

The Strategic Framing of Abortion Discourse on Czech Social Media

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Abstract

Abortion remains one of the most polarizing public issues, with social media playing a central role in shaping narratives and influencing public opinion. This dissertation investigates how influential pro-life movements in the Czech Republic construct abortion discourse on social media, focusing on the strategic use of language, imagery, and platform-specific tools to promote ideological messaging.

The study applies a multi-method qualitative design. Thematic content analysis is used to identify recurring narratives, rhetorical patterns, and emotional appeals in posts published on Facebook and Instagram by Movement for Life CZR, Stop Genocide, and the Catholic Church. Posts are selected based on the keywords “abortion”/“potrat” and categorized chronologically in a coding book developed for this study. Discursive visual analysis, grounded in T. van Dijk’s critical discourse theory, explores how power relations and ideologies are reproduced through both text and imagery. Multimodal discourse analysis further examines the interaction of textual and visual elements, including hashtags and hyperlinks, in shaping meaning and emotional resonance.

In addition, approximately 15 semi-structured interviews will be conducted with key actors, including representatives of pro-life movements, religious institutions, legal and medical experts, and communication strategists. These interviews, planned from March 2025, aim to contextualize online messaging and uncover strategic objectives.

By integrating these approaches, the research contributes to media and communication studies by offering deeper insight into the ideological framing of reproductive rights. It also enhances understanding of online polarization, helps decode strategic agenda-setting, and informs broader debates on the role of digital media in shaping public attitudes and policy discourse.

Keywords: reproductive rights, strategic communication, critical discourse analysis, narrative construction, ideological framing