

Abstract

This diploma thesis explores the phenomenon of media exploitation of crisis events in selected Czech media, using the media crisis exploitation theory as a conceptual framework. Using the examples of two unprecedented crises, the Covid-19 pandemic in the Czech Republic and the ammonium nitrate explosion in Lebanon, this study analyses the diversion of two Czech media outlets, BLESK and Mladá fronta DNES, from journalistic norms and standards across four dimensions: journalistic style, framing of the crisis, the balance of political sources, and tone of reporting. The selected media failed to provide journalistic standards in times of crisis as the study proved a substantial deviation from these standards, with a predominance of descriptive journalistic style using issue-framing when constructing the crisis image, unbalanced use of political actors as sources of information favoring the governmental parties, and lacking the critical point of view on the political leaders portraying them in neutral or positive tone. The analysis also reveals that there was a greater shift from journalistic standards in the case of the Covid-19 pandemic and in the case of the tabloid BLESK. Overall, the study underscores the active role that media organizations play in creating possibilities for media crisis exploitation by political leaders as well as in shaping public discourse around a crisis, highlighting the importance of media coverage as part of the construction and shaping of reality.