

Glenn W. Muschert and Johanna Sumiala (Editors) - School Shootings: Mediatized Violence in a Global Age - Studies in Media and Communications Volume 7

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Review

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Many sociological studies show that violence on TV brings violence in the real world. Worldwide there have been thousands of studies showing that the share of violent scenes on TV is very high, from cartoons to political news. Although violence in schools is a problem of particular importance it is still not enough analyzed. In recent years, vigorous discussions and debates about the employment of violence in schools commanded the attention of scholars from all around the world. Violence and aggression are complex social phenomena, whose ways of expression, social consequences and solutions are interesting for both institutions of social control and public opinion. The book *School Shootings: Mediatized Violence in a Global Age* edited by Glenn W. Muschert and Johanna Sumiala and published by Emerald Books in 2012 contributes to the recent academic discussions about violence in schools by offering a complete evaluation of the school shootings phenomenon. The articles from this book are the result of the discussions that begun at the Conference on Social Violence in the Network Society hosted by the Communication Research Centre of the Department of Communication at the University of Helsinki in 2009. As the editors say the purpose of this volume is "to examine the connections between school shootings and media, while examining the presence and effects of these events and dynamics in contemporary life" and "to understand the complex interplay between media, society and school shootings, and certainly how this interaction is carried out in the range of cultural and societal contexts and settings".

This very well organized volume is divided into three sections that bring new perspectives on the school shootings phenomenon all around the world.

Section 1 - Framing the Event: Societal and (Media)/ Cultural Perspectives contains 5 chapters "School Shootings and Cultivation Analysis:

Confrontational Media Rhetoric and the History of Research on the Politics of Media Violence" by Andy Ruddock, "Media Dynamics in School Shootings: A Socialization Theory Perspective" by Nils Bockler, Thorsten Seeger and Peter Sitzer, "A Futile Game: On the Prevalence and Causes of Misguided Speculation about Role of Violent Video Games in Mass School Shootings" by Christopher J. Ferguson, James D. Ivory, "Media Consumption in German School Shooters" by Rebecca Bondu and Herbert Scheithauer and "Making Headlines: A Quarter Century of the Media's Characterization of Canadian School Shootings" by sociologist Stephanie Howells. These five chapters analyze "the symbolic representation/understanding of school shootings, bringing insight on various aspects of the media's characterization of school shootings, and how this may have important effects on media violence and physical violence".

Section 2 - Covering the Events: Perspectives of and for Journalistic Practice includes 4 chapters: "Analyzing Visual Media Coverage of Amok School Shootings - A Novel Iconographic Approach" by Marion G. Muller, Ognyan Seizov and Florian Wiencek, "U.S and Finnish Journalists: A Comparative Study of Roles, Responsibilities and Emotional Reactions to School Shootings" by Klas Backholm, Marguerite Moritz and Kaj Bjorkqvist, "Vital Explanations or Harmful Gossip? Finnish Journalists' Reflections on Reporting the Interpretations of Two School Shootings" by Jari Valiveronen, Kari Koljonen and Pentti Raittila, "Deciphering Rampage: Assigning Blame to Youth Offenders in News Coverage of School Shootings" by Glenn W. Muschert and Leah Janssen. These studies are examining "the process of journalistic practice, whether involving the way in which journalists create visual representations of school shootings, whether it involves journalists' attribution of blame and responsibility for school

shootings, or examining the stress involved in covering such events”.

Section 3 - *Witnessing and Consuming School Shooting Events* focuses on “media and school shootings from the point of view of those who witness and/or consume the media representations of these tragic events”, adding 5 more articles to the study of the contemporary school shootings phenomenon: “Media Participation of School Shootings and their Fans: Navigating Between Self-Distinction and Imitation to Achieve Individuation” by Nathalie E. Paton, “The Remote is Controlled by the Monster: Issues of Mediatized Violence and School Shootings” by Jaclyn Schildkraut, “The Mediatized Victim: School Shootings as Distant Suffering” by Salli Hakala, “Collective Coping through Networked Narratives: YouTube Responses to the Virginia Tech Shooting” by Simon Lindgren and “School Shootings, Crisis of Masculinities, and Media Spectacle: Some Critical Perspectives” by Douglas Kellner.

Overall, the 14 chapters of this volume highlight the importance of media for framing the school-related violence issues and provide the readers with a comprehensive analysis of the mediatization of violence, and in particular to the media coverage of school shootings in the context of globalization. This volume is useful for students, scholars, teachers and anyone interested in understanding mediatized violence as a global phenomenon. The book fills a gap in violence studies by providing a new critical analysis of school shootings from different perspectives: theoretical perspective, media perspective and audiences' perspective.