

Abstract

The requirement to uphold the principles of objectivity and balance in journalistic outputs becomes even more important in the pre-election period when it is necessary to provide citizens with impartial information for their decision-making. The aim of the thesis was to reveal whether and how the Czech media violated these principles in organising the presidential debates ahead of the second round of the 2023 elections. Key theoretical concepts of objectivity and balance are presented, including Jörgen Westerståhl's model. Forms of media bias and media framing are also presented as examples of violations of the principles of objectivity. A quantitative content analysis and a qualitative framing analysis method were used to evaluate balance and identify media frames in seven audiovisual debates. The typology of frames by Muñiz, Saldierna and Marañón was used. The results of the quantitative analysis showed that in all the debates analysed, the candidate Andrej Babiš received more coverage than Petr Pavel. The qualitative analysis revealed the presence of mainly strategic game frame, conflict frame and issue frame, which could have influenced the debates' tone and the candidates' image. In the interpretation of the data obtained, manifestations of media bias, especially unconscious and propagandistic, were detected. Thus, the results of the thesis confirm that all the analysed debates showed elements of violation of the principle of objectivity and balance.