



# **The role of the media in the United States and the media's influence on aggression, violence, crime and the individual**

*Adriana Zühlke*

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Seminar paper from the year 2003 in the subject American Studies - Culture and Applied Geography, grade: 2+ (B), Ernst Moritz Arndt University of Greifswald (Institute for American Studies), course: HS Criminal Justice in the USA, 12 entries in the bibliography, language: English, abstract: Today the media is often seen as the “fourth estate” of the American system, which

already marks its special position in society. This term-paper will show both how that position historically developed and which role the media plays currently. In order to underline the specific conditions and political and social circumstances that existed in the colonies and later in the United States, e.g. the British Kingdom’s influence and its predominance, the media’s gradual development will be traced back carefully.

Furthermore, it shall be given an answer to the question if and in what respect the media influenced and influences social and personal life. This will be analyzed with regard to the media’s functions and its reputation as being responsible for high violence and crime rates in the USA. Moreover, an insight into common views and prejudices of the media will be given and compared to reality.

To answer the question if the media is really responsible for crimes, violence and aggression, its status in our lives must be examined. That means it will be considered of what importance the media can be for the individual and which positive and negative consequences might arise from the media’s existence and significance. Moreover, it shall be shown that media violence has certain potential effects on the individual and is able to affect everybody.

On the one hand, this term-paper will point out that the media’s impact on political, social and personal life is underestimated, respectively often not even acknowledged.

On the other hand, it shall be presented that the media serves also as scapegoat and can not be blamed for everything, in particular it can not be held responsible for crime, violence and aggression all alone. To prove that, an individual’s personal determinants will be analyzed in order to underline the various aspects that must come together to create violence and aggression.

Finally, actions of state and society with the purpose of reducing violence on TV are portrayed and further suggestions are made on that topic.

Within the analysis, special attention is turned to television as the medium of the 21st century. Due to its characteristics (stimulating the recipient audio-visually, having the greatest potential of manipulation and fascination, being seen as the most important, most credible and easiest accessible source of information and depicting violence and aggression most effectively) it is the medium which the examination must base on.

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