THE ROLE OF MASS MEDIA IN THE SECURITIZATION PROCESS OF INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

Vladimír Dolinec[*]

RESUME

The presented article tries to contribute to the theory of securitization introduced by the Copenhagen school. The theory itself is of great importance; however, it misses some explanation of the process of political communication. The authors of the Copenhagen school focus on the speech act of securitization, but do not concentrate on its way to the audience. The presented paper focuses on the role of mass media and their effect on the process of securitization of international terrorism. The centre of attention is the process of political and mass media communication and the methods mass media use to influence this process, primarily their work with sources, the theory of agenda setting and framing.

Key words: *securitization, agenda setting, framing, mass media, Copenhagen school, terrorism*

RESUME

Predložený článok sa snaží prispieť k teórii sekuritizácie, ktorá bola predstavená Kodanskou školou. Táto teória sama o sebe je veľkým prínosom pre skúmanie bezpečnosti, existuje však istý deficit vysvetlenia procesu politickej komunikácie, ktorá je pre tento fenomén nevyhnutná. Autori zameranie Kodanskej školy sa zamerali na rečový akt sekuritizácie, ale nesústredili sa pri tom na jeho cestu k tzv. publiku. Predložená štúdia sa zameriava na úlohu masmédií a ich vplyv na proces sekuritizácie medzinárodného terorizmu. V centre pozornosti je proces politickej komunikácie a spôsoby, ktoré masovokomunikačné prostriedky používajú na ovplyvnenie tohto procesu, predovšetkým ich práca so zdrojmi, teória agenda setting a rámcovanie.

Kľúčové slová: *sekuritizácia, agenda setting, rámcovanie, masmédiá, Kodanská škola, terorizmus*

[*] Mgr. Vladimír Dolinec is an internal Ph.D. student at the Department of Security Studies, Faculty of Political Science and International Relations, Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica, e-mail: vladimir.dolinec@umb.sk

Introduction

Securitization is a process which was described by the work of the so called Copenhagen school[1] and this term came into existence at the end of last century. Since then, it has become a common concept among security researchers and analysts, which proves that securitization is an often analyzed phenomenon. However, the role of mass media in this process is largely under-analyzed. The main aim of this article is to emphasize the importance of analyzing mass media – their contribution to the process of securitization, as well as defining their position in this process. Their position will be defined with the use of deductive method by analyzing their conduct by informing about security related issues, mainly in the newscast programs. Newscast is the most important element of mass media content concerning the process of securitization; however, we by no means neglect the impact of other elements of mass media content on the process.

This paper does not aim to give a detailed content analysis of coverage of a particular issue in particular dailies or TV channels in a particular period. Its aim is rather to point out the most common effects, researched by theorists, which we think could have a major influence on the process of securitization. One of the most important one of these effects is the so called *agenda-setting effect* of the mass media, as it was introduced by **M. McCombs** and **D. Shaw**. In addition, the phenomenon of framing, which is as well a part of the agenda-setting, will be looked further in this paper. For a better understanding and a practical evidence of the methods which mass media use, we will use quotations of the Western (liberal-democratic) audiovisual media with the biggest share of the market. The central point of our attention is the mass media's influence on securitizing of the international terrorism, therefore, the quotations focus on this issue. Nonetheless, we presume that we could similarly be able to observe the same methods being used in all other security related issues. This stems from the theoretical background of this paper, which is rather constructivist.

If one wants to understand the role mass media play in the process of securitization, he has to understand the process of securitization itself, as

---

[1] The www.newamericancentury.com school is a group of researchers from Copenhagen which focuses on security studies and researching of security related issues. The most famous authors of this school are Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, Jaap de Wilde.

explained by the Copenhagen school. Only after that, after becoming aware of the basic elements, actors, objects, as well as the course of the process can one understand the position and the influence of mass media in this process. Therefore, we focus on this part first.

Securitization

Securitization is the continuation of politicization or its more radical version. The authors of the Copenhagen school claim, that any public topic can go through 3 different stages. It can be non-politicized, politicized or securitized. A non-politicized issue is an issue standing outside the public interest; there is no public discussion going on about it. Politicized issues become part of public policy; they often become part of the governmental action in the form of state action. Securitized issues are understood as being existential threats which require extraordinary means and they excuse actions which are normally beyond the frame of common political procedures. (Buzan et al., 2005) Hence, securitization is a process which shifts issues and problems (mostly already politicized) into a position where they become existential threats for the referent object, be it (depending on the sector) a state, a sub-state entity, ideology, economy, environment etc. This shift is called *the act of securitization*. The authors of the Copenhagen school state that it is a speech act. Securitizing actor has to argue that the problem is more significant than other problems; it is a problem of high priority. (Ušiak, 2009, p. 143-144) As criteria, they set the concept of the existential threat. A topic becomes securitized when the actors of securitization have labelled it as an existential threat. There has to be a message coming out of the securitization act saying: "*If we do not manage this problem in time, everything else will become unimportant (either we will be dead or we will be constrained by something else by solving it).*"(Buzan, 2005, p. 35)

At this point it is important to emphasize the subjective and selective character of what becomes a security related issue. Some issues had existed for a long time before getting securitized (e.g., terrorism, environmental problems); some securitized issues have proved to be false alarms; they were oversecuritized and have brought reactions which were inappropriate and caused a lot of meaningless suffering (Hitler's securitization in 1939, securitization of the communist ruling parties in the Eastern bloc 1945-1989, the 2003 Iraq invasion etc.) That means it is quite impossible to set an objective set of criteria what is, should or should not be securitized; that is to say – what is or

is not an existential threat. Mostly, it is defined by who we are, what our goals are and how we are able to advertise the negative effect of those factors which are not in accordance with these thoughts. The selective character of securitization is to be borne in mind for the purpose of following parts of this paper to better understand the role of mass media.

As a part of the securitization, or its necessary result, there is an answer or a proposed solution to the problem labelled as the existential threat. In fact, the whole process of securitization leads to this reaction. '*As a reaction to the existential nature of the threat the securitizing actor claims he has to adopt extraordinary measures which are outside common norms of the political field. Buzan, Weaver and de Wilde therefore argue that securitization is a motion which moves politics outside the common and usual rules and limits the problem either as a special type of politics or something more than politics (above politics).* (Emmers, 2007, p.111 In: Collins, 2007)

Public discussion in which the issue has been presented as an existential threat is only the first phase of the securitization process. The second step is the acceptance of this issue, now an existential security threat, by the public (audience). Only here does the issue become a real and 'genuine' existential threat. Within liberal democratic societies, it is not possible to realize the act of securitization by force. There has to be some kind of general acceptance from the audience that the issue really needs to be solved, otherwise they might not survive. In conditions where it is impossible to use force to persuade, other methods have to be used. That is why mass media have a substantial role in this process. It is the best means to reach the widest audience no matter what message one wants to communicate and securitization act is therefore no example. As will be showed later, however, mediation is not the only means by which the mass media contribute to it.

As it has already been stated, we can call a securitization act successful only in case the speech act, which has to be convincing, has been accepted by the audience. The audience has to approve that the referent object is threatened and it has to (mostly tacitly) approve of the extraordinary measures proposed by the securitizing actor. These are usually thought to be necessary, given the nature of the threat. The security analyst should therefore explore who speaks about security and in what way, or how he is creating it. The topics and circumstances under which they are securitized are of great importance, too. The above mentioned audience, for example, can differ depending on the sector

of security[2] and the referent object. Mostly it is the public of the state, as security issues are usually dealt with on the state level. This is, naturally, not a rule as issues can be securitized on a local level, be it on a communal or district level (usually within the environmental sector).

Acquiring the public approval (acceptance by the audience) means to agree with the idea that the securitized issue is one of an existential character. To solve it, some extraordinary measures have to be taken, which under normal circumstances would not be considered legitimate (violence, war, invasion, tax rising, limiting the free market etc.) Acquiring this approval or acceptance may be of miscellaneous difficulty for the securitizing actor. It depends on the issue being securitized which is related to the perception of threat on the individual as well as societal level and the concept of identity. Depending on the issue being securitized and the level on which it is being securitized the actor chooses the means and tries to find the answer to the question: '*How to securitize*?'

The fact that the process of securitization depends on the approval of the audience brings us into a new dimension of researching securitization and that is exploring the process how the speech act is accepted and who can be involved into the process as well as how.

In the 21st century, the time when there is a TV set in almost every household of the 'western' or 'democratic' societies and TV, radio and increasingly internet are the main sources of information, it would be erroneous not to research the contribution of mass media to the process of securitization. Of course, the aim of this article is not to provide a cover-all, comprehensive knowledge of the mass media effects as there are whole books covering the topic of mass media effects. The aim is to select the most general methods and means which various types of mass media from radio stations to internet news pages use in their newscasts and by which they contribute to the securitization process. For, in addition to the informative function of the mass media's newscast, it has also many others. First of all, newscast is an '*repetitive representation of who and what is important in the society, what is normatively right from the social systems' perspective and simultaneously, what sanctions can follow after potential breaking of such norms.*' (Trampota, 2006, p.10)

We believe that without mass media the process of securitization could not for many reasons be successful in most cases. First and foremost, the attempt

---

[2] The Copenhagen school also introduced the 5 sector of security: environmental, political, societal, economical and military.

for a successful securitizing act would not reach general public. Interpersonal communication and its limitations would no less than slow it down and deform it in a way that it would be of no meaning for the securitizing actors. On contrary, mass media speed the process of securitization up significantly. We have chosen newscast as the central point of analysis, because it is the main element of the mass media content which deals with political and security issues. Other types of programmes do affect the process as well; however, not in such extent as newscast.

The Role Of Mass Media In Securitization Of Terrorism

Actors and functional actors of securitization

In the previous part we described the concept of securitization, the basic process and its particular stages. At this stage we would like to stress the fact that of securitization itself is very complex process and it does not only involve only the speech act of the securitizing actor itself. A simplified model of securitization process consists of 4 basic elements: 1. the securitization actor 2. the referent object 3. functional actors and 4. the audience. (Buzan, 2005)

According to the Copenhagen school, the referent object is the entity which is existentially threatened and can therefore legitimately claim the right to survive. Securitization actors are actors who state that the referent object is existentially threatened and try to persuade the audience that the issue which is being securitized is an existential threat, thereby shifting the process of securitization. Functional actors influence the dynamics of the security related relations within the security sectors. They influence the political decisions in the field of security; however, they are neither referent objects nor actors of securitization. For example, as a functional actor in the environmental sector, is a company which pollutes the environment. It is not a referent object, nor tries it to securitize the public topics within the environmental sector. However, it is important for the run of events in the sector. (Buzan, 2005)

After denoting the main elements of the securitization process, the question at this point would be where to assign the mass media. The most obvious answer would be that they are just mediators of the speech acts made by the securitizing actors and thus deserve no special position. However, when looking at some effects of mass media, and the way they inform about the social reality, this first glance view could be erroneous.

Mass media, of course are mediators. However, as will be showed later on, they influence the dynamics of the security sectors like functional actors do, and they promote the speech acts of the securitization actors and sometimes shift them to a higher level. That gives them some characteristics of securitization actors. In addition, mass media often have ties to other functional actors and sometimes securitizing actors, too; for example, corporations or even governments. Last but not least, their *agenda-setting* effect, by which they influence the public agenda, is a form of shaping the security discourse within the audience, supporting particular speech acts and extraordinary measures.

It is important to consider the fact, that particular mass media are not isolated entities with any structures above them. They are usually subsidiaries of large corporations, which then influence their political heading and behaviour. A matter of fact, it is not unusual that a corporation which owns a particular media is a functional actor within the security sector. In our case, the securitization of international terrorism, one of the functional actors which influence and are influenced by the dynamics within the sector are arms corporations. From an economical point of view, it is in favour of those corporations when the defence spending of a state rises.

After 11th September 2001, for example, the U.S. expenditures in the so called War on Terrorism were 432 billion $ from September to June 2006. The expenditures of the American department of defence rose by 53% in real terms from 2001 to 2006. (SIPRI Yearbook 2007, 2007) Before 2001, it was spoken in the USA about the defence expenditure crisis and authors of conservative think-tanks spoke about the necessity of their rising. (Schmitt, 1998)

Arms corporations are therefore functional actors of securitizing international terrorism. They are considered to be functional actors in the military sector by the authors of the Copenhagen school as well: "*If we do not look at the governments, various players from the private sphere, mainly the companies that form the arms industry, appear in our visual field. At the end of the 19th century were the European arms companies so independent that they were called the "death merchants". Their business representatives were never far away from private diplomatic activities, by which they would have added fuel to the flames of tension and conflict just to find new outlets for their goods.*"(Buzan, 2005, p.70)

As functional actors, the arms corporations have had a lot of ties to the mass media. In 1985, for example, the company General Electric – a leading

producer of nuclear arms and arms technologies acquired National Broadcasting Company (NBC) which is available in 97% households and is one of the main TV networks in the USA. Another influential mass media corporation owned by an arms corporation was the CBS, which belonged to Westinghouse Electric, a company producing nuclear weapons among others. American Broadcasting Company (ABC) is owned by Disney; CNN is owned by Time Warner which also owns Warner Brothers. Disney and Warner Brothers were long-time co-operators with the American government in the times of World War II when they produced war propaganda for the masses under the veil of entertainment. **Nancy Snow** (2003) wrote a whole book on the ties of the mass media and the government.

The above mentioned channels are the most significant TV channels and their newscast have a great deal of influence on shaping of the public opinion not only in the USA. "*The view of the American public on the world of foreign affairs is framed by what is presented in the evening news of the channels ABC, NBC, CBS and CNN. It does not mean that the only source of information on foreign affairs is TV, but that it is the most compact and most largely used source of information by the American public. The public understanding of problems (predominantly those which concern non-western cultures) is established on the basis of everyday information and visual symbols.*" (Altheide, 2006, p. 41)

American mass media and also mass media in general are under the influence of various groups; there is pressure also from the arms companies, which either own them or are somehow connected to them. It also shows that terms like independency and objectivity are disputable concepts even in the context of the so called democratic societies. In the private but in public media as well, the production of newscast is lead mainly by the economic motives of producing profit. This manifests itself in the form and policy of newscast. It does not have to be in the form of involuntary or forced breaking of the journalism's ethics, but applying the economic power. The economic power can play out in an indirect form. **Trampota** (2006) states that it starts with selection and hiring of similarly thinking people into the key managerial positions. Their role is to fulfil the owner's will by their activity. The value orientation, the policy and procedures of the particular media is the result of this applied economic power as well.

We have already mentioned think-tanks as the voices that called for a rise in the defense spending in the USA. These think-tanks, especially PNAC (Project for the new American Century[3]) played an important role in the securitization of terrorism. They helped by forming frames used when describing the events connected to the 11th September 2001. They connected 11th September 2001 with Iraq and Saddam Hussein and their activity helped this securitization by creating positive conditions for its successful run.

Among them, PNAC, a conservative American think-tank helped to form the public opinion and prepared the citizens of the USA and indirectly of other states for the extraordinary measures, which are usually the result of a successful act of securitization. Many PNAC members were members of the administration of **G. W. Bush,** had their voice in the media and helped to spread the war propaganda in the American mass media before the invasions into Afghanistan and Iraq. "*It's efforts influenced the Iraqi war and their result was the propaganda campaign which was supposed to persuade the American nation that the attack on Iraq is equal to the attack on terrorists and other enemies threatening the USA.*"(Armstrong, 2002 In: Altheide, 2006) According to **D. Altheide** PNAC '*put the phenomenon of terrorism into the context of a wider discourse of fear. It was created by omnipresent communicating, symbolic knowledge and persuasion about the reality, that threats and risks are part of everyday life.*' (Altheide, 2006) Inserting terrorism into the discourse of fear and the effort to invoke the feeling of danger, threats and risks fits into the logic of the process of its securitization.

In this case, PNAC acted as one of the actors of securitization and the American mass media often chose its members as routine sources for their news coverage, and their use rose by 85%, which influenced the shaping of public opinion. (Armstrong, 2002 In: Altheide, 2006) Such an increase is fairly high, given the fact that there are dozens of security think-tanks in the USA. There are various explanations why the mass media selected as their source primarily a securitizing actor rather than a desecuritizing one. One reason is the tendency of mass media to concentrate on more dramatic frames as well as more negative stories, because it attracts the audience more. Stories full of fear sell better. Another reason why the mass media could have been choosing securitizing actors could be the myths of the newscast as described by

---

[3] 1997-2006

Trampota (2006). He claims that there is a mythological level of newscast, which confirms some myths that pass on in the society. These myths are present in the ideas, notions, values and ideals which prevail in the society. These form a background for a construction according to which people interpret the world, they decide on what is good and what is bad, what is important and what is insignificant. This perception then transforms into different texts which the society produces, e.g. laws, scientific works, cinematography, advertising etc. Based on that presumption, we can state the connection with the security problematic. For example, if there is omnipresent coverage on terrorist attacks, dangerous nuclear weapons, which can fall into the hands of terrorists supposedly easily, about the threats that other countries pose to home countries by trying to access nuclear technologies and other threats and risks, people tend to unconsciously accept this content and they incorporate it into their psychological "equipment". If the often presented information is in accordance with the myths which prevail in the society (for example the myth that the world is a dangerous place or that life is a struggle) people tend to accept this information as truthful without deeper thinking about them. Of course it is not true for every member of the audience, it is rather a generalization. The hypodermic needle effect of mass media which claimed that mass media had a direct, immediate and powerful effect on their audiences is obsolete today. However, as we will show later, there are some rather long-term effects of the mass media which are proved by a several decades' long research.

Mass media as a mediator and authors of the speech act

Taking the ties of the functional actors and actors of securitization and mass media into account or not, as we will prove in this part of the paper, securitization of international terrorism is a result of a process in which mass media play a significant role. It is difficult to determine whether the activities of mass media in relation to securitization are an external factor or they are one of the important means of a successful achieving of goals. It is clear from the logic of their activity that securitization of particular issues is included in the receiving and representing information which has been acquired from their sources. Saying this as an excuse for not researching the issue further would be pitiful for the research of securitization itself. What could possibly seem as just a passive information gathering or receiving at first glance is not a passive involvement in the process of securitization. The character and coverage of the issues which

are being dealt with, the sources of information about these issues as well as placement in the hard news or soft news are very significant, too. These and many other factors influence securitization, taking into consideration the effects mass media have on the shaping of public opinion.

The first and most obvious example of mass media's influence on securitization stems from their informative function. Media are *mediators* between the public on one hand and government, politicians, officials, official bodies and clerks on the other. The role of the media is to inform the citizens about the activities of the government and the elected and unelected representatives. To give an example, the activities of the US president are monitored by mass media and the information about his activities are one of the main topics of newscast, given the position of president in the American political system. Therefore, most of his addresses are covered by the most of the newscast programmes. **G. W. Bush** as the commander-in-chief of the armed forces of the USA and the chairman of the National Security Council was one of the main securitizing actors of international terrorism after 11th September 2001. All his addresses touching this subject included the speech act of securitization. On 11th September 2001 he launched a massive campaign which concentrated on mobilization of public opinion in favour of retaliatory measures and countermeasures against the terrorist attacks. Since this moment the term *global terrorism* has been in use more often, mostly to name the greatest threat to America, the Western civilization, democracy and freedom.

By broadcasting and rebroadcasting Bush's (and now Obama's) speech acts within their addresses, they spread the speech acts themselves and the result was that the securitization reached a larger audience. This share of mass media on securitization is a logical implication of the political system and the function of the media. It seems like media were just a neutral mediator of information. However, they could have can choose a different way than this receive and pass on technique and concentrating on the official sources and conservative think-tanks. There are number of explanations for every issue and systematic repetition of a particular one may result into an easier acceptance by the audience as the *truthful* one. After the 11th September 2001, war propaganda supporting a war resolution of the problem became part of the newscast. (Altheide, 2006)

Focusing on the sources which provide mass media with information is also of high importance by this issue. Many media researchers have confirmed

the hypothesis that journalists tend to routinely use a limited number of proved sources which are most often sources with an official bureaucratic status. Moreover, it is also proved that sources with a higher social status and ones disposing of social power prevail. (Trampota,2006)

For the process of securitization, the above stated is important with connection to the concept of the so called *primary definition.* It is a hypothesis which claims that the right of primary definitions of issues belongs to people with a high social status, have a high rank or power in the society, because it is thought that they have access to more accurate and expert information than the rest of the population. (Critcher, Hall, 1978 In: Trampota, 2006, p.83) Thereby, high ranking persons have an advantage by shaping the agenda. If we presume that the given pattern works in the society, the advantage of these people is that by their primary definitions they form the basis of the future discussion about the particular topic. They help to form the frame which sets boundaries within which the discussion will take place.

If we look back at the securitization of international terrorism, we find out that it is how it worked after 11th September 2001. **G. W. Bush** was in the best frame to become the primary defining actor by defining what had happened. He began to offer his primary definitions the first night after the attacks on the buildings of WTC and Pentagon and that was in the address to the nation speech broadcasted on 11th September. Since that day, his statements constantly contained the terms of *threat* and *danger* and those terms were also widely present in the security documents.[4] Supposing the concept of primary definitions is veridical, we can reason out that when the American president defined Al-Qaeda and terrorism as the biggest threat to the American nation and mass media did not give any critical alternative, the audience probably accepted it. This kind of acceptance then coincides with the acceptance of the existence of the existential threat, which is a necessary precondition of a successful securitization act.

As we have indicated, by producing newscast, mass media can receive speech acts and pass them on only as quotations, referring to their sources. In this case, they become the mediators of the speech acts. On the contrary, mass media can also be involved in the process of securitization directly; that happens when the information which has the traits of a securitizing speech acts

---

[4] The word "terror", either itself or as a part of the words "terrorist" and "terrorism" was mentioned 90 times in the National Security Strategy. The word "threat" was mentioned 50 times.

according to the logics revealed by the Copenhagen school are not quotations of official representatives, politicians or governmental officials, but they represent individual standpoints, conclusions, presumptions, conjectures or opinions of particular reporters or media. In such case, the mass media become one of the securitizing actors, because they persuade the audience (readers, viewers or listeners) about a threat. As an example we can state a quotation from the British newspaper *The Guardian* in reaction to the attacks in Madrid: "*The great atrocity which was aimed at so many innocent people showed what we understood as early as on 11th September. We are facing an enemy we have never faced before... Many still do not understand the essence of what we are standing against... Now we are at war... It can and it must be won, but this will happen only if we start shoulder to shoulder, not only with the people of Spain, but all countries and religions which are now exposed to attacks.*"(Terror in Madrid: Europeans...., 2004) Such cases are direct securitization acts, where the mass media take part on directly, not by *only* mediating speech acts about threat and danger, but by creating them and broadcasting them into the world. This is an easily identifiable phenomenon and needs no further explanation. We will continue by focusing on another form of mass media influence on the securitization act and that is the concept of *agenda-setting*.

Agenda setting and securitization of international terrorism

As we have stated earlier, the process of securitization is influenced by many factors which were not described by the Copenhagen school and that is missing some important factors which affect it. **Williams** (2003, p.512) is the same opinion when he calls for developing a „*broader understanding of the mediums, structures, and institutions, of contemporary political communication if it is to address adequately questions of both empirical explanation and ethical appraisal in security practices.*" We have already introduced some ways of influencing the process by mass media above. That part focused on rather short-term effects of mass media. In this part, we will add another concept from the field of mass media studies, which is one of the long-term effects and can be used for researching securitization. It is the concept of *agenda setting.*

The dictionary of mass media communication defines *agenda setting* as the "*process of pushing of some topics into the public discourse and simultaneous exclusion of some topics from this discourse... In media studies, it is the hypothesis about the effect of mass media on the content of thinking of*

public and political discourse, according to which media are able to purposely or non-purposely expose some events and simultaneously determine the order of importance of the exposed events, which create part of the public space." (Reifová, 2004, p.16) Agenda setting theory looks for the answer why some information about particular issues become part of the public debate and some stay outside its attention, and why some questions are perceived by the public as more important than other.

Mass media have the power to influence the agenda within individual states, focus on several problems, and some problems stay in the background. Not only do people get the information about issues from the media, they also assign these issues with importance according the media. They do it by looking at the importance which mass media assign to these issues by putting stress on them. For example, print media put stress on issues by placing them on the title page, assigning them with a big headline and big pictures etc. (it also depends on the newspaper type, whether it is a tabloid or broadsheet and so on). TV news use other practises like placing the "more important" news in the headlines, assigning it with more time when reported and so on. These means, used daily, effectively present the "importance" of particular topics. (McCombs, The agenda-setting role...)

In the first research of the phenomenon of agenda setting which was carried out by the American professor **M. McCombs**, the participants were asked to determine the most important problems of that time. Their answers copied the patterns of the newscast programmes of previous moths on the television, in the newspaper and magazines which were available. Since the publishing of this research, there have been 300 researches all around the world which document the influence of mass media. (McCombs, The Agenda-Setting role...)

Trampota (2006) summed up the results of a 30 year old research of agenda setting into 5 points:

1. Different media devote similar attention to particular topics in particular time periods. They tend to have the same proportion of news stories to particular topics.
2. Indicators of the real world are relatively unimportant by setting the media agenda.

3. The process of agenda setting is one of the social constructions, by means of which the key actors construe how media and environment affect the coverage of a topic.
4. Scientific research plays no significant role by agenda setting.
5. The placement and position of the topic in the media agenda affects its position in the public discussion.

Points 2., 4., and 5. are the most important for this paper. Those points support the idea of a rather intersubjective dimension of the term security, where the threat is only a perception of a particular phenomenon as a threat, or the greatest threat. For the audience, the process of securitization usually starts when they come across an issue in the media, which assign the issues with a particular level of importance, where the indicators of the "real" world or scientific research do not play an important role.

There are 3 theories explaining the concept of agenda setting which describe the basis of casual effect of mass media on the public agenda. They are the *memory model, the theory of trust in media institutions* and *the theory of chances and individual priorities.* **Kalvas and Kreidl** (2007) in their study dedicated to the phenomenon of agenda setting inclined to the first two, which we consider important in the study of securitization. The *memory model* claims, that the more people learn about a problem, the more they remember it and the more they think of it when they are to name the most important problems. The theory of *trust in media institutions* claims that by orientating in various issues, people turn to the sources they think are reliable and trustworthy; most of the time these sources are mass media. Problems and topics which are presented in mass media are thought to be important, because the recipients suppose that mass media choose the most important and most significant issues and they reflect reality most precisely. Of course, different people react on the media agenda differently and a lot also depends on the topic as well as the personal experience with it. (McCombs, 2009)

However, in the research, it has been proved that this theory is relevant and we think it can give a clue by researching threat prioritizing. When applying this knowledge to the securitization research we come to the conclusion that recipients of the media content by repeated threat of terrorism from the side of the elites and mass media first think it is important and second, if it is presented as an existential threat, they tend to accept this, because they trust the media.

Together with the concept of primary definitions this leads us to an important conclusion: the media can help the elite with the process of securitization by prioritizing some issues over others making them more important for the audiences as other issues.

After 11th September 2001, we face the agenda-setting role of mass media connected to terrorism very often. Since this day the mass media have devoted this topic hours and hours of air time. One can assume that this is because the issue of international terrorism is something which erupted after this day and hence mass media only reflect the reality out there. From the strategic documents and widely spread speech acts, it is clear that the threat of terrorism is perceived as a new phenomenon. A very common and shared statement is that '*Our world has changed after the 9/11'.* However, one could object that it is not the case. The world has not changed, what has changed is the western world's perception of the world and terrorism. These groups, mainly the political elite have the power to shape the perception of larger audiences through the speech acts and their prerogative of primary definitions. Thus, the image of the contemporary terrorist threat is portrayed as something new, more terrible and dangerous than before. As evidence, specific terrorist attacks which have happened in the 21st century are presented, mainly the September 2001 attacks in New York, 2002 Bali bombings, 2004 Madrid Bombings, London 2005 bombings. *Graph 1.,* however, contests this idea. Figures show, that the yearly numbers of international terrorist attacks at the beginning of the 21st century did not radically change, in comparison to the numbers of attacks which took place before the start of this century or 9/11, if this should be the landmark. The graph also shows that the number of attacks changes over time, when for example in 1987 there were 665 acts of international terrorism which is by 300 attacks more than the 365 acts of 2001, and by 440 more than the 205 acts in 2002.

Graph 1: Acts of international terrorism 1975-2003
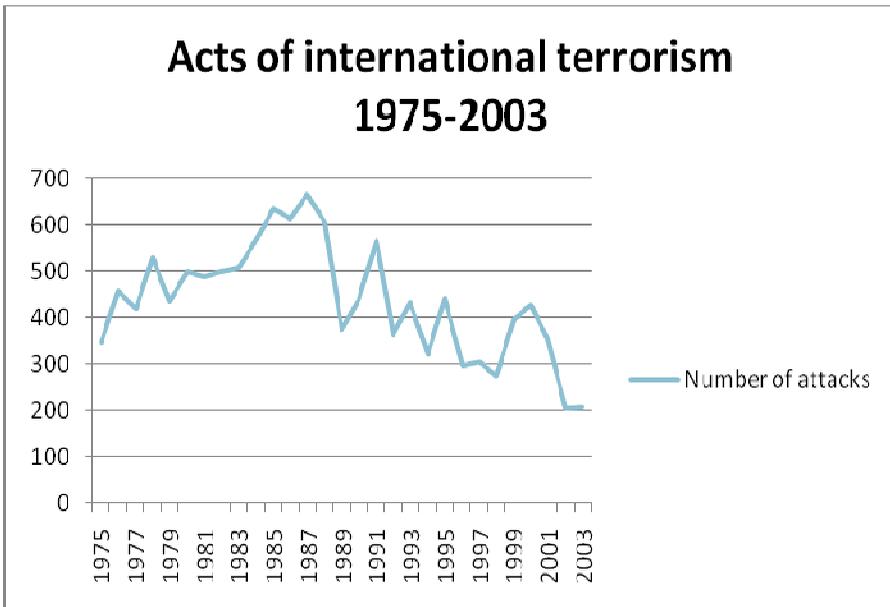
Source: (Krejčí, 2007)

A study which compared the time which particular TV station devoted to different issues in their newscast programs came to a conclusion that the number of minutes devoted to coverage of terrorism increased rapidly after 11th September 2001. It was a research carried out by ADT agency where the newscast programs of ABC, CBS and NBC during the periods of 1997-2000 and 2002-2005 were compared. The research found that there was a 135% increase of the number of minutes devoted to terrorism in the period of 2002-2005 compared to 1997-2000, a 102% increase of the number of minutes devoted to foreign policy and a 69% increase of number of minutes devoted to armed conflicts. On the contrary, newscast devoted to home issues got less space. (How 9-11 Changed...., 2006)

During the period of 4 weeks before the terrorist attacks in September 2001, the main topics of the newscast of ABC, CBS and NBC were fires in the west of the USA, the political scandal around the missing internist Chandra Levy, the so called "Summer of the shark" and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (in

the order from the most broadcasted to the least). The top three news each week during this period were the failed attempt to fly round the Earth on a hot air balloon, the lottery jackpot which was over 280 million dollars and the start of the baseball Little League season. 4 weeks after the attacks, the top three news was news about the attacks themselves, the "war on terror" and the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. All the news in the first ten was connected to the attacks of 11th September.

By repetitive broadcasting of terrorism related issues terrorism gets into the subconscious and it alleviates the process of securitization. The audience becomes more susceptible to accepting the extraordinary measures taken in order to solve the existential threat. The mass media do not and cannot afford to examine each issue, whether it does or does not reflect the "real" world. They cannot afford to bore their viewers, listeners or readers. In search for the best story and the most thrilling newscast, they are prone to use various practises like presenting more extreme opinions, terrorist hunts, labelling and calling for a tough reply. (Farmanfarmaian, 2002). Such case was the case of the "anthrax panic" in the USA, where the number of casualties of the anthrax attacks was very small, the evidence on new attacks was unconvincing and there were no arrests or charges. Despite these facts, the mass media devoted this topic a lot of time, it was part of the headlines, title pages or it was the first topic in the TV newscasts which created fear and panic among the public. (Farmanfarmaian, 2002).

Besides the quantitative features of terrorism coverage or threat coverage in general, qualitative research is also very important. For example, emphasis, picture documentation, the use of symbols, stirring emotions or stereotypical views are all factors which influence the perception of broadcasted news, in our case speech acts. We also should not forget the concept of intermedia agenda setting. This concept claims that when constructing agenda, media draw salience from other media and they reciprocally influence themselves by agenda setting. In today's globalized world and the growing importance of internet, this concept is of a big importance, mainly in the foreign policy issues. The agenda is then taken from the influential media from abroad. Thereby, even the securitization speech acts "travel" all over the world to reach their audiences, mostly about the issues framed as global threats like international terrorism, the financial crisis, the global warming etc. Therefore we think the concept of agenda setting is of great importance for the theory of securitization

and deserves further research.

Media framing of terrorism

Mass media influence the process of securitization in many ways which are intertwined and related. Above, we introduced the theory of agenda setting which is also connected to another concept researched in the mass media studies and that is the concept of *media framing.* Media framing is a concept which is often thought to be a complement of the theory of agenda setting. While agenda setting determines which issues will be presented as important for the public, media framing determines the way and the issues will be presented. It "*Selects, emphasizes, holds back and comments.*" (McCombs, 2009) Individuals often have limited cognitive ability to simultaneously think about and consider all the potential dimensions of the given problem. That is why frames or specific presentation is used which has the potential to prefer one way of thinking about an issue over another. The preferred way of thinking is usually simplified to the extent which is easy to remember. (Haider-Merkel et al., 2006)

Framing is a process which "*selects only some facts, images and events, thereby enforcing only one interpretation of a particular phenomenon.*" (Norris et al., 2003, p.11) According to **R. Entman** (1993), who devotes his scholarly to framing, this phenomenon "*essentially involves selection and salience. To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described.*" That means mass media not only tell people what to think about, but how to think about them. Media communication "packs" each piece of information into special textual and visual frame and thereby produces a specific message. The specific formulation of this message can change the perception of an issue, problem and conflict in a significant way.

Media framing means directing of the viewer's, listener's or reader's attention with the aim of forming his understanding in a way that the author wishes. (Yang, 2003) Media frames are thus kind of manuals for thinking about particular problems and often involve a solution of the problem.

And such was also the case of framing of international terrorism after 11th September 2001, where a frame was created involving the military reply as a solution of the problem of terrorism. The frame was created in the USA and a lot

of symbols, rhetorical strategies, methods or images were used to cover the wider meaning of 11th September. A frame was created which connected the events of that day with war and a military solution, rather than looking at those acts as criminal acts. (Ryan, 2004) **D. Kellner** (2007) states that on the day of the attacks the American TV channels invited experts on national security, mainly representing the radical right, to explain what had happened earlier that day. They presented the situation as a threat and the justification of an armed strike could be heard all through the day on the channels Fox News, CNN, Canadian Broadcasting Network and others. In addition, they used logos with the slogans like "War on America", "Attack on America", "America under attack", and they broadcasted debates which indicated that USA are in war and only a military answer is appropriate. Such a frame is consistent with the focus of this paper and that is the securitization of international terrorism, where the military answer to this issue is a kind of an extraordinary measure. Creating and spreading such frames also helped the process of securitizing this issue.

Haider-Markel et al. (2006) in their study, which was based on the results of a research containing questions and answers posed to 1641 responders during the period of 6th November 2001 to 8th February 2002, confirmed that framing significantly influences people's thinking about the future terrorist threat. This analysis also confirmed that exposure of individuals to the framing of terrorist threats also increases their support for the security countermeasures. The result of this study was also the fact that those individuals who watched the terrorism related newscast in the mass media opposed security countermeasures which were offered by the researchers. The implication was that the *"issue frames can be used for manipulation of the public perception about the possible future problems."* (Haider-Markel, 2006, p.550) The above mentioned feature of the frame, that it often involves a solution was confirmed by this study. Moreover, it also concluded that framing is most efficient when it is connected with a solution of the given problem.

In the American mainstream media, calling for a military answer was a very frequent phenomenon after 11th Spetember 2001[5]. Anchors **Tom Brokaw** form NBC and **Dan Rather** from CBS expressed themselves in a way which supported a military reply as the only way to reply the events of 11th September. They used quotations from **G.W.Bush** and the anger-colored style. The next

---

[5] For more information see: http://www.fair.org/index.php?page=1853.

day, **Rather** stated that the new researches indicated a general support of American citizens for a retaliation without specifying what research it was. (Eisman,2003)

Another part of the framing was the wide use of the American flag and high levels of patriotism. It lead to a "patriotic fever". By moderating, the anchors wore badges with the American flag (Littlejohns,2001) and the above mentioned anchor admitted that patriotism in the American media created circumstances which are not fruitful for journalism. He stated that the patriotism in the media created pressure on journalists who then became conformable with the American government and did not ask important questions, because they feared they would be accused of betrayal. Patriotism in the context of "war on terror" lead to self-censorship. (US media cowed by…, 2002) As a result of this, the American media did not do their job of impartially informing on events, because they "*regarded nothing but the official line. The media bias in the first weeks after the attacks stemmed from too much patriotism."*(Eisman,2003, p.64) If the media do not inform on such an important matter objectively it can have serious consequences on the audience. Framing of international terrorism, using military terminology rather than looking at it as at any other form of criminal act, alleviated for the speech act to be accepted and it alleviated for the acceptance of the extraordinary measures (e.g. military invasion to Afghanistan).

The attitude of the American mass media was not in compliance with the requirement of mediating a various and non-discriminating spectrum of opinions, ideas and beliefs about the social reality as well as the topic which are represented within the society. Media should not neglect any, even a minority view of the social reality. (Reifová, 2006) The American mass media, however, chose only those facts, which were in accordance with the official frame created by the administration and did not give space to the other side – e.g. the opponents of a military solution, moderate Islamic leaders who could have presented their own proposal of a solution, there were no interviews with the victims from the Islamic countries (only those in favor of the antiterrorist coalition). (Farmanfarmian, 2002)

Archetti and Taylor also came to the conclusion that the influence of framing of a threat is evident in the subsequent behavior of the mass media and then later in the behavior of the people, whose perception of the terrorist threat is largely influenced by the mass media. "*The way politicians frame the threat affects the way the media and, at the other end of the communication spectrum,*

the public perceive the terrorist threat. Framing the threat has far reaching consequences in the real world, including the way we practically deal with it and our sense of vulnerability as a society." (Archetti and Taylor, 2003, p.42) This is related to the phenomenon of agenda setting, primary definitions, the tendency of people to trust in the media institutions which often turn to sources who are often securitizing actors.

Conclusion

The presented article tried to contribute to the theory of securitization introduced by the Copenhagen school. The theory itself is of great importance; however, it misses some explanation of the process of political communication. The authors of the Copenhagen school focus on the speech act of securitization, but do not concentrate on its way to the audience. It is important to state, that not every speech act can even make it to the audience. On the other hand, some speech acts are mediated and even supported by the media in different ways.

This study tried to answer the question: "What role do the media play in the process of securitization?" It used the example of the securitization of international terrorism after the 11th September 2001. Firstly, it concentrated on the actors and functional actors of securitization of international terrorism. It found, that the functional actors of this securitization, the arms corporations influence the dynamic of securitization by exerting economic power within the media industry; it is not unusual for them to have ties to particular media. It looked at the way the mass media communicate the speech acts of the actors of securitization, giving more room to people with high social status and power, predominantly government officials. Selective and routine process of working with sources was described as one of the ways of affecting the process of securitization.

From the long term effects, the article concentrated on the theory of agenda setting and framing in the mass media. To sum this part up, we can say that mass media affect the way people prioritize issues; by various methods they make some issues seem more important than others and people often copy the salience patterns from the mass media. Therefore, if an issue is repeatedly presented as a threat, they tend to accept this definition. It is a process of unintentional learning and it helps a securitizing speech act, for the audience "learns" the salience of the threat.

Last but not least, the paper describes the process of framing, which highlights only some aspects of threats and remains silent about others. Usually, the frames which are adopted by the mass media include a solution to the given problem. In the case of securitization, this is a very important feature of framing, because securitization itself aims to persuade the audience that some extraordinary measures have to be taken to deal with the threat. In the case of international terrorism, the frame included a military retaliation as the answer and it was accepted by the audience. The extraordinary measures took place in the form of the military invasion to Afghanistan and Iraq, therefore, the securitizing act of international terrorism after 11th September 2001 was a successful one.

References:
ALTHEIDE, D. 2006. *Vojnové programovanie: Projekt propagandy a vojna v Iraku.* In: *Mediální studia*. Roč. I, č.1, 2006, ISSN 1801-9978, s. 39-65.
ARCHETTI, C.-TAYLOR, P.M. 2003. *Managing Terrorism After 9/11: the War On Terror, The Media, and the Imagined Threat*. Paper presented at the 'Communicating the War on Terror' conference, June 5 – 6, Royal Institution, London. Available at:
http://www.terrorismresearch.net/finalreports/Taylor/Final%20Report.pdf
Available at: http://www.journalism.org/node/1839
BUZAN, B. et al. 2005. *Bezpečnosť: Nový rámec pre analýzu*. Praha: CSS, 2005. 267s. ISBN 80-903333-6-2.
COLLINS, A. 2007. *Contemporary security studies*.New York: Oxford University Press, 2007. 436s. ISBN 0-19-928469-5.
EISMAN, A. 2003. *The media of Manipulation: patriotism and propaganda - mainstream news in the United States in the weeks following September 11*. In: *Critical Quarterly*, 2003, Vol. 45,Issue 1-2, ISSN 0011-1562, s.55-72.
ENTMAN, R. 1993. *Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm.* In: *Journal of Communication.* 1993, Vol.43, Issue 4, ISSN 0021-9916, s.51-58.
FARMANFARMAIAN, R. 2002. *The Media and the War on Terrorism: Where Does the Truth Lie?* In.: *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*. 2002, Vol. 15., Number 1, ISSN 0955-7571 s.159-165.

HAIDER-MERKEL, D. P. et al. 2006. *Can We Frame the Terrorist Threat? Issue Frames, the Perception of Threat, and Opinions on Counterterrorism Policies*. In: *Terrorism and Political Violence*. 2006,Vol. 18, Issue 4, ISSN 0954-6553, s.545-559.

How 9-11 Changed the Evening News. http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2002/may/17/terrorismandthemedia.broadcasting

KALVAS, F. – KREIDL, M. 2007. *Jaký je vliv televízního spravodajství na vnímání tématu veřejností?* In.: Sociologický časopis, ročník 43, č. 2, 2007, ISSN 0038-0288, s.333-360 .

KELLNER, D. 2007. *Bushspeak and the Politics of Lying*. In: *Presidental Studies Quarterly*. 2007,Vol.37, Issue 4., ISSN 0360-4918 s.622-645.

KREJČÍ, O. 2007. *Mezinárodní politika*. Praha: Ekopress,2001. 710 s. ISBN 80-86119-45-9.

LITTLEJOHNS, M. 2001. *The P-words: Patriotism press and propaganda.* Available at: http://www.globalpolicy.org/empire/media/2001/1206pat.htm

McCOBS, M. 2009. *Agenda setting.* Praha: Portál, 2009. 251 s. ISBN 978-80-7367-591-2.

McCOMBS, M. *The agenda-setting role of the mass media.* Available at: http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/dps/extra/McCombs.pdf

REIFOVÁ, I. 2004. *Slovník mediální komunikace.* Praha: Portál, 2004. 328s. ISBN 80-7178-926-7.

RYAN, D. 2004. *Framing September 11: Rhetorical Device and Photographic Opinion*. In:*European Journal of American Culture*. 2004, Vol.23, Issue 1, ISSN 1466-0407, s.5-20.

SCHMITT, G.J. 1998. *American Primacy and the Defense Spending Crisis*. In: *Joint Forces Quaterly*. Vol. 6, 1998, Issue 18, ISSN 1070-0692, p.52-56.

SIPRI. 2007. *SIPRI Yearbook 2007*: *Armaments, Disarmament and International Security.* Stockholm: Oxford University Press, 2007. 752 s. ISBN 978–0–19–923021–1.

SNOW, N. 2003. *Information Wars: American Propaganda, Free Speech and Opinion Control since 9/11*. New York: Seven Stories Press, 2003. 208s. ISBN 1-58322-557-9.

Terror in Madrid: Europeans must tell the United States where Washington is going wrong in its war on terror. In: The Guardian, 13.3 2004.

UŠIAK, J. 2009. Sociálny konštruktivizmus ako jeden z prístupov skúmania bezpečnosti. In *Vedecký obzor (Scientific Horizont)*, roč. 1, 2009, č. 4. ISSN 1337-9054, s. 141-148

TRAMPOTA, T. 2006. *Zpravodajství.* Praha: Portál, 2006. 192s. ISBN 80-7367-096-8.

US media cowed by patriotic fever, says CBS star. 2002. Available at:

WILLIAMS, P. 2008. *Security Studies. An Introduction.* Abingdon: Routlege, 2008. 551s. ISBN 0-203-92660-9.

YANG, J. 2003. *Framing the NATO Air Strikes on Kosovo across Countries*. In: *The International Journal for Communication Studies*. 2003, Vol. 65, Issue3, ISSN 0016-5492, s.231-249.