

Abstract

The thesis focuses on the political communication and media-related aspects of the first two waves of the coronavirus pandemic in the Czech Republic. The Czech Republic overcame the spring wave of the pandemic in 2020 almost exemplarily, despite low preparedness and lack of protective equipment. This changed completely with the arrival of the second wave, when Czechia found itself among the worst affected countries. The aim of this paper is to explore one of the possible causes of this development. The thesis builds on the assumption that 1) political communication and media messages directed at citizens can - especially in times of crisis when news messages and politicians receive increased attention - have a perceptible impact on citizens' behaviour, their decision-making and their interpretation of unfolding events, and 2) that inconsistency of information, as well as inconsistency in its interpretation and framing, can have a negative impact on citizens' trust in the state and in the measures taken. Building on these assumptions, the paper uses a content analysis to examine how the COVID-19 disease pandemic was framed by the government and the media during the first and second waves of the pandemic, and tests the hypothesis that the degree of divergence between government and media framing of the pandemic increased between these waves. The rejection of this hypothesis, which the paper subsequently arrives at, allows us to rule out the influence of the increasing diversity of framings in public discourse on the worsening of the pandemic situation in the second wave. Despite the rejection of this hypothesis, the thesis contributes valuable data to basic research on the framing of the coronavirus pandemic in the communications of government politicians and the media in Czech Republic, and thus provides a springboard for further research on the political-communication and media dimensions of the coronavirus crisis and its impact on the course of the pandemic in the country and abroad.