

Abstract

The thesis deals with the media representation of crime and crime news as a specific image of reality. The aim of the thesis was to analyse the role of the media in the process of defining crime as one of the risks in contemporary risk society and the part of the media portrayal of crime which plays in the process of legitimising appropriate ways to manage these risks. The study attempted to clarify the way in which the topic of crime as an agenda of the news media operates, how criminal risk is constructed through the media in contemporary society, and how it is understood by the public. The media construction of crime risk was examined in three different ways. A quantitative content analysis of television crime news focused on describing the characteristics of crime news in general and the specific differences between public television and commercial television news. By analysing the media representation of crime types, specific crimes, crime news actors and punishments, the differences in the media construction of crime risk between the two types of news coverage were highlighted. A qualitative content analysis of the media representation of probation, using a specific example, showed how the topic of probation is reflected in the Czech media space and focused on how to thematise crime risk in relation to this measure. The media analyses were complemented by an analysis of the audience's perception of media content with criminal themes and a probe into the lay people thinking and argumentation in relation to punishment carried out through focus groups. The results support the assumption that analysing public attitudes towards crime and punishment, as well as feelings of safety and fear of crime, it is also necessary to take into account the representation of crime in the media and to consider media constructed crime risk. The media is a major source of information about crime for the public and respondents used media content at all levels of their argumentation.