

ABSTRACT

Russian-American Relations and the Mass Media Securitization of Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump in the American Press

by

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This thesis is focused on two issues relevant to Security Studies and Political Science: relations between the Russian Federation and the United States of America, which are currently experiencing yet another decline, and problematics of political journalism. It reviews the process of securitization of Russia through speech acts in the mass media of its historical opponent, the United States.

First, the thesis provides a theoretical framework, securitization theory, introducing its main principles. To prove that the process of securitization indeed occurs, the method of discourse analysis is employed. The third chapter provides background information on the relations between the Soviet Union/Russia and the United States since the end of the World War II; this information is completed by the role mass media had in their affairs. The next chapter frames the issue of propaganda, elaborating on the meaning behind this concept, the “fake news” narrative, and the idealistic idea of media objectivity. In the fifth chapter, the case study, two processes of securitization are reviewed. The first one is the American mainstream media, namely *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, securitizing Putin’s Russia, with the referent object being the United States and the international liberal order. It has been found that the media uses “symbols” to refer to Russia as an aggressor which threatens the US and other actors. The second case of securitization is the media securitizing Donald Trump’s presidency; the referent object is again the United States and democracy in the country. The thesis concludes with emphasising the importance of connection between the two processes: securitizing Trumps is possible because securitization of Russia started decades ago and has never really stopped, even after the collapse of the Soviet Union. This indicates the importance of the mass media: during the Cold War, anti-communism had become a national ideology thanks to propaganda in the media, and the negative attitude towards Russia did not cease to exist with the collapse of communism regime. It also illustrates how deep rivalry and animosity between Russia and the US are, and how

complicated it used to be - and would be in the future - for them to cooperate and coexist peacefully as partners.

Keywords:

Securitization, Russian Federation, United States, Donald Trump, Vladimir Putin, Propaganda, Bias, Mass Media, American Media, Cold War