

Mass media in Slovenia and a culture of (non)violence

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The article resumes research findings of the study "Violence in the media". The research comprises two parts; the first is theoretical and deals with violence in the media in general and the response to this type of culture. It provides some findings of foreign researchers about the extent and impact of violence on the reading public. The second part of the study is empirical and includes data on the extent of violence in some of the mass media. In order to get a proper picture of editorial policy regarding violence, the study compared the prime time news of two television companies, broadcast on the same day during two months. Results reveal an important difference between national and commercial television, in which programs with violent contents were nearly three times higher than those transmitted by the national television. However, the latter is not far behind with some other emissions in which violence, in the author's opinion, exceeds the limit of the acceptable. In addition to television communication, the study also examined the most read Slovenian newspaper "Slovenske novice" and analysed it from the viewpoint of the quantity of violence, the method of reporting news and accompanying visual materials; for this purpose, 100 randomly chosen numbers of this newspaper, published in the last two years, were examined. The analysis of headlines, accompanying pictures and the extent of violence indicate that violence is one of the best traded goods. As many as 80 percent of titles, makes association to bloody stories which then follow.

Here it seems worth mentioning that "Slovenske novice" is a newspaper which is daily read by 300,000 Slovenes. In the author's opinion, it is not possible to advocate classical censorship, since there is the question of the long-term process of the formation of a culture of communicating information, on the one hand, and a culture of reading on the other. Present editorial policy typically shapes such news as it assumes will be best accepted by the public. In doing that, editorial boards in principle decline to assume the role of a creator of a general culture and consent only to the role of one who serves and satisfies the public, nearly almost on the principle of "bread and games".

Keywords: violence in the media, fear of crime, reporting of mass media on violence, editorial policy towards violence

UDC: 316.647.3 : 654 (497.4)