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<p>Tiivistelmä-Referat-Abstract</p> <p>This thesis explores the link between the events of September 11, 2001, and the subsequent initiation of the policy of "war on terror". The theoretical assumption of the thesis forwards that the American political establishment had to give the events of September 11 a meaning in order to create a basis for meaningful action. The analysis therefore explores how the events were represented and how these representations provided the discursive foundation for the formation of the "war on terror".</p> <p>I approach this topic through three analytical steps. First, I draw a theoretical outline of what I call the narrative approach for the purpose of describing the logic of meaning construction. The narrative approach holds that national narratives contextualize and frame policy problems and their solutions. I then introduce the layered model of discursive structures which implies that policies are conditioned by political discourses that are embedded in narrative structures.</p> <p>Second, in order to approach the question of narrative structures and their influence on foreign policies I present a review of the prominent narratives in the American historical self-conception. I identify one overarching narrative structure - the narrative of American exceptionalism - as well as four traditions of narrating America's foreign policy - Jeffersonianism, Hamiltonianism, Wilsonianism and Jacksonianism. This part of the analysis is based on previous research on the topic.</p> <p>Third, in order to establish the link between narrative structures and the discursive interpretation of the events of September 11 I perform a discourse analysis of a strategic sample of political texts on the events of September 11. This analysis investigates firstly the structure of argumentation that was used to describe the events and secondly the ways in which narratives were present in the representations of the events of September 11. In this part of the analysis I discuss how national narratives and their varying representations framed and conditioned the foreign policy agenda and principles of the "war on terror".</p> <p>I conclude that the discursive construction of the events of September 11 was framed by the narrative of exceptionalism in terms of the overarching rhetorical structure and the central metaphors. Further, the argumentation on the events of September 11 was established in the particular frameworks of the Jacksonian and the Wilsonian narrative traditions. I argue that this merging of the Jacksonian and Wilsonian narrative representations provided for a military-oriented and potentially limitless scope and policy for the "war on terror".</p> <p>Finally, I argue that had the dominant narratives used by the American political establishment been different, one could have expected a markedly different policy reaction by the United States to the events of the September 11.</p>		
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