

# THE IMPORTANCE OF VALENCE-FRAMING IN THE PROCESS OF POLITICAL COMMUNICATION: EFFECTS ON THE FORMATION OF POLITICAL ATTITUDES AMONG VIEWERS OF TELEVISION NEWS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

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Izvorni znanstveni rad / DOI: 10.20901/ms.8.15.6 / Primitljeno: 04.04.2017.

**ABSTRACT** *This article explores the meaning of valence-framing theory in political communication. It examines the influence of valence frames on the formation of political attitudes among the public. The valence-framing effect is derived from the information context value (positive, negative) and applies if people's attitudes towards a certain subject match the context value of the information received. The article presents a case study of reports during the crisis of Mirek Topolánek's government in the Czech Republic in 2009. It examines to what extent the context of the statements on the Czech news concerning the parliamentary parties Civic Democratic Party (ODS, leader Mirek Topolánek) and the Czech Social Democratic Party (ČSSD, leader Jiří Paroubek) related to the existing political attitudes of their prospective audiences. The article argues that the valence-framing effect was more evident in the public broadcasting programme Události ČT than the commercial programme Televizní noviny, a paradox which can be explained by the unique link between the attributes of the Czech media environment and the political opinions of their viewers.*

## KEY WORDS

POLITICAL COMMUNICATION, THE VALENCE EFFECT OF FRAMING, CZECH TELEVISION NEWS BROADCASTING, ODS, ČSSD

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*The article was created within the project "Participation, media and local politics" (IGA\_FF\_2015\_008).*

## INTRODUCTION

Today's society receives a large amount of information daily. A majority comes from the mass media. A significant amount of society's knowledge is created along with the content distributed by the media (Lapčík, 2012: 13). The media touches on all areas of everyday life with political affairs not being an exception. The process of creating politics can be understood as a communication activity which occurs in an environment with a multi-directional flow of information within the democratic society. The concept of political communication is closely connected with this process. It can be defined as an interactive, multi-layered process, in which a transfer of information between politicians, the news media, and the public occurs (Bradová, 2005: 16).

Valence-framing theory emerges in political communication from the assumption that the news media plays a decisive role in the process of forming the political preferences of citizens (Druckman and Wild, 2009). The testing of valence-framing theory can be quantified by the level of effect the news can have on its recipients (Entman, 1993: 51). This presents valence-framing theory as one of the important concepts for the study of public opinion formation in political communication.

Analysing television broadcasting provides an ideal way of examining the valence-framing effect (Iyengar and Kinder, 1991: 13). Television continues to serve as the most widespread medium today (Marketing charts, 2017) due to the character of news presentation. Television is a visual medium, which unlike press or radio combines picture and sound. It can mediate both the information and emotion, which accompany the events. The viewers receive an entertaining and easy source of information. This article examines the valence-framing effect of *Události České televize* and *Televizní noviny TV Nova*, two popular over the long-term television news programmes in the Czech Republic.

The valence-framing effect is examined in relation to the character and form of information presented by the designated television programmes concerning the Czech parliamentary parties Civic Democratic Party (ODS), Czech Social Democratic Party (ČSSD) and their chairmen at the time, Mirek Topolánek and Jiří Paroubek, two important figures in the 2009 Czech governmental crisis. The article examines to what extent the context value of the statements concerning specific political subjects presented in the prime-time television news on the TV stations ČT1 and TV Nova is related to the existing political preferences of prospective viewers of the TV shows, *Události ČT* and *Televizní noviny*.

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Jay G. Blumler and Dennis Kavanagh (1999) argue that political communication has entered its third age, characterised by media abundance. Television has become a key medium of providing 24/7 information about political issues. New communication techniques have enabled the participation of the entire public in the process of political

communication and control over political activity occurs in a closed elite space (Blumler and Kavanagh, 1999: 213). Media communication has become the primary source of information about political events.

The basis of the media behaviour within the framework of political communication is mediating information among its individual actors (Davis, 2007: 97). Each information mediation is a dynamic interpretative activity. All the mediated information is actually an interpretation of (un)real events, thus their importance is always somehow constructed (McQuail, 2007: 21). Scholars view media as an important source of power and interpretation of social reality, media determine what society considers normal and what the publicly acceptable standards are (Forgette and Morris, 2006; Matthes, 2011).

The theory of valence-framing also stems from the hypothesis that media plays a central role in political communication. It does not, however, perceive media as simply agenda setters in social affairs, but instead emphasises the assertion that the form of media message presentation instantaneously predetermines the interpretation mode among the public. Shanto Iyengar claims that "viewers are influenced not only by the amount of news but also by the kind of news they see." (Iyengar and Kinder, 2010: 34)

In order to understand and study the valence-framing, two basic assumptions need to be made. The first is that the media is the primary source of information from which the society receives news from external events. With these events, ordinary citizens do not have a personal experience. They cannot know their objective value and are essentially completely dependent on the choice, the form and the way the information is passed to them (Iyengar and McGrady, 2007). The second assumption is that the public actively processes the received media information and thus contributes to the formation of views on the events in the political environment (McNair, 2011: 27).

Valence-framing is defined by the qualitative value of the context that can acquire a positive or negative degree. The value of the context is shaped according to the language, signs, visual symbols etc. used in the news report. It defines "the percentage of different but logically equivalent words or phrases" (Druckman, 2004: 671). The proportion expresses whether the thematically same information is presented in positive or negative terms. In the case that the recipient of the framed message generates an opinion (in the form of a strengthening or reduction of the existing opinion preferences), which corresponds to the value of the context of the presented message, the existence of the valence effect of framing is discussed.

A basic attribute of valence-framing is its ability to present an already finalised version of a news report and thus evoke an exact course of thought for its interpretation. Frames can consequently be perceived as templates upon whose basis people process information. The course of thought created by the viewers' contact with the framed testimony evokes in their mind a so-called value frame wherein the context assigned to the critical subject of the message (in this sense the frame) can acquire positive or negative values. All further information about this subject is consequently processed through an

evoked value frame (Entman et al., 2009: 177). If the receiver of the framed message forms an opinion (including the form of reinforced existing opinion preference) corresponding with the value meaning of the presented message's context, one can talk about the so-called valence-framing effect (Žeželj et al., 2007: 368). It is declared when the viewpoint of the population of a certain object corresponds to the value of contextual information in which it is received (Chong and Druckman, 2007: 104). Valence-framing effects are derived from the qualitative value of the context presenting the receivers with the formation of a specific message interpretation possibility that is based on the language, signs, visual symbols, etc. used. The same themed message can consequently be presented with a positive or negative meaning and opinion formation can occur in only two logically equivalent modes, that is, a rise or drop in political preferences.

Valence-framing is a product of the heuristic processing of information (Kim et al., 2005: 1), or manifests itself in the form of a decision that is based only on available information. Framed information thus influences in the process of the perception of events, through the activation of an evaluating scheme of the recipient.

In the evaluating process, a whole range of factors are used to filter information. The higher presence of these factors, the lesser is the valence-framing in the formation of an individual's view. Jörg Matthes explains that framed information does not affect all members of the audience equally and can vary in intensity. Thus, the valence-framing effect cannot be generalised, but it is necessary to examine it in a specific case at a certain time (Matthes, 2011: 250). Its intensity decreases in relation to the low level of significance and frequency of the framed report (Iyengar, 1991: 13), the high degree of social identification of the individual (Hänggli and Kriesi, 2012: 262), the increase in personal experience with the presented events (Vliegenthart et al., 2008: 418), the low credibility of the source of framing (Druckman, 2005: 466) or a low level of political knowledge and interest in public events (Druckman, 2004: 673).

On the contrary, the valence-framing of messages can be monitored at a higher rate depending on their increasing frequency, exposure time (Iyengar, 1991: 14), and increasing awareness of the importance of the presented topics by their recipients (Lecheler et al., 2009: 403). The authors explain their findings by finding that "the framed messages from a thematic agenda tends to be more important to individuals, become more accessible to them and they remember them more quickly." (Lecheler et al., 2009: 403) The effect of framing is also manifested at a higher rate in the context of presented topics with which the individual does not have a direct personal experience, but is only mediated through the media (Vliegenthart et al., 2008: 415).

## **TELEVISION NEWS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC**

Television broadcasting is defined by Czech law (Czech National Council, 1991). The Czech public has a high interest in television broadcasting. Practically each household owns a television set. A number of them even own two (Czech Statistical Office, 2009).

A survey from 2009 indicated that 72 % of Czechs learned about political events from their TV screens (European Parliament, 2009: 135).

From the viewpoint of the development of television broadcasting, the key year was 1953, when Czechoslovak television began to broadcast in Prague on 1 May (Štoll, 2011: 117). It existed in the form of state television. After the fall of Communism in November 1989, the Czech Republic joined the process of democratisation, with which the transformation of the media system was closely linked. A centralised state-controlled mass media system shifted to a more decentralised model. Television broadcasting was deprived of state ownership to transform it into a British BBC public television model (Trampota, 2009: 29).

By 1992 it was broadcast at a federal level when there was a common Czechoslovak program and an independent Czech and Slovak television station (Kelly et al., 2004: 34). After the dissolution of the Czechoslovak Republic, the television was divided into two different terrestrial broadcast channels. In the Czech Republic, this was Czech Television, which was established on 1 January 1992 (Parliament of the Czech Republic, 2001) as a public broadcasting television, in the form of a separate legal entity from the state.

In 1991, a dual (mixed) system of broadcasting, or the coexistence of the public and private sectors was created (Bartoň, 2004: 17), which substantially liberalised the subsequent development of television broadcasting in the Czech environment. On 4 February 1994, the first Czech private broadcasting NOVA TV was launched. It has enjoyed a large amount of popularity from the beginning. Approximately 70 % of Czech viewers watched it in its first year of existence (Kelly et al., 2004: 35). In June 1994, the nationwide terrestrial broadcasting launched another private station, the Premiere, which in 1997 was renamed TV Prima (Šmíd, 2005: 24). Nowadays, the traditional position of public television is represented by the TV station Česká televize (Czech Television). The most popular private TV station is Nova TV.

News have a special position in the broadcasting on both of the mentioned stations. Daily, they provide their viewers with news combining audio and visual narratives about events which should be important and interesting to the audience. News provide information about certain realities outside of our knowledge. The important status of news is demonstrated by their assignment to the beginning of prime time, the most watched period set usually between 7 and 11 pm. The potential impact of news reporting is more significant than other types of media content.

The quality of news reporting concerning political affairs depends in the Czech news environment on the focus, ownership and financing mode of the given TV station. Each TV station decides what information to include in its news. The composition of the main news significantly differs between the public and private TV stations. Apart from the choice of events, the arrangement also differs (Lapčík, 2008: 190).

The news on public television is financed from public funds by means of licence fees. The main news in the Czech Republic is *Události ČT* broadcast by the TV station Česká

televize. The news activities are governed by the Codex of Czech Television, which defines them as a “provision of important information for general awareness and free opinion formation of the viewers.” (Kodex ČT, 2003) The Codex further accentuates the expertise, accuracy and objectivity of the reporters. The media analyses evaluate the news broadcasting of *Události ČT* as relatively balanced and objective (Urban et al., 2011: 90). The potential utilisation for the valence-framing effect is consequently lower than with commercial broadcasting.

Private news broadcasting manifests a preference for entertainment and the sensational character or appeal of events. The criteria for their news production are not publicly known and the expectation of objectivity and impartiality is heavily undermined by using elements of infotainment and tabloid information. *Televizní noviny* is the most popular Czech television news and is broadcast daily on the private TV station TV Nova. In contrast to *Události ČT*, the form and content of the *Televizní noviny* news clearly demonstrate features of commercial television. The elementary value of the constructed TV Nova reality is its appeal to viewers through drawing them emotionally into the presented event. This corresponds with a high number of live broadcasts, an accent on opinion depiction and the testimonies of the ‘common man’. The viewer is drawn into the mood of the event not only by means of a detailed and vivid description, an impressive choice of repeated words and phrases, but also by accompanying illustrative personal and emotional stories of the people in question (Schneiderová, 2008: 40). The framework of the *Televizní noviny* agenda can result in a lower impartiality and information value of the presented event which opens space up for a higher rate of the valence-framing effect manifestation on the opinion formation of TV Nova viewers (Urban et al., 2011: 91).

## THE CRISIS IN MIREK TOPOLÁNEK’S GOVERNMENT (JANUARY TO MARCH 2009)

Although Czech society celebrated the 20-year anniversary of the fall of Communism in 2009, the year would enter Czech political history as one of intra-party quarrels and instability. The internal political development was affected by a governmental crisis in the first half of the year which led to its fall, the establishment of a caretaker government and later a failed attempt to organise early elections. Unlike previous intra-party disputes, these events were closely followed, relatively, by European representatives since the Czech Republic held the EU presidency in the first half of 2009.

The Czech Republic entered the year 2009 under the second government of Mirek Topolánek, which was appointed under complicated negotiations on 9 January 2007. The opposition parties ČSSD and KSČM called the Topolánek cabinet illegitimate as its emergence and existence were based on the votes of two defectors from ČSSD, Miloš Melčák and Michal Pohanka, who left the Chamber prior to a vote of confidence (Hloušek and Kopeček, 2012: 68).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ČSSD deputy Petr Wolf also helped Topolánek when he did not use the strictly prescribed formula (he said “I am against the proposal” instead of simply “against proposal”) and thus following the rules of order the Wolf’s vote was counted. All three ČSSD deputies mentioned were subsequently expelled from the party (Hloušek and Kopeček, 2012: 68).

The Topolánek cabinet took over the EU presidency on 1 January 2009. The oppositional ČSSD declared its support for the coalition government during the EU presidency under the condition that it would assent to early elections (Balík, 2010: 42). Prime Minister Topolánek immediately found himself in the spotlight of both the national and international media when he conducted diplomatic negotiations during the escalated natural gas supplies dispute between Russia and Ukraine. After long negotiations, all the parties concerned, i.e. Russia, Ukraine and the EU, signed an agreement mediated by PM Topolánek. TV news showed him alongside top European leaders. He presided over the special EU summit in Brussels and negotiated the April visit of the American president Barack Obama in Prague (iDnes.cz, 2009a). His successful activities and reputation building in the international arena was reflected in a popularity hike in the domestic environment (Novinky.cz, 2009).

While PM Topolánek thrived in international politics, the domestic scene began to become unstable. Disputes within the governmental coalition led to the departure of four ministers. There were also disagreements concerning the position of political representatives concerning the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty. A distinct rift also arose within ODS, where several deputies led by Vlastimil Tlustý called Topolánek a party rebel (Hloušek and Kopeček, 2012: 69).

The tense domestic political situation culminated on 16 March 2009, when the programme *Reportéři ČT* reported that a lobbyist and a close Topolánek's friend, Marek Dalík had put pressure on ČT to revise the filming of a piece on suspicious subsidies for a company owned by Petr Wolf a deputy and former member of ČSSD. Wolf was an extremely important for the survival of the government because his vote supported the fragile majority of the government coalition (Reportéři ČT, 2009).

The following day, ČSSD chairman Paroubek demanded an expedited resignation of the government, which he claimed was founded on political corruption. The intended peace between the ČSSD and the government during the EU presidency did not consequently last more than three months. A vote of no confidence was scheduled for 24 March 2009 and passed with 101 votes resulting in a loss of confidence for Topolánek's government (Balík, 2010: 42).

Almost immediately after the vote of no confidence ended, mutual accusations as to who was responsible for the fall of the government began. ČSSD refused to govern for it lacked an electoral mandate. The media described Paroubek's act as a Pyrrhic victory. (iDnes.cz, 2009b).

## METHODOLOGY

The current research consists of a case study analysing a series of important social affairs during the crisis of Topolánek's government in the Czech Republic in spring 2009. It attempts to provide empirical verification of the valence-framing effect on the process of forming public political preferences. More specifically, it tests the hypothesis whether and

in which form a mutual connection can emerge between the value of the news context of news information about ODS, ČSSD and their leaders at the time presented on *Události ČT* and *Televizní noviny* on the one hand, and the political attitudes of the respective viewers of these programmes on the other hand.

The valence-framing effect derives from the information context value (positive, negative) and arises when the viewpoint of the population of a certain object corresponds to the value of contextual information in which it is received (Chong and Druckman, 2007: 104).<sup>2</sup> The research consequently builds on the assumption that evening news are the main source of information about important political events for specific groups of the population (Žeželj et al., 2007).

The research had three main objectives and related research questions. It first mapped out the medialisation development of the Czech parliamentary parties ODS and ČSSD and their chairmen Mirek Topolánek and Jiří Paroubek during the governmental crisis from 1 January to 31 March 2009. The first research question was:

RQ1: Did the positive and negative value of the context appear in statements about selected subjects in the main TV news of Czech TV and TV Nova?

The measurable variables were the frequency and qualitative context value of the statements concerning the subjects of interest. The objective data and methodology of Media Tenor, an agency that conducts content analyses of Czech news reports, was first used to answer the first research question. The basic unit of the content analysis was a report defined as an information segment, which cites or describes the subject of interest. The subject and context of evaluation consequently determine the report. The subject is the object the inspected information is related to (e.g. politician, political party). The context is defined as a segment of news report, which presented the subject in a positive, negative or neutral light and in relation to broader circumstances.

The second aim was to identify the prospective viewer of *Události ČT* and *Televizní noviny* to specify the target population in relation to which the TV news reporting could potentially demonstrate a higher level of valence-framing effect.<sup>3</sup> The research questions related to this aim were:

RQ2: What is the profile of a prospective viewer of the *Události ČT* and *Televizní noviny*?

RQ3: In which socio-demographic characteristics do they differ from each other?

<sup>2</sup> The aim of the article is not to explain the short-term effect of the frames on the individual formation of political opinions. On the contrary, the valence-framing effect is perceived here as the long-term influence of framed news reports on their recipients (Druckman, 2004; de Vreese, 2004).

<sup>3</sup> The target groups mentioned were perceived through the lens of probability because the available quantitative tools which measure the ratings of TV news cannot yet measure with mathematical accuracy the degree of active reception of news content by the recipient. Thus, this article assumes that an individual who met the given criteria would be a potential recipient of the news content over the period examined.

Identifying the profile of the viewer groups was based on the data available through the ratings database managed in the Czech Republic by the Association of Television Organizations (ATO). They perform electronic ratings surveys by monitoring live television viewing on all television sets in a household. Live television watching is defined as “person’s presence in the room where a TV set is turned on showing the live broadcast of a TV channel with this person logged in through a TV meter system.” (Ato.cz, 2017) To identify the viewer population groups, the variables age, sex and education were selected. For these specific target groups, the rating, or percentage of people from a given target group, who were following live for an average second of a given period of television broadcasting on a given channel, was observed (Ato.cz, 2017).

The final third research objective was the identification of mutual relations between the context of news reports in selected programmes and the political preferences of viewer groups within the monitored period. The related research question was:

RQ4: Was there a correlation between received news and political attitudes within the target groups of viewers?

Data from the research project *Naše společnost* (Our society) implemented by Centrum pro výzkum veřejného mínění (Public Opinion Research Centre, CVVM), which belongs to the Sociological Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, was used for the research. The empirical verification of the assumed valence-framing effect on the formation of TV news viewers’ political preferences was carried out on the basis of time aggregated data and primarily focused on examining the degree of probable effect on selected segments of the population over an extended time frame.

Therefore, the research used three types of data, the collection of which depended on the aforementioned three objectives: medialisation data obtained from Media Tenor; *Události ČT* and *Televizní noviny* ratings data from ATO; and the data files of individual opinion polls conducted by CVVM. The data were treated and subsequently analysed by the statistical programme Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). All data, which met the selection criteria of research variables and the time limit of the study, were considered relevant.

The research was based on the empirical-analytical approach. The following hypothesis was tested:

H1: Valence-framing effect exists in a link between the context value of news reports in *Události ČT* or *Televizní noviny* and the political attitudes of their viewers.

The hypothesis was tested by the correlation analysis method which allowed us to learn the association level of the examined variables over time (Hendl, 2012: 240). The aim was to verify the possibility that a link could be observed between the frequency of news reports about selected subjects and the rise or drop in political preferences of the prospective recipients of these news reports over the given period. The medialisation data

of the given news were for these purposes always compared with the political preferences of their viewers. They were compared based on the final correlation of coefficients of the three examined groups.

## RESULTS AND MAIN FINDINGS

### Medialization (presence of positive and negative frames in reports)

The first objective focused on mapping the development of medialisation of the main political actors during the governmental crisis over the given period. Both programmes were broadcast daily during the interval investigated. Each selected TV station presented the main news to their viewers 90 times. Czech Television broadcast a total of 51.72 hours of its evening news. *Události ČT* always began at 18:59:38 and lasted 34.48 min on average. Television Nova broadcast a total of 38.4 hours of its main news. *Televizní noviny* always began at 19:30:00 and lasted every day 25.6 min on average, being on average 8.9 min shorter than the *Události ČT*.

Both television programmes dedicated space to the selected subjects during the period examined. *Události ČT* broadcast entries about the examined parties and politicians on average two times more often than *Televizní noviny*. The news of ČT1 thus provided more space to political events than Televize Nova, which dedicated most of its broadcasting time to other issues. The point of medialisation of the selected subjects (ODS, ČSSD and their leaders) on both stations over the given period demonstrated certain specific trends. In the case of ODS, identical periods of top frequencies presented entries about the party itself and its president Topolánek (from 14 March to 31 March 2009, and from 1 January to 15 January 2009). These periods also coincided for both subjects with the top frequencies of positive (1 January to 15 January 2009) and negative reports (from 14 March to 31 March 2009). It can therefore be assumed that a certain level of news agenda personalisation occurred. In the case of the positive medialisation of Topolánek, the frequency between the testimonies of both stations was almost linear from a time perspective.

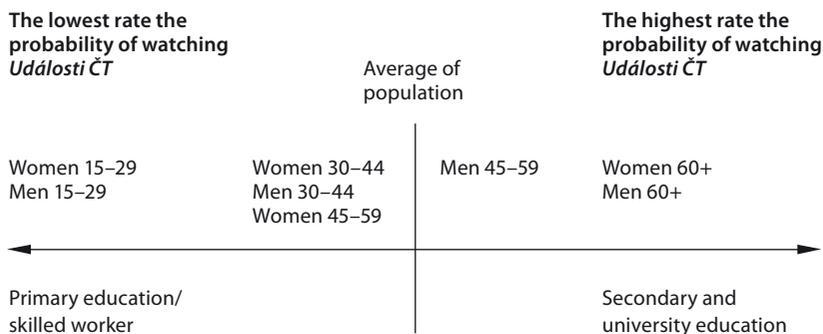
The positive medialisation of ODS and its chairman was specifically related to the beginning of the Czech EU Presidency. Topolánek and his team were portrayed in the news as EU leaders, who stand alongside prominent European statesmen. They also positively evaluated his role in the negotiations concerning the suspension of natural gas supplies from Russia. Both TV stations were very close in providing positive medialisation of Topolánek which could be explained by the importance of the Czech EU presidency. In contrast, the most negative reports about Topolánek and ODS appeared during the crisis and the fall of the government. Topolánek was portrayed as an incompetent leader incapable of maintaining party unity. News reports also broadcast his undignified reaction to the fall of his cabinet.

ČSSD and Paroubek displayed in both news programmes a generally lower level of medialisation than the previous two subjects. From the perspective of the qualitative

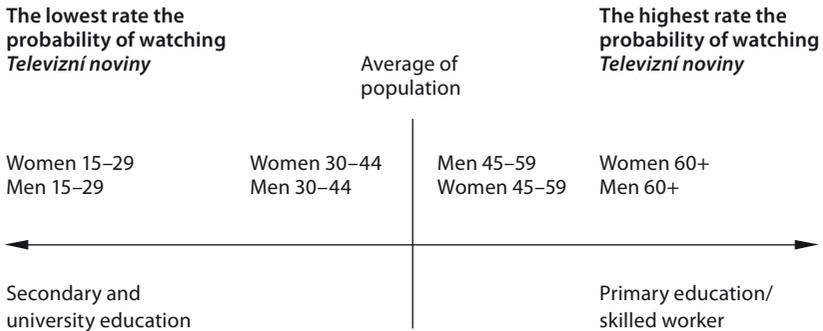
context value, an identical media depiction of the party and its leader was not experienced. The discrepancy occurred in the first two weeks in January and during the governmental crisis in March 2009. In the first case, ČSSD was presented in a more negative light because of their expressed disapproval of the change in the Cabinet in January. In the second case, its chairman was presented in a more negative manner as the media presented him as the initiator of the vote of no confidence, who consequently was unwilling to take responsibility for the outcome of the vote. In the case of ČSSD, specifically Paroubek at the time, the news frequency between both stations did not attain the same level of concurrence as with ODS and Topolánek.

### The profile of prospective viewers of *Události ČT* and *Televizní noviny*

The second objective of the study focused on identifying the profile of prospective viewers of *Události ČT* and *Televizní noviny*. The aim was to identify those population groups, on which the news reports could have demonstrated the highest level of the valence-framing effect. Figure 1 and 2 present the results. To identify the viewer population groups, the variables age, sex and education were selected. The main news on TV Nova was generally more watched than the news on ČT1. The most prospective viewers of both news were people over 60. The age of 45 was identified as a breaking point between the above and below average viewer rating. Both genders above 45 tend to pay the attention to the evening news on *Události ČT* and *Televizní noviny*. Youngers seek information elsewhere e.g from the Internet.



▲ Figure 1.  
The profile of prospective viewers of *Události ČT*  
(by age and education levels of the population).  
Source: Author based on ATO data.



▲ Figure 2.  
The profile of prospective viewers of *Televizní noviny* by age and education levels of the population.  
Source: Author based on ATO data.

As regards to the education structure, the news on TV Nova was most often watched by skilled workers and people with a primary education. On the other hand, those with the highest probability of watching *Události ČT* appear to be among the secondary and university educated people.

### Is the valence-framing present with prospective viewers of *Události ČT* and *Televizní noviny*?

The final objective of this study focused on testing the presence of the valence-framing effect with prospective viewers of *Události ČT* and *Televizní noviny*. This was verified by identifying the links between the qualitative context value (positive, negative) of the *Události ČT* and *Televizní noviny* news reports about the selected subjects on the one hand and the existing political attitudes of the prospective viewers of these programmes on the other hand. Political attitudes were defined with the following variables: current social affairs, party sympathies of selected political parties and trust in selected politicians. Tables 1-3 illustrate the results of the correlation analysis.

Results manifest the presence of the valence-framing effect demonstrated by the link between the news reports of *Události ČT* and their prospective viewers. The hypothesis was verified. It became evident in the case of the higher frequency of positive reports about ODS related to the rise in support for this party among prospective viewers of ČT1. Increasing party support for ODS was also apparent with a higher frequency of negative reports about ČSSD in *Události ČT*. This mutual link was most obvious in the case of positive and negative reports about Topolánek, when the increase in positive medialisation of Topolánek in *Události ČT* was accompanied by a growing trust in his person among the prospective viewers of the ČT1 news programme.

Table 1. Correlation level of between news reports about ODS and ČSSD in *Události ČT* and *Televizní noviny* and party support among selected population groups in selected period.<sup>4</sup>

	ČT viewers: support ODS	ČT viewers: support ČSSD	Nova viewers: support ODS	Nova viewers: support ČSSD
CT1_Reports about ODS	<b>0,492</b>	0,507	0,159	0,654
CT1_Positive reports about ODS	<b>0,714</b>	0,493	0,661	<b>0,499</b>
CT1_Negative reports about ODS	0,275	-0,065	0,125	0,161
CT1_Reports about ČSSD	<b>0,531</b>	0,382	0,258	0,562
CT1_Positive reports about ČSSD	0,375	0,197	0,158	0,373
CT1_Negative reports about ČSSD	<b>0,611</b>	0,598	0,346	0,746
NOVA_Reports about ODS	0,230	0,539	-0,111	0,632
NOVA_Positive reports about ODS	0,347	<b>0,586</b>	0,377	0,494
NOVA_Negative reports about ODS	-0,202	-0,146	-0,340	0,066
NOVA_Reports about ČSSD	0,274	0,093	0,062	0,270
NOVA_Positive reports about ČSSD	0,331	0,437	0,113	<b>0,580</b>
NOVA_Negative reports about ČSSD	0,460	0,461	0,244	0,522

Source: Author based on Media Tenor and CVVM data.

Table 2. Correlation level between news reports about Mirek Topolánek in *Události ČT* and *Televizní noviny* and the trust in him among selected population groups in selected period.<sup>5</sup>

	ČT viewers: trust in Topolánek	ČT viewers: distrust in Topolánek	Nova viewers: trust in Topolánek	Nova viewers: distrust in Topolánek
CT1_Reports about Topolánek	<b>0,434</b>	<b>-0,521</b>	0,279	-0,306
CT1_Positive reports about Topolánek	<b>0,622</b>	<b>-0,787</b>	0,511	-0,621

<sup>4</sup> Each line indicates in colour the greatest differences between the correlation coefficients between media reports and party support for ODS (ČSSD) among the individual target groups of the public (ČT viewers, Nova viewers). A different colour was selected for each news station. The position of the colour field in the table corresponds with the degree of mutual link between the media reports of a given programme and the party support for ODS (ČSSD) among the public.

<sup>5</sup> Each line indicates in colour the greatest differences between the correlation coefficients between media reports and support for Topolánek among the individual target groups of the public (ČT viewers, Nova viewers).



CT1_Negative reports about Topolánek	<b>0,417</b>	<b>-0,499</b>	0,287	-0,262
NOVA_Reports about Topolánek	<b>0,527</b>	<b>-0,670</b>	0,406	-0,490
NOVA_Positive reports about Topolánek	<b>0,740</b>	<b>-0,888</b>	0,659	-0,747
NOVA_Negative reports about Topolánek	<b>0,499</b>	<b>-0,523</b>	0,359	-0,312

Source: Author based on Media Tenor and CVVM data.

Table 3. Correlation level between news reports about Jiří Paroubek in *Události ČT* and *Televizní noviny* and trust in him among the selected population in the selected period.<sup>6</sup>

	ČT viewers: trust in Paroubek	ČT viewers: distrust in Paroubek	Nova viewers: trust in Paroubek	Nova viewers: distrust in Paroubek
CT1_Reports about Paroubek	0,205	-0,343	<b>0,348</b>	-0,494
CT1_Positive reports about Paroubek	0,396	-0,600	<b>0,549</b>	<b>-0,703</b>
CT1_Negative reports about Paroubek	0,168	-0,341	0,312	-0,466
NOVA_Reports about Paroubek	-0,172	0,074	-0,088	-0,050
NOVA_Positive reports about Paroubek	-0,100	0,044	0,078	-0,153
NOVA_Negative reports about Paroubek	0,064	-0,167	0,214	-0,322

Source: Author based on Media Tenor and CVVM data.

The presence of a mutual link can be derived from the character of the news medium and the structure of the prospective viewer population. In the case of *Události ČT*, the link between the news reports and the attitudes of the prospective viewers could be explained, on the one hand, by the greater media space which ČT1 dedicated to political events, and on the other hand, by the fact that its prospective viewers were more right-wing oriented voters with a higher level of trust in quality information provided by ČT1 news broadcasting.

As concerns the mutual correlation between the reports about the examined parties in *Televizní noviny* and party support among its viewers, a weaker correlation relationship than with *Události ČT* was observed. Higher values of the correlation coefficient appeared among TV Nova viewers only in support for ČSSD. A significant link between the news

<sup>6</sup> Each line indicates in colour the greatest differences between the correlation coefficients between media reports and support for Paroubek among the individual target groups of the public (ČT viewers, Nova viewers).

report of TV Nova about ČSSD and *Televizní noviny* viewer's support for this party emerged, most visible in the case of positive reports.

The medialisation of Jiří Paroubek and his support among TV Nova viewers showed no mutual link. This could be explained by a generally lower frequency of political events presented on *Televizní noviny* and also a lower interest on the part of its prospective viewers in political affairs. If they take any interest in political affairs, they tend to be more left-wing oriented voters. It can be assumed that the valence-framing effect emerged regarding the viewer connection to the TV Nova news, but to a far lower extent than in the case of *Události ČT*.

## CONCLUSION

This study helps to understand the meaning of valence-framing theory on the formation of political attitudes among the public. The first objective mapped out the medialisation development of the Czech parliamentary parties ODS and ČSSD and their chairmen Mirek Topolánek and Jiří Paroubek during the governmental crisis from 1 January to 31 March 2009 (RQ1). According to the analysis, the positive and negative reports about the subjects were presented in broadcasts on both television channels. *Události ČT* broadcast entries about the examined parties and politicians on average two times more often than *Televizní noviny*. The character of public television news coverage of *Události ČT* has proved to be an important factor in the provision of media space to political events. In the case of private *Televizní noviny*, the lower frequency of political denunciations was noticeable, as news items on other topics prevailed in the broadcast.

The point of the medialisation of the selected subjects, on both stations over the given period demonstrated certain specific trends. In the case of ODS, identical periods of top frequencies presented entries about the party itself and its president Topolánek (from 14 March to 31 March 2009, and from 1 January to 15 January 2009). These periods also coincided for both subjects with the top frequencies of positive (1 January to 15 January 2009) and negative reports (from 14 March to 31 March 2009). It can therefore be assumed that a certain level of news agenda personalisation occurred. In the case of the positive medialisation of Topolánek, the frequency between the testimonies of both stations was almost linear from a time perspective. The positive medialisation of ODS and its chairman was specifically related to the beginning of the Czech EU Presidency. In contrast, the most negative reports about Topolánek and ODS appeared during the crisis and fall of the government. ČSSD and Paroubek displayed in both news programmes a generally lower level of medialisation than the previous two subjects. From the perspective of the qualitative context value, an identical media depiction of the party and its leader was not experienced.

The second objective focused on identifying the profile of prospective viewers of *Události ČT* and *Televizní noviny* and mapped out the socio-demographic characteristics (sex, age and education) in which these two groups of viewers differ from each other (RQ2,

RQ3). The most prospective viewers of both news programmes were people over 60. The age of 45 was identified as a breaking point between the above and below average viewer rating. The both genders under 45 years tend to find another source of receiving the news (e.g. the Internet). Education was the key variable to distinguish the viewers of *Události ČT* and *Televizní noviny*. The highest probability of watching *Události ČT* tends to appear among people over 45 with a secondary and university education. On the other hand, the viewer of *Televizní noviny* tends to be over 45, but have a primary education or are a skilled worker.

The final objective of this study focused on testing the presence of the valence-framing effect with prospective viewers of *Události ČT* and *Televizní noviny*. In other words, if the correlation can be found between the positive (negative) reports and the viewers of the news and thus form their political attitudes (RQ4, H1). Although both news programmes practically coincided in terms of periods of increased frequency of positive and negative medialisation about the selected subjects, they differed in terms of the degree of the valence-framing effect on their prospective viewers. The findings of the correlations analysis indicated that the public TV news programme *Události ČT* displayed a higher level of valence-framing effect than the commercial *Televizní noviny*, and the same could be said about the medialisation of the government party ODS rather than the opposition party ČSSD. It could be argued that the increase in positive news about ODS and Topolánek in *Události ČT* led among viewers of ČT to an increase in party support for ODS and an increased trust in Topolánek and vice versa. The same trend was not observed among viewers of Czech Television concerning ČSSD. In the case of the mutual correlation between reports about the parties in question in *Televizní noviny* and the attitudes of TV Nova viewers, a correlation link was observed less frequently than in the case of *Události ČT*.

Two factors could explain this paradox. As it concerns the news programmes, the media space dedicated to political events and the subjects under examination could explain this reality. An increase in attention dedicated to political affairs led to a more common presence of a link between the political attitudes of prospective viewers of a given programme and its news reports. This would be the case for *Události ČT*. An opposite trend was observed in the case of *Televizní noviny*. The second explanatory factor was related to the prospective viewers, specifically their structure, wherein a possible prevailing political orientation could be derived. As concerns *Události ČT*, these were the older, more educated viewers, who could probably be labeled as more right-wing than left-wing voters. In the case of *Televizní noviny*, older viewers also prevailed, but with a primary education or among skilled workers, from whom one would more likely expect left-wing rather than right-wing political views.

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# VAŽNOST VRIJEDNOSNOG UOKVIRIVANJA U PROCESU POLITIČKE KOMUNIKACIJE: STUDIJA SLUČAJA O UTJECAJU VRIJEDNOSNOG UOKVIRIVANJA NA FORMIRANJE POLITIČKIH STAVOVA GLEDATELJA TELEVIZIJSKIH VIJESTI U ČEŠKOJ REPUBLICI

Hana Hurtíková

**SAŽETAK** Rad istražuje značenje teorije vrijednosnog uokvirivanja u političkoj komunikaciji, odnosno ispituje utjecaj vrijednosnih okvira na formiranje političkih stavova u javnosti. Učinak vrijednosnog uokvirivanja izveden je iz kontekstualne vrijednosti informacije (pozitivno, negativno) i vrijedi ako stavovi ljudi prema određenoj temi odgovaraju kontekstualnoj vrijednosti primljene informacije. Ovaj rad kao studiju slučaja predstavlja izvještavanje za vrijeme krize vlade Mireka Topoláneka u Češkoj Republici 2009. Rad ispituje u kojoj je mjeri kontekst izjava na češkim vijestima o dvjema parlamentarnim strankama – Građanskoj demokratskoj stranci (Občanská demokratická strana, ODS, predsjednik Mirek Topolánek) i Češkoj socijaldemokratskoj stranci (Česká strana sociálně demokratická, ČSSD, predsjednik Jiří Paroubek) – povezan s postojećim političkim stavovima njihove potencijalne publike. U radu se tvrdi kako je učinak vrijednosnog uokvirivanja bio vidljiviji u programu javne televizije Události ČT nego u komercijalnom programu Televizní noviny, što predstavlja paradoks koji se može objasniti jedinstvenom poveznicom između karakteristika češkog medijskog okruženja i političkih stavova televizijskih gledatelja.

## KLJUČNE RIJEČI

POLITIČKA KOMUNIKACIJA, VRIJEDNOSNI UČINAK UOKVIRIVANJA, VIJESTI ČEŠKE TELEVIZIJE, ODS, ČSSD

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