and then

in the body of the message, where it is used to modify “begin interventions” (line 2).<sup>11</sup> This modification stresses that although the foreign currency intervention has been performed by the CNB before, it is not something regular or routine. This practical historical work – pointing out that an action happened before but now commenting on its frequency - constitutes the intervention into something exceptional. Note further that the truth of historical information is to be taken for granted by the reader – it is not warranted or disputed. The readers are ‘expected’ to assume rather than verify that the bank did indeed intervene in 2002 and not since, or to find out what the intervention was. As elsewhere, the historical information is introduced in a background assumption (this, however, is not always so).

There was to us (the analysts) one possible notable absence in these first two news reports: they did not add any dialogical connections to the CNB press release, such as assessments of the decisions by other stakeholders. A longer piece published only six minutes later did just that (text 5).

#### **(5) CTK website, 7.11.2013, 13:06:01**

1. CNB decided to begin foreign currency interventions, for the first time 2002
2. Prague 7. November (ČTK) - The bank board of the Czech national bank today
3. decided to begin foreign exchange interventions. This was conveyed by the CNB
4. spokesperson Marek Petruš.
5. The goal is to weaken the koruna and so to ease monetary conditions even more.
6. The interest rates are in fact at the so called technical zero. Through
7. the interventions the bank wants to keep the exchange rate of the koruna near
8. the level 27 CZK/EUR.
9. The last time the central bank resorted to foreign currency interventions was in 2002.
10. Then, however, the goal was to stabilize the exchange rate of the koruna, which was
11. rising sharply until the summer 2002, that when interest rates were not zero. At present,
12. when the interest rates are at the technical zero, the goal of interventions is to ease monetary
13. conditions through weakening the koruna. The bank board decided even in the autumn 2012
14. that after reaching the zero bottom level of the interest rates the exchange of the
15. koruna would be a possible tool for easing monetary conditions.
16. So today the interest rates were left unchanged by the bankers. As a
17. result the basic interest rate, from which derive the interest charges on commercial
18. loans, stays at 0.05.
19. According to the estimates of [financial] analysts the central bank will leave
20. the interest rates at this record low level till at least the end of the next year.
21. Today’s currency meeting of the board was attended by all the seven members.
22. The press conference following the meeting of the board will begin at 14.30.
23. The rates set by the central bank determine the interests on the bank deposits and
24. charges. Lower interest rates bring lower interest repayments to businesses for the
25. investment and running costs; to the households [they bring] lower mortgages.
26. sos rot mha<sup>12</sup>

The first paragraph (lines 2–4) of this text is a replica of the 1st report and our analysis of it remains. The 2nd paragraph (lines 5-8) reproduces the text from both the 1st and the 2nd report. As before, it puts the CNB’s current currency exchange intervention into historical context but now it provides more detail. It compares the circumstances and the aims of the use in the past and in the present. It points out specifically that the CNB intervened in currency markets before but with a different aim (the Czech word ‘ovšem’ means ‘however’, line 10) and in different circumstances. So CNB is now doing something it claims to know how to do (intervene in currency market) but since it is doing so for a different reason and in different circumstances, it is not actually doing quite the same thing. Argumentatively this practical historical work affords the reader a better understanding of what the bank is doing but also subtly puts its

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<sup>11</sup> This kind of headlines is generated automatically from the first words of the first sentence of the body of text. This is indicated by the headline by final three dots.

<sup>12</sup> Note the initials of an additional author, MHA in (5), (6), and (7). This addition indicates that the incremental nature of CTK newswashes is not necessarily an expansion of a text by one (single or joint) author, but may also involve contributions from additional authors; the text can therefore be expanded collectively, presumably as information becomes available. As a result of the practice, several versions of a newswash become available and can be used by journalists. We do not count the repetition in these as instances of text re-use. Some ethnographic information would clarify this practice.

self-assurance in doubt – the intervention is a step into the unknown. The last piece of a practical historical work (lines 13-15) clarifies the novelty status of the decision – in fact it has a historical pedigree, having been considered as a possibility a year ago, in 2012. CTK produced a fourth instalment just twelve minutes later, at 13.18. This text is a verbatim copy of the 13.06 release with the following inserted in the middle of the 13.06 release:

#### **(6) CTK website, 7.11.2013 13:17:58**

1. Immediately following the announcement of interventions the koruna weakened
2. to 26.63 CZK/EUR, whilst in the morning it circled around 25,80 CZK/EUR.
3. The koruna is therefore at the lowest level since June 2009.
4. “Even though this sort of intervention was talked about for a long time,
5. the start of it in, for us aggressive manner is a surprise. It is likely that in
6. the next few weeks the course will move around the level mentioned in
7. the intervention, that is 27 CZK/EUR,” the analytic of the J&T Bank Milan Vaniček
8. noted. He also added that he assessed the news negatively, because according to him,
9. bearing in mind the results of trade balance, the intervention is not necessary.
10. ...
11. sos rot mha

This text augments the CNB press release by adding assessments of CNB decisions and actions. Both are in CTK’s own voice or that of a relevant expert. For itself CTK provides the factual information confirming that even just the public decision to intervene already had the financial consequence the CNB aimed for – the value of the koruna relative to the euro had fallen. Note that this assessment is a factual one, rather than an opinion. Then, however, a commercial bank financial analyst is recruited to comment (lines 4-9). He confirms that CNB is likely to be successful in keeping the value of the koruna within the limits it set. But his second assessment is negative – the CNB’s intervention in currency markets is not needed because the trade balance does not warrant it. Moreover, he also assesses negatively the manner in which the CNB carried out the intervention: “Even though such intervention was discussed for a long time, the aggressiveness of it is a surprise.”

The way the analyst’s and CTK’s participant positions are constituted is pertinent. The analyst is a financial expert and so competent to provide these assessments. Moreover, he is not just any expert, but one from an independent financial institution, with different interests and focus than CNB. As such he is likely to extend the field of pertinence and the terms of assessment, and indeed he does. CTK does not provide its own assessment but it initiates the dialogical network and extends the field of argumentation by making the analyst’s into a participant.

So CTK does not just report, it initiates a controversy: CNB may be capable of devaluing the koruna but this may not be needed and they are, allegedly, going about it in a wrong way. The CTK news report problematizes decisions and actions of the CNB. It initiates the dialogical network by making the CNB record more widely available together with an assessment designed towards a controversy - where there is one financial analyst, there can be many.

The added text introduces historical particulars with two pragmatic effects. One is that the CTK report anchors the relative fall of the koruna in the (near and distant) past. This is done in two ways. First, the fall of the koruna is fast (5%) just from the morning to the afternoon (lines 1 to 3). Second, the value now is the lowest since July 2009 (lines 2 to 3). These are both historical comparisons, which produce the pragmatic implicature that the decision to intervene is seriously consequential in the way intended by the bank (remember the news reports also downgrade the bank’s self assurance).

The second piece of practical historical work is similar to that done by CTK in Text 5. The analyst comments that the intervention was well known as a possibility (to relevant actors) (lines 4 to 5). So the bank is doing something it did not invent and it is not doing it well.

CTK produced one more report on the CNB decision at 13:30, this just an hour before the start of the press conference. The first seventeen lines repeated the text 6, and the concluding lines were also verbatim repetitions of the same text and in Text 7, these parts are omitted. The rhetorical strategy in the remainder was to introduce more ‘outside’ expert analysts as assessors, extending the field of the assessment.

## (7) CTK website, 7.11.2013 13:30:30

1. “As long as the koruna is weak, we can expect quick increase in the prices of fuel,
2. imported goods and services (including the holidays), the cost of which is derived
3. from foreign costs,” the analytic of ČSOB Petr Dufek pointed out. At the time when
4. the home customer confidence did not yet manage to recover (lit. ‘catch the breath’),
5. it will have to deal with higher prices of imported goods.
6. “The fears of marked underachievement of the inflation target obviously came first.
7. In the short run, this will have a negative impact on the consumers. If the
8. weakening of the koruna should be long term, it will be positive for the exporters,”
9. added the chief analyst of Raiffeisenbank Michal Brožka.
10. ...
11. sos rot mha

This fifth CTK news report makes the press release more meaningful (transparent) by re-contextualizing it so that the consequences relevant to the public become more obvious. It does by recruiting two more financial analysts to provide assessments of the intervention.

The first expert draws out the likely negative consequences of the koruna devaluation on the price of imported goods. The second one points out the same consequence but also the possible positive influence on exports. The CNB release did not consider these, focusing instead on the monetary consequences. CTK report thus broadens the assessment of the intervention by considering its economic consequences for the Czech industry and citizens.

CTK in effect starts a public controversy but not in its own voice – after all it is not an expert on financial or economic matters; but the financial analysts it recruited are. By doing this, CTK is initiating a dialogical network in which banks’ actions will be considered. CTK thus disseminates the CNB press release, but is not just repeating it but constituting it as a focus of debate.

Three general network characteristics are documented by our analysis so far. One is that networks are sequentially structured, as are everyday conversations – a statement-comment/assessment sequence is notable so far. The sequences are, however, distributed in time and location. The second characteristic is the reuse of texts, claims, and arguments, often with shifts in formulation and editing through omission, juxtaposition etc. Both of these characteristics provide for cohesion of the nascent dialogical network. The third characteristic is the development of antagonistic positions in the network – the bank’s actions are assessed negatively, as are its competencies. This may create problems for achieving ‘transparency’ in interaction.

## Reports in Internet Czech publications

Within two hours, the CNB press release and the CTK reports were used by 10 Czech web publications. Three – Blesk.cz, Lidovky.cz and iDnes.cz - were electronic versions of national dailies. Let us consider the manner in which these informed the public about the CNB decision.

First, though, a comment on our analytical practice: We could try to analyse each of these newspaper articles in its own right, in isolation from their context. All three are, however, composed mainly or in part using texts published previously by the CNB and CTK. As we shall see, the newspaper articles are connected to the previous texts not just by being parts of the same news sequences and on the same topic, but also through text re-use. This is where the concept of dialogical network comes into its own because it helps the analysts to trace systematically how participants create inter-textual (here inter-dialogical) connections.

When it comes to the Blesk.cz article, the journalist simply copied the CTK piece published at 13.06, using the same headline, but adding two expert assessments. We do not reproduce it, but what needs consideration is that the piece did not acknowledge the source of the text. Is this plagiarism? Perhaps not.<sup>13</sup> First, why reproduce the CTK piece at all? – Obviously to make it available to the readers of Blesk.cz who were unlikely to know about CNB press releases. But why reproduce it without

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<sup>13</sup> As a CTK client, *Blesk.cz* is an online publication associated with the Czech tabloid *Blesk* that focuses mostly on celebrity gossip. As it does not have its own economic or financial journalists, it is entirely reliant on economic news provided by news agencies such as CTK.

acknowledging the source? Publishing the text in its own name makes Blesk.cz responsible for the information reported rather than distancing it from it (and the details of news mediation are of not much interest to Blesk.cz readership.)

Lidovky.cz also re-published the CTK piece (this time that of 13.18 p.m.); it acknowledged the source, did some minimal editing, and provided its own headline. This was “The CNB is weakening the koruna. It is supporting exports, but may make imported goods more expensive” (in Czech, “ČNB oslabuje korunu. Posílí export, ale zboží z dovozu může podražít”). So the same analytical comments apply here as they did in the case of Blesk.cz, but we also need to consider what the headline achieves. The first part is a report of the goal of the CNB – it is indeed trying to weaken the koruna. According to the CNB, this is in order to prevent deflation and introduce some inflation instead; the second part of Lidovky.cz headline, however, highlights a different type of consequence, an economic one rather than just a monetary one, and one not aimed for by the CNB (the effects on the price of the imports). In doing so, it shifts and extends the debate for its readers. It does this by broadening the terms of assessment of the bank’s actions to consequences relevant to its readers (few of whom will work in finance or be economists but all of whom are consumers.) This duplicates CTK reports of selected assessments by financial analysts. The report in iDnes.cz is more complex.

### (8) iDnes.cz, 07/11/2013, 13.47

1. **The Czech National Bank wants to weaken the koruna. It is unleashing interventions**
2. **after eleven years.**
3. The Czech National Bank decided on Thursday to start currency exchange interventions.
4. This is for the first time since 2002. By doing this, the central bank wants to weaken the koruna
5. and so to ease the monetary policy even more. The bank intervention was discussed for
6. a long time, but the Thursday’s step surprised the analysts. They are concerned that the
7. imported goods will become more expensive.  
[image and caption deleted]
8. “The Bank Board decided to start using the exchange rate as an additional instrument for
9. easing the monetary conditions. The CNB will intervene on the foreign exchange market to
10. weaken the koruna so that the exchange rate of the koruna against the euro will be close to CZK
11. 27.” said the spokesperson for the CNB Marek Petruš. On Wednesday the course of koruna
12. was, according to CNB, at the level 25,785 CZK/EUR.
13. Even though the interventions were being considered for a long time, the central bank
14. surprised the market by its decision.
15. “The details are not yet available, so we can only say that its likely that CNB was compelled
16. to take this step by the new prognosis which expects the inflation to be below the target.
17. The bank wants to increase the inflation through the weak koruna and higher import prices”,
18. Petr Dufek, the analyst of CSOB commented.
19. According to him, the bank managed to surprise the market, because the koruna reacted to the
20. CNB decision by sharp weakening of exchange rate from 25.80 to 26.60 CZK/EUR.
21. Dufek is, however, concerned about the consequences of the step for the consumers. “As
22. long as the koruna is weak, we can expect quick increase in the prices of fuel, imported goods
23. and services (including the holidays), the price of which is derived from foreign costs. At the time
24. when the home customer confidence did not yet manage to recover [lit. ‘catch the breath’],
25. it will have to deal with higher prices of imported goods,” he added.
26. CNB intervenes for the first time in 11 years
27. The interventions to weaken the koruna mean that CNB will start selling the koruna reserves
28. and substitute them by reserves in foreign currencies. Selling the koruna reserves
29. will make the koruna cheaper, because there will be more of it in circulation, and this will make
30. it weaker compared to foreign currencies. “The possibility to do this
31. is practically unlimited, because CNB is the institution that prints money. If,
32. however, it wanted to strengthen the koruna, it would be limited by the volume of its foreign
33. currency reserves,” Jan Čermák, the economist ERA of the CSOB told iDnes.cz.
- ...
34. Authors: spi, fih

This piece uses CTK reports, sometimes reproducing parts of them verbatim, sometimes providing summary formulations. So, again, the piece cannot be completely and properly analysed in isolation from the rest of the network. It outlines and explains the decisions and actions of CNB but not altogether in original way. Through the reuse the piece indexes what was argued elsewhere and aligns with it in terms

of the attitudes it expresses and how it does so. Three points are then important. First, are the texts re-used or are they originals and is this decidable in the first place? Second, where do the re-used texts come from and is the origin acknowledged? Third, how are these texts used pragmatically?

The headline of the piece is iDnes.cz's own (lines 1-2). Like the CTK pieces, it formulates the decisions of CNB as a mundane 'wish' (in Czech "chce"). This downgrades its status to something uncertain - wishing something is less likely to achieve it than firmly deciding - compare "wishes/wants to weaken" vs. "decided to weaken". The second part of the headline is a piece of practical historical work – by informing us that the last time such intervention took place is 11 years ago, iDnes.cz presents the intervention as something which is not routine. Taking these two together, the headline presents the impending intervention as somehow irregular. The text, which follows, develops this theme. There are several specific instances of text reuse in the body iDnes.cz piece.

- i. The first two sentences (lines 3 to 5) outline the decisions of the CNB but not in its own terms; instead they are a copy of the headline of CTK 13.30 piece with small edits (e.g. "měnové podmínky" is substituted by "měnová politika" and 'bankovní rada České národní banky' becomes 'Česká národní banka').
- ii. The third sentence (lines 4-5) explains the CNB decision but again comes verbatim from a CTK news report, this time that of 13.06 p.m.
- iii. The last part of the first paragraph is a summary paraphrase of CTK assessment of the decision later in the same CTK piece.

Taken together then, the introductory paragraph is a hybrid report, part verbatim and part a summary of what had been written before (cf. Reddeker, 1991, and Nekvapil and Leudar, 1998 for the use of the CTK reports by the Czech media). The reused text is not attributed to CTK but written as a factual report, and the summary part is anonymized (the assessor was identified in CTK news report as financial analyst Vaníček). As in the case of Blesk.cz, the mediation of CTK is traceable, but not acknowledged.

The text which follows (lines 8 to 11) copies the CNB press release, and its' source is acknowledged. It is a direct quote of what the CNB spokesperson wrote in the press release ("uvedl mluvčí ČNB Marek Petruš" in Czech). The iDnes.cz journalist selects the part of CNB press release which explains what CNB is actually doing and why. He adds the sentence specifying what the exchange rate of the koruna was prior to the decision and any intervention, so the reader can see the extent of devaluation on the cards. So the reused text is joined with factual information needed to understand (some of) its implications (which are not spelled out).

Note that there is a repetition within the article we looked at so far – the 1st and 2nd paragraphs contain similar information (e.g. what the intervention is, what is its purpose). This is, however, a redundancy in semantic sense only. In a dialogical sense the writer does not just repeat the same information but coordinates statements by different actors – here one by iDnes.cz (which is admittedly to a great extent a hybrid quote of CTK piece) and one by CNB. How do the statements relate pragmatically to each other? The former summarises the topic to the readers, the later illustrates and confirms it in words of the major actor in the network – so the repetition expresses agreement and creates dialogical polyphony.

Then, however, the text is original. We observed elsewhere that journalists do not just report on dialogical networks, but may also facilitate their development (cf. Nekvapil and Leudar 2002, Kaderka and Havlík 2010). iDnes.cz journalists do this here by making public critical assessments of exchange rate intervention. They first report 'concerns' already expressed (lines 6-7) - the possibility of such intervention has been discussed in the past and the concern of 'analysts' in general was that the weakening the koruna would result in more expensive imports. Then, however, the journalist presents views of particular experts, one a financial analyst and one an economist, and some of these views might have been solicited by the journalist himself.

First, the assessment by analysts in general is particularized by a report of the view of one analyst, Petr Dufek, CSOB financial analyst (lines 15-18). Dufek explains the bank's reasoning - why the intervention is needed and how the intervention would work in financial terms and why. He notes that even the mere announcement of the policy affected the markets (lines 15-17). The economist Jan Čermák, also working for CSOB, does not doubt the feasibility of the action – since the bank 'prints money' it can

buy euros ‘practically’ without limits and thus control the exchange rate (lines 32 – 34). Note that saying this downgrades the bank’s competence and accomplishments. The expert assessment is nevertheless that the intervention is feasible in financial terms. Like the headline in Lidovky.cz, however, the journalist also points out that the intervention may have negative economic consequences (and these were not spelled out by the bank.) He does this using a second assessment by Petr Dufek (lines 21 – 25) where he is specific about these consequences and singles out likely increases in costs of fuel, imported goods and services (including the holidays). Note that this assessment was first made public in the CTK 13:30 report and is available above as Text 7 (lines 1 – 5).

Journalists then can afford their readers a better understanding of the interventions and their consequences by soliciting and making public independent expert assessments, and the bank can accomplish transparency through journalists. There are, however, problems with this strategy, as we shall see.

### **CNB press conference**

The dialogical network we documented so far, or what of it is accessible to us, consisted of written texts – a press release, newsflashes, and newspaper pieces. Its parts were linked through sequential structures (e.g. statement-comment) thematic continuities and text reuse. The argumentation in the network developed through the journalists’ soliciting assessment of the CNB actions by independent experts. The next part of the network is a press conference, which obviously happens in talk. The question is, how does the spoken event become a part of the dialogical network? Leudar (1995, 1998) considered a similar problem for a TV interview, and found the following. First, the integration was accomplished through attention to participant positioning - participants did not just speak for themselves but for the groups and institutions they represented. Second, links were established through exophoric addressing – participants directed their talk to individuals not in the studio. Third, the interviewer formulated (some) questions in such a way that answers to him were also answers to or comments on something somebody said in the past, away from the studio. Are (any of) these pragmatic devices also used in the CNB press conference?

The conference started at 14:15 and was in two parts, the first a presentation by the bank’s chairman Miroslav Singer (MS) (who informed those present of the bank’s decisions, and explained them), the second a question-answer session. The conference was not open to anybody - participants were invited. It was chaired by its spokesperson Marek Petruš (MP), who introduced MS and selected who asked questions and when. This participant format afforded a measure of control over the proceedings to the CNB and in particular forestalled extended polemics.

#### **(9) CNB press conference, question-answer session.**

228. MP: so please ladies and gentlemen eh your questions please,  
229. as I said I’ll just remind you (..) after the press conference  
230. there won’t be time for eh individual interviews  
231. so ask please (.) ask questions now during the press  
232. conference. introduce yourself by name and institution which you  
233. represent, (.) I saw at the ba::ck eh Bloomberg  
234. and then Reuters  
235. please

By asking participants to give a name and the affiliation, MP positions the participants both as individuals and representatives of ‘institutions’ (9, line 232). The media, which the participants work for, range from a global financial news company (Dow Jones) and news agencies (e.g. *Bloomberg*, *Reuters* and CTK) to Czech public service broadcasters (Czech TV and Radio) and national dailies (e.g. *MF Dnes* and *Hospodářské noviny*). The fact that the participants represent institutions is significant - it means that by default they do not ask questions just for themselves, but for their clients, and so when MS answers them, he also indirectly ‘addresses’ those clients; and, considering the nature of institutions to disseminate information, it is likely to be passed on to the public. So, the access of the public to the bank is mediated by the journalists. The presence of journalists ensures that what is said, or at least some of it, will be passed on. But not just reported – the journalists are more than messengers. The briefing is a part of the

dialogical network and we shall see how exactly that is accomplished.

### **Press conference: CNB governor Miroslav Singer (MS) presents the intervention**

MS began by reporting the decisions CNB took at its meeting earlier that day. Rather than speaking from memory, or improvising, he reproduced some of the press release on his first powerpoint slide and voiced it in his talk (9 & 10 respectively).

#### **(10) The MS's first powerpoint slide**

1. \* After discussing the situation report, the CNB Bank Board decided unanimously to
2. leave the interest rate ceiling for two weekly repo operations at the existing level 0.05%.
3. \* The interest rates will be held at existing rates (at the so called 'technical zero') for the long
4. term, until the occurrence of marked inflation pressures. The increase in inflation pressures is,
5. however, not forecast by the given prognosis and there is no indication of any concrete risk of
6. their growth.
7. \* The Bank Board also decided to start using the exchange rate as an additional instrument
8. for easing the monetary conditions. The CNB will intervene on the foreign exchange market
9. to weaken the koruna so that the exchange rate of the koruna against the euro is close to
10. 27 CZK/EUR.

(10) is in part a copy of the press release, and in part its reformulation. The text in lines 6 to 9 reuses the press release verbatim. That in lines 1 to 5 conveys the same information as the press release, but it is edited and includes two new points. One is that the decisions were made following 'a discussion of situation report' – but this is the expected procedure, so why say it? The other is that the decision to keep the interest rates as they were was taken 'unanimously'. Both these additions are possibly reactions to the critical comments already appearing in the media. We cannot of course be certain that this is so -what is certain is that the added information stresses the bank's competence and diligence. But why do this, unless the conflict is likely and the decisions and so the competence of the bank questioned?

The slide links the CNB press release and the press conference: the reuse of the press release affords continuity, the additions represent MS's orientation to the developing network. But how did MS actually use the slide (10) - he did not just put it up without a comment? He started by voicing the written text reproducing it verbatim.

#### **(11) CNB press conference, MS presentation.** <sup>14</sup>

1. MS: ... (..) after discussing the situation report, eh mm the bank board
2. decided unanimously to leave eh the interest
3. rate ceiling at what (.) is:: mm techni- tech- de facto
4. technical zero (..) ee we shall maintain it there fo:r eh
5. longer period until the occurrence of a sharp rise in
6. inflation pressures (..) eh at this moment the prognosis
7. forecasts nothing like that, no eh risks of such increase
8. are forecast (..) the bank board also decided to start using the exchange rate
9. as an additional instrument for easing the monetary conditions. eh (...)
10. we shall intervene in the foreign exchange t- market to
11. weaken the course of the koruna, so that we hold
12. the course of the koruna under (.) relative to the euro,
13. near the level twenty
14. seven korunas for a euro

We could analyse the talk transcribed in (11) as it is, in isolation, ignoring its dialogical context, as if it were an original one-off production, which it, however, is not. Nevertheless, the analysis could have come out as follows:

MS first reports the two decisions CNB made. One was to keep the interest rates as they are. On line 5, he uses the word to leave ('ponechat' in Czech) to say that the interest rate will be maintained

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<sup>14</sup> The press briefing was transcribed by Petr Kaderka and translated by Ivan Leudar.

(‘držený’) at the effective zero. This presupposes that the interest rates now are at an effective zero. So the action of the CNB (whatever it might be) will aim to maintain something already in place. The temporal duration of such action (or actions) is not specified (will it be months or years?) but it is delimited by the occurrence of significant inflationary pressures (‘výrazný nárůst inflačních tlaků’ in Czech). Note the words MS uses to express the temporal organisation of the events. These are ‘leave’ (‘ponechat’ in Czech), ‘we shall’ (‘budeme’ in Czech) and ‘until’ (‘pokud’ in Czech). Taken together these indicate that the bank is continuing to do something it has been doing already and will continue to do so until specified conditions occur. But since such conditions are not expected any time soon (lines 6 - 7), the temporal constraints are moot. Note also that, in MS’s exposition so far, the past and the future are joined linked by the means of a continuing practice, namely controlling the interest rates.

Then MS introduces the second decision, to weaken the Czech koruna to the euro exchange rate to 27 to 1, by intervening in currency markets, buying euros and selling korunas. In reporting this decision MS uses two temporal indicatives: ‘to start’ (‘začít’ in Czech) and ‘we shall’ (‘budeme’ in Czech). So the actions indicated by the decision are new (to start something implies it is not being done presently), it is also the course of action that will be followed in the future. Unlike for the first action, the ‘halting conditions’ are not even vaguely specified. And, the past and the present are linked by change – the value of the koruna was not controlled by the bank in the past but will be in the future.<sup>15</sup>

Note the orderliness of this report. MS first reports something the bank has been doing already (and will continue to do). Only then he reports the new, additional course of action, marking it by ‘also’ (‘dále’) on line 8. The second decision is a novelty in contrast to the first one.

There is nothing altogether wrong with this analysis and it is required, but it may have given the reader a sense of *déjà vu*; and indeed it more or less replicates our analysis of the press release. This is not surprising, since we are considering different tokens of the same text, written then, spoken now. Yet, the situations in which the texts were produced and are understood are different and small variations in texts reflect this. One obvious difference is how participant positioning is managed. The press release is written in the 3rd person singular and informs the audience about the decisions CNB made. The manner in which the governor of the bank manages his participant positioning in his spoken exposition is different - he switches systematically between 3rd person singular (‘CNB’ did ...) and 1st person plural (‘we’ did ...). When he reproduces the text of the press release he uses third person singular (lines 1-4, ‘bank board decided ...’). When he expands on the press release he uses the pronoun ‘we’ and so positions himself explicitly as a member of CNB (line 4). He switches in the same manner again in lines 8-10: First he reports the decision of the bank board to intervene on currency markets using 3rd person singular, then he explains the aim of the intervention in 1st person plural, subsuming himself in the ‘we’ (lines 10 - 11, ‘budeme’, ‘abysme’). Does he ever speak in 1st person singular? Yes, but mostly when he manages local talk as the speaker. In (12) he switches from 1st person plural (‘we’) to 1st person singular (‘I’) when he reminds those present that the interest rates are in fact already negative now (line 24). In (14) he uses 1st person singular to convey where he is in his exposition (lines 49-50). All these are activities relevant to being the current speaker. Even then, however, he represents the bank and managing the positioning affects how he does so. Speaking in 1st person plural and 3rd person singular links the briefing to prior events in the network; speaking in 1st person singular accomplishes his and the bank’s live presence in the briefing. The result is that CNB engages with those present in two ways: formally through the press release, and more directly and dialogically in the person of its director. This increases the richness of the bank’s interaction with the journalists: the formality of the press release is complemented by the more immediate encounter. Such interaction arguably adds to transparency. This however also means that transparency is not a characteristic of an individual intent or act - it presupposes the active listening presence of the journalists, and cannot be done without their collaboration. Having conveyed the CNB’s decision, MS gives reasons for it. Transparency and accountability require that CNB explains why it is doing what it is doing.

## **(12) CNB press conference, MS presentation., cont.**

17. (...) the reasons for the decision (.) ee

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<sup>15</sup> Change here does not mean discontinuity

18. (..) very (..) simply (..) ee the prognosis is
19. consis- (..) consistent with sharp decline in the market
20. interest rates, (..) clearly under the zero level,
21. that of course we are not able (..) to ee (..) accomplish
22. we are not able to get to such negative ee (..)
23. levels, and their increase above e the current values (...)
24. as late as the end of the year 2014, (..) I remind you
25. that these current values are already (..) de facto negative
26. so even now (..) we should in fact e hold
27. negative interest rates (..) so when the (..) exchange rates are
28. at zero bottom limit (..) the prognosis indicates the need for easing
29. using other instruments (..)
30. the alternative scenario of using the course of the koruna
31. confirms that (..) ee long lasting weakening of the course is (..)
32. an effective tool speeding up the return of the inflation to
33. the target.

Why is CNB “attacking” the koruna? Doing so is formulated by CNB as an instrument needed to manage inflation. But why is it needed? MS states that the prognosis of CNB indicates the interest rates would have to be negative in order to obtain the target inflation (lines 18 to 20) and this is to him self-evidently not possible (lines 20-23). Using interest rates to regulate inflation has therefore ceased to be feasible. The prognosis implies that different financial instruments are needed (lines 27 to 29) and MS presents the use of the exchange rate as one such instrument. According to him the ‘alternative scenario’ confirms (‘potvrzuje’, line 31) that a long-term weakening of the exchange rate would return inflation to the intended target. So the use of currency intervention is justified in two ways: using interest rates ceased to be feasible and the bank’s financial model indicates that intervening against the koruna would work. What warrants his assertion that exchange rates would be an effective instrument is ‘the alternative scenario’ produced by the economic model the bank uses. MS does not illuminate either of these in the presentation, he assumes both and so there are technical limits to transparency. MS presents the effectiveness of alternative scenario as supported ‘objectively’ by the economic model he cannot easily explain there and then.

In (13), speaking in the 1st person plural, MS coordinates the two courses of action open to the bank. The original instrument (using the interest rates) is introduced by ‘so far’ (‘zatím’ in Czech) (line 33) the second, the use of the exchange rate (‘devizový kurz’ in Czech) is marked by ‘we started’ (‘začali jsme’ in Czech) (line 40). The former instrument is presented as a standard, the latter is necessitated by the contingency.

### **(13) CNB press conference, MS presentation, cont.**

33. (4.6) so far we used (..) our
34. standard tools, e we lowered the basic
35. interest rates even to a technical zero, (...) but in
36. trying to stop the long term undershooting (..) ee
37. of the inflation target, (..) to speed up eh return to the
38. situation when we will again be able to use (...)
39. our standard instrument, i.e. the interest rates which are,
40. as I have already said, at a technical zero (..) we started
41. to use foreign exchange rates as another tool of currency
42. politics. (..) e (..) from the point of view: of time and (..) volume
43. it needs to be said that (..) eh (..) we are, (..) eh
44. (...) able to intervene without a limit, against the koruna,
45. (..) that means that we will interve- in such a volume and
46. for as long as necessary (..) eh to reach (..) the value of exchange rate,
47. which we have set ourselves and through that (..) the fulfillment of
48. the inflation target in the future.

So, one coordination of the instruments is temporal. Monitoring the interest rates has been done and will continue to be done. The currency interventions are new but once started will (also) continue (lines 40 - 42). There is, however, a second kind of a contrast, which is evaluative and historical. The first

instrument is presented as an orthodox and preferred one, and something to be returned to when circumstances allow (line 39) - the second, weakening of the currency to increase the inflation, is a novelty only to be used whilst necessary (line 46). This echoes the views expressed in media previously – see for example (1) above.

#### **(14) CNB press conference, MS presentation, cont.**

49. (...) now I will, ee (..) get to
50. the basic scenario: eh prognosis, (..) it is
51. a scenario which (..) e presupposes negative interest
52. rates and it is a scenario (..) which we judged so
53. unrealistic that (..) we would have to move
54. to an alternative scenario. (..) so, e I shall describe that which
55. eh (..) as is indicated forced us (.) eh
56. to say eh this is not the way, (...) we cannot anymore
57. ignore the need for negative rates
58. indicated in the basic scenario, (..) and (.) we decided
59. (.) ee to use an alternative scenario which
60. presupposes exchange interventions, (..) and which on that basis
61. e becomes from the point of view of the bank board (.)
62. the most likely description (.) of the expected
63. without a doubt the future developments. (4.4) I'll summarize the prognosis, (..)

Having first pointed out the availability of the ‘alternative scenario’, and sketched out a need for it, MS now formulates it as a description of the future (lines 59 – 63). Note the action status of the proposed alternative scenario as MS formulates it: by the decision of the bank council ‘the alternative scenario has become the most probable description of the expected future development’ (lines 59 – 63). What started as a possible course of action is now presented as a commitment to a future action. But since this action is an unorthodox one, it is only logical that MS returns at length to the problems with base scenario (‘základní scénář’ in Czech). The base scenario presupposes negative interest rates, which are not feasible, as MS indicated earlier (see Text 12, lines 18-21). In this situation, the decision to use an alternative scenario is inevitable.

MS justifies the decisions as the governor of the bank, speaking for it, and the way he manages his participant position ensures that CNB is present at the conference directly, rather than as an absent third about which participants talk. This immediacy adds to the sense of transparency, and willingness to engage with others about the issues involved. Note, however, that the transparency, or its elements, is a dialogical accomplishment, not an enacted disposition of an organisation. The bank does not simply inform the public impersonally about its decisions using press releases; it is present in the press conference, recruits others and depends on their collaboration to accomplish transparency. We also asked how the press conference was made a part of the dialogical network. One means was the text repetition – MS’s presentation is linked to the press release by reproducing parts of it verbatim in the powerpoint slide and voicing it. The second is his attention to participant positioning, managed through his systematic use of pronouns. What MS does not do is to address individuals outside of the conference room, which was the case in other networks we dealt with (cf., e.g., Leudar and Nekvapil, 2004, Nekvapil and Leudar, 2006).

#### **Press conference, question-answer session**

The second part of the press conference was a question-answer session, journalists asking questions and the governor answering them. The questions asked were as follows:

1. “When, in what situation, in what circumstances, would you abandon the required 27 [koruna to euro] course, and change the current policy in any way?” (lines 237-246)
2. “If I understand it correctly, the course predictions in the alternative scenario imply that you expect to maintain the scenario for the whole of 2014.” (lines 299-303)
3. “I would like to ask if you could confirm that you were active in the market today. With what volume?”

And will you have an information policy about market interventions?” (lines 322-327)

4. “Do you expect any significant volatility on the euro-czech koruna market as a result of this, throughout the whole next year?” (lines 360-362)
5. “Are there any balance sheet risks for the national bank as a result of this [intervention]?” (lines 377-378)
6. “Mr Singer, can you indicate how the voting went?” (lines 401-402)
7. “What was the market’s immediate reaction to the your announcement? Was it what you expected?” (lines 408-413)
8. “Could you say something about the exit strategy?” (lines 453-458)
9. “Is it a part of your information strategy to provide information about the volume of interventions, and will you provide information about the decision making and perhaps [about] voting?” (lines 498-506)
10. “Could you comment on the concerns that rising import prices will put pressure on consumer activity and that will slow down the emerging economic recovery?” (lines 528 – 533)

CNB’s statutory duty is to maintain price stability and to control inflation. MS’s exposition followed this remit - his account focused on why setting interest rates was not enough to forestall deflation, and devaluing the koruna was required. The questions 1 – 10, however, came from a wider variety of perspectives. They aimed to elicit pertinent additional information about the bank’s actions and their consequences. Taken together, the questions were asked along the following themes:

1. How long will the intervention last, can it be modified and what is the CNB exit strategy?
2. What will be the consequences of the intervention – financial, economic and social?
3. Did the bank formulate an information policy for the interventions? Will it keep the public informed about how the interventions are working? How unanimous was the decision to intervene?

Most of these have not been addressed by the bank in its press release or by MS. Yet, they are clearly pertinent to understanding the interventions. If answered, the questions would broaden the public understanding of their logic, implementation and consequences. If transparency consists in providing relevant and true information when it is pertinent, and the lack of transparency consists in not doing so, then the journalists’ questions afforded the bank the possibility to increase the transparency. This again confirms that the bank does not always accomplish transparency directly by itself but via intermediaries with specialist knowledge, interests and access to communication channels. So transparency may be a dialogical accomplishment, but then what kinds of dialogues are involved?

There is a problem with restricting the analysis by reducing questions to content themes and considering these out of context, as it is done in coding-based quantitative approaches. Even a quick perusal of the complex questions 1 to 10, however, reveals that answering them may reveal more about the bank that it might want to, or be allowed to by CNB statutes. Moreover, some of the questions are not obviously straightforward requests for information but contain implicit assessments of the bank’s policies and actions. Some questioners might be sympathetic to CNB’s assumptions, aims and practices, others may not be. So the collaboration with others is needed to accomplish transparency, but it may open the bank’s reasoning and actions to assessment and critique. So it is not enough to analyse just the themes of the questions or even the questions in isolation, but also how, as parts of exchanges, they are put and responded to. The question 6 asked in (15) exemplifies that need sharply.

#### **(15) CNB press conference, question-answer session, cont.**

- |      |  |
|------|--|
| 399. | MP: thank you, other questions?                  |
| 400. | (2.9)  |
| 401. | JV: good afternoon, Vlková, Mladá Fronta Dnes    |
| 402. | Mr Singer could you indicate how the voting went |
| 403. | (1.8)  |
| 404. | MS: can’t  |
| 405. | (2.8)  |

The detailed transcripts of the CNB Bank Board meetings and the details of votes are by statutes kept

confidential for six years.<sup>16</sup> The journalist JV knows this, as is suggested by the format of her question - she asks MS to ‘indicate’ rather than ‘tell’ or ‘reveal’ how the vote went (lines 401-402). And indeed MS does not provide the information; instead, he bluntly confirms his inability to do so. He indicates that the question is out of order by responding after a long pause and by not hedging the blunt reply as ‘dispreferred’. So, if JV could not really expect that the information would be provided, what was the question about? It implied (pragmatically) a possible lack of consensus on the intervention within the bank and the lack of transparency about that.<sup>17</sup> This contrasts with how MS presented the intervention – as warranted by the knowledge of economy and something consensual, not involving controversy within the CNB. So JV’s question problematized the implied consensus in the bank’s decision making. This indicates that not all question necessarily afford transparency – some may highlight the lack of it.

At other times the assessment is more delicate; implicit and a part of the request for information, as in (16). KC from Bloomberg Associates asked about the duration and the flexibility of the intervention – could it be adjusted or changed (lines 243-244) and in what circumstances (lines 240-241). This much is clear without an analysis; what is of interest is how KC formulated the question and what else was in it, so to speak.

### (16) CNB press conference, question-answer session, cont.

237. KC : ee good afternoon, Kryštof Chamonykolas  
 238. from Bloomberg. I would  
 239. like to, eh Mr Governor, ask, (.) if you could estimate  
 240. ((lit. if you have any estimate)) either in terms of time or the level of  
 241. inflation: (..) when: in what situation, in what conditions  
 242. you would be able to, (..) abandon the required exchange rate  
 243. twenty seven and in some way (..) change or  
 244. adjust the present ehm (.) present policy  
 245. thank you,  
 246. (..)

Remember that in his presentation MS said that the devaluation policy would cease in the advent of increased inflationary pressures. KC asks him to specify further when the intervention might end, in temporal terms and depending on inflation level. But he does not just requests this information in neutral terms. He does not ask MS for knowledge but for an estimate (16, line 240, ‘odhad’ in Czech). And he does not ask when the bank will cease the intervention but when it will be able to do so (16, line 242, ‘byste mohli’ in Czech). The complex question then contains an implicit assessment, which highlights future uncertainties of the intervention, and contrasts MS’s apparent self assurance that bank is in control and can end the intervention any time.

How does the governor deal with the question – does he orient to the implicit assessment or does he ignore it and just provide the information asked for? He first unpacks the question – it either means changing the criterial exchange rate value or abandoning the control of inflation via currency intervention altogether (17).

### (17) CNB Press conference, question-answer session, cont.

247. MS: in principle there are two (.) eh two situations which  
 248. you have in your questions. eh the first is that (..) we shall change the target  
 249. exchange rate, (and) the second is that we shall abandon this: regime  
 250. through which we are accomplishing (..) the inflation target through  
 251. other means than eh changes of the interest rates right? (...)

Then he answers the first ‘question’. ‘Theoretically’ the exchange rate criterion could be changed at any sitting of the bank board or during an extraordinary meeting (18, 252-256).

<sup>16</sup> The minutes of the CNB bank board are, however, normally published 8 days after meetings.

<sup>17</sup> Remember that MS volunteered, on his 1<sup>st</sup> powerpoint slide, that the vote on keeping interest rates as they were was unanimous (see Text 10, line 1).

### (18) CNB Press conference, question-answer session, cont.

252. the : first, eh (..) situation, purely theoretically  
253. can happen at: any eh monetary policy meeting of the bank board  
254. of which there are eight a year, (..) the bank board  
255. can theoretically meet in exceptional circumstances  
256. (...) and can change anything

So the alteration of the exchange rate criterion is possible, since doing so is the bank's routine practice. This is obvious, but not quite what the question was about; yet MS's answer is not a pragmatic *non-sequitur*. In answering it in this way MS reacts to the implicit assessment, and bolsters the image of the bank as being in control. So the change is possible, but is it likely? MS does answer the question, by comparing flexibility of the two financial instruments.

### (19) CNB Press briefing, question-answer session, cont.

257. nevertheless I would like to say ee (...) it is eh absolutely  
258. clear to us that (...) it is not possible m eh (...) eh to smooth eh all  
259. the changes or all the changes of our views about economic  
260. conditions, (.) eh by the changes of the target exchange rate as we were  
261. doing with m eh interest rates: which means that the change of the target rate (..) will  
262. require considerably sharper change: of (.) eh situation, (..) ah undoubtedly  
263. it will arise eh very rarely or: (.) never.  
264. (.) (yeh?) (..) we don't ex- in other words we are saying it is possible  
265. but, (..) eh don:: don't infer that: possibility and  
266. likelihood from how we frequently moved (.)  
267. interest rates this is a change:: more important by a magnitude eh (.)  
268. we: eh at the moment we tried to, (.) eeh  
269. to set the target rate so as to (..)  
270. in the foreseeable future, eh and by that we do not mean (.) eh the next  
271. situation report and the next eh next monetary policy meeting (.)  
272. but simply (to-) to have a feeling that  
273. we shall not have to move it.

The phrase 'it is absolutely clear to us' in lines 257-258 is significant. MS responds not by and for himself, but in 1st person plural, that is for the bank. And the issue is not something new to it; it has been considered and resolved by the bank. What was resolved is that compared to the standard regime, much deeper changes in economic conditions would be required to the change the criterion. Note how MS formulates this: KC asks him to 'estimate' (line 239), MP asserts for himself and the bank that the issue was considered and 'decided' and the exchange rate was set after careful consideration, so that change is unlikely to be required. The formulation provides both the requested information, but also indicates that the bank is in control in implementing the alternative scenario. It is a competent and diligent rational agent. The face-work indicates MS's orientations at the at this stage implicit criticisms of the bank.

MS then addresses the second question – how long will the intervention last? Note that the same 'question' was asked in the conference several times already – and so the duration of the intervention becomes a *common concern*. As we pointed out, a crucial property of dialogical networks is a duplication of expressions. The consequence of such duplication here is that even though KC formulated it as his own, individual question MS's answer can also be pertinent to questions asked elsewhere, headlines, and comments of experts.

### (20) CNB press briefing, question-answer session, cont.

274. (...) the second question if I understand  
275. is (.) when shall we end the intervention regime, (..) eh  
276. we'll end the intervention regime (.) now eh (.) eh mm  
277. I'll try to approximate what we decided  
278. without looking for it, (..) we shall end it the moment

279. we judge that (...) eh that we have ahead of us dramatical  
 280. inflation pressures, (...) which (.) ju::- justify (.)  
 281. eh sharp cha:nge in the monetary policy, (.) in the direction  
 282. of restriction, (.) a:nd in that moment I can  
 283. imagine we shall (.) end the inflation regime.  
 284. (.) nevertheless, (.) if I should translate it eh into  
 285. popular Czech (.) language, (.) ee we shall end  
 286. the intervention regime the moment we are, very  
 287. (.) very, eh e a cowboy from the american west would  
 288. surely say damn, (..) ee sure ee that we won't  
 289. have to (re)start the interventions (...) in foreseeable period  
 290. which maybe som- a majority of the members of the bank board  
 291. would understand as the period until the end of their mandate  
 292. (2.4)

MS accepts that the policy could be changed in response to strong inflationary pressures – the bank is not inflexible and pays attention to circumstances. However, it does not react to these blindly, but in the light of its decisions carefully made before the intervention started. So, as the answer goes, the future actions are grounded in the past decisions and in part explicated in their terms. The question allows MS to share pertinent information about the bank's actions and so to increase the transparency, but he has to do this against the background of scepticism. The first sceptical 'contrary' is whether the bank is in control of the policy, the second one is how long will the Czech economy have to take the 'medicine' (the shared implication of the question is that the intervention should not last too long.) MS asserts that CNB will not stop the intervention unless it is clear that it would not have to be reinstated. Note he formulates this in vernacular – like his expression, the intervention is a strong medicine, which has to be taken until the patient is well. (This is the talk reported in the media later in the day). MS responds in terms of what the bank already decided (it won't have to go away and think or react myopically to circumstances). So, again, questions afford transparency but require an effort to maintain the authority of the bank.

The eighth question on our list, asked in (21, 457-458) seems, at first sight, one straightforward request for information. The *Business Newspaper* journalist asks MS to say something about the bank's exit strategy.

### (21) CNB press conference, question-answer session, cont.

451. MP: ... Mr Bednařík please,  
 452. (...)  
 453. RB: ehm good afternoon, Bednařík, Commercial News (.) I would  
 454. like to ask ehm your colleague Janáček ehm in his  
 455. article or presentation, (.) talked about  
 456. exit strategy being important (.) in the case of interventions  
 457. if they should be introduced, could you somehow say  
 458. something about it, thank you.  
 459. (...)

The question would have been a straightforward one if MS were simply asked to talk about something he has not yet addressed. It would not be if it, for instance, implied that the omission was deliberate, or that the bank did not have, or could not have, such a strategy (and so MS would not be prepared to talk about it.) There are indications that the question is indeed not altogether an innocent one. First, RB does not just ask MS to outline the exit strategy but to 'somehow' talk about it, projecting a difficulty (line 457). Second, RB warrants the importance of the question by reference to a view expressed by a colleague of MS, member of the CNB Bank Board known at that time to be a critic of the likely intervention.<sup>18</sup> These, taken together, project a likely reluctance or unpreparedness to answer. The question implies that the lack of information on this issue is a significant omission, and it presses for transparency. How does MS take up the question?

### (22) CNB press conference, question-answer session, cont.

<sup>18</sup> The possible disunity in the CNB on the wisdom of interventions is an issue here as it was in Text 15 above.

460. [in this case] I am sure I can: I will just comment that the six  
461. years are obviously very useful for a daily, (..)

MS starts with a preamble (line 460) and an aside (lines 460-461). In the former he stresses that indeed he can answer the question (line 460), in the aside he relates being able to answer *this* question to not being able to answer the *previous one* about how the voting went (15). He treats the current question as one formulated to create a problem and denies this using a reference to not answering the other one in (15). He is open and transparent when the rules of the game allow it. Then he returns to the exit strategy (line 462).

### (23) CNB press conference, question-answer session, cont.

462. a:nd so eh (.) eh I'll return to the exit  
463. strategy. (..) eh so, eh it is quite  
464. simple. what we have said is that we shall intervene  
465. against the koruna. (..) not: eh for the koruna. (..) in other words  
466. what we will gain from the interventions (..) we won't reintroduce into the market  
467. if we just feel (.) things are okay now,  
468. and even our traders are not so instructed.  
469. (...) eh that means that the moment we judge (.) eh  
470. that (...) exchange conditions require sharp  
471. closure (...) whether through eee the effects of the rate, (...)  
472. o:r eeh with eh the growth, the closure eh of the intervention  
473. (.) regime or regime of using of [exchange] rate to reach  
474. the inflation target targets, (.) to be quite precise, return o  
475. in such a moment (.) eh basically most probably  
476. we shall start (...) either we shall announce the  
477. eh the end of tha :t regime and we shall wait, or  
478. we shall see (.) e :h we shall announce, (..) a rate stronger than  
479. the rea- than that which actually (.) exists, (..)  
480. we shall possibly accompany this eh  
481. by a return to an above zero level (.) of interest  
482. rate but definitely the momen:t eh (...) and again  
483. I return to what I was already telling you, (.) in such a moment  
484. when we do this we shall be very very very sure (..)  
485. that we shall not have to (co-) return neither to zero (..)  
486. nor to eh (.) into the intervention regime. (...) and that  
487. is for us the basis ...

In answering, MS again presents the bank as being in control. The exit strategy has elements MS outlined in answering other questions. One such is the onset of inflationary pressures. The question was also what will the bank do with the euros it bought? – MS does not say what CNB will do, but what it will not do – sell them and so inflate the value of the koruna. So the transparency is again accomplished in talk, but in an atmosphere of implicit scepticism, and more is revealed about the bank than it may wish. We shall see that the implicit scepticism turns to open criticism, some of it ad hominem, as the network develops.

In what way is, for the participants, what is happening in the conference room, a part of the dialogical network? Some network links were created through the text reuse – MS has reused the bank press release in his exposition. Such reuse is not obvious in QA session. What is interesting, though, is how RB formulates the background of his question (21, 454-457). It is by reference to comments made elsewhere by a colleague of MS – these are made relevant in the conference room. As a result, MS has to treat the issue of exit strategy as a serious one, otherwise he would be disagreeing with a colleague, and reveal explicitly a lack of unity in CNB. Both RB and MS then link what is happening now to what has happened in the past, and the latter is used to validate the question as a significant one and to constrain MS's answer. RB displays his sensitivity to the unfolding network by conjoining his question to a comment made in the past and in a different location. Leudar (1995) also noted that in TV interviews, participants in the studio *addressed* others who were elsewhere at the time. There is, however, no evidence of this in the press conference.

In (24) a representative of Dow Jones (speaking in English) asks a question about the possible negative economic consequences of the intervention – will it slow down economic recovery?

**(24) CNB press conference, question-answer session, cont.**

525. MP: eh ok so the really last question so:  
526. eh there Dow Jones  
527. (...)  
528. DJ: uh (just) a general question there are some concerns  
529. that (.) uh rising import prices will (..) again put  
530. pressure on uh consumer activity (.) and then that  
531. will in turn (.) uhh slow down this (.) uh nascent  
532. economic recovery (y-) uhh what do you say to that.  
533. thank you.

Note that DJ is introduced by the name of his organisation. Yet, he does not ask the question for Dow Jones but instead attributes the concern about the consequence of interventions to unspecified others (line 528). He voices this ‘concern-in-common’ in the press conference, so opening the conference to the outside and, in doing so, he foregrounds the duplication of the concern in the dialogical network. The expression ‘there are some concerns ...’ counts as his gloss of public assessments of the intervention, and it grounds his question in a distributed social concern - and that is why he can end his turn with ‘what do you say to that!’ – the question is serious. His is then an economic argument proposing a sequence of related economic events but it is also a shared collective position sceptical of CNB’s action. The consequence is that MS has to answer not just one economist’s question, but instead a concern in common, and that is a very different thing. This participant then does orient to the unfolding dialogical network (if not under that name) and specifically, we would argue, to its ‘emergent property’ arising from a duplication of concerns about the intervention. But perhaps we should have said ‘multiplication’ instead of ‘duplication’.

But, in general, what are emergent properties? The concept of network has been used for some time in, and adjusted to, a variety of disciplines, including cognitive science, artificial intelligence, biology, physics, psychology and sociology, for instance (e.g. Hopper, 1987; Ikegami, 2000; Sawyer, 2001). One recurring conclusion has been that networks have ‘emergent properties’ (see Noble, 2017 for a broad introduction), and these seem to be one reason for postulating the networks in the first place. Emergent properties of networks are said to be those not easily predictable from the known properties of their components. Wetness, for instance, is a property of an arrangement of hydrogen and oxygen molecules, but would be difficult to predict in advance just from knowing the properties of the two, especially since it depends on temperature. Once, however, one knows that the (liquid) water is wet, that property can be at least in part explained in terms of characteristics of the components and their relationship in the water molecules (see, e.g. Noble, 2017). The concept of emergent property must not, however, paradoxically be a fig leaf for dualisms. One needs to show how emergent properties and the grounds from which they emerge, on which they supervene, relate. Usually, this would be done using formal methods, such as mathematics or statistics (as for instance in representing social networks graphically, or in connectionist networks). In analysing dialogical networks, however, we can use just the methods we used so far to analyse the network that is those developed in ethnomethodology, conversational analysis and pragmatics.

The text (24) may point to what is possibly an emergent property, ‘concern in common that the interventions will be bad for the recovering Czech economy’. We have said that the expression ‘there are some concerns that ...’ refers to multiplication (of concerns) in the DN. This simply means that the concerns about the intervention have been expressed publicly, by different people, in different locations and at different times. But, does the multiplication by itself constitute an emergent property? No, for participants the concerns could be coincidences and not add up to anything new. In this instance, however, this is not so - the concerns expressed by multiple actors were noted as mutually relevant and brought together by the Dow Jones journalist; glossed and used on a specific dialogical occasion. However the concerns may have been originally expressed, in DJ’s gloss they add up to public ‘concerns about likely consequences of the intervention’. If this reasoning is right, the dialogical network we are

investigating does indeed have at least one emergent property, based on multiplication of expressed concerns, which is noted and used by a participant in a question-answer sequence.

The next problem, however, and one that is important to understanding the argumentation in the dialogical network, is this: is this ‘emergent property’ in any way novel? Our answer is that, in important respects it is, because a concern in common (about something) is different from an individually expressed one, even though both are concerns, and both are about the same problematic action of the CNB. First, the ‘concerns in common’ are most likely distributed in time and location, and so their sequential properties are not just like those of individually expressed concerns. And, second, effectively to refute concerns in common one has to do so differently than refuting individual ones, dealing not just with the validity of the concern in abstract but, in addition, with the fact that the concerns in common are shared and reported as shared.

So how does MS actually respond to the question? – is it in a way consistent with our reasoning? He certainly does not simply deny the existence of the concern or its validity. He acknowledges the concern, conceding that the currency intervention will have some negative consequences - the increase in prices may decrease the demand. The concession is, however, only partial – MS reformulates DJ’s argument and omits the part of it, which raises negative effects on the ‘nascent’ economic recovery. And, notice also that the concession and the admitted possibility of negative effects are qualified. First, the ‘of course’ attached to the concession means that the possibility is not something unexpected by the bank – CNB is not ignorant and the question is not hard to deal with. Second, the expressed concern itself may be exaggerated - the increase in prices may lower demand, but only ‘to some extent’ (line 538) and then only for a time (line 536). Following this qualified concession, MS contrasts (but in line 539) the likely negative economic consequences to the likely positive ones, which, he argues, will outweigh them – in an export based economy, the industry will be more profitable, workers will keep their jobs, and their pay will not decrease (lines 542-544). In fact a consumer boom may result. Note that this contrasting position is not modified – it is boldly asserted. So what he contrasts is the concern in common which is focused just on negative consequences of the interventions, and the bank’s prediction which is a balance of positive and negative consequences with the former outweighing the latter.

### **(25) CNB press conference, question-answer session, cont.**

534. (1.7)  
535. MS: eh of course the rate [intervention] has also:: negative consequences  
536. in the first sort of approach [to begin with], that means that  
537. of course that, (.) eehh the rise in prices ca:n eh ca:n  
538. ee (.) to some extent lower the real level of  
539. demand but, (.) the problem is that from the world view point  
540. we are a small open (.) export oriented economy, (...)  
541. and mm and these effects (.) in our view simply will simply  
542. be overcome (.) by those effects which mean that  
543. firms (.) ee will gain in profit, people will keep their jobs,  
544. and will know that (.) their pay will not have to go down, (.)  
545. and at the same time it will be clear consumers  
546. to the consumers (.) I dare to say, even more clear not just that (.)  
547. eee that some eeee some economic expansion is coming, (.)  
548. but at the same time that it is pointless to delay ee (..) purchases::  
549. the goods which are perhaps imported or which are made using  
550. imported components, (.)  
551. and we understand that: eh that eh deferred speculatively deferred  
552. consumer demand simply, (.) ee as an effect we are aiming for. (1.9)

The most important thing about MS’s reply to DJ is, however, that what MS produced was not an abstract, closely reasoned and warranted economic prediction. He formulated two contrary positions on what will happen, and marked one of them as the preferred one and coming from ‘us’, the bank (see use of plurals in lines 542 & 555). The dis-preferred position was that of the analysts who expressed the concerns (text 24, line 528).<sup>19</sup> So he does not simply provide an economic counter prediction warranted

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<sup>19</sup> In an interview the next day MS expresses his frustration with having to explain to analysts that each economic

by the bank's model, but produces a *social position* which is contrary to the one DJ established in reporting the multiplied concern. MS acknowledged the concerns, down played them, counter-asserted the positive effects effect and aligned the alternatives in an us-them polarity. The argument here does not simply consist in dispassionately weighing likely effects of interventions on the Czech economy, using the bank's economic model. The DJ's prediction is refuted by formulating a *counter-position* (rather than simply a counter-claim). The argument is not to be settled simply by technical means and MS does not try. We have noted above that transparency is a dialogical accomplishment, and observed that in some circumstances it has to be accomplished in an atmosphere of implicit critical scepticism. In the question-answer session this problem for CNB was even more marked - the critical element was stronger.

So the network we are analysing does have at least one emergent property to which the participants orient – the concern in common about how the currency interventions will affect the economic recovery. And it is important to note that this emergent property and its effects on argumentation have been effectively investigated using analytical resources of ethnomethodology/conversation analysis. The next question is, does the network have any other emergent properties?

### **Following the press conference.**

We are looking at approximately the first 12 hours of the dialogical network, and have set the cut off at 8 p.m. of 7/11/2013. Following the press conference, the intervention was addressed to in 43 CTK news reports and it was referred to in at least 60 internet, radio, and TV media pieces, this according to *Newton Media* (see 1 and 26 for a chronologically ordered selection of items with a time code). The intervention is obviously a subject to intense public interest and scrutiny.

### **(26) The dialogical network after the CNB press conference.<sup>20</sup>**

- 14:17, **CTK**, *The CNB increased the economy development estimate for this year.*
- 14:18, **CTK**, *Singer: the CNB is ready to intervene without limits.*
- 14:43, **kurzy.cz**, *The CNB intervention – the koruna weakens by about 4% with respect to the euro and the dollar.*
- 15:01, **CTK**, *CNB is able to intervene in foreign exchange market ...*
- 15:02, **CTK**, *The CNB improved its forecast for the GNP development ...*
- 15:12, **CTK**, *The CNB improved its forecast for the economy development this year.*
- 15:16, **novinky.cz**, *The CNB estimates that the economy will fall less this year.*
- 15:19, **CTK**, *Singer: The CNB is ready to intervene against the koruna without limits.*
- 15:29, **kurzy.cz**, *Czech Republic joins the currency wars, the intervention may make things worse.*
- 15:33, **Blesk.cz**, *Singer: The CNB is ready to intervene against the koruna without limits.*
- 15:34, **kurzy.cz**, *Nobody expected such sharp intervention against the koruna.*
- 15:42, **kurzy.cz**, *ECB and CNB went on rampage today.*
- 15:42, **blesk.cz**, *The CNB improved its forecast for the economy development this year.*
- 15:44, **ihned.cz**, *CNB started interventions after 11 years. The koruna immediately fell to a four year low.*
- 15:46, **CTK**, *The CNB decided to start currency interventions, for the first time since 2002.*
- 15:56, **CTK**, *The industry welcomes the CNB interventions; new jobs could result.*
- 15:57, **CTK**, *Analysts: the CNB intervention will show first in the prices of petrol.*
- 15:57, **idnes.cz**, *The Czech economy will weaken less this year, the CNB expects.*
- 15:59, **blesk.cz**, *The CNB decided to start currency interventions, for the first time since 2002.*
- 16:00, **CNB** publishes audio and video recordings of the press conference.
- 16:00 **Czech Radio Hradec Kralove**, *The CNB decided to start currency interventions*
- 16:04, **CTK**, *CTK economic news summary 7th November 16.00.*
- 16:05, **CTK**, *The CNB intervention will show first in the prices of...*
- 16:19, **ihned.cz**, *The CNB started interventions after 11 years, the koruna immediately fell to a four year*

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intervention has winners and losers as a consequence.

<sup>20</sup> As these headlines indicate, many of the media pieces are based on CTK releases – we shall not again analyse systematically how these were re-used - it was in the ways established above. Where, however, we analyse a text in detail, we do examine how it re-uses texts when it does.

- minimum.*
- 16:30, **CTK**, *The industry welcomes the step of CNB to...*
- 16:32, **akcie.cz**, *The central bank eventually fulfils its threats.*
- 16:32, **kurzy.cz**, *The central bank eventually fulfils its threats.*
- 16:39, **e15.cz**, *More expensive petrol, electronics and holidays. The CNB intervention shakes prices.*
- 16:39, **investicniweb.cz**, *Prague stock exchange 'flew up' following the CNB decision on Thursday and rose by more than one percent.*
- 16:44 **ihned.cz**, *The analysts: The intervention of the CNB will first make petrol more expensive by 50 pence. In just a few weeks.*
- 16:45, **CTK**, *Klaus: Foreign currency interventions are faulty and a risky step.*
- 16:45, **CTK**, *The ex president Václav Klaus considers today ...*
- 16:45, **Radio Time**, *CNB will start foreign currency interventions.*
- 16:46, **novinky.cz**, *CNB started interventions against the koruna. We have no limits, the governor of the CNB declared.*
- 16:49, **CTK**, *Travel agencies are not planning immediately to raise prices of holidays because of the weakening of the koruna*
- 16:51, **akcie.cz**, *Prague stock exchange is rising near to the year's maximum, partly thanks to the CNB interventions.*
- 16:51, **kurzy.cz**, *Prague stock exchange is rising near to the year's maximum, partly thanks to the CNB interventions*
- 16:57, **kurzy.cz**, *CR – summary 7.11. – the koruna intervention moved even BCPP, ERSTE to over 700.*
- 16:59, **CTK**, *The prices of foreign holidays arranged ...*
- 17:07, **CTK**, *Following the CNB interventions, Czech currency weakened relative to dollar and the euro by the koruna.*
- 17:09, **iDNES.cz**, *The weakening of the koruna will first make petrol more expensive, then electronics or holidays.*
- 17:10, **Czech Radio Plus**, *Czech national bank surprised the majority of analysts.*
- 17:07, **CTK**, *CNB started foreign currency interventions, the imported goods will become more expensive.*
- 17:08, **CTK**, *Czech currency weakened by more than the koruna ...*
- 17:18, **CTK**, *Prague stock exchange reacts to the CNB interventions by rising 1.28 percent.*
- 17:18, **CTK**, *As a result of the interventions Czech stock exchange ...*
- 17:18, **CTK**, *Singer: CNB is ready to intervene without limits*
- 17:20, **CTK**, *The industry welcomes the CNB interventions, new jobs could result.*
- 17:34, **blesk.cz**, *The industry welcomes the CNB interventions, new jobs could result.*
- 17:44, **blesk.cz**, *Prague stock exchange reacted to CNB interventions by the 1.28% rise.*
- 17:44, **tyden.cz**, *The industry welcomes the CNB interventions, new jobs could be result.*
- 17:44 **parlamentnilisty.cz**, *Babis's economist praised his boss on the radio. He is rational and emphatic, allegedly.*
- 17:58, **CTK**, *Travel agencies are not planning immediately to make holidays more expensive.*
- 17:59, **blesk.cz**, *Following the CNB interventions, Czech currency weakened by a koruna relative to dollar and the euro.*
- 18:00, **Czech Radio Journal**, *CNB acts against the strong koruna, after 11 years.*
- 18:09, **e15.cz**, *Following the CNB interventions, Czech currency weakened by a koruna relative to both the euro and the dollar.*
- 18:10, **Czech Radio Journal**, *CNB acts against the strong koruna.*
- 18:15, **blesk.cz**, *Travel agencies are not planning immediately to raise prices of holidays because of the weakening of the koruna*
- 18:16, **news.radio.cz**, *CNB started to act against the strong koruna, for the first time since 2002.*
- 18:16, **parlamentnilisty.cz**, *The Institute of Václav Klaus: The mistake of foreign currency interventions of the Czech National Bank.*
- 18:29, **tyden.cz**, *CNB weakened the koruna. Electrical goods, petrol and holidays will be more expensive.*
- 18:38, **CTK**, *The weak koruna will make imported cars more expensive by thousands, an analyst thinks.*
- 18:57, **e15.cz**, *Klaus: Foreign currency interventions are a wrong and risky step.*
- 19:00, **tyden.cz**, *Foreign currency interventions of the CNB are a wrong and risky step.*
- 19:00, **Czech television 1**, *CNB intervened, the koruna weakened.*
- 19:30, **TV Nova**, *CNB will intervene in the development of the Czech koruna.*
- 19:59 **CTK**, *CTK economic news summary 7<sup>th</sup> November 20.00*
- 20.00 **lidovky.cz**, *CNB weakening the koruna.*

Our focus for the remainder of the paper will be on how the argumentation about the CNB intervention is expressed in the multiplication-based emergent properties of the network and what role these might play in argumentation.

The headlines in (26), taken jointly, indicate that some issues were addressed repeatedly in the network. So the network may have other ‘emergent properties’ based on multiplication, in addition to the ‘concern in common ...’ we noted above. The issues, which recur, are:

- the wisdom or otherwise of the interventions (15.29, 15.34, 15.42, 18.57, 19.00);
- the weakening of the koruna (14.43, 15.33, 15.34, 15.44, 16.19, 17.51, 18.29, 19.00);
- the effects of the intervention on the economy (15.16, 15.29, 15.57, 16.39, 16.51, 17.34, 17.44); and
- the effects of the intervention on prices (16.39, 16.44, 17.09, 18.15).

But, as we argued, multiplication by itself does not constitute an emergent property, even though it is a precondition; what is required is that participants orient to it and use it. The headlines of the pieces published at 16.44, 17.10, and 17.34 do indicate such duplications - their writers orient to them, glossing them respectively as:

- concrete predictions in common (of price rises),
- surprise in common (at the implementation of the intervention) and
- welcome in common (of new jobs).

We end the analysis by examining the relevant pieces, starting with (27).

#### **(27) ihned.cz, 7. 11. 2013, 16:44**

1. Analysts: Interventions of the CNB will make petrol dearer first, by half a koruna a litre. In just a few weeks.
2. First the petrol and diesel will get more expensive. Food and holidays will follow. Whoever will
3. want to buy electronics for Christmas, will have to pay 3 to 4 per cent more than now.
4. These are the predictions of analysts about the interventions of CNB and the planned weakening
5. of the koruna. Foreign exchange interventions of the CNB and following weakening of the koruna will
6. within weeks be expressed higher prices of imported goods. First, according to analysts fuel
7. will get more expensive, by about fifty cents a litre, then the prices of imported goods, and even
8. holidays will follow. The prices of electronics and other goods on pre-Christmas market will rise
9. by 3 to 4 per cent. This is what the poll of analysts implies.
10. “Then it will be the turn of food, but there the situation will not be as clear. Some costs will rise
11. visibly, other increases will not be obvious because of seasonal variations, some prices will not
12. increase at all.
13. Next year, I expect the increase in prices of consumer electronics and foreign holidays,” the chief
14. economist of UniCredit Bank Pavel Sobišek commented.

The text (27) reuses parts of the CTK report of 15.57. The headlines of both attribute the assessment of consequences to unnamed ‘analysts’. The CTK headline was “Analysts: the CNB intervention will show first in the prices of petrol”, the one in the Commercial News is “Analysts: Interventions of the CNB will make petrol dearer first, by half a koruna a litre. In just a few weeks.” Both of these predict that the intervention will result in more expensive petrol (27, line 1). The predictions are, however, not made by either CTK or ihned.cz themselves, but are attributed to unidentified ‘analysts’. So the headlines presuppose that there were analysts who expressed some such predictions, and they bring together those individual predictions glossing them as a prediction in common. So what is duplicated is not just the predictions, but also the reports of the duplications.

We can’t quite say what exactly the CTK journalist’s sources were, but the body of (27) helps. The first paragraph develops the analysts’ prediction – not just fuel, but also food and holidays will be more expensive due to the intervention. The text confirms that the predictions about the likely effects of interventions are predictions in common by ‘analysts’ (lines 4, 6, 8). So another emergent property is the prediction in common that the intervention will result in higher prices. This accords with the prediction expressed by Dow Jones journalist in 24 – the concern in common that prices will rise (and this will affect the recovery in Czech economy.)

The journalists, however, do not stop at reporting emerging concerns in common about the

consequences of interventions. They juxtapose them with relevant assessments by individual experts (e.g. 9-11). (The complete piece reports the views about the impact of the intervention on prices of 3 economists/financial analysts.) The inclusion of these assessments exemplifies the journalist's gloss, but it also documents the variation in predictions that he brings together. The analysts in the headline of (27) could, of course, be just those individuals whose views are then reported. This, however, could not have been so in (27).

The transcript (27) is of an interview on the Czech radio of the past deputy governor of CNB Luděk Niedermayer, now making ends meet by working for Deloitte. The headline contrasts two membership categories, CNB and 'analysts' and in this respect it parallels MS and DJ's exchange in 25.<sup>21</sup> Bearing in mind the topic of the piece, the analysts are likely to be financial and economical experts, and the cause of the surprise the currency interventions. It also implies that the intervention is deemed inappropriate. The headline presupposes that the intervention has indeed surprised some analysts. This presupposition is, however, brought into doubt by the presenter in his first turn - he modifies the assertion by 'perhaps'. In his second turn he warrants this by saying that the currency interventions were talked about for some time; so they could not be that surprising. The question he puts to Niedermayer is whether the intervention really was surprising.

### (27) ČRo Plus, 7.11.2013 17:10

1. The Czech National Bank surprised the majority of analysts
2. Tomáš PAVLÍČEK, moderator
3. Czech National Bank today surprised perhaps the majority of analysts. For the first time in 11 years
4. it intervened hard against the strong koruna. Central bankers were afraid, in their own words, of
5. sharp undershooting of the inflation target. Deflation allegedly threatened. And our currency
6. reacted immediately. It weakened to almost 27 koruna for the euro, which corresponds to the
7. expectation of the bank board. The decision of current members of the bank board will be
8. assessed by their predecessor, the ex vice-governor of the Czech National Bank Luděk
9. Niedermayer, who now acts in the company Deloitte. Good day.
10. Luděk NIEDERMAYER, the vice-governor of the CNB, economist, Deloitte.
11. Good evening.
12. Tomáš PAVLÍČEK, moderator.
13. So, the central bankers talked about this intervention for a long time. Almost a year, if I remember
14. well. So is it really a so surprising decision?
15. Luděk NIEDERMAYER, the ex vice-governor of the CNB, economist, Deloitte.
16. Well, from the perspective which you mentioned it isn't that surprising. But it is surprising
17. because recently fairly strong news are multiplying that Czech economy is finally getting out of
18. the recession. And because, in accordance with what is happening abroad, the majority of
19. economic commentators and even observers understood the efforts of central banks to engage in
20. nonstandard monetary policies more as an effort to speed up the economy to the road of
21. economic growth, the timing, when it really seems that better times are coming is somewhat
22. surprising.

Niedermayer responds by qualifying the reasons for the surprise. He agrees that from the point of view expressed by the presenter the intervention is indeed *not* surprising (line 15). Then, however, he provides his assessment of the economic circumstances in Czech Republic - the economy is coming out of the recession - and so the interventions are unnecessary and so inappropriate and so surprising. The participant status of Niedermayer is important. He is an independent financial expert but also a past vice-governor of the CNB, so his analysis carries some weight. He confirms the headline, the action of the bank is indeed surprising and not in a positive way - the interventions are a mistake. Note also that his justification contains two instances of multiplied expressions. One is that the Czech economy is understood to be coming out of recession ('množí se silné zprávy' in Czech) and he describes how 'economic commentators and observers' understand the function of exchange rate interventions. So the second emergent property glossed by Niedermayer (and the headline) is the surprise at the ineptness of CNB initiating the interventions in the current economic circumstances. And the rejection is not just Niedermayer's own but one in common. His is, however, not an *economic* argument - it is an attack on

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<sup>21</sup> See also the headline *Nobody expected such sharp intervention against the koruna* of the piece issued by [kurzy.cz](http://kurzy.cz), at 15:34.

the competence of the CNB, made on economic grounds. The text (28) on the other hand provides a support for the CNB.

**(28) blesk.cz, 7.11.2013, 17:34**

1. Businesses welcome the interventions of Czech National Bank, new jobs could be created.
2. Businesses welcome the decision of CNB to intervene in foreign exchange market and hold the
3. koruna around the level 27 CZK to the euro. The weaker koruna can help especially the exporters. But
4. it is less advantageous for the manufacturers who import materials for their products. The drop
5. in the value of the Czech currency could result in new jobs.
6. “The decision of CNB came at the right time. It is a decisive and brave step, which could help
7. Czech exporters and the whole national economy,” the president of the Association of
8. Exporters of the CR Jiri Grund said to CTK. The weakening of the koruna by more than a koruna
9. is according to him noticeable by exporters. Over six months, the action of the central bank
10. should according to him mean the growth in exports in korunas of two to three percent.
11. For exporters the step is positive because the foreign demand has been growing recently, said
12. the analyst of the Association of Industry and Transport Bohuslav Čížek. But, according to him,
13. there are limits to the effects of interventions. For instance, some firms have a part of exports
14. returns insured against currency variations. According to research of the association the value
15. has been recently moving around roughly one third.
16. fd mjr jsa mol

The multiplied expression in (28) is referred to in the headline and the first line of the text. The statement ‘businesses welcome the decision of CNB to intervene in the currency exchange market to ...’ presupposes that several businesses expressed sentiments, which can jointly be glossed in that way. The rest of the 1st paragraph is an unattributed justification for this welcome. The CNB intervention is designed to weaken the koruna and the weak koruna is helpful to exporters and should create employment. The weak koruna is, however, not advantageous to the industries that import materials for their products. We cannot of course know what exactly the individual comments by business representatives were. They are, however, instantiated subsequently in the piece. The ‘welcome in common’ is documented by statements of business representatives. The first is by the president of the exporter association, who characterizes it as a ‘decisive and brave step’ (line 6) and provides a factual justification for why and how devaluing the koruna is helpful to exporters. The second expert is the analyst from the union of industry and transport who also welcomes the intervention, although in a more guarded way. According to him, the intervention is timely, because of the current increase in the demand for exports. Note that both statements can jointly be glossed as ‘businesses welcome ...’. And both are in contradiction to the assessment expressed by Niedermayer (see 27).

So using the network terminology, we have noted several ‘emergent properties’ in the network so far. Three were critical of the intervention –

- the prediction in common that the interventions will result in increased prices,
- the concern in common that the interventions will impede the nascent economic recovery,
- the surprise in common over the timing of the intervention,

and one was positive,

- the welcome in common of the intervention (for the export industries etc).

In argumentation these are not dealt with in an exactly the same way as individual concerns and predictions. This means that socially-distributed argumentation about interventions cannot be reduced to abstracted economic/financial claims and counterclaims and their warrants and backings: who issues them - whether individuals or collectives - matters.

## **Conclusion**

The immediate aim of this case study was to analyse how the Czech National Bank communicated its decision to devalue the koruna, focusing on how transparency was accomplished in the controversy that ensued.

The more general aim was to develop the concept of dialogical network by using it in an area we have not examined before, that of economic argumentation. We found that, as elsewhere, the main practice causing the growth of a DN was to introduce new participants, by making their views visible and consequential. And as not just the number but also the range of participants increased, so did, inevitably, the number of arguments for and against the interventions. The cohesion and structuring of the network was in part accomplished through a reuse of previous contributions – the participants reacted dialogically to previous contributions to the DN and often did so by quoting others. Some quotations were dialogically linked, others were simply juxtaposed; some of the juxtaposed quotations became dialogically linked by a third person (e.g. a journalist). The important new result is that dialogical networks have emergent properties based on multiplication of contributions in which argumentative positions become crystalized, and, as a result, hard to shift through argumentation.

The concept of DN is a useful analytical tool - it helps to track consequential contexts of participants' contributions. But is it a member's phenomenon or an ironic glance at complex interactions? Explicit awareness and documenting of a complex DN is obviously an accomplishment of the analyst, which requires much dedicated effort, not feasible in the fast flow of everyday life. Nevertheless, participants create the network and orient to aspects of it. First, they note contributions of others, reuse them and thereby create argumentative alliances. Second, they orient to emergent properties of networks: They note multiplication of expressions to networks and gloss the multiplied contributions into argumentative positions in common, polarizing them thereby, and so increasing the antagonistic character of interactions. We can conclude that, if not the DN itself in its totality, dialogical networking as a social practice is undoubtedly a member's phenomenon.

We have also shown that transparency is, or can be, an interactive accomplishment - CNB depended on journalists to distribute and mediate their communications. Czech central bankers' practice of transparency was based on the assumption that other financial experts and journalists will collaborate in transmitting and explaining the bank's message to the public. So transparency depends on a practical coalition between bankers and journalists. This 'coalition' enables the bank to address multiple audiences, argue using economic models and forecasts, keep to technical vocabulary, and so to maintain its own expert identity and rationality.

In Kaderka, Leudar and Nekvapil (2017) we argued that the mediation by journalists allowed the bank representatives to adopt a style of argumentation, grounded in monetary theories without designing the arguments for non-experts. We found that representatives' contributions stayed linguistically and stylistically consistent, exemplifying organisational discourse that aims for 'semantic security' (Boltanski 2011, 78f.). The analysis, moreover, showed that orientations to different domains of knowledge and differences in expertise resulted in variations in temporal framing. All the participants were oriented to the future, but only the bankers' arguments were based on forecasts grounded in formal monetary models - they presented future states of affairs as facts that would occur with certain, model-calculated probabilities. To put it in another way, speaking in technical mode, the bankers referred not to the actual time of everyday life, but to the virtual time of macroeconomic forecasts. The forecast horizon of one to one-and-half years, specified as relevant for monetary policy decisions, conceivably enabled the bankers to disregard the more immediate consequences of their decision. This temporal framing and its grounds were different from that in everyday life, adopted by the journalists, which is based on the common sense anticipations of affairs in the near future (cf. Schutz, 1964). It would, however, be only too easy to exaggerate the technical character of bankers' arguments. In other respects, and other situations, their argumentation was resolutely mundane and easy to understand without specialist knowledge. The orientation to the future, for instance, was necessarily accompanied by references to the past, which were entirely ordinary and afforded by the resources provided by shared language. We have shown how the past was made consequential in the present and for the future, by documenting how continuities and discontinuities of practice and skill were managed. This extends our work on people as practical historians.

In practice, achieving transparency collaboratively turned out not to be straightforward. This is because the encounters between the bank on the one hand, and the journalists, politicians, analysts and the

public on the other, varied in character and some became polemical. The point of polemical encounters is to use the information so as to bolster one's position and to weaken that of one's opponent. Revealing some information, e.g. the impact of the koruna weakening on prices, may serve transparency but it will also help one's opponents to undermine the worth of the intervention as a whole. When the independent analysts pointed out the likely negative consequences of the currency interventions, which were not mentioned by the bank, were they doing this for the sake of transparency? And, in not mentioning these consequences, was the bank being secretive with the public? In polemical interactions, providing some information may arguably add to transparency but it will also aid the bank's opponents. Our study then reveals the *limits of the concept of 'transparency'* – it works differently - perhaps better from banks' perspective - in collaborative interactions than in polemics. In polemical interactions transparency is more likely to be forced and the information revealed used to win arguments.

So to conclude, we demonstrated that the CNB did achieve a measure of transparency, but with the help of financial journalists and not by itself. Transparency was a joint accomplishment. The collaboration extended the understanding of the intervention by debating in public continuities and discontinuities of the bank's aims, policies and practices, bringing to view a broader field of future consequences. As well as making the bank's interventions public, however, Czech journalists introduced voices critical of CNB interventions. So the practice of accomplishing transparency interactively can be double-edged. It inevitably opens a central bank's reasoning and actions to criticism with which it has to engage. This means that banks depend on others to mediate their communications, but as a result they may lose control over how the interventions are represented.

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