

Abstract

This diploma thesis aims to apply the securitization concept in the field of media studies, while also exploring the role of media as an autonomous actor in the (de)securitization process, being able to produce a unique type of discourse, independent from the discourse of political actors. The thesis seeks to confirm the disparities between the discourse of media and political elites on the plain of the (de)securitization theory. This is examined within the topic of the covid-19 epidemic, from 1st January until 12th March, when the state of emergency has been announced by the Czech government. The thesis is organized as a discourse analysis on the basis of the Foucauldian historical method. The theoretical chapter introduces the basic premises of the securitization theory, its evolution and contemporary discussion, including the dimension of media autonomy. The analytical chapter examines seven topical aspects representing the uniqueness of the coronavirus discourse during the examined time period. In addition, the thesis also analyzes the reproduction of the discourse of political elites in media. A total of 154 inputs is compiled in the analyzed corpus, consisting of the transcript of covid-themed press conferences, and articles from the online media portals of iDnes and Fórum 24 that have been selected using a keyword string. The results of the analysis confirm the uniqueness of the coronavirus discourse in media articles as well as its contradictory implications in the process of threat construction. The government discourse can be described as rather (de)securitizing, whereas the discourse promoted by both observed media channels is of strongly securitizing nature. This thesis therefore contributes to the contemporary discussion regarding media as an autonomous agent in the securitization theory. Further research should focus on the applicability of such premises in other fields of security and politics.