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War and Peace Journalism in Mass Shootings Coverage – Case Study of a School Shooting in the U.S. Uvalde

Abstract

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE: Analysis of the problem of using the theory of war and peace journalism in reporting mass shootings in the American media on the example of a school shooting in Uvalde.

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND METHODS: The article answers the question whether theories about war and peace journalism can be helpful in the analysis of media coverage of mass shootings. The text analyzes how the leading media broadcasters in the U.S. (CNN and Fox News) use war- and peace-oriented mechanisms. The article uses research methods standard for social sciences and humanities, including content analysis with elements of framing analysis, comparative analysis and the case study.

THE PROCESS OF ARGUMENTATION: The starting point for the research was the theories on war and peace journalism by Johan Galtung. The reason for undertaking the research was also the record number of mass shootings in the U.S. in 2021 and the significant importance of the Uvalde shooting in the American public debate on gun control in 2022. The article focuses on the first week of coverage of the shooting.

RESEARCH RESULTS: American media use war journalism more often. Coverage is influenced by ideological profile and political affiliation. Political issues and the reconstruction of events come to the fore. Contexts such as victims, solutions, roots of the problem or fate of the perpetrator are discussed

177

less frequently. The shooting in Uvalde became an instrument in the political conflict in which the media took part.

CONCLUSIONS, INNOVATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS: War journalism mechanisms favor media polarization in bipartisan conflict conditions and help show sensational events in a 24-hour cycle. In turn, the mechanisms of peace journalism support reporting on the perpetrator, victims and potential solutions. The article intends to increase awareness of various ways of publicizing extraordinary events and political conflicts and serve for more profound research in the future.

INTRODUCTION

Research on war and peace journalism (hereinafter referred to as WJ and PJ, respectively) focuses on how the media report on wars and armed conflicts. These concepts can be used to analyze other acts of violence or conflicts – terrorist attacks, social unrest, presidential elections or crime, including mass shootings (Youngblood, 2017). Mass shooting is a specific act of violence that evokes great emotions and attracts significant social interest, often accompanied by a heated debate regarding gun control. Mass shootings become used in political conflict and contribute to polarization. It means that the media covering mass shootings can use similar mechanisms as in the case of wars or conflicts. In addition to the shooting's reconstruction and political debate, the media also focus on the perpetrator, victims and relatives, roots and solutions to the problem, which may support the use of PJ. However, it is not obligatory. After all, the aforementioned aspects may be shown as a sensation or used in a political conflict anyway. It is also worth emphasizing that television, one of the media most often reporting mass shootings, favors WJ (Galtung, & Fischer, 2013).

An example of such situation may be the shooting in Uvalde, Texas, as a result of which 23 people were killed on May 24, 2021, and the conflict over gun control flared up again in the United States. The

school shooting at Texas' Robb Elementary was the worst in the U.S. in 2022. In 2022 alone, the second-highest number of mass shootings in history was recorded (648), just after 693 in 2021 (Gun Violence Archive, 2023). Great emotions in the public debate are also caused by the fact that since 2020 more children in the U.S. have died from guns than in car accidents, which makes firearms the leading cause of child deaths (Goldstick et al., 2022). According to Americans, gun violence is the third most serious problem in the country (Pew Research Center, 2022). Such conditions make mass shootings newsworthy for the media and attractive from a political perspective.

The article aims to check whether the concepts of WJ and PJ can be valuable tools for analyzing media coverage of mass shootings. Basing on the American media reports (CNN and Fox News), I checked which mechanisms of WJ and PJ were used, and which perspective dominates. The article is a field for reflection on how political affiliation, ideological profile and polarization of the American media may affect the way mass shootings and the issue of gun control is covered. Hence the article seeks answers to the following questions: 1. Through what perspective, WJ or PJ, was the Uvalde mass shooting covered? 2. What mechanisms of WJ and PJ were used in the coverage? 3. Did the political and ideological profile of the media influence the use of WJ or PJ mechanisms?

METHODOLOGY, RESEARCH SOURCES

Content analysis with elements of framing and comparative analysis was conducted to answer research questions. The online news programs of CNN and Fox News were analyzed. The choice of media was intentional. Firstly, they are the two most popular news media in the US, operating on cable TV and the Internet (Statista, 2022). Secondly, they are characterized by highly different editorial lines, ownership, politicization (Muise et al., 2022). Owned by Warner Bros. Discovery, CNN was founded in 1980 and is associated with a liberal worldview and connected to the Democratic Party. Whereas Fox News, owned by Fox Corporation (derived from so called Rupert Murdoch's media empire), was founded in 1996 in opposition to CNN. It is associated with the influence of the Republican Party and

a conservative worldview. Numerous differences suggest that these media broadcasters may use PJ and WJ differently, presenting the same events and political problems.

Materials covering the Uvalde shooting published from May 24 to May 30, 2022, were analyzed. It focuses on a first week of coverage, as that was when the media showed the most significant interest in the topic. Materials were searched with the use of search engines on media websites, using keywords such as "Uvalde", "Uvalde shooting", and "Texas shooting". The research sample included 128 video materials. The analysis was conducted using a codebook of 28 open and closed questions. The individual segments dealt with reconstruction of the shooting, bipartisan conflict, perpetrator, victims, causes and implications.

Critical research sources for the article were studies on PJ and WJ. In recent years, researchers have focused on 1. theoretical and methodological issues, 2. case studies of selected conflicts, crises or elections, and 3. perception of journalists and audience. Publications on the concepts of PJ and WJ (Lynch, & McGoldrick, 2005; Galtung, 2006; Lynch, 2015; Perry, 2022), their contemporary interpretations in the era of polarization and disinformation (Eide, & Ottosen, 2020; Fourie, 2022) were useful for setting the theoretical framework and methodology. The recent case studies on various Asian conflicts (Kempf, 2012; Garud-Patkar, 2017; Fong, & Gek Koon, 2019; Elham et al., 2021), migration crisis (Kalfeli et al., 2022) and elections (Norström, & Kolczyński, 2021; Auwal, & Ersoy, 2022) helped in the research. The issue of the reporters' perception of PJ and WJ is also popular among researchers (Neumann, & Fahmy, 2016; Hussain, & Ahmad, 2022), as well as the issue of the predisposition of media workers to create peace- and conflict-oriented coverage (Adegbola, & Zhang, 2022; Yontucu et al., 2022). Contemporary research also focuses on the audience's perception of PJ and WJ. These studies confirm the positive impact of these journalistic practices on the audience (McGoldrick, & Lynch, 2016). Works on the implementation of PJ (Bläsi, 2004; Nohrstedt, & Ottosen, 2015; Ersoy, 2017) also appear necessary to discuss the research results. An inspiration for the conducted research was Steven Youngblood's monograph (2017), where author addressed an entire chapter on PJ and WJ in the context of mass shootings. The latest scientific literature focused on the

media and mass shootings was an equally crucial source. The most important results provide information on 1. the leading trends in coverage, 2. the newsworthiness of various types of mass shootings, 3. the impact on society and media workers' perception of the identified trends.

PEACE AND WAR JOURNALISM – CHARACTERISTICS, PRINCIPLES

In the 1970s, Johan Galtung (2006), described two opposing models of media coverage of conflicts. In his opinion, media uses two types of journalism: war- and peace-oriented. These concepts are characterized by a different approach to framing events, word choice, perception of the media's role and the way of covering conflicts. Coverage is also affected by the architecture of media systems and editorial policies of individual media.

The character of contemporary media – bias, politicization, commercialization, tabloidization – affects how wars are reported (Ersoy, 2017). More often, it is reactive, simplified coverage, focused on current events, image of the physical consequences (killed and wounded people, damaged infrastructure), rich in the so-called DMA traps (Dualism, Manichaeism, Armageddon). It gives voice to representatives of the elite (politicians, military), favoring a particular side of the conflict, focusing on its victory (Galtung, 2006). It shows the differences between warring parties and is created by using emotional language and audio-visual material (Lynch, & McGoldrick, 2005). Peace is understood negatively, as a victory owed to institutions and politicians (Galtung, & Fischer, 2013). This model is known as WJ and can apply to the coverage of other conflicts and acts of violence.

An alternative model is PJ, which primary goal is to strive for the immediate de-escalation of violence and promote peace, laying the foundations for anti-war attitudes among belligerents and a broad group of observers (Lynch, & McGoldrick, 2005). Peace-oriented journalism is a proactive and in-depth coverage, showing broad context, focused on the "invisible" and non-sensational effects of conflicts (trauma, destruction of social and cultural fabric, refugees). It gives a voice to civilians and various social groups of each warring party.

It is created with neutral language, trying not to shock with a massacre. It is adopting a multilateral orientation, avoiding reducing the conflict to the fight between good and evil, showing areas of potential agreement, and striving for an effective solution (Galtung, 2006). Peace is understood positively, as a solution focused primarily on rebuilding the social structure and on creative ways of preventing violence (Galtung, & Fischer, 2013).

The contrast between models raises the question of what functions should be performed by the media in a conflict situation. The phenomenon of the mediatization of conflicts suggests that with the development of new media, they increasingly become a participant in the conflict – a committed party representing and implementing the interests of another particular party (Youngblood, 2017). There is a different view – according to supporters of PJ, the media may, and even should, become a mediator. PJ supporters claim that the lack of this type of journalism is one of the reasons why peace processes are complicated, lengthy and their resolutions too challenging to implement (Auwal, & Ersoy, 2022). WJ increases polarization, strengthens stereotypes, moves conflicted parties away from the agreement. It builds the conviction that war is a matter of "winning" or "losing", not an issue of reconciliation and building the future together (Keeble, Tulloch & Zollmann, 2010). Partisanship and politicization of the media, especially when it comes to television, contribute to the creation of such narratives.

PEACE AND WAR JOURNALISM IN MASS SHOOTINGS COVERAGE

Coverage of mass shootings is characterized by tendencies that can be compared to the WJ mechanisms. As Steven Youngblood (2017) points out, media narratives about mass shootings are characterized by several problems: they resign from precision and factual accuracy in favor of a quick report, reconstruction of events and sensational coverage; they give voice to the perpetrator and may inspire copycats, forgetting the broad context, victims and their relatives; instrumentally treat racial and ethnic issues; serve as a pretext for political grandstanding and inflame social conflicts.

Studies show that the way media report mass shootings affect the increase of fear in society. It correlates with the increase in firearms sales and background checks carried out to prevent potentially dangerous people from possessing the weapon (Porfiri et al., 2019). Sensational, shocking with massacre coverage of mass shootings can distort the actual threat level, unnecessarily evoking a sense of danger among audience, becoming a catalyst for the hasty implementation of counter-effective policies. The same research states that a lack of interest in some types of mass shootings and missing broader context may undermine prevention policies (Silva, & Capellan, 2019a). Simplified coverage of gun control policies may cause the public to fear the weakening of their rights to self-defense, which, again, leads to an increase in the number of weapons purchased and moves away from the debate on non-forceful countermeasures (Porfiri et al., 2019). Focusing on the physical, emotional aspects of the event, politicizing the narrative and giving voice to the elites are solutions characteristic of WJ.

Perpetrator's ethnicity and racial prejudice is used instrumentally, deepening the antagonisms and promoting the "us" versus "them" narrative. Media use the terrorism frame more often with non-white perpetrators, especially from the Middle East (Silva, & Capellan, 2019b; Elmasry, & el-Nawawy, 2020). Researchers noted a tendency to pay more attention to shootings where the perpetrator was not a white male. It applies primarily to incidents where the shooter was black or came from the Middle East. Case studies show that the racial factor was more important for the amount of coverage than the number of victims in a shooting by a white attacker (Elmasry, Mohamad Hamas; el-Nawawy, Mohammed, 2019). In the case of white perpetrators, journalists more often use humanization and associate the perpetrator's act with mental illness than other ethnic origins (Duxbury et al., 2018). This suggests journalists treat perpetrators in a biased, prejudiced way and also do not give voice to the victims and relatives, which is contrary to PJ.

Latest research shows that the most frequently reported type of mass shooting is a school shooting. Newsworthiness consists of such elements as location, ethnicity of the perpetrator, number of victims (Schildkraut et al., 2018; Silva, & Capellan, 2019a; Silva, & Capellan, 2019b). It suggests that the media are guided by simplifications and narrow context characteristic of WJ in their agenda-setting.

The audience itself signals the need to implement PJ mechanisms in reports of mass shootings and is most eager for content about bystander heroes, less for stories about perpetrators or victims. The public needs content that provides it with information on how to deal with an active shooter situation, which proves that society needs content that reduces fear and helplessness, provides valuable advice rather than increases the sense of threat (Levin, & Wiest, 2018). It means that society needs solution journalism (McIntyre, 2019).

The perception of media employees has also become the subject of research. Mass shootings coverage appears to be an ethical challenge, although most employees do not believe that their reports generate copycats (Dahmen et al., 2018). Researchers in criminology and media studies contest this position. They found the connection between media coverage, copycats and the contagion effect (Towers et al., 2015; Jetter, & Walker, 2018; Fox et al., 2021). Researchers indicate the need to respect standards of journalistic ethics in portraying the perpetrators of mass shootings (Lankford, & Madfis, 2018; Dahmen, 2018). Similar demands were made by the victims' families who, as part of the "No Notoriety" campaign (Youngblood, 2017), called on the media to use PJ.

RESULTS

1. Themes of the coverage

Themes of the coverage allow us to determine which contexts related to the mass shooting have become the most newsworthy for CNN and Fox News.

Table 1. Themes of the coverage

Category	CNN	Fox News	Total	N=
Bipartisan conflict over gun control	60%	72%	66%	81
Reconstruction of events	52%	70%	61%	75
Roots of the problem, solutions	37%	59%	48%	59
Victims and relatives	50%	31%	41%	50
Perpetrator	15%	36%	25%	31

Source: Author's own elaboration.

Both media most often raised issues related to the political conflict regarding gun control and focused on the perception of events from the perspective of both sides of the American political scene. Again, for both broadcasters, the second most common theme was an attempt to reconstruct the shooting, intervention and the sequence of events leading up to the shooter's entry into the Robb Elementary School. The media's attention was focused differently on subsequent topics. In the case of CNN, the most popular subjects were victims and their relatives, roots and solutions to the problem, and the perpetrator's profile. In the case of Fox News, roots and solutions to the problem, perpetrator's profile, victims and their relatives.

2. Pretext for political grandstanding and inflaming bipartisan conflict

The media covered the Uvalde mass shooting mainly using the political conflict frame. It applies to both broadcasters, which suggests that CNN and Fox News are biased. The tragic event was instrumentally used in the bipartisan conflict. Both media gave voice to politicians of the parties with which they are affiliated.

In all of the materials that gave voice to the politicians on CNN, the Democratic voice was the majority (65%), and the Republican voice was the minority (30%). On FOX News, the voice of a Republican politician was significantly dominant (96%). It is worth noting that both broadcasters did not give representatives of other, less popular parties (Libertarians or Greens) a chance to comment, reinforcing the dichotomy. An essential element related to the frame of the conflict and the "us versus them" narrative was looking for the guilty actors, which is typical to WJ (Galtung, 2006). On CNN, main culprits were the police (46%) and the Republicans (42%). The incompetence of the police was associated with an inappropriate policy of the Republican authorities in Texas. The Republicans were blamed for their overly liberal approach to gun ownership and sales, the promotion of gun culture, and inadequate mental health policies. On Fox News, on the other hand, a completely different situation can be observed. Democrats (62%) were presented as the guilty ones, followed by "all politicians" (29%). The fault of the Democratic Party was presented

as promoting cultural patterns that led to violence and restricting the right to bear arms, which reduced the possibility of self-defense and security systems in schools. In both cases, it correlates with partisan views on the gun violence related issues.

By using the mechanisms shown above, the partisan media try to minimize the guilt of "their side", making coverage propaganda-oriented, which is a feature of WJ (Galtung, 2006). Uvalde mass shooting has thus become a tool of polarization in a bipartisan conflict that also penetrates the media. It is also worth noting that the narrative around the shooting in Uvalde was elitist. Politicians and other elite representatives accounted for 57% of the voices in both media, another feature of WJ (Lynch, & McGoldrick, 2005). Fox News' narrative was more dominated by elites (61 materials) than victims (14 materials). There was more balance on CNN, with the voices of the elites being given in 30 materials and victims in 29.

3. Roots and solutions of the problem

Another context that can be considered polarizing and deepening the dichotomy is the roots of the problem and the solutions. Both broadcasters, thanks to journalists and guests, offer viewers different causes and solutions to the problem of mass shootings.

Fox News has devoted more attention to these issues than CNN. According to the pro-Republican medium, the most frequently mentioned cause of mass shootings is the evil that, according to journalists and guests (conservative politicians, firearms experts, clergymen), consumes the United States. The second most mentioned root of the problem is insufficient security in schools, in terms of infrastructure and equipment, the skills of school police and even teachers. Other roots of the problem, mentioned with equal frequency on Fox News, include contemporary culture (social media, video games, popular culture), mental problems of children and adolescents, and the lack of government funds for school protection. It is worth emphasizing that these arguments are sometimes directly linked to the "fault" of the Democratic party.

The progressive, liberal CNN proposes a different picture. The most frequently described cause of mass shootings is easy access

to firearms and the lack of gun control laws. The second leading source of the problem is the inappropriate policy of the Republicans towards the National Rifle Association (NRA) and arms companies. According to CNN, such actors lobby Congress and state legislatures for gun ownership liberalization, acting primarily in the interests of owners of home firearms arsenals and companies which generate profits thanks to significant sales of individual armaments. The least cited causes were police dysfunction, family problems, inadequate security in schools, and evil. In the case of both broadcasters, it is clear that the explanation of the causes of the shooting in Uvalde is closely related to ideological issues. Viewers of these media will get completely different pictures of the causes of the tragedy, which strengthens propaganda orientation of the coverage.

A similar observation occurs in the case of solutions proposed by the media. Fox News often proposed strengthening security in schools (adaptation of infrastructure, better equipment and armament of school police units, security companies and teachers, and training for school communities). There is a consensus that children must become "more difficult targets". The second most discussed solution is mental health care, emphasizing young men. The third method involves the gradual introduction of gun control. Some guests at Fox News suggested that background checks and red flag laws should be slowly implemented at the state level. Another frequently mentioned solution was faith and prayer. The solutions proposed by Fox News are, therefore, identical to the policy of the Republican Party – the securitization of the problem, the appeal to the mental health of young men and the role of religion come to the fore. The guests at Fox News are conservative about legal solutions, usually not proposing tightening gun control at the federal level, which, in their perception, could mean a violation of the Second Amendment to the Constitution, regarding the right to keep and bear arms.

CNN has a different approach. Significantly dominates the belief that the critical solution is to limit the right to own firearms and increase gun control. According to journalists and guests, national regulations are needed regarding the aforementioned red flag laws and background checks, as well as limiting the possibility of selling weapons at unauthorized dealers (for example at garage sales, unauthorized shops). Solutions such as strengthening protection in

schools or mental health care were proposed much less often, and they were usually Republican proposals. The political aspect related to legislation in Congress comes to the fore.

Although the media focused on roots and solutions to the problem, which is a feature of PJ, it should be emphasized that they do so in a biased, politicized way. Both broadcasters implement the propaganda assumptions of the parties with which they are directly related. The discourse on roots and solutions reflects the worldview and political demands of Republicans and Democrats. It deepens the bipartisan conflict, giving room for accusations of political opponents. It is worth noting that the comparison of the proposed solutions proves the existence of common points – red flag laws, background checks. However, the analyzed media rarely mention the space for dialogue. Once again, features typical of WJ can be noticed: propaganda orientation, giving voice to the elites (mainly politicians), paying attention primarily to forceful, political solutions to the problem, and the "us versus them" narrative.

4. Reconstruction of the events

The reconstruction of the Robb Elementary School shooting and the events leading up to the tragedy was the second most covered topic by CNN and Fox News. Television is a specific medium – requires the visual presentation of events, strives to attract and maintain the audience's attention (Ersoy, 2017). It operates on a 24-hour cycle, seven days a week, all year round. Events such as mass shootings or terrorist attacks are opportunities for broadcasters to record a sharp increase in viewership (Youngblood, 2018). Fighting for viewers' attention, traditional media use WJ mechanisms (Galtung, 2006). The coverage analysis of the Uvalde shooting confirms this trend only partially.

Table 2. WJ rnechanisrns used in the reconstruction of the event

Category	CNN	Fox News	Total	N=
Showing unedited footage	19%	24%	43%	32
Describing sensational scenes	15%	8%	23%	17
Comparing to other mass shootings	8%	7%	15%	11
Repeating the same sensational images	5%	3%	8%	6
Showing hysteria or panie scenes	5%	0%	7%	5
Showing sensational irnages out of context	3%	3%	5%	4
Showing bloody images	1%	0%	1%	1

Note: The table contains only materials in which a reconstruction of events could be found.

Source: Author's own elaboration.

In order to reconstruct the events, both broadcasters occasionally used similar solutions that can be considered WJ. CNN and Fox News used a chaotic, unedited smartphone or CCTV footage to show scenes such as a shooter entering the school, intervention of the emergency services, reactions of those gathered near the scene, classroom situation. It is worth noting, however, that both broadcasters almost completely avoided showing bloody or violent scenes. The reports only partly focused on describing sensational events by reporters, services or witnesses. The reports covered not only shooting itself, intervention of the services or reactions of the victims during the shooting, but also events preceding the shooter's entry to the school, such as the shooting of the perpetrator's grandmother or previous preparations. Another mechanism was comparisons to other, most tragic school shootings in the US history, such as the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School or Columbine High School. Mechanisms such as repetition of the same sensational image, showing scenes of panic and hysteria, using sensational images unrelated to the report's content, showing bloody images were rarely used. Although much attention was paid to the course of events and the physical aspects of the incident, which should be considered WJ, the selection of media reconstruction mechanisms proves that both broadcasters tried to limit their sensational, massacre-filled overtones, which can be considered PJ (Youngblood, 2017).

5. The perpetrator and the victims

In Uvalde's shooting coverage, both broadcasters also focused on the key actors – victims, their relatives, witnesses and perpetrator. For CNN, the context of the victims of the shooting was the third most discussed topic – it appeared in half of the materials. It is worth noting that it contains direct victims (people in the school) and indirect ones (relatives of those killed or injured, the Uvalde community, people providing help). In most of its coverage of the victims and the witnesses (58%), CNN directly gave voice to the families of the dead, residents of Uvalde, surviving students, doctors, families of victims of other mass shootings. In individual materials, the voice was given to the teacher, the shooter's family and a US citizen from outside Uvalde. It is a wide range of actors through whom CNN's audience has been exposed to social reactions. In this way, CNN avoided presenting "worthy victims" and indicated that entire social fabric suffers from mass shootings. Showing the suffering all over is a typical PJ mechanism (Galtung, 2006). However, it is worth mentioning that ways of helping victims were rarely shown (10%). On Fox News, the issue of victims of the shooting received the least attention of all topics (31% of coverage). Medium gave voice primarily to the people of Uvalde and, to a lesser extent, to the families of the dead in this and previous shootings. In a single report, the family of the policeman who intervened in Uvalde was also given a voice. Like CNN, how to help victims was rarely addressed (18% of the materials). Fox News reporters, unlike CNN reporters, focused their questions on the course of events and the social reception of the services' intervention, which leads to the WJ characteristic focus on the physical and force aspects of the event. CNN reporters approached the interviewees more openly, asking questions about their well-being or what they would like the viewers to hear. This approach is closer to the principles of PJ suited to cover mass shootings (Youngblood, 2017).

The issue of perpetrator turned out to be one of the least discussed topics. In Fox News it was second to last in terms of frequency of occurrence (36% of materials). The station focused primarily on the perpetrator's past (29%), paying particular attention to the fact that the shooter was an outsider (26%). To a lesser extent, mental health was discussed (in most cases without the participation of an

expert), controversial posts on social media were quoted, and the type of weapon used by the shooter was mentioned (19%). Attempts at humanization were rare (3%). Interestingly, the ethnicity and skin color of the Hispanic perpetrator was not discussed, which may be explained by the fact that the shooting affected a Hispanic-dominated community; therefore, no racial conflict was perceived. On CNN, the context of the shooter was the least discussed topic (15%). The station occasionally gave voice to the perpetrator, showing his posts on social media (10%), made attempts at humanization (7%), discussed mental health with the participation of experts (6%), raised the issue of the past in the context of being an outsider (3%). Although the broadcasters emphasized other aspects related to the perpetrator, it should be noted that the low popularity of this topic indicates an awareness of how sensitive this issue is. CNN avoided using mechanisms typical of WJ, paying more attention to the victims, giving the floor to experts in the context of the perpetrator's mental health, making attempts at humanization. Fox News approached the issue in a more traditional and WJ way by showing the perpetrator more often than the victims, focusing on his past without the involvement of experts, using the frame of an outsider with mental problems (Youngblood, 2017). It is worth emphasizing that in none of the reports was the perpetrator called a terrorist.

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis showed that CNN and Fox News covered the mass shooting in Uvalde mainly from the WJ perspective, using a traditional formula of reporting violence. Fox News used PJ mechanisms slightly less often than CNN. Despite significant differences between the broadcasters (the broadcaster's agenda, presented worldview, dependence on political elites), they use the same mechanisms. This is how partisan media pursue their political agenda.

It was possible to identify specific WJ mechanisms used by both media. These include: focus on the conflict arena (both in the context of the shooting *per se* and the conflict around gun control); focus on the visible effects of violence (reconstruction of the shooting); showing two conflicting sides (Democrats and Republicans); "us vs them"

narrative; zero-sum orientation (showing no room for agreement in the context of preventing mass shootings); looking for the guilty (indicating the guilty party on the side of the "enemy"); propaganda orientation; focusing on elite peacemakers (mainly politicians); focusing on institutions, law; using the shooting in political grandstanding. Among the less numerous PJ mechanisms, the following were identified: non-sensational reconstruction, avoiding publicizing the shooter or giving him a voice. In addition, CNN used two more mechanisms, such as focusing on invisible trauma effects and suffering all over (showing many types of victims, giving them a voice).

The ideological and political profiles are key factors that influence the use of WJ. The tendency is visible from the very selection of the subject matter of the materials, where the issue of the political conflict between Democrats and Republicans dominates. The stations present solutions, causes, interpretations of the events in Uvalde as proclaimed by the dominant elites on the polarized American political scene, identifying themselves with the views of one of two major parties. The voice is given primarily to the elites associated with a given medium, deepening the dichotomy. The case study confirms that the politicization and bias of the media correlate with the use of WJ, moving away from the nuanced and mediation-oriented PJ. Such an approach may deepen the polarization in the U.S. regarding gun control and, in a broader sense, inflame bipartisan and social conflicts, reinforcing stereotypes about Democratic and Republican voters and politicians. The tragedy that affected Robb Elementary School, the Uvalde community and Americans as a nation was treated instrumentally in political grandstanding, in which partisan media took part.

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