

Social reaction to a case of parricide in Spain.

A study based on Twitter interaction

Reacción social ante un caso de parricidio en España. Un estudio basado en la interacción en Twitter

Reação social a um caso de parricídio na Espanha. Um estudo baseado na interação no Twitter

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Abstract

A minor murdered his parents and siblings in Elche (Spain) in February 2022. This case has offered the possibility of analysing this type of crime, which is so rarely studied in Spain. In a novel way the paper research analyses the social reaction to a case of parricide. For this purpose, a total of 7200 messages published in the days following the event were analysed using NVIVO 12. The measures of central tendency indicate the influence of the traditional media in defining the framing of the treatment of the case, but also the capacity of new actors to incorporate new perspectives and question the media discourse. Alongside this analysis, a qualitative analysis of the discourse conveyed in the messages has been developed. This research contributes to productively using media information to analyse various social phenomena. It also aids in understanding processes of the social construction of violence and its effects within the framework of current communication.

Keywords

Juvenile delinquency, child to parent violence, parricide, Twitter, youth violence

Resumen

En febrero de 2022, un menor asesinó a sus padres y hermanos en Elche (España). Este caso ha ofrecido la posibilidad de analizar este tipo de delitos, tan escasamente estudiados en España. La presente investigación analiza, de una forma novedosa, la reacción social ante un caso de parricidio. Para ello, mediante el uso de NVIVO 12, han sido analizados un total de 7200 mensajes publicados en los días posteriores al hecho. Las medidas de tendencia central señalan la influencia de los medios de comunicación tradicionales para definir el encuadre del tratamiento del caso, pero también la capacidad de nuevos actores para incorporar nuevas perspectivas y cuestionar el discurso de los medios. Junto con este análisis se ha desarrollado un análisis cualitativo del discurso emitido en los mensajes. Esta investigación contribuye a aprovechar la información procedente de

los medios de comunicación para analizar diversos fenómenos sociales y comprender los procesos de construcción social de la violencia y sus efectos en el marco de la comunicación actual.

Palabras clave:

Delincuencia juvenil, violencia filio-parental, parricidio, Twitter, violencia juvenil

Resumo

Em fevereiro de 2022, um menor assassinou seus pais e irmãos em Elche (Espanha). Esse caso ofereceu a possibilidade de analisar esse tipo de crime, que é tão raramente estudado na Espanha. Nesta pesquisa, é analisada, de forma inovadora, a reação social a um caso de parricídio. Para isso, usando o NVIVO 12, foi analisado um total de 7 200 mensagens publicadas nos dias seguintes ao ocorrido. As medidas de tendência central indicam a influência da mídia tradicional na definição do enquadramento do tratamento do caso, além da capacidade dos novos atores de incorporar novas perspectivas e questionar o discurso da mídia. Juntamente com essa análise, foi desenvolvida uma análise qualitativa do discurso veiculado nas mensagens. Esta pesquisa contribui para aproveitar as informações provenientes da mídia para analisar diferentes fenômenos sociais e compreender os processos de construção social da violência e seus efeitos no âmbito da comunicação atual.

Palavras chave:

Delinquência juvenil, violência entre filhos e pais, parricídio, Twitter, violência juvenil

Introduction

On Friday 11 February 2022 a young man was arrested in Elche, a city with a population of over 230 000 in south-eastern Spain, after confessing to a neighbour that he had killed his parents and his 10-year-old younger brother. A series of statements and interpretations of this case of parricide began to appear on Twitter over the following days, after the news was leaked to the media. This paper studies this social reaction by analysing messages posted on the social network. In this way, the aim is to examine a specific case of parricide with the objective of advancing in the understanding of how the social perception of these crimes committed by young people in Spain is configured. Given the scarcity and peculiarity of these events, a case study can contribute towards a better understanding of the influence of these cases on public opinion.

After the Elche case of parricide became known, a Spanish national newspaper headlined: ‘From the catana murderer to the parricide of Elche: children who

have shocked Spain with their atrocities’ (ABC, 2022). A boy killed his father, mother and little sister with a catana in 2000, a few months after the approval of the Penal Law for Minors in Spain, also known as LORPM (Organic Law 5/2000). This case had an important media impact (Jiménez, 2015) and a large number of scientific publications have used it to show that cases like this had a notable influence on the punitive drift of the LORPM, which culminated in the enactment of Organic Law 8/2006. These publications highlight how the media have created social alarm when reporting on several very serious crimes committed by young people during the first years of the 21st century (Bernuz & Fernández, 2008; Jiménez, 2015; Lidón & Gomis-Pomares, 2021; Tarancón, 2017). Even Organic Law 8/2006 acknowledges the strong social impact that some violent crimes had had in its explanatory memorandum, although the law itself points out that there was no significant increase in violent crimes in the years preceding the reform.

Criminalisation processes resulting from atypical cases with a high social impact have also occurred in other

countries. In the United Kingdom, the murder of 2-year-old James Bulger shocked the country, influencing the parliamentary agenda and the modification of aspects of juvenile criminal law (Guerrero, 2018). Despite the uniqueness of the cases, this effect motivates a greater awareness of social reaction. However, analysis of the influence of the media on the construction of the social perception of violence and child aggressors, as well as the effects on legal transformations and the consequent increase in the judicialisation of child to parent violence (CPV) is scarce. This, despite the confirmation of its impact on official figures on youth violence (Palma-Durán & Ruiz-Callado, 2019).

The case this paper analyses is the ultimate exemplification of violence exercised by children towards their parents. In Spain, research on violence towards parents has grown notably over the last decade, as in other countries; Spain leads the number of publications on this topic¹. Work has been completed parallel to this research process to define and interpret this reality, given that there has been little development of this subject to date. In this sense, CPV has been considered as different to parricide in cases in which there is no prior violence, and attempts to consolidate a definition have considered it as such (Pereira et al., 2017). This differentiation exists on an international level. This is mainly because, among other factors, parricide is committed by adults in 75 % and 91 % of cases (Heide & Petee, 2007a), while VFP has largely been associated with violence committed by adolescents. Differentiation allows these cases to be separated from elder abuse. 2.24 % of all cases in Spain between 1990 and 2019 were committed by minors, and 35.43 % of the perpetrators were aged between 26 and 36 (Vidal, 2022).

However, other authors consider that the differentiation between these two types of violence is due to a lack of communication between researchers of these two phenomena (Holt & Shon, 2018). In this sense, we could consider that there is little evidence supporting the need for different classifications and that research carried out so far has been scarce. Therefore, decisions on defining and categorising different forms of violence have been made without sufficient research. In fact, the Attorney General's Office (Fiscalía General del Estado, 2020) has expressed its concern that some cases of CPV in Spain have been categorised as homicide.

Vidal (2022:119) points out that previous ascending violence in cases of exists in 19.57 % of parricide cases.

This figure is above the incidence data shown by recent studies carried out among the Spanish population (Calvete et al., 2011; Cano-Lozano et al., 2021; Contreras et al., 2020; Cortina & Martín, 2020; Ibabe et al., 2020; Ibabe & Bentler, 2016; Izaguirre & Calvete, 2017; Junco-Guerrero et al., 2021). Other research shows that the incidence is quite similar (Ibabe et al., 2013). This data coincides with Walsh and Krienert's work (2007) which found a considerable number of assaults on parents, some of which ended in parricide, using on data obtained from a sample (n = 17.957).

On the basis of this research, it is possible to point out that although both are largely understudied manifestations of domestic violence, CPV and parricide are not distant realities. For this reason, parricide is one of the least understood and researched acts of family violence (Walsh et al., 2008). However, research in recent decades has incorporated explanatory variables beyond the perpetrator's mental health, on which much of the scientific production has focused so far (Boots & Heide, 2006). The most recent publications have analysed aspects such as previous conflicts within families (Auclair et al., 2006; Dantas et al., 2014; Marleau et al., 2006) and even previous instances of violence (Hart & Helms, 2003).

All these variables must be analysed, along with others, as Miles et al. (2022) indicate, to understand this little studied reality. It is important to incorporate explanatory factors at the contextual level in order to understand parricide in different social contexts. In this sense, a complete understanding of parricide must include a necessary consideration of local differences in terms of the organisation of justice, access to firearms, the prevention and intervention systems developed by each state, etc.

Regarding research on parricide in Spain, Vidal (2022), author of a review of two hundred twenty-three parricide sentences, states that previous literature in Spain is limited to a publication on a case study of a homicide by an adolescent. The authors of this publication indicate that the murderer was a fan of video games and that he built a weapon similar to one from game to commit the crime against his father (Rodríguez et al., 2015). Although they point to the child's psychopathic traits as the most significant variable to consider, it is very interesting to note that the father has also abused his son. This is particularly significant in highlighting the importance of looking at domestic violence in a more holistic way.

Today, the growing influence of social media makes it necessary to extend research beyond traditional media. Previous research has pointed out how social media contributes to the dissemination of misinformation

1 A search in Scopus using the terms child-to-parent violence, child to parent abuse, adolescent to parent violence and adolescent to parent abuse yielded 212 publications, of which 117 are Spanish, 29 are from the UK, 29 are from the USA and 19 are from Australia.

and unverified data, and various authors (Dasilva et al., 2020) question the information they transmit. For this reason, the number of studies on the subject is increasing, although research on the perception of crime on new social networks is still lacking (Kostakos, 2018). The case analysed in this paper is particularly significant due to its impact on the media. It has been particularly impactful because of the singularity of the event, the presence of a firearm in the case, and the small number of crimes of this type that occur in Spain.

The analysis of Twitter messages relating to the Elche parricide involves assuming the principles of cultural criminology, considering that the media contribute to generating a certain conception of crime and social control. The actions of the media influence the creation of the social conception of crime. However, in today's communicative context, the advent of new technologies has transformed the immediacy of interpreting crime and giving it meaning (Ilan, 2019). As a result of the transformation of forms of social communication, the use of social networks on the internet must undoubtedly be understood as an inseparable part of the process of understanding crime (Mayr & Statham, 2021).

Therefore, the analysis of this parricide case encompasses the communicative transformations of the last two decades. Society is saturated with collective meaning and full of symbolic uncertainty (Ferrell et al., 2008), especially due to the irruption of social networks and the capacity of users to generate and exchange content. For this reason, it is essential to incorporate analysis of social media into criminological studies; these new social networks allow for the immediate presentation of crime (Yar, 2012).

Method

This investigation uses content analysis on messages posted on the social network Twitter following the case of the Elche parricide. The aim is to understand the social interpretation of a particularly singular case with a strong impact on public opinion. To this end, it is possible to extend the scope of the study beyond the media using an analysis of participation on the Internet, while also incorporating users' perceptions of the network.

To analyse the discourse around the Elche parricide case, public Twitter messages were captured on 15 and 16 February 2022 using the NCapture extension of the Google Chrome browser. The messages were analysed using the NVIVO 12 programme. A total of 7200 messages were obtained using the search term 'Elche'. The calculation of term frequencies and the sociometric analysis were carried out on the entire

sample. Qualitative analysis was carried out to identify themes after reading the whole sample.

After a list of the most frequently used terms was obtained they were represented in the form of a frequency cloud, facilitating their visualisation. The calculation of these frequencies allows us to identify the most significant topics discussed in the set of messages. This therefore showed what Twitter users talked about when referring to the parricide case.

In addition, a graphical representation of the network made up of all the messages that constitute the corpus of analysed tweets was generated using the Gephi 10.1 programme. This visual representation enables the observation of relationships established between different messages, as it shows those with the greatest influence and the connections between them. This graph also makes it possible to visualise the influence of certain messages on the overall set of tweets.

Measures of degree centrality and intermediation were determined by means of a sociometric analysis which made it possible to identify the messages with the greatest influence within the sociogram generated from the discourse on Twitter. Centrality shows the number of edges that emerge from each node. The concept of intermediation refers to the capacity of a node to serve as a link between others; this concept is relevant to studies of information on Twitter because it indicates the power of a node for controlling the information that must necessarily pass through them in order to be shared and reach other users.

A qualitative analysis of the discourse identified the themes present in the messages; the level of message rebroadcasting was also compared as an indicator of the propagation of certain themes among Twitter users. To this end, Spearman's Rho correlation coefficient was calculated to analyse the relationship between the number of times a message was retweeted and the account's activity level and number of followers. The study also used SPSS v 28.

Results

Figure 1 shows the results of the frequency analysis in the form of a word cloud from the corpus of messages obtained using NVIVO 12. References to the book or novel *La edad de la ira* (the main character of which, Marcos, is a middle-class teenager who murders his father and leaves one of his four siblings badly wounded), which the child in the parricide case had read in secondary school, and to the use of video games stand out among the total number of terms. Also noteworthy is the reference to the 'shotgun', the weapon used by the minor and owned by his father. Although most of

the media did not reference it, this was the term around which the entire social media response developed was articulated.

Figure 1. | Word cloud

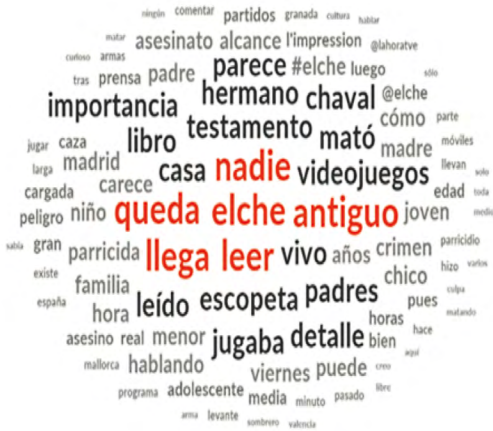


Figure 2 shows the sociogram generated from the interactions between the various tweets, where each tweet is represented by a node.

It shows the names of the accounts whose messages have been retweeted the most. At the same time, the size of the node indicates a higher number of retweets. The sociogram shows that MiguelBarrero (Barrero, 2022) and Tortondo (Durán, 2022) exert notable influence on the set of messages analysed. These two messages are widely retweeted; Twitter users make the decision

to re-share this information or opinion, which they consider relevant. Finally, the names highlighted in black indicate the position in the sociogram of the accounts reflected in figures 1 and 2.

Figure 2. | Sociogram of the analysed tweets

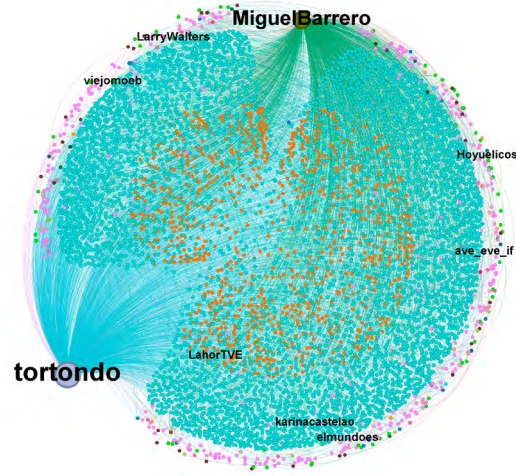


Table 1 ranks the tweets with the highest levels of centrality measures after calculating the degree of centrality and betweenness. The degree of centrality is particularly significant in the tweets published by @tortondo (Durán, 2022) and @MiguelBarrero (Barrero, 2022). The same is true for the measure of the degree of intermediation, which indicates the number of times a connection between two nodes occurs.

Table 1. | Users sorted by degree, level of intermediation and tweet text

User	Grade	Brokerage	Tweet text
@tortondo	2554	19 922 691	If he reads the Old Testament no one will be left alive in Elche. https://t.co/tekoLSzqkz (Durán, 2022)
@MiguelBarrero	1563	12 931 730	The boy who killed his parents and brother in Elche played video games and had read a book. He also had a shotgun at home, but it seems that this detail is unimportant. (Barrero, 2022)
@LaHoraTVE	78	352 752	Triple parricide in Elche. Javier Gandía, head of Red Cross Relief and Emergency: ‘Our intervention focuses on the person who is setting our pace’. (La Hora de La 1, 2022)
@vejomoeb	78	352 752	They’ve been on @LaHoraTVE for about half an hour talking about the Elche murder and the danger of video games and mobile phones, but they haven’t had a minute to mention that there was a loaded shotgun in that house within reach of a child. (Moyano, 2022)
@LarryWalters	73	723 403	The press and the Elche crime https://t.co/B2fqff9kQC (Walters, 2022)
@elmundoes	50	406 039	The Elche parricide child had read ‘The Age of Wrath’, a novel in which a young man kills his family, and which forms part of the educational programme of his secondary school. https://t.co/zt6ROvhFmo . (El Mundo, 2022b) A 15-year-old boy murders his parents and 10-year-old brother in Elche. They had cut off his wife for getting suspended https://t.co/2CCq2lkK3E (El Mundo, 2022a)
@ave_eve_if	48	540 024	Yes, it is very curious that no media asked how a teenager could handle a hunting shotgun so well in the Elche crime. The boy was very fond of video games, but investigating the hours of training and killing animals with his father can wait for another day. ² (Ave, 2022)

² The texts of the messages inserted in the tables have maintained the spelling and punctuation of the original message. It is considered that the way the message is written on Twitter denotes features that may have a meaning that should not be overlooked.

In addition to information obtained through network analysis, the very characteristics of Twitter provide other information relevant to understanding how the generated dynamics function. Table 2 shows messages that have been most shared. The great impact of the first two messages and the outstanding influence of a national newspaper such as El Mundo stand out among these. This difference shows that the accounts on Twitter have differentiated hierarchies.

Table 2. | Most retweeted tweets

Account	Retweets	Followers	Text
@Miguel Barrero	4380	7979	The boy who killed his parents and brother in Elche played video games and had read a book. He also had a shotgun at home, but it seems that this detail is unimportant. (Barrero, 2022)
@tortondo	4350	49 552	If he reads the Old Testament no one will be left alive in Elche. https://t.co/tekoLSzqkz (Durán, 2022)
@ElMundo	1535	4 090 675	A 15-year-old boy murders his parents and his 10-year-old brother in Elche. They had cut off his wife for getting suspended https://t.co/2CCq2lkK3E (<i>El Mundo</i> , 2022a)
@Hoyuelicos	333	28 836	There was no time to blame video games for the triple parricide [perpetrated by] the minor in Elche. Almost all teenagers in our country play video games. We have a very low crime rate among minors, parricides are almost non-existent. But videogames are guilty. (Jurist Priest, 2022).
@ElMundo	222	4 090 675	The Elche parricide child had read 'The Age of Wrath', a novel in which a young man kills his family, and which forms part of the educational programme of his secondary school. https://t.co/zt6ROvhFmo (<i>El Mundo</i> , 2022b)
@KarinaCastelao	177	5142	A 15 year old boy kills his father, mother and brother in Elche because they take away his wife so that he can study and collaborate at home. We have a terribly sick society. (Karinacastelao, 2022)

Table 3 shows the different topics raised by the audience in relation to the parricide in Elche. The corpus of messages has been ordered according to the number of retweets and grouped into different themes according to the categorisation. The table excludes messages with less than 30 retweets. The number of retweets of each of these messages is considered an indicator of their influence among Twitter users.

Table 3. | Themes raised by the audience about the parricide case

Thematic	Text	Retweets
Criticism of the media	They've been on @LaHoraTVE for about half an hour talking about the Elche murder and the danger of video games and mobile phones, but they haven't had a minute to mention that there was a loaded shotgun in that house within reach of a child. (Moyano, 2022)	93
	The young Elche perpetrator was hooked on intermittent fasting and real fooding. The shotgun found in his house was a tangible representation of his fight against ultra-processed food (Please... stop treating us like idiots) (Justeffe, 2022).	90
	The young man from Elche had a shotgun at home, he knew where it was, how to load it and how to use it. The problem is a book (Yago, 2022).	62
	According to various headlines, the Elche parricide played Fornite, had read 'The Age of Wrath' and, if you keep going, listened to heavy metal. No one thinks to ask how a 15 year old kid knows how to use a shotgun and why he had a gun within reach (Perea, 2022).	48
	What I had yet to read: the media are talking about the novel - which they don't even know about - that the Elche parricide was reading. To insinuate a link between a book and a triple crime is despicable. My solidarity with the writer. (Tróspida Piur, 2022).	34
Video game addiction	The 15-year-old parricide in Elche was hooked on the video game 'Fortnite'. He killed his parents and his 10-year-old brother for punishing him by leaving him without a console and without wife. Addictions are tragedies that end as such. Some parents are more concerned about social media than about their children! (López, 2022)	89
	A 15 year old boy murders his whole family in Elche over wife and lives with the bodies for three days (Tiramillas, 2022)	58

Thematic	Text	Retweets
Psychopathic traits	The cold blood of Santi, the parricide of Elche: 3 days answering his dead mother's whatsapp https://t.co/VRhagwBqYF via @elespanolcom (Jiménez, 2022)	100
	The confession of the parricide of Elche: 'I shot my mother in the back and then I finished her off, I hunted my brother, I waited for my father for four or five hours and I shot him on arrival' https://t.co/cDBnLUvwcm (El Mundo, 2022c)	82
Relationship with the Teletcinco programme ³	La Sexta, they have just talked about the Elche crime, and the boy who killed his parents and brother, a minor, will spend 5 years in an institution and then he will be released without a criminal record. I think that what they are doing with RF is a crime. When is the prosecutor going to act (Nicolas, 2022)?	105
	Do you understand Rocío better with the parricide of Elche?	81
Opposition to hunting	Yes, it is very curious that no one in the media asks how a teenager could handle a hunting shotgun so well. The boy was very fond of video games, but investigating the hours of training to kill animals with his father can wait for another day (Ave, 2022).	65
	Neighbour of the parricide of Elche: 'The father had a shotgun because he was a hunter' #NoalaCaza #LaVerdadDeLaCaza ⁴ https://t.co/PIb70XG86G via @teletcincoes (Rivero Saeta, 2022)	31
Criticism of the LORPM	I am going to say this in the least populist way possible, but, to me, the fact that the boy from Elche, who is fifteen years old, will be on the street when he turns twenty does not seem at all normal. (Vázquez, 2022).	31

Table 4 identifies the various types of accounts that have achieved more than 30 retweets. One third of the accounts can be classified as personal and 9 of the 21 are associated with professionals such as writers, communicators or journalists. It is important to bear

in mind that these values are constantly changing and undergoing modifications. The figures shown in table 4 refer to data captured with the NCapture extension on 16 February, 2022.

Table 4. | Typology of accounts participating in the discourse

Account	Type	Broadcast messages	Retweets	Followers
@ElMundo	Media	366 786	222	4 090 675
@navedelmisterio	Media	116 707	100	718 764
@justeffe	Personal account	5055	90	57 519
@tortondo	Writer	23 766	4350	49 552
@contrastado	Journalist	153 415	89	35 455
@Hoyuelicos	Disseminator	84 741	333	24 424
@lapiur	Writer	284 130	34	17 603
@tiramillas	Media	33 617	58	14 236
@Alber	Writer	18 387	31	9605
@viejomoeb	Personal account	14 279	93	9561
@PereaConcha	Writer	41 584	48	8000
@MiguelBarrero	Writer	36 008	4380	7979
@LarryWalters	Creator of memes	49 130	74	6428
@AlbertoRSaeta	Personal account- activist	35 120	31	4346
@Mariannicolas10	Personal account	38 815	105	2615
@ave_eve_if	Personal account	6366	65	906
@YagorochaAlvz	Personal account	91 583	62	564
@AnavicanteRamir	Personal account	94 900	81	409
@karinacastelao	Blogger	245	177	322

³ These messages refer to the programme Rocío, telling the truth to stay alive, where the protagonist, well known in the Spanish tabloids, recounted her alleged experience as a victim of gender violence and CPV.

⁴ These hashtags translate to 'no to hunting' and 'the truth about hunting'

The relationship between these three variables can provide important information about the functioning of Twitter and the reaction of the audience to this particular case. For this reason, the correlation between the number of retweets and the number of followers has been calculated, as has the correlation between the number of retweets and the number of messages issued, which is an indicator of the level of account activity. Spearman's Rho coefficient between the number of followers and the number of retweets is .232, while between the number of retweets and the number of messages posted it is .036. In both cases show a very weak correlation, indicating that neither the activity of the account nor the number of followers has a significant impact on the number of times a message is shared.

Discussion

In his reference work on parricide, the French sociologist and psychologist Michel Foucault (1976) defines the concept as 'a singular quarrel, a power relation, a battle of discourses and through discourses'. If the discourse on parricide is articulated on the basis of a set of reports, news and statements in Foucault's work, the discourse analysed in this paper takes place within the current communicative environment. However, this case also identifies different power relations between the actors; this shows that not all Twitter accounts have the same the communicative power.

According to framing theory, traditional media has the ability to approach a topic in a specific way when they present it; by referring to it, they convey a specific interpretation (Antón-Mellón et al., 2015). That the vast majority of the messages analysed are a response to the interpretation of the main cause of the parricide in the newspaper *El Mundo*, one of the most important national newspapers in Spain, demonstrates this. The media's vision is constructed on the basis of a discourse in which violence and drama are predominant, and which has the effect of causing social alarm (Antón-Mellón & Antón-Carbonell, 2017). However, the identification of the various discourse themes (table 3) shows that this also occurs through the actions of some of the other analysed accounts.

As evidenced by the data, both some media and some accounts (Table 3) have related the similarities of the case analysed in this paper with other previous parricides in Spain, especially with the case of the minor with the catana (Marlasca & Rendueles, 2022). Therefore, the analysis of the Elche parricide case is important for improving knowledge about the impact caused by this type of event on Spanish public opinion. It is particularly important for considering the legal

consequences of the events, given that a whole set of reforms to the LORPM were consolidated under the premise that the law was too lax with juvenile offenders (Pozuelo, 2013).

The elaboration of the sociogram (figure 2) and the calculation of the centrality measures (table 1) have made it possible to identify which messages and accounts have had the greatest influence on the Twitter audience. From this data, we can conclude that users supported messages linked to criticism of the media's interpretation of the parricide. The fundamental difference in this case is that, while the *El Mundo* newspaper's message focuses on the importance of reading a novel (*La edad de la ira*) and the minor's dependence on video games, Twitter offers the possibility of questioning information coming from traditional media. It offers another framework for approaching the analysis of the social interpretation of this parricide case (Navarro & Coromina, 2020). The two messages with the highest levels of centrality measures, both in terms of degree and intermediation, are responses to a message published by the @ElMundo account. Meanwhile, the frequency analysis of key concepts (figure 1) shows the influence of references to video games, the book or the firearm across the messages as a whole. This audience response generates a discourse that is not hegemonic, but dominant.

The message from @tortondo (Durán, 2022) challenges a key aspect of claims about the relationship between witnessing violence and committing violent acts. In this regard, as Widom (1989) points out, the vast majority of children who have been abused or neglected do not exhibit violent behaviour in the future. For his part, Ferguson (2015) points out that the consumption of violence does not predict increased rates of social violence, which is also true of the use of violent video games (Dorantes-Argandar, 2021; Turel, 2020). Regarding video games, Estanyol et al. (2019) state that young Spaniards perceive that the media suggests that video games encourage violent behaviour. However, recent specific research on CPV showed a lower incidence of this type of violence among minors who play violent video games (Ruiz-Fernández et al., 2021). Likewise, the evidence indicates that ICTs are not triggers of CPV, although they can act as facilitators (TheFamilyWatch, 2016).

With regard to references to video games, the activity of Twitter users during the days analysed highlights the influence of the presence of a shotgun in the house where the child lived. Miguel Barrero (2022) informatively insists that the presence of a firearm in the home where the crime took place, the child's ability to access it and his or her ability to use it are omitted.

According to Spanish law, these weapons must be kept in an approved armoury.

This concern is consistent with research findings (Boots & Heide, 2006; Heide & Petee, 2007b) that show that the presence of guns is a key factor in understanding the commission of parricide. Moreover, when the perpetrator is a young person, the relationship between the presence of firearms and the commission of parricide is even more important (Heide & Petee, 2007b; Mills & Kivisto, 2023). This relationship is explained by the fact that patricide occurs in an explosive manner and access to a gun facilitates the commission of the crime. For this reason, the presence of a weapon is particularly significant in cases where the perpetrator is an adolescent, especially considering that there could be a considerable difference in physical strength between the minor and the victim. However, Miles et al. (2022) have found that while references to firearms may well explain US cases, the British particularity is better explained on the basis of mental illness and the care relationship established between the mother and the parricide perpetrator.

The results show that the reaction of Twitter users was to question the relationship of the perpetrator with the use of video games and to focus their discourse on the presence of a firearm. In Spain, 7.5 % households contain a firearm (Small Arms Survey, 2018), one of the lowest in Europe. This may explain why firearms are only a factor in 6.82 % of cases of parricide, while bladed weapons have risen to 54.55 % of cases (Vidal, 2022: 130). This fact must be taken into account together with the fact that 89.24 % of these crimes were improvised and that the trigger was an outburst (34.98 %) or impulsive behaviour (29.15 %).

From the calculation of the correlation between account activity, the number of followers and the number of retweeted messages, we can infer that the success of a message among the audience correlates very weakly to account activity or number of followers. This is characteristic of Twitter and enables the development of what Castells (2009) has called mass self-communication, in which information shared by a private actor can reach a large audience.

In general, the traditional media's selection of news, interpretation of crime cases and emphasis on some of the most shocking cases distort the population's view of crime (Fuentes, 2005). However, the data shown in Table 3 shows that this treatment of youth violence is not exclusive to the mass media and can also be observed in the discourse analysed on Twitter. These messages tend to demand a toughening of the LORPM, as the media also do with their criticism of the laxity of criminal justice for minors in Spain (Atlas

España, 2022; El Programa de Ana Rosa, 2022), which has even been described as ridiculous (Canarias Te quiero, 2022). However, the study of the sample data allows us to conclude that these messages have not been widely supported by the audience. Moreover, the case of parricide this paper analyses takes place in a period of declining juvenile crime in Spain. Fernández-Molina and Bartolomé (2020) note that crimes against property and the most violent crimes have decreased. Meanwhile lower tolerance towards violent behaviour and the judicialisation of problems that previously remained outside the juvenile criminal justice system explain the increase in family violence.

In relation to the various factors the discourse presents, it is necessary to highlight that a single factor is not a sufficient basis for interpreting the genesis of a case of parricide. In this sense, the analysis of themes in the messages shows that Twitter also reproduces a reductionist discourse similar to that of the media. Table 3 presents various interpretations of the factors that provoke parricide which, conversely, do not have a great impact on the audience. Some messages point to what can be considered psychopathic traits, such as coldness and lack of empathy. Although scientific literature frequently cites these traits (Boots & Heide, 2006), the audience do not necessarily share this tendency. Therefore, it should be considered that the reaction on Twitter does not serve to explain the case of parricide, but rather to understand the reaction to it from a broader perspective.

In other cases, impact of the parricide and how it is shared in the media is used to present personal or ideological interests. For this reason, there are themes as diverse as opposition to hunting or the reference to a television programme broadcast by the Mediaset group in which a tabloid personality recounts his conflicts with his daughter and her ex-partner. This docuseries intruded a wide television audience to CPV.

In relation to the shotgun, it is crucial to understand that the aversion towards firearms shown in some messages transcends the specific scope of the parricide under analysis. In Spain, the stance towards firearms and hunting is highly politicised and associated with conservative positions. Consequently, several of the highlighted messages also contain criticism of hunting (Table 3). This phenomenon should be interpreted as an attempt to amplify their demands by taking advantage of the media attention generated by the parricide case. It is important to note that, analogous to how social media platforms facilitate the audience to express a critical and active stance on information, many of the messages share characteristics with those disseminated by conventional media and tend to simplify the problem, such as those related to hunting.

Conclusions

The data obtained in this study shows that simplistic and sensationalist explanations of this case of parricide are present both in traditional media and among Twitter users. However, the majority of the sample analysed questioned the interpretation of some media and emphasised the presence of a firearm in the home. The results support a broad rejection of the use of firearms, although we cannot infer that this is the causal factor of the violent act. The explanation of the genesis of a case of parricide is more complex than the vision given by the mass media or social network users, although this work enriches the knowledge around the social alarm such extreme events generate.

Social network analysis is becoming increasingly common in public opinion behaviour research. In this way it is possible to examine hundreds of thousands of messages both to identify communities of people and to describe a new sphere of public or political action; such spheres of action are associated with the massive use of bots to influence citizens and their opinions. In contrast, this research into the number of messages and types of accounts involved is much more limited, as interaction has been much less frequent and no bots have been detected.

Despite the development of research using Twitter data in the social sciences, its development in the criminological field is less evident than in other fields. However, current research exemplifies how the use of this social network can be applied to understand diverse phenomena and how it integrates new methods to criminological analysis and tools that provide innovative resources to interpret crime today. In this sense, this work contributes to the understanding of society's interpretation of an extreme case of family violence based on the participation of diverse social actors.

Therefore, the analysis of social networks proves to be highly useful for examining social phenomena and for reconsidering the conceptual structures that guide scientific research in this field. The process of the social construction of violence takes place in the new context of social communication. In this sense, through the necessary revision of previous contributions on the influence of mass media on the social perception of crime, the study of messages posted on social networks allows us to advance in present and future lines of research that contribute to understanding aspects such as the social perception of crime or the participation of other actors, including professionals or intervention agencies. These are key elements in

the social construction of violence in conjunction with traditional media.

Any study carried out using massive data must consider both its benefits and disadvantages. The use of big data makes it possible to initiate new research that was previously impossible to conduct. However, a larger volume of data should not always be viewed positively, as the handling of thousands of messages can also limit the possibility of performing a detailed reading of these messages, which could give rise to interesting working hypotheses. In this research, the number of messages can be seen as a limitation. Paradoxically, this limitation allowed a more exhaustive reading of the messages, which in turn made it possible to make subsequent methodological decisions.

As a limitation of this study, it should be noted that the intention was not to investigate the social perception of cases of parricide or juvenile violence in general. This study is based on a specific case with the aim of describing the social reaction to a crime with a strong social impact in the contemporary communicative context. The uniqueness of the case means that similar occurrences are very infrequent. Finally, by incorporating contributions from social actors other than the media and law enforcement agencies, which have traditionally been endowed with greater authority in the criminological field, this work provides a more holistic understanding of the discourse and interpretation of a specific case of parricide.

Conflict of interest

There is no conflict of interest among the authors of this research. We declare that we have no financial or personal relationships that could influence the interpretation and publication of the results obtained. We also assure ensure that we always comply with ethical standards and scientific integrity at all times, in accordance with the guidelines established by the academic community and those dictated by this journal.

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