

FEMICIDE IN TURKEY: A DESCRIPTIVE AND CRITICAL STUDY BASED
ON NEWS TEXTS OF FEMICIDE INCIDENTS IN 2009

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of the study is to develop both a descriptive and critical understanding towards the phenomenon of femicide in Turkey. First, the answers to the questions who commits femicide, where it takes place, what the ages of perpetrators and victims are, and in what ways femicide is committed and what are the ‘reasons’ of committing femicide will be revealed through news reports of the incidents of femicide. Second, the news texts of incidents of femicide will be analyzed based on the framework of Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA). The discourse of framing the incidents will be identified. In particular, ‘justifying discourse’ in the language of the news reports will be examined.

Keywords: Femicide, Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis, News Texts, Justifying Discourse

ÖZ

TÜRKİYE’DE KADIN CİNAYETLERİ: 2009 YILI KADIN CİNAYETLERİ HABERLERİ ÜZERİNDEN BETİMLEYİCİ VE ELEŞTİREL BİR ÇALIŞMA

Güngör, Derya

Yüksek Lisans, Sosyoloji Bölümü

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Bu çalışmanın amacı Türkiye’de kadın cinayetleri fenomenine hem betimleyici hem de eleştirel bir anlayış geliştirmektir. İlk olarak, gazetelere yansımış şekli ile kimler kadın cinayeti işliyor, nerelerde gerçekleşiyor, kadın cinayeti işleyen adamlar ve cinayete kurban giden kadınların yaş dağılımı nasıl, genellikle nasıl yollar ve be gibi ‘nedenler’ ile işleniyorlar gibi soruların cevaplar aranacaktır. İkincisi, haber metinlerinin Feminist Eleştirel Söylem Analizi çerçevesine dayalı analizi üzerinden kadın cinayetlerinin nasıl bir söylem çerçevesinde haber yapıldığı incelenecek ve haklılaştırma söylemi içerisinde sunulup sunulmadığı bakılacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kadın Cinayetleri, Feminist Eleştirel Söylem Analizi, Haber Metinleri, Haklılaştırma Söylemi

Dedicated to Dicle Koğacioğlu

and

All the women around the world that live under the threat of femicide

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Once upon a time murder of women was an issue that feminist activists and scholars had tried to make visible. However, recently, it has gained great attention and has begun to be studied. Various international organizations, state institutions, non-governmental organizations, and academics are some of the groups that deal with this issue. In addition to these, newspapers have started to give more space to these incidents than they did before. Thus, the issue has gradually become visible. However, the question is how exactly it becomes visible. This study will concentrate on revealing the ways femicide has been made visible through news texts. In addition, a descriptive study of the phenomenon will also be provided.

In the literature, the issue has been debated generally in two seemingly different conceptualizations. The first one, ‘custom (töre) killing’, has been considered to be associated with particular ‘cultures’, religions, and ‘tradition’ both in Turkey and all around the world. On the other hand, it has been conceptualized ‘passion killing’¹, as a phenomenon different from ‘custom (töre) killing’. The former has been treated as a social problem of specific groups of people, whereas the latter has usually been

¹ In the literature, ‘passion killings’ is used to refer to the murders of men by women for ‘reasons’ of passion, jealousy, etc as well as those of which women are murdered by men for similar reasons. However, throughout this study, it exclusively refers to the cases in which men kill women for these reasons.

conceptualized as individual events based on each individual man's psychology. However, I argue that femicide is the result of patriarchal relations and is part of the tendencies to control women and women's behavior in society. Thus, instead of all these different terms and different assumptions, I suggest using the term femicide² to be able to encompass the phenomenon comprehensively.

Femicide is a controversial issue and there are different terms that refer to the phenomenon that may create theoretical and methodological differences. This research requires a theoretical discussion about the phenomenon and specifies how the issue is approached in detail. In this respect, in Chapter 2, I am going to make an introduction to the issue of violence against women in general and provide a theoretical discussion. In addition, the prevalence and magnitude of violence against women, particularly femicide will be put under scrutiny. Then, in Chapter 3 of the study, I will bring into discussion various debates about femicide. Particularly, in the first part of Chapter 3, I will briefly discuss the phenomenon in the world literature. In the second part of the same chapter, I am going to look into the common debates about femicide in Turkey. I will also explain the implications of these debates both at the national and international level. The aim of the debates in this chapter is to show how the use of the existing terms about femicide leads to some problems and also to

² Throughout this study, I prefer using the term *femicide* to refer to the phenomenon of the murder of women. In later parts, I will explain why I prefer using the term *femicide*. Since it is a term that has been recently debated, there have not been many studies that conceptualize the term. The term *femicide* was first used publicly by Diana Russell while testifying the murders of women at the International Tribunal on Crimes against Women in Brussels in 1976. However, she explicitly defined the term with Jill Radford as 'the misogynistic killing of women by men' in 1992 (Widyono, 2008: 7). In Turkey, the commonly used term that refers to the issue especially in academic studies and campaigns, is 'custom (töre) killings', 'honor killing' or 'the murder of women in the name of honor'. However, recently, the term *kadın cinayetleri* in Turkish which is similar to the meaning of *femicide* in English has been used by feminist activist groups. Yet, it is not a grounded term.

suggest that the term femicide can be used as an alternative to refer to this phenomenon. In the last part of this chapter, I will develop some ontological arguments for such a preference. This is a study based on the analysis of news texts of incidents of femicide; therefore, it is also essential to clarify the study's approach to mass media which will be provided in Chapter 4.

The Chapter 5 will be the analysis chapter of the research. In this chapter, there will be two main parts, which may be considered as descriptive and critical studies of the news texts of femicide incidents. In the descriptive part of the analysis, I will draw a general picture of the phenomenon of femicide regarding the perpetrators' relationship to the victims, the 'reasons', the forms and the timing of the cases, the locations of the cases and the ages of the perpetrators and victims involved in the incidents based on the information in the news reports, being aware of the limitations of making generalizations about the issue through newspaper texts. These points seem significant for this study because the existing debates and definitions of the phenomenon are generally based on such aspects of the murder.

In the critical part of the analysis, I will make a critical examination of the news text within the framework of feminist critical discourse analysis based on the 'reasons', the form of the murder, the victim/perpetrator relationship, the age of the victims and perpetrators and some other factors affect the framing of the events. Through such an analysis, I aim to reveal how the discourse on femicide in Turkey, and to what extent the discourse on femicide justifies the phenomenon.

Consequently, in Chapter 6, I will summarize my main points, discuss the findings of the analysis, and state their significance for this study.

CHAPTER 2

THE ISSUE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

2.1. A Short Theoretical Debate about Violence against Women

Violence against women, which can take economic, psychological and physical forms, is the most common problem that women experience all over the world (Coomaraswamy, 2005: xi) and goes beyond cultural, geographical, religious, social, and economic differences. It is a significant problem because it devastates lives of women and, even in some cases, causes their death (Levy, 2008: 5). While it was considered as a private issue in the past, it is, fortunately, no longer a hidden phenomenon as it was (Levy, 2008: 3) and the struggle against it has been widespread throughout the world.

Although it is argued that men are also sometimes abused by women, empirical observations show that violence is also a gendered issue since the number of women who experience violence is bigger than that of men and women are being subjected to violence specifically because of their gender (Hunnicut, 2005: 557). Since violence against women is a gendered phenomenon, it is related to gender relations in many ways. For example, there is a mutual relationship between violence and gender inequality: women are subjected to violence as a result of gender inequality and at the same time, violence is one of the mechanisms that reproduce gender inequality. In other words, while it emerges due to unequal gender relations, it also contributes to the reproduction of them (Watts and Zimmerman, 2002: 1232).

Although violence against women is not the sole basis of control and reproduction of unequal gender relations and control of women, it can be argued that it is one of the main mechanisms that provide such control and domination (Walby, 1990: 142-143).

The debates and explanations about male violence against women vary. Many consider male violence against women “as the acts of a few men upon a few women” and think of it as individually motivated violent behavior such as the acts of some men with psychological problems (Walby, 1990: 128-129). According to a more ‘sociological’ explanation, men exercise violence against women due to socio-economic problems such as being alcoholics, unemployed, and/or outcasts (Walby, 1990: 132; Lundgren, 2009: 23). Men who use violence against women because of individual and socio-economic problems are usually considered as abnormal, different from other men and few in number (Walby, 1990: 128-129).

However, as Lundgren states, men who use violence against women are individuals who usually perform their daily social activities properly (2009: 24). Furthermore, as Walby pointed out, if these men are abnormal, then all men that perform any kind of violent act against women should be given psychiatric assistance instead of being given a penalty by the courts (1990: 130). Also, in most places, beating his wife does harm to a man’s ‘manliness’; on the contrary, he may even be considered more ‘masculine’ (Lundgren, 2009: 26). These arguments may demonstrate that the problem of violence against women is culturally accepted as ‘normal’ within the existing relations, rather than being considered as abnormal (Lundgren, 2009: 18).

Furthermore, the argument that violence against women is more common in families experiencing socio-economic problems may be inferred from existing facts and

figures which means that violence is more widespread among women of low socio-economic groups. However, reducing the phenomenon to socio-economic problems may be insufficient to explain the gendered aspect of such violence. For instance, socio-economic explanations cannot answer the following questions: “why do not women under similar circumstances with men (e.g. even if they are poorer than men, have less development resources than men, have more stressful experiences, and/or have been brutalized for years) use violence against their husbands, fathers, or brothers with as much as a common pattern like men” (MacKinnon, 2006: 31) and “why in high-socioeconomic groups is violence against women by men still prevalent”.

Therefore, it is argued that male violence against women cannot be easily attributed to individual psychological conditions, socio-economic problems, a particular culture and religion and/or be considered as rare and unusual (Walby, 1990: 131). In other words, it is not a rare issue that can be explained as the acts of a few men that have psychological problems, nor it is only the issue of some men who live under poor socio-economic conditions, or the problem of some specific cultures. Instead, violence against women is a widespread phenomenon all over the world that women are or are at risk of being subjected to.

In order to be able to cope with the problem of violence against women, approaches relate it to culture, religion, individual psychology, abnormality, socio-economic problems, and lack of education should be ruled out (Mojab, 2006: 41). Since it is a gendered sociological phenomenon, it needs to be explained from a feminist perspective to provide a better understanding of the extent of the problem. Different from approaches based on individual psychological and socio-economic problems,

feminist perspectives focus on patriarchal relations as the pervasive motive of violence against women (Dobash and Dobash, 1979; Walby, 1990; Levy, 2008). As the feminist perspective argues, the phenomenon can only be interpreted mainly in terms of patriarchy and within the framework of unequal power relations among men and women. As Hunnicutt points out in her article *Varieties of Patriarchy and Violence against Women: Resurrecting "Patriarchy" as a Theoretical Tool*, patriarchy means 'social arrangements that privilege males, where men as a group dominate women as a group, both structurally and ideologically—hierarchical arrangements that manifest in varieties across history and social space' (2005: 557). Furthermore, patriarchy is not stable in time and place. With respect to this, she argues that violence against women is a phenomenon that occurs in different forms and frequencies according to the 'degree of patriarchy' (2005: 559). Despite the fact that gender hierarchies are the main driving features of patriarchal systems, as she pointed out, 'age, race, class, sexuality, religion, historical location, and nationality' mediate gender statuses, assigning males and females varying amounts of social value, privilege, and power' (2005: 558). As a result, it should be underlined that although patriarchal power relations are universal, it is also self-evident; the ways in which it operates may change from time to time and context to context, depending on some other factors.³ Nevertheless, these should not create a hierarchy among different types of violence against women. Despite differences in the operations of patriarchal relations due to some factors, it should be always kept in mind that

³ There have been many arguments regarding the term *patriarchy* especially based on its 'inadequacy' to cover the operations of different gender relations in various contexts. . For further debate, see Walby, Sylvia (1989). *Theorising Patriarchy*. *Sociology*. Vol. 23. No. 2. pp. 213- 234; Acker, Joan (1989). *The Problem with Patriarchy*. *Sociology*. Vol. 23. No. 2. pp. 235-240; Pollert, Anna (1996). *Gender and Class Revisited; or the Poverty of 'Patriarchy'*. *Sociology*. Vol. 30. No. 4. pp. 639-659. Gottfried, Heidi, (1998). *Beyond Patriarchy? Theorising Gender and Class*. *Sociology*. Vol. 32. No. 3. pp. 451-468.

violence against women is a gendered phenomenon, and it is that unequal gender relation that causes systematic violence against women in the last instance.

The issue of violence against women was brought to Turkey's agenda by the struggle of the women's movement in the 1980s in relation to the international context where feminist theory and women's movements made quite a profound impact. In Turkey, the interest in feminist theory and the women's movement started to rise during these years (Arat 1990; cited in Arat, 1994: 241). While, on the one side, women scholars were dealing with theoretical issues concerning women's perspective especially in humanities and social sciences, on the other side, the women's movement brought women's issues and problems to the public arena and created a public awareness regarding women's problems (Altınay and Arat, 2009: 1). The women's movement of the 1980s, usually consisting of middle class, educated and professional women, organized consciousness raising groups, petition campaigns, protest walks to draw attention to women's problems and oppression of women, and also published journals,⁴ instituted a modern library⁵ and established women's NGOs⁶ (Arat, 1994: 241).

⁴ Some of them are as follows: Feminist Dergisi (Feminist Magazine) (1987), Sosyalist Feminist Kaktüs Dergisi (Socialist Feminist Kaktus Magazine) (1988), Kadınların Kurtuluşu (Emancipation of Women) (1988), Kadın Bülteni (Women's Newsletter) (1990).

⁵ Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi (Women's Library and Information Center) was founded in 1989 (Arat, 1994: 245).

⁶ Mor Çatı Women's Shelter Foundation in Istanbul, which still deals with the issue of violence against women, was founded in 1990 (Göksel, 2009: 29). Women's Solidarity Foundation, which also particularly aims to fight against the problem of violence against women, was founded in Ankara in 1991. It was the 'Women's Solidarity Center' in the first year of its establishment operating under Ankara Municipality, and later in 1993 it became Women's Solidarity Foundation (Altınay and Arat, 2009).

Especially, in the second half of the 1980s, the women's movement organized many demonstrations, meetings and campaigns. In 1987, a public demonstration against battering of women in the families, the first public protest about violence against women was organized with a mass participation of women. 'Solidarity against women's battering' campaign was a significant event of those days to make domestic violence visible in the public space rather than a private issue (Timisi and Gevrek, 2007: 23). In addition, in order to draw attention to sexual harassment, some other demonstrations were organized, such as the 'Purple Needle Campaign' in 1989 (women sold needles with a purple ribbon to be used by women to stick men with in case of sexual harassment) and 'We own our body' in 1990 (Timisi and Gevrek, 2007: 36).⁷

During these years, some developments also occurred in the international legislation and government institutions. For instance, Turkey ratified the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1985 (Acar, 2000: 204). Furthermore, in 1987, The Advisory Council for Women's Policies was founded within the body of State Planning Organization Directorate General of Social Planning, which turned into the Directorate General on the Status of Women (KSGM) affiliated to the Prime Ministry three years later (HUIPS, 2009: 21-22). In addition, women research centers were opened in many Universities to deal with women's problems and to be able to do research on the subject (Kerestecioğlu, 2004: 86).⁸ All these may be considered, at least to some extent, as the reflections of the

⁷ However, femicide was not protested by women in the 1980s as it was not yet recognized as a gendered phenomenon in that decade. It is a phenomenon that has recently been studied and debated.

⁸ The first woman research center opened in Istanbul University in 1989 (Kerestecioğlu, 2004: 86).

understanding of women's problems, and particularly the phenomenon of violence against women, as social problems.

2.2. Prevalence and Magnitude of Violence against Women and Particularly Femicide

Despite the increasing interest in violence against women both around the world and in Turkey, there are limited extensive research and systematic statistics. Therefore, existing figures may not show the true extent of the problem of violence against women; nevertheless, they may help to show the prevalence and the universality of the problem and demonstrate the magnitude of it. For instance, on the global scale, according to 48 population-based surveys from around the world, 10 % to 69 % of women reported being subjected to physical violence by their intimate partners in their lifetime (WHO Summary Report, 2005: 15). According to the survey results conducted by WHO, from their Multi-country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence, the proportion of women who have ever suffered from physical violence by a male partner varies from 13 % in Japan to 61 % in provincial Peru involving ten countries: Bangladesh, Brazil, Ethiopia, Japan, Namibia, Peru, Samoa, Serbia and Montenegro, Thailand, and the United Republic of Tanzania (Garcia-Moreno et al., 2005: 28). The proportions in most cities change from 23 % to 49 % (Garcia-Moreno et al., 2005: 28). Moreover, available data suggest that 35 % of women in Egypt reported being beaten by their husbands during their marriage and 20 % of women in New Zealand reported being hit or physically abused by a male partner (UNICEF, 2000; cited in Amnesty International, 2004). In the USA, a woman is battered by her husband every 15 seconds (UN Study on the World's

Women, 2000; cited in Amnesty International, 2004). Based on the research results of Russian non-governmental organizations in the Russian Federation, 36,000 women are beaten every day by their husbands or partners (OMCT, 2003; cited in Amnesty International, 2004).

In Turkey, research on the topic was quite insufficient during the 1980s. Although there were qualitative research studies on the issue,⁹ nationwide representative surveys on the prevalence of this phenomenon were very limited during these years (Altınay and Arat, 2009: 1). The only systematic quantitative research study on the issue was *Causes and Effects of Domestic Violence*, which was conducted and published by Family Research Institution.¹⁰ However, the number of surveys conducted on the issue has been increasing recent. One recent study is *Violence against Women in Turkey: A Nationwide Study* conducted by Ayşe Gül Altınay and Yeşim Arat in 2008. Another survey called *The National Research on Domestic Violence against Women in Turkey* was conducted by Hacettepe University Institute of Population Studies (HUIPS) in 2009.

⁹ Some of these small-scale studies are as follows: Arıkan, Ç. (1987). Sosyal Hizmetler Açısından Şiddet ve Bir Türü Olarak Evlilikte Kadına Yönelik Şiddet (Violence in terms of Social Services and Violence in Marriage as an Example). H. Ü. Sosyal Hizmetler Yüksek Okulu Dergisi. Vol. 5. Issue. 1 :75-97., Şahika, Y. (1990). Eş Dayacağı ve Dayacağı Karşı Kadın Dayanışması Kampanyası (Wife Battering and the Solidarity Campaign against Wife Battering). In Şirin Tekeli (ed). Kadın Bakış Açısından 1980'ler Türkiyesinde Kadınlar (Women in 1980s in Turkey from Women's Perspectives) İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları. Demiröz, F. (1996). Evli Kadınlara Yönelik İstismar ve Kadınların Sığınmaevleri Hakkındaki Düşünceleri (Abuse against Married Women and the perceptions of Women about Women's Shelters) (Unpublished PhD. Thesis). Ankara: H.Ü. Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü. Sosyal Hizmetler Anabilim Dalı., DPT (TUIK). (1993). Şiddet ve Kadın Çalışma Grubu Raporu (Violence and Women's Working Group's the Report). Kadın Çocuk Gençlik Özel İhtisas Komisyonu. Ankara. pp. 84-106., Gülçür, L. (1996). Violence against Women in the Family: The Ankara Study. In P. Ilkcaracan, L. Gülçür, C. Arin (Eds.), *Sıcak Yuva Masalı (The Myth of the Warm Home)*. İstanbul: Metis Publications.

¹⁰ The Institution of Family Research under Prime Ministry has recently been displaced by General Directorate of Family and Social Services.

With its large sample,¹¹ the survey of HUIPS is the most current and comprehensive one carried out on the subject using face-to-face interviews (HUIPS, 2009: 13). It provides highly representative nationwide data on the issue to shed light on the prevalence of violence oriented towards women by men, particularly by their intimate partners. Based on its findings, 4 out of every 10 women were subjected to physical violence by their husbands or intimate partners during their lifetime. In other words, the proportion of ever-married women in Turkey who reported being subjected to physical violence throughout their life is 39 %. Similarly, according to the results of the survey conducted by Altınay and Arat, which was based on the responses of 1,800 women, the proportion of married women who were subjected to physical violence by their husbands at least once during their marriage is 35 % (Altınay and Arat, 2008: 64).

Regarding the prevalence of violence based on education level, the proportion of women with no education and the ones who have not completed primary school is 56 %, whereas it drops to 27 % for women who are at least high school graduates. The proportions regarding wealth levels are similar to the patterns of educational levels. Fifty-% of women with a lower wealth level reported experiencing partner violence throughout their life, whereas the proportion decreases to 29 % among the highest socio-economical level. The prevalence of violence that women experienced during their lifetime shows differences based on education and wealth levels. It demonstrates that as education and wealth level increase, the prevalence of violence decreases in significant proportions. However, it is significant that almost 3 out of 10 women with a high school education or with high living standards are also subjected

¹¹ The sample size of the survey is 24,048 households in 51 provinces in Turkey (HUIPS, 2009: 13).

to partner violence during their lifetime (HUIPS, 2009). Thus, although I agree with the assumption that education and rich socio-economic conditions provide protection with women to some extent, gendered violence cannot be reduced to a lack of education or poor socio-economic conditions. Even though when the socio-economic levels increase, the proportion of experience of violence decreases, the problem does not go away. Therefore, as I have already argued, although these factors are variables that affect the operation of patriarchy in different contexts, they cannot be the fundamental causes of the problem; the problem is much deeper.

Just as male violence against women is a common problem around the world, the murder of women by male blood relatives or current or previous intimate partners is particularly one of the most extreme and quite prevalent forms of violence against women. The data below also shows the prevalence and magnitude of femicide by males around the world.

The available statistics regarding femicide by male relatives and male intimate partners are much more limited when compared to the data about violence against women in general. However, the existing data still provide an insight to the phenomenon. According to the data from Australia, Canada, Israel, South Africa and the United States of America, 40–70 % of female murders are committed by women's husbands or boyfriends (WHO, 2002). This is in great contrast with the data on male murder victims. For example, in the United States, only 4 % of men were murdered by their intimate partners or ex-intimate partners between 1976 and 1996. The proportion is about 9 % for Australia between 1989 and 1996.

Moreover, more than one woman a week was killed by her male partner in Kenya. In Zambia, five women a week were murdered by a male partner or family member and 50 % of all murders are of women by their partners in Bangladesh (Seager, 2003, cited in Amnesty International, 2004). In Spain, in 2000, one woman every five days was killed by her male partner (Seager, *The Atlas of Women*; cited in Amnesty International). Also in the United Kingdom about two women per week are killed by their partners (Seager, 2003; cited in Amnesty International, 2004).

The statistical studies on femicide in Turkey are not sufficient because there is no comprehensive systematic research on the statistics of femicide by intimate partners or family members in Turkey. In press and in many other sources, it is argued that the number of femicide has increased by 14 times since 2002 (CHP Women's Report, 2011). According to many sources, it is argued that 83 women in 2003, 128 in 2004, 317 in 2005, 663 in 2006, 1,011 in 2007, and 806 in 2008 were murdered by men.¹² In addition to these, according to the 2011 Report of Human Rights Organization, a total of 4,190 women were murdered by their husbands or current or former intimate partners between 2005 and 2011. Although these results are not based on official statistics and the cases were selected from the applications to Human Rights Organization offices, surveys of women's organizations and the news in the press, they are significant in showing the extent of the problem for Turkey (2011: 4).

¹² 'Kadın Cinayetleri 14 kat arttı (Femicide increased 14 times)'. *Bianet*. 09.15. 2011. Retrieved from <http://bianet.org/bianet/kadin/132742-kadin-cinayetleri-14-kat-artti>, 08.13.2011.

CHAPTER 3

DEBATES ON FEMICIDE

3.1. 'Passion Killings', 'Custom (Töre) Killings': Different Forms of Femicide

3.1.1. The World Debates on Femicide

There is lack of consistency in the terminology regarding killing of women, which, in fact, demonstrates how controversial the issue is. The discourses about the phenomena are various and each of them has different ontological assumptions; therefore, a discussion on different perspectives of the phenomenon is essential. When the literature is reviewed, 'honor killing' and 'passion killing' stand out in the terminology used regarding the issue. There are increasing number of sources on the differences between killings of 'honor' and 'passion'. The differences between these two murders are usually debated with reference to the so-called dichotomy of the 'West' and the 'East'. Accordingly, while 'honor killings' are reduced to the 'East', and some particular religions such as Islam and some particular cultures, 'passion killings' are conceptualized as the problem of the 'West,' independent of religion and culture.

From 'Western' eyes, 'honor killings' have been conceptualized in relation to specific religions, i.e. Islam. While it can be argued that there are some interpretations of Islamic texts and practices that feed into violence against women and unequal power relations between men and women, these are not unique to Islam since all monotheistic religions bear patriarchal dictates. In addition, the issue

predates Islam (Sev'er and Yurdakul, 2001: 966, Mojab, 2006: 6). Therefore, this practice cannot be associated with any particular religion. In addition to religion, the other main common tendency is to reduce it to particular cultures that are mainly identified with tradition (Koğacıoğlu, 2009: 351). According to this perspective, it is assumed that there are some inherent patriarchal features of the culture in question that result in the systematic killings of women (Akpınar, 2003: 461). Such 'cultural reductionist' explanations which are very common may result in discrimination against a particular culture. However, the perspectives that directly relate the issue to a specific culture are not limited to the 'cultural reductionist' explanations. Although not as common as the 'cultural reductionist' perspective, there are also 'cultural relativist' arguments which consider individuals as free from responsibility of committing femicide, by blaming the culture that makes an individual commit such a murder (Elden, 1998).

For instance, in Sweden, reflections of these differentiating perceptions could be readily identified in the responses given to the murder of Fadime Sahindal¹³ in the name of 'honor'. In the aftermath of the killing of Fadime, the debate was polarized between these two positions. According to the interpretation of the case by the 'cultural reductionist' approach, values of immigrant cultures (predominantly Kurdish) were seen as the underlying motivation for the murder. Thus, it was interpreted as a Kurdish phenomenon, and the problem was explained as Kurds' non-adaptation to the Swedish culture. At the same time, it was implied that Swedish values in terms of gender relations are superior to those of 'immigrant cultures' and

¹³ Fadime Sahindal, a 26-year-old Kurdish woman living in Uppsala, was murdered by her father on 21 January 2002 because, as explained by the father, she refused an arranged marriage by her family and chose her own partner (Kurkiala, 2003: 6)

only if the ‘immigrants’ adopted ‘superior’ Swedish values, the problem would be solved (Akpınar, 2003: 426). Also, from a ‘cultural relativist’ perspective, the incident was again interpreted as a phenomenon of the immigrant culture and particularly the Kurdish communities’ problem. However, they emphasized the conditions that made the perpetrators behave in such ways and tried to understand the conditions that made any perpetrator commit such a murder rather than blaming the culture. This kind of conceptualization of those killings is reflected particularly in legislation and causes reductions in the sentences. For instance, in many similar cases, the Swedish court found the perpetrator guilty of manslaughter but not of murder because the court considered him as a victim of his own culture (Eldén, 1998: 93).

The approaches that conceptualize the issue as a problem of a particular culture either judge the culture or consider it as a mitigating factor for the perpetrator. However, both positions –‘cultural relativist’ or ‘cultural reductionist’ - are problematic since both of them ascribe the problem to a specific culture and assume it as something static and unchangeable (Eldén, 1998: 93).

Consequently, the implications of both of these positions place their supporters as living in modern societies in which there are not such kinds of bad practices against women. Any forms of violent acts from men that women are subjected to in their societies are considered as ‘ordinary’ and ‘mundane’ events that a few deviants are involved in, rather than a part of the larger western culture. In other words, these particular ‘cultures’ are supposed to be patriarchal as opposed to societies dominated by modern relations, such as Sweden who is assumed to be gender neutral in the

above example. Although ‘cultural reductionist’ and ‘cultural relativist’ explanations here are debated in the context of Sweden, its implications are symmetrical to the debates on ‘honor killings’ in the context of the world which are easily identifiable.

As Elden pointed out, men’s violence against women can neither be ‘excused’ with reference to a specific culture nor can it be explained as a direct consequence of a particular culture (Eldén, 1998: 93) because patriarchal features are not inherent to it. I argue that violence against women can neither be reduced to a particular culture in a discriminative manner nor can it be explained and ‘excused’ from a relativist perspective. While different patriarchal societies may have particular differences in their fundamental premises, all societies maintain patriarchal relations and maintain physical or symbolic violence against women as an underlying axis of a universal patriarchal regime (Mojab, 1998).

Related with such kind of assumptions, the descriptions of the phenomenon below summarize the stereotypical understanding of ‘honor killings’:

An honor killing is a generic term used to refer to the premeditated murder of preadolescent, adolescent, or adult women by one or more male members of the immediate or extended family. These killings are often undertaken when a family council decides on the time and form of execution due to an allegation, suspicion or proof of sexual impropriety by the victim (Amnesty International, 1999 and Pervizat, 1998, cited in Sev'er and Yurdakul, 2001).

The paradigmatic example of a crime of honor¹⁴ is the killing of a woman by her father or brother for engaging in, or being suspected of engaging in, sexual practices before or outside marriages (Abu Odeh, 2000: 363).

Being committed by blood relatives of the victim (fathers, brothers, male cousins), being premeditated after a family council decision, and being committed due to

¹⁴ ‘Crimes of Honor’ is also another term that is used to refer to the phenomenon.

‘improper’ sexual experiences of women are defined as the main characteristics of the phenomenon of ‘honor killings’. The common features of ‘passion killings’ may be deduced from the comparison between ‘honor killings’ and ‘passion killings’ given in the passage below:

The so-called 'honor crimes' should not be confused with the concept of 'crimes of passion'. Whereas the latter is normally limited to crime that is committed by one partner (or husband and wife) in a relationship on the other as a spontaneous (emotional and passionate) reply (often citing a defense of 'sexual provocation') the former may involve the abuse or murder of (usually) women by one or more close family members (including sexual partners) in the name of individual and family honor (Welchman and Hossain, 2005: 10).

Considering the definitions and comparisons, I can argue that the points that become prominent in the conceptualization of ‘honor killings’ and ‘passion killings’ are based on the relationship of the male perpetrator to the female victim (blood relatives or intimate partners), the time and the form of the crime (premeditated or spontaneous), and the ‘expressed reason’ of the murder (sexually ‘improper’ behavior of women or jealousy of men). According to this, the difference between ‘passion killings’ and ‘honor killings’, based on the relationship between perpetrators and victims, is often considered to be whether the perpetrators are women’s sexual intimates or their blood relatives. ‘Honor killings’ are usually identified with being committed by blood relatives of the women such as a father, brother or cousin of the victim, while ‘passion killings’ are more linked with former and current intimate partners of women such as a husband, boyfriend, fiancée, or lover (Welchman and Hossain, 2005: 11). The matter of spontaneity or premeditation is also another dimension through which these killings are differentiated. While ‘honor killings’ are assumed to be premeditated by a family council decision that determines the time

and the form of the murder, 'passion killings' are presumed to occur spontaneously as a result of amok. Also, the 'reason' for the murder given by the perpetrator is seen as another criterion that differentiates between these types of murders. The main idea behind 'honor killings' is assumed to be the protection of the 'family honor' while the motive of 'passion killings' is considered to be jealousy and love. Along with this, another assumption is that while 'honor killings' are considered to be committed only by men while 'passion killings' are assumed to be perpetrated by either men or women.

Many feminists and human rights activists around the world express their deep discomfort using of concept of 'honor' to refer to these murders because of the possible unintended meanings it may convey. For example, it is argued that the preference of the term 'honor killings' has a potential to create an interpretation that 'honor killings' are a phenomenon peculiar to some specific parts of the world and some specific parts of Turkey because 'honor' is theorized in relation to cultures in these parts of the world and Turkey (Sirman, 2006; Mojab, 2006; Koğacioğlu 2004). These perspectives also pointed out that the term may create a tendency to ignore the universality of femicide that is seen all around the world and may lead to the emergence of ethnocentric attitudes towards the target culture (Mojab, 2006: 34).

Emphasis on such differences on femicide are substantial because first of all, they show that 'passion killings' are not recognized as a gendered phenomenon (Welchman and Hossain, 2005: 10), and imply that it is a spontaneous and individual crime that is a result of psychological deviance or pathology and a common phenomenon, not a social phenomenon, which occurs in the 'West'. However, 'honor

killings’ are considered to be a result of patriarchal relations in traditional societies that aim to assure the power of male family members in the eyes of the community in the East (Reimers, 2007:239). The underlying meaning of emphasizing such ‘differences’ between these two types of crimes leads to the ignorance of commonalities related to unequal gender relations among any incidents of femicide (Pope, 2006: 107) and this differentiation in a way attributes a more ‘excusable’ nature to ‘passion crimes’ as opposed to ‘honor killings’.

Depending on what extent patriarchal power is universal, patriarchal violence may take different shapes in specific cultures. However, what should be underlined is that it exists everywhere cutting across all territorial and cultural boundaries (Mojab, 2006: 5). Therefore, assuming violence against women as a problem of non-Western societies has ethnocentric implications; however, violence against women cannot be reduced to any religion, particularly to Islam, or any specific culture.

3.1.2. Debates on Femicide in the context of Turkish Society

When considering the debates on femicide in Turkey, we can easily follow the prominent points of the world debates that I have reviewed. For instance, associating the issue directly to a particular culture, considering it as the problem of the ‘East’, and comprehending similar cases that occur in the ‘West’ as a totally different phenomenon and mundane events are also evident in Turkey.¹⁵ In other words, the issue has been particularly debated with reference to a specific culture and tradition, particularly Kurdish culture, in Turkey as well. It may be claimed that the issue is

¹⁵ Different from the world discussions, these murders have not been debated with reference to religion in Turkey because a high proportion of the population is already Muslim.

also controversial in Turkish literature; there are many terms that refer to the phenomenon of femicide and also different criticisms of and dissatisfactions with each different term and different assumptions behind them.

Considering Turkey, I can say that femicide is usually problematized as a premeditated murder of a woman by male relatives such as a father or brother as a result of sexually ‘unapproved’ behavior of the woman, which is quite similar to the conceptualization of ‘honor killings’ in the international literature (see Yurdakul and Sev’er, 2000, Pervizat, 2005, KSGM, 2006 and Yirmibeşoğlu, 2007). As a result, when the issue of the murder of women is debated in the media, academia and in official discourses, the most common term that is usually adopted is ‘custom (töre) killings’. This is not used to refer to all cases of femicide, but is exclusively used to denote the incidents of the murder of women in the Kurdish communities in Eastern and Southeastern regions and migrants of such backgrounds in other regions of Turkey. In other words, this term implies that especially people from East and Southeastern parts of the country or those who migrated to other parts of the country from these regions are responsible for these murders (Koğacıoğlu, 2004: 130) and since these areas are predominantly populated by Kurds, it has been pointed out as a Kurdish phenomenon (Koğacıoğlu, 2004: 130).

When the phenomenon is conceptualized as the premeditated murder of women by immediate male family members due to ‘improper’ sexual behaviors of women, it is called ‘custom (töre) killings’ and represented as a Kurdish issue; tradition is assumed to be the real ‘reason’ behind these murders. Especially actors such as the media, political parties, some activist groups, government institutions and

international institutions consider the problem as the effect of tradition and locate modern institutions such as law, education, and the media as opposed to tradition as if they have no responsibility related to this issue (Koğacıoğlu, 2004: 121) and as modern relations free from patriarchal relations. As a result, the Western part of the country has supposedly been free from the problem of violence against women, and particularly femicide, because it is assumed that this part of the country is modernized.

Framing the tradition as the reason for this phenomenon and reducing tradition to particularly Kurdish communities may create a category of ‘the other’ that points to South Easterners and particularly Kurds (Koğacıoğlu, 2009: 354) and may strengthen discrimination against Kurds (Sirman, 2006: Koğacıoğlu, 2004). However, the discourse of discrimination should not be understood to be the direct result of the process of definition of these murders, but rather it is associated with the ongoing ethno-political debates about the Kurdish issue in Turkey (Ecevitöğlü, 2007: 116). The discourse of discrimination is established under the existing power relations between the ones that are assumed to own that tradition and the ones that need to interfere in that tradition (Koğacıoğlu, 2009: 356). From this perspective, women have been defined in the grip of tradition; thus, it is only possible to ‘save’ them by the interference in traditional ways of living by development because by development, it has assumed that tradition would vanish, unequal gender relations would disappear and women would be saved (Koğacıoğlu, 2009: 370). As a continuum of this perspective, dominant political groups claimed that any problem considered to be related to the ‘backwardness’ of traditional societies can only be

avoided by modernization (Sirman, 2006: 43).¹⁶ As a result, education and development have been considered as main solutions to prevent these murders. Therefore, for instance, in the report by KSGM (2006), establishing boarding schools in the rural areas that are undeveloped, especially in economical terms, and dominated by traditional values is suggested to increase the proportion of girls at the schools to prevent femicide (2006: 133).¹⁷

Such arguments and approaches to the issue, according to Koğacioğlu, hinders how republican institutions in Turkey contribute to the reproduction of patriarchal relations and ‘tradition’ (2009: 359) and quoting from her: ‘with the utterance of tradition, questions of violence against women and the violation of their most basic rights fade away,’ which is what she calls ‘tradition effect’ (Koğacioğlu, 2004: 121). Moreover, by assuming that tradition is the reason for these murders and identifying the Eastern part of the country with said tradition, the rest of the country, which is assumed to be modern, is reflected as being immune to the problem (Koğacioğlu, 2004: 130).

¹⁶ The perspective that provides the framework for such an understanding of the issue based on tradition is about the modernization theory that posits gender relations as the key indicator between the traditional and the modern (Sen, 2005: 45), which may also be observed in the Turkish modernization process as many scholars argued. Women were considered as the indicator of the level of development and modernization. The reforms concerning women in the Early Republican era such as having political rights, relative increase in the level of access to education, and relative increase in participation in employment may also be interpreted from such a perspective (Arat, 1994).

¹⁷ Although I generally agree that economic independency and high levels of education may help to avoid the problems that women are subjected to in their daily lives, it is not the fundamental way of getting rid of patriarchal power relations. For instance, in the Violence against Women part of this chapter, I stated that women’s experience of physical violence may decrease in high education groups of women; however, it is still prevalent to a significant extent. Therefore, taking education and development into consideration is favorable to deal with patriarchal unequal gender relations. However, defining lack of education as the real reason and basis of analysis and considering education as the sole solution to this issue is inadequate to overcome the problem.

These debates related to the conceptualization of the issue as ‘custom (töre) killings’ and the assumptions behind it shift the axis of the debate and may create some other political discourses about tradition, ethnicity, and modernization (Ecevitoglu, 2007) and may represent it as an issue of development, ignoring the gender perspective that is fundamental to the issue. In addition, by assuming femicide and violence against women as an issue of culture and tradition, they also imply that, in opposition to such violence against women, there are also some ‘ordinary’ forms of violence. The claim of mundaneness of these acts is argued as related to the individuality of the crime since these acts are presumed as crimes caused by individual men’s deviance and abnormality (Elden, 2006: 98).

As a result of such a perspective and conceptualization, other murders of women which are usually assumed to be committed with ‘individual motives’ by current or intimate partners with a reason of actual, suspected, or potential adultery, seeking divorce or separation, refusing to date, and jealousy are considered to be mundane events. They are usually problematized as either an exception or a problem resulting from individual’s abnormality and occurring universally, but not as related to the general patriarchal system, which is similar to the interpretation of ‘passion killings’ in the world and the ignorance of them as a social problem.¹⁸

¹⁸ In the world literature, we are used to terms such as ‘passion killing’, although they are not studied as a social phenomenon but conceptualized as a psychological or criminal problem. However, in Turkey, it is not possible to find any studies that problematized these murders in any scholarly literature. We are familiar with terms such as ‘love murder’ (aşk cinayeti) or ‘jealousy murder’(kıskançlık cinayeti) in the news headlines such as ‘*Love Murder in the Zoo*’ (Sabah, 09.11.2011), and ‘*Forbidden Love Murder in the Capital City*’ (Sabah, 04.26..2011).

It should also be stated that ‘custom (töre) killing’ is an ambiguous term. For instance, the term ‘honor killing’ can occasionally be used instead of ‘custom (töre) killing’; thus, they can be used interchangeably or can be used together as ‘custom (töre)-honor killings’. Although in the literature the definition of the phenomenon usually encompasses the ones that define the perpetrators as blood relatives of the female victim, in any study, we may come across an example that conceptualizes a murder that was perpetrated by the husband of the woman as an ‘honor killing’ just after stating the strict definition of ‘custom (töre) killings’, which is based on the criteria of being committed by a blood relative such as a father or brother. Therefore, in some cases, the term ‘honor killing’ may be considered as encompassing incidents of femicide that are committed also by husbands (see Yurdakul and Sev’er, 2001 and Pervizat, 2005).

These ambiguities are problematized as to whether to call these murders ‘custom (töre) killings’ or ‘honor killings’ and this debate is reflected especially within the framework of the amendment of Turkish Criminal Code (TCK). In the current TCK, which was put into practice in 2005, in article 82, the crime of ‘murder in the first degree’ regulated and committed for the sake of ‘custom (töre)’ was defined as one of the aggravated circumstances. According to this article, if the crime is committed with the motive of ‘custom (töre)’, it is assumed to result in aggravated life imprisonment (Ecevitoglu, 2007: 114). According to some feminists, academicians, activists and lawyers, the problem with this amendment is that since it is based on the criteria of ‘custom (töre)’, which is identified in particular with being premeditated by a family council decision, it leaves out the cases of femicide committed by so-called individual motives by their husband for the sake of ‘honor’ within the scope of

the application of this article (Ecevitoglu, 2007: 115). Correspondingly, for example, in some cases, men themselves claimed that they committed the crime not for the sake of ‘custom (töre)’ but for the sake of ‘honor’. Therefore, in some of those cases, this article was not applied because the courts looked for and failed to find a sign to prove that it was related to ‘custom (töre)’. Because the law is left open to such interpretations by the courts with this article, the critics of this amendment have suggested defining these murders as ‘honor killings’, not as ‘custom (töre)’ killings and changing the matter of the aggravation as ‘for the sake of ‘honor’’.¹⁹ Compared to the term ‘custom (töre) killing’, the term ‘honor killing’ may be more comprehensible as it is less likely to reference any culture or ethnic group and includes the murders of women committed by their husbands. The term ‘honor killing’ has been debated concerning whether the notion of ‘honor’ may imply that women embody the ‘honor’ of men and can even create a justification for such murders (Welchman and Hossain, 2005: 6). Also, it has been suggested that the use of the term ‘honor killing’ carries the risk of accepting the description of the act as it is perceived by the perpetrator and may obscure the real dynamics behind it (Welchman and Hossain, 2005: 8).

These differences in the literature may also be observed in the way people perceive femicide, albeit different ways. In some cases, ‘honor killings’ can encompass all types of murders of women including both the murders that are spontaneously committed by the husbands of the women and the ones that are assumed to be

¹⁹ However, in my opinion, such an amendment would not be enough because in some incidents, ‘honor’ is also invisible as the ‘reason’ of the murder, but women are killed in a way which is a result of control of their bodies by men and is different from assumed ‘honor killings’. These murders are committed not only by the husbands of the victims but also by the current intimate partners or lovers.

premeditated and committed by the immediate family members of the victim. On the other hand, in some cases, ‘honor killings’ are considered to be a directly different phenomenon from ‘custom (töre) killings’. This differentiation in public perception is substantiated in the research by Filiz Kardam. As she pointed out, people from the Black Sea region had a tendency to see ‘custom (töre) killings’ and ‘honor killings’ as two different types of murder of women. For instance, they expressed that ‘custom (töre) killings’ (implying the murders are premeditated and committed with family council decisions) and ‘honor killings’ (assuming that they are committed as a result of adultery or suspicion of adultery usually by husbands) are totally different phenomena. However, they not only solely consider them as different, but at the same time, they consider ‘honor killings’ more ‘excusable’ as opposed to ‘custom (töre) killings’ as reflected in the words of some respondents as follows (Kardam, 1999: 25):

‘Töre’ killings are something different...It is brutality. I’m from Şirvan, but I did not hear about it in our place. Maybe in Şanlıurfa, Adana, Mardin... However, when there is dishonorable conduct, the morals dictate to kill. In my family there are family councils, but no killing decision has been taken. In my family morals are more contemporary... In my opinion, 99% of honor killings take place spontaneously depending on the situation at that moment...but in ‘töre’ killings some people decide that it should be done (Istanbul, male, age 33, elementary school, from East Turkey) (Kardam, 1999: 25).

So there is definitely a difference between the case of the man killing the woman who has betrayed him and the man killing his daughter who has run away with her beloved... ‘Töre’ killings are more frequent in the East and Southeast (Istanbul, male, age 24, teacher at the elementary level) (Kardam, 1999: 25).

‘Töre’ killings also concern honor; however, it seems as if honor killings are more individualistic, while the others are collective. In the latter, many people, a clan takes the decision. Therefore, we can consider it then an organized crime (Istanbul, female, age 42, journalist) (Kardam, 1999: 25).

Considering these concerns and critiques related to the different conceptualizations of the phenomenon and their different ontological assumptions, I can argue that each different term defines different forms of murders that may occur in different contexts and considers some of them as more ‘tolerable’ when compared to the others. I do not consider that femicide is an issue of particular cultures, in Turkey particularly among Kurds. I do not think murders that seem to be committed with ‘individual motives’ are more ‘excusable’ than any other murders. Despite differences in the ways of sexual control in different societies, the experience of control over women and their bodies is observed in all societies (Koğacıoğlu, 2004) and although the ‘reasons’, the perpetrator/victim relationship, and the forms of the murder may change in some contexts, that women are murdered because of patriarchal relations and patriarchal control mechanisms which are penetrated in every subtle aspect of our daily lives around the world, is a systematic and common problem. Therefore, independent of reasons, type of the victim/perpetrator relationship, whether it is spontaneous or premeditated, they should be considered and referred to as ‘femicide’ because women are murdered because they are women. It should not be forgotten that they are all systematic murders that deprive the woman of the most important right –the right to live- and pose a threat for other women as it can make them feel that it can also happen to them. For such reasons, this study conceptualizes femicide, being inspired by Diane Russell’s and Jill Radford’s approach, as the intentional killing of women and girls by an intimate partner such as a husband (current, separated, or divorced), boyfriend (current or former), cohabiting partner, or a rejected would-be stalker or blood relatives (father, brother, males cousins) and relatives by marriage (father-in-law, brother-in-law) (see Russell and Ratford, 1992).

²⁰ This is not only a debate about terminology; rather, it is an endeavor to provide a perspective with ontological reasons.

3.1.3. Reasons for Femicide: Control of Women's Body and Sexuality - What is beyond 'Honor'?

Behind these murders, it is obvious that there is the motive of control of women, women's sexuality and their bodies since patriarchal power relations are based on the disciplining of the bodies and sexuality. As I have already discussed, we can mention the hegemony of understanding the 'custom (töre) killing' and 'honor killing' in the literature which may cause 'honor' to come to the forefront as the sole reason behind these murders. However, as argued, although 'honor' is one of the mechanisms that serve to discipline women and their bodies and sexualities, it is not the only mechanism working for such a control. Moreover, control of women and their bodies is not only a matter of tradition, at least for Turkey, as it is usually conceptualized in the literature. Also, there are some other mechanisms that provide disciplining of women and their bodies within the modern realm. Therefore, although it is significant to understand what 'honor' is and how it provides control, it is also significant to understand how 'honor' is reproduced within the modern context by modern institutions and also there are what other modern mechanisms of such control and discipline over women.

²⁰ This is not the exact definition of the term suggested by Russell and Radford, as they define *femicide* as 'the killing of women simply because they are women' (1992), and they do not give reference to victim/perpetrator relationship. However, since according to the studies, women are most at risk of being murdered by those known to the victims such as current and former intimate partners, family members, friends, and acquaintances (Report of Understanding and Strengthening Femicide, 2008: 3), I conceptualize the phenomenon in such way.

Although people attach different meanings to ‘honor’ at different times and places, and the notion of ‘honor’ is very flexible and varied, it can be claimed that it has a common ground in the society related to women’s sexuality.²¹ While we can mention different interpretations of ‘honor’ in the society, two of them are more common. Accordingly, in one of the most common comprehensions of the notion, ‘honor’ is thought to be more related to everyday life practices, encapsulating all aspects of life as something that is personal, something that is in the minds of people. It defines so-called main principles of living as human beings such as having an honest life, being a reliable person, not cheating on any person, etc. The other meaning of ‘honor,’ which is also common, is related to women’s behaviors and their sexuality (Kardam, 1999: 19, Sirman, 2006: 46).

For men ‘honor’ is related to all kinds of social relations in daily life and also sexuality, which is not generally associated with men’s but rather is related to women’s bodies and behaviors. In Turkey, ‘a dishonorable man’ means he is dishonest and unreliable and at the same time, he lacks control over the behaviors and sexuality of women whom he is responsible for. On the other hand, being dishonorable for a woman is nothing to do with her daily lives and habits; rather, it is more associated with control of her sexuality and bodies in terms of families and intimate partners (Sirman, 2006: 46).

According to this notion of ‘honor’ in terms of sexuality, men cannot have ‘honor’ by themselves. Instead, it is the woman’s (a man’s wife, daughter, or mother and his other female relatives) sexual behaviors and experiences that determine man’s

²¹ I preferred to provide a debate on how ‘honor’ is conceptualized and how it constructs men and women differently rather than examining the reasons behind ‘honor’ and the history of the term because it is out of the scope of the study.

'honor' (Sev'er and Yurdakul, 2001: 975). While women are usually expected to passively obey the rules of conduct accepted as honorable, men's role is to actively make women obey these rules (Sirman, 2006; 44, Kardam, 1999: 19). Therefore, it is clearly seen that male 'honor' is inseparably tied to women and 'honor' is a male and not a female attribute. As Victoria Goddard cites from Pitt-Rivers 'a man must defend his own and his family's 'honor' (which implies control over other members of family), whereas women must preserve their purity. 'Men's relationship to honour is therefore seen to involve an active role, whereas the role of women in the theatre of honour is the passive one' (Pitt-Rivers, cited in Goddard, 1987: 167). Thus 'honor' of men is not static; it may grow, develop or diminish while women's may only be lost. It is clearly seen that male 'honor' is inseparably tied to women and 'honor' is a male not a female attribute. This coincides with the common understanding in Turkey that 'women should passively obey the rules of conduct accepted as honorable, while men have to actively make women obey these rules' (Kardam, 1999: 19).

Hence, 'dishonorable' behavior is considered differently for men and women. Therefore, it may be claimed that in any case of so-called 'dishonorable conduct' men and women have different kinds of experiences (Kardam, 1999: 24). This does not refer to a *simple* difference, but it is an *unequal* difference that may even result in the murder of women. Accordingly, women can be subjected to violence and even be killed if they love someone, if go out with someone, if they do not want to get married to the men their families suggest, if they cheat their husbands, if they want to divorce their husbands, if they are suspected of adultery and if they are raped.

It may be stated then, that the notion of ‘honor’ is a social construct. However, it is not only constitutive of ‘what it means to be a woman but also what it means to be a man’. Therefore, it is a patriarchal power mechanism that regulates some kinds of relations between men and women. The target of ‘honor’ is the body of men and women and it regulates the relations between them. Thus, it is not only related to women; however, it constructs different forms of hierarchical relations between men and women. It operates through the ‘dishonorable side’ that is woman and the ‘honorable’ side that is men (Hasan, 2002: 2).

Such an understanding of ‘honor’ may probably sound more or less familiar to many people living in Turkey, albeit the experiences may change based on some cultural differences. Therefore, it is possible to identify that ‘honor’ can also be reproduced by modern institutions as opposed to the general assumption. For instance, law may be considered one of the areas that contribute to the reproduction of the notion of ‘honor’.

There is no direct reference to ‘honor’ in neither the old nor the new TCK. However, although some important amendments were made in the TCK in 2005, some articles, especially in the old ones, were very parallel to the notion of ‘honor’ in Turkish society. Accordingly, both in the content of the criminal code and the interpretation of the code control over women's bodies; sexuality is defined with respect to men which can be easily interpreted as ‘honor’.²²

²² Although the previous Turkish Criminal Code (TCK) was amended in 2005 and in current TCK many articles that existed in the old one contributing to reproduction of ‘honor’ was amended, there may be still the spectacle of the notion of ‘honor’ in practice. In order to understand this, the court cases should be examined in detail which can be a significant study. Nevertheless, since this is beyond

First of all, it must be emphasized that the previous Turkish Criminal Code defines sexual crimes as ‘Felonies against Public Decency and Family Order’ as opposed to any other violence that is defined against a person (Beninger-Budel and O’Hanlon, 2004: 354). This is significant since it illuminates how women’s sexuality is interpreted by the law and by the state.²³

In addition, ‘adultery’ (‘illicit’ relationship) is one of the key substantial issues associated with the approach of the TCK to sexual offenses. In the old penal code, the murder which is committed as a result of ‘adultery’, could be reduced by one-eighth based on Article 462 (Koğacıoğlu, 2004: 121-122). However, although ‘adultery’ used to be defined as an offense both for men and women for a long time in the article, it was usually used against women for the benefit of men; it was not used against men who ‘committed’ adultery (Pervizat, 2009: 6). In other words, men’s and women’s extra-marital affairs were evaluated differently: while men’s are accepted, women’s are taboo (İlkkaracan, 2000: 239). In the courts of these cases, the provocation clause was applied and if the murder was assumed to be committed by ‘uncontrollable grief’ or as a result of any provocation, the sentence could be reduced by two-thirds by considering women’s ‘unapproved sexual relations’ as a reason for applying ‘unjust provocation’ (Koğacıoğlu, 2004: 121-122). Thus, if a man kills his wife or his female relatives after discovering her adultery, the punishment was reduced by one-eighth of normal punishment defined for manslaughter (Koğacıoğlu, 2005: 147). The article has been applied not only in the case of adultery but also in

the scope of this study, I am content with a small examination of the old TCK in terms of the notion of ‘honor’.

²³ In the new TCK, sexual crimes are defined under the rubric of ‘Crimes against Sexual Inviolability’.

the case of doubts of adultery.²⁴ Concerns about family ‘honor’ were also deemed to be a mitigating condition of infanticide or the abandonment of a child. The sentence for ‘infanticide for family ‘honor’ is much less (4-8 years) as opposed to the punishment for ‘regular’ manslaughter, which is 24 to 30 years (Koğacioğlu, 2004: 123).

Furthermore, although there was also no direct reference to virginity, a woman’s status as married, ‘girl’ or prostitute had a crucial role in the definition of any crime or punishment (Parla, 2001: 79) and sex crimes committed against non-virgin women were considered as a less serious offence than crimes committed against virgin women by the criminal code (Beninger-Budel and O’Hanlon, 2004: 357), which is also related to how the notion of ‘honor’ is understood. For example, in the case of rape, the rapist’s sentence was increased if the woman he raped was a virgin. In addition, if the rapist agreed to marry his victim and the marriage lasted for five years, the sentence was removed. Likewise, if the woman who was raped was a prostitute, the sentence was automatically reduced (Parla, 2001: 79). The article that enabled the sentence to be reduced or suspended if the perpetrators married their rape victims may be considered as a reflection of the notion of ‘honor’ in the law. It is probably based on such an assumption that rape dishonors women; therefore, it would probably be ‘better’ for a woman to marry her rapist because only through this way she can save her ‘honor’. In addition to the other articles, in the case of rape, the criminal code’s concern was not to punish the man, but rather to assess the woman’s situation in terms of social norms and try to protect her ‘honor’.

²⁴ ‘Töre’de Kadınların Korktuğu Gerçek Oldu (Women’s Fear of Töre Came True)’. Radikal. 12.26.2006. Retrieved from <http://www.radikal.com.tr/haber.php?haberno=207954>, 12.12.2010.

In addition to reflections of the notion of ‘honor’ in *de jure, de facto* was also a bit problematic because judges can sometimes still take into account women's performance of ‘honor’ in the courts. This has been especially common in divorce, alimony and custody cases in which we see a judge or a court clerk discussing the women's dress and behaviors and her opponents’ testimonies according to the unwritten criteria of ‘honor’. It is very likely that women who fulfill the ‘honorable’ criteria would be treated more favorably in the trials (Koğacıoğlu, 2004: 124) and the criteria of the act that is approved by the social order was not specified. It can be anything such as driving a car alone, working late while alone, or spending time with male friends in a park late (Parla, 2001: 79-80).

The old Turkish Criminal Code did not explicitly state ‘honor’ as a mitigating factor; there were some provisions that were regularly used by judges to reduce sentences in the cases of crimes committed in the name of ‘honor’. However, ‘honor’ used to be legitimized in the legal framework by these articles and can still be legitimized not with the articles directly but by the interpretation of the law and attitudes towards sexual crimes as could be understood by case results that are reduced by the article of ‘unjust provocation’. Despite the lack of any direct reference to ‘honor’ in these articles, it may be argued that it had been used as a mitigating factor in cases of sexual crimes against women (Koğacıoğlu, 2004: 123).

Considering the examination of the old TCK, it can be argued that ‘family honor’ was the key constituent of the Turkish penal code and the law protected ‘honor’ as a social value. The TCK can be read as providing continuity of legitimacy of ‘honor’ which is reduced to women’s sexuality in the law. ‘Honor’ can be interpreted not

only as a notion that only belongs to the traditional, but it also has a function in the modern order (Sirman, 2006: 46).

Conceptualizing ‘honor’ as an Eastern and traditional notion and thus, considering the control over women and women’s sexuality as a reality of traditional societies, may result in an understanding of the modern society as ‘free’ in terms of women’s sexuality. This is why ‘modern’ is often conceived as something that is free from patriarchal relations and as if there is no control over women and women’s sexuality in the modern realm. For example, it is argued that the modern individual can choose her/his partner ‘freely’, can decide on her/his private relationships and sexual experiences. These are the assumptions that are often used to contradict the argument that control of sexuality also exists in modern relations (Ecevitoglu, 2007: 104). We can mention a relative flexibility in the modern context in terms of the control over women’s sexuality. However, the control of sexuality is evident in all societies. What should be emphasized is that it does not operate in all societies in the same way.

A conceptualization of patriarchal power analogous to Foucault’s understanding of power in modern societies may help to clarify the meaning of these differences in controlling women in different contexts and why it is more difficult to understand patriarchal domination in the modern realm although Foucault did not problematize patriarchal power relations in his writings. Foucault claimed that in the medieval era power was held by a sovereign authority. The control exercised over individuals was more absolute and visible. According to Foucault, pre-modern modes of power, which was ruled by religious laws and vicious force, could no longer cope with the changing nature of society by the late eighteenth century. Thus, a new kind of power

which is not based on individuals and titles, but rather on systems of social administration emerged. Instead of the sovereign power, he argues that there emerged new mechanisms of power (Foucault, 1977, Foucault, 1980).

For Foucault, such '*power*' takes its power from the disciplines that claim to be scientific (Foucault, 1977). For him, modern science produces *knowledge* about our bodies and lives and based on the *knowledge*, it classifies behaviors and creates norms. Foucault called this *disciplinary power*, which operates over individual bodies – its capacities, gestures, movements, location and behavior are located within institutions such as hospitals, schools, prisons, and also in the everyday activities and habits of individuals at the micro level of society (Sawicki, 1991: 67).

Its persuasiveness derives from its dependence on 'scientific' knowledge. The knowledge that is produced by scientific inquiries and scientific disciplines such as criminology, psychology and psychiatry may result in the dispersion of these norms as *discourses* (van Zoonen, 1994: 39-40). What makes power invisible and subtle is its relationship to *knowledge* and its penetration into our lives through *discourse*.

Discourse means certain ways of thinking, speaking, and writing about a given social object, practice or phenomenon and *discourse* has the power to define what a social problem is. In addition, it also prescribes how an issue should be understood and the legitimacy of the actors involved in the cases. Thus, the discourse can exclude, embarrass, and delegitimize certain views, ideas, and positions while including others (van Zoonen, 1994: 39-40). For example, until the second wave of the feminist movement problematized sexual harassment and sexual violence embedded in heterosexual relationships, they were considered as private issues and not

criminalized in legal terms. As a result of defining it as a private issue, sexual violence was made invisible as a social problem and it was represented as an unpleasant fact of life that women were exposed to.

As Sawicki argues, discourse has a crucial role in producing and sustaining hegemonic power (1996: 160). All aspects of our lives are encompassed by *discourses* about anything such as femininity and masculinity. *Discourse*, then, may also define how to be a ‘man’ and a ‘woman’ based on some parameters and discursive frameworks demarcate the boundaries that one defines the way she or he is gendered (Mills, 2001: 17-18).

Bartky also argues that ‘the disciplinary power that inscribes femininity in the female body is everywhere and it is nowhere; the disciplinarian is everyone and yet no one in particular’ (1988: 76), while Foucault tends to locate the imposition of discipline within specific institutions such as the school, the factory, and the prison. Bartky, on the other hand, is more concerned with the ‘unbound’ discursive structures that are not limited to any institutional sources and sites. ‘The absence of a particular formal institutional structure and of authorities invested with the power to carry out institutional directives creates the impression that the production of femininity is entirely voluntary and ‘natural’ (Bartky, 1988: 75). Therefore, women themselves contribute to the control over them. This is why it is difficult to identify power and control over women’s bodies. However, as she argues, refusing the accepted ways of femininity operates against women in a dominant way (Bartky, 1988: 77).

In this respect, constructing masculinity and femininity creates a discourse which enables discipline of the bodies of individuals, both men and women, usually with

disadvantages for women. Within this discourse the borders of both femininity and masculinity are produced and reproduced. It tells society in what contexts what kinds of behaviors are 'proper' for men and women. While defining femininity and masculinity, it devalues femininity and values masculinity through which the oppression of women continues.

Hence, it can be argued that patriarchal power relations are reproduced directly or indirectly and penetrate into every aspect of our lives. Such a power, whether with reference to 'honor' or not, directly or indirectly, provide control and governance of women, their behaviors, sexuality, and attitudes. In short, the result was not the abolition of domination in modern context, but rather the replacement of pre-modern forms of power with new quintessentially modern ones (Fraser, 1996: 25). However, the 'flexible' and the 'indirect' feature of the control of sexuality in modern societies does not prove that individuals are freer there than they are within traditional control mechanisms. On the contrary, the sexual control of women is argued to be deeper and more insidious and difficult to confirm in modern societies because it seems as if it is not coercive since it is internalized. Thus, it is not the lack of sexual control or lack of 'honor' that makes the modern society different, but it is the nature of the mechanisms that function to ensure them (Ecevitoglu and Aytaç, 2007: 105).

These debates can be considered as an endeavor to provide ontological explanations of the phenomenon of femicide. Despite contextual differences, which are the reasons behind all these forms of femicide, femicide is, in the last instance, a problem deriving from patriarchal and unequal gender relations all around the world. In different contexts, these unequal relationships may take different forms.

CHAPTER 4

APPROACH TO MASS MEDIA AND NEWS

This study is based on the analysis of newspaper reports of incidents of femicide. Thus, before going into analysis, a discussion of how to approach mass media and news are required in addition to a discussion of femicide. Within the framework of this study, mass media is not conceptualized as a medium that creates, affects or directly reflects social facts but rather it is conceptualized as a medium which uses, reflects and also reproduces already existing dominant discourses that have penetrated into every aspect of our lives such as language, law, and education. Such discourse(s) that we are born into are very subtle and difficult to identify.

Because of the subject matter of this research, a discussion of the feminist media studies is also essential. 'Feminist media studies' does not refer to a holistic approach to mass media in feminist terminology. In early debates the media has been considered to be the very medium of sexist, patriarchal and capitalist values to ensure the continuity of patriarchal social order. The mass media has always been criticized by feminist theory for having an instrumental standpoint because feminist theorists argue that the media is the fundamental instrument transferring stereotypes about woman and femininity and patriarchal and hegemonic values and serves for the social control (van Zoonen, 1997: 316). According to liberal feminist critique, the media contributes to the transmission of the hegemonic patriarchal and sexist

heritage (Tuchman in van Zoonen, 1997: 316). For instance, radical feminism argues that media is patriarchal since it suppresses and distorts women's experiences that disturb the patriarchal order (Mattelart, 1986 in van Zoonen, 1997: 316). Socialist feminism states that the media presents the existing capitalist and patriarchal society as the best and the most desired society (Women Take Issue, 1978 in van Zoonen, 1997: 316). Related to this, the issues that they raised were the critique of stereotypical images of women in the mass media and the effects of these images on the audiences, which coincides with the arguments of empirical research paradigm in communication studies (van Zoonen, 1994:16). What feminists suggested as a solution was to see more realistic images of women in the media based on the assumption that if women are reflected in distorted ways, then the audience will be socialized according to these stereotypical, misogynist and sexist values. However, the understanding of the widespread stereotypical image of women in the media and the assumption that women will be affected by them were criticized by many scholars (van Zoonen, 1994: 17). Scholars in this paradigm have pointed to the male dominance in the media sector as the reason for this reproduction. Since the media is full of (rich) men, it is very comprehensible for them to present capitalist and patriarchal values (Davies cited in van Zoonen, 1994: 29). The emphasis is on the effect of mass media messages on the wider society and the audience. Considering the sender as active (intentionally aimed to create a specific message) and the receiver as passive was not convincing for some feminist scholars.

For these scholars, 'media production is neither a straightforward derivative of the malicious intents of capitalist male owners, nor is it merely the product of the sexist inclinations of media professionals. It cannot be considered as a simple black box

transmitting the patriarchal, sexist or capitalist values of its producers' (van Zoonen, 1994: 30). These messages that carry patriarchal, sexist or capitalist values do not originate from media institutions, but 'come from society' and are 'sent back' to society through the media (McQuail, 2002: 416). This does not mean that in media productions patriarchal, sexist or capitalist values are not reproduced. They are reproduced but the conditions of this reproduction are not one-sided as it starts with the capitalist, male, sexist 'senders' of the messages and ends with the 'passive receiver'. Rather, it is based on a dialectical relationship between society and mass media in general and products, news reporters and consumers in particular. Accordingly, for example, the debated 'wrong' and 'distorted' representations of gender and women also exist in other institutions such as family, education, law, language, religion, and daily languages. This is why we also confront them in media messages.

Although journalists produce knowledge with the claim of objectivity such as in the human sciences and among its practitioners (Hobbs, 2008: 9), the news does not reflect the outside world like a mirror as is often claimed. On the other hand, nor does it totally construct the reality as some critical scholars argue. Although we cannot give credit to the information in news texts as presenting the whole truth, this does not necessarily mean that such news do not reflect the truth. In other words, we cannot claim that the information has nothing to do with the reality or that such information is basically 'fictitious'. On the other hand; in some news texts real information can indeed be omitted and/or some normative judgments can be made by the reporter. Also, in some other cases, some facts in the news texts can only be partially valid (Burton, 2005: 294). In addition, it is not the factual information itself

that is constructed but the story. The story of the news is meaningful within a social context and these meanings of the news are based on shared interpretative recourses (Matheson, 2005: 15), which can be referred to as *discourses*.

Discourse in Foucauldian terms would be helpful to provide the relationship between the media and society in general, and the producers, the content and the consumers of the news media in particular. Although Foucault did not problematize the relationship between discourse and the media himself (Hobbs, 2008: 3), the media can be considered as the site where already existing discourses come into play and come into being from a Foucauldian perspective. Such an approach to mass media is significant in demonstrating the importance of newspaper analysis and the findings.

The public demand and the audience's tastes and values also seem significant with respect to the determination of the media content. People are willing to 'hear' existing dominant discourses in mass media content, were *discourses* define the limits of interpretations and some certain meanings are privileged above others (McHoul & Grace, 2003: 31).

As we already debated, power is diffused across all aspect of social relations; as a result, it produces some specific forms of thought and behavior while restricting others. It is dispersed through the network of relationships that make up society and is based on discourse (Green, 2011). Thus, through applying the existing *discourses*, the mass media is also involved in the exercise of power (Green, 2011). Thus, 'media texts are replete with the discourses that surround and define the events being represented' (Hobbs, 2008:11).

As Hall argues, another implication of Foucault for understanding representation is that the subject produces knowledge within the discourse or discourses of a particular period and culture. Thus, in fact, the discourse produces knowledge. It is the subject who produces particular texts. However, this production operates within the limits of the existing discourses (Hobbs, 2008: 12). Parallel to this, when considering the media, it is the discourse, not the media or the journalist, that produces the news. The media institutions and the journalist are created by discourse and operate the conceptual parameters that it determines (Hobbs, 2008: 12).

The mass media is infused with discourse or discourses which define the meaning of media representations (Hobbs, 2008: 9). In news discourse, we are subjected to a variety of ways of knowing, thinking and speaking about any phenomenon. Although Hobbs stated that Foucault analysis of discourse focuses on institutional settings such as hospitals, asylums and prisons, the mass media may also be considered as pervaded with discourse or discourses in which the media representations reach their meanings (Hobbs, 2008: 9). As a result, the textual form of a particular 'news event' will be shaped by discourses. However, to be clear, the site for discourses to come into play is not only mass media, but also religion, the workplace, state institutions, and the family. In Burton's terms:

Our communication is full of discourses, which shape how we understand our world, how we deal with others, how we make sense of everyday experience. So it is that we talk about parenthood, we talk to parents, we talk as parents, in different terms to those we use towards and about children. Such discourses may well shift from culture to culture, because different cultures think differently about parents and parenting, because they value it in different ways. The essence of a discourse is the 'meanings we have about' its subject. So the discourse of death is not so much about corpses as about 'deathness'. It is about how we talk dominantly about death; about what death means to most of us in our culture. This talk happens in everyday life, as well as through the media. The meanings that it produces interlock with social practices around death, such as the funeral.

In that the meanings of discourses are about dominant beliefs and values (Burton, 2005: 53).

In this context, although journalism is the practice of dissemination of information about contemporary affairs that interest the public (Schudson, 2003: 11), they should not be considered as a mirror of reality. It is a representation of the world and like all representations this is also a selective process. This means that while some select the news, others choose what to present as a news event and how to present it. Thus, news is considered to be distorted and in most of the debates it is assumed that the distortion is personal. However, Schudson argues that the ideas which are the primary factors that lead to distortion are not personal. 'Rather, they are socially organized distortions built into the structures and routines of news gathering' (2003: 33).

News is made, not found. Furthermore, it is not the attitude or 'bias' of individual journalists, but their social and organizational context which primarily determines how news is made (Tuchman, 2002: 80). The individual does not make the discourse, but the opposite tends to be the case. The discourse is super-individual. Though everybody 'knits along' at producing the discourse, no individual or single group determines the discourse and its final result (Jager, 2001: 35). This may be referred to as framing which moves the analysis of the news from intentional preferences. He argues:

Every narrative account of reality necessarily presents some things and not others: consciously and unconsciously, every narrative makes assumptions about how the world works, what is important, what makes sense and what should be (Schudson, 2003: 35-36).

Analyzing framing rather than bias opens the discussion of examining unintentional, unconscious and intentional selective representation. 'It diminishes the extent to which evidence of selection can be automatically read as evidence of deceit, dissembling, or prejudice of the individual journalists; it also draws attention to ways journalists select certain traditions and routines of the culture at large and the news business specifically' (Schudson, 2003: 37). Thus, framing is related to the existing discourse. Because both the audience which will consume the news, and the journalist who produces the news are living in the dominant existing discourse, the framing is most likely born from existing discourses. Discourse, therefore, is useful in that it can enable us to analyze similarities across a range of texts as the products of particular power/knowledge relations (Mills, 2001; 19).

Applying the existing discourses again and again and reproducing them make the mass media participate in the process of dispersing the 'regimes of truth' of all institutions; thus, journalists willingly or unwillingly participate in the administration of the society (Hobbs, 2008: 12) because it contributes to the production of the knowledge of 'normality'. Modern mass media is rich in terms of the examples of normalization via representing some cases as 'abnormal'. Thus, mass media contributes to the government of the society giving references to some forms of thoughts and behaviours as 'abnormal' and by the representation of punishment of some specific kinds of behaviours (Green, 2011).

These are what make the analysis of the newspaper reports significant for this study. In short, 'our social system provides a kind of framework within which the media operates' (Burton, 2005: 52). Thus, mass media is replete with existing dominant

sexist discourses, and representation of existing sexist discourses contributes to the production of knowledge of 'normality' and thus, contributes to the administration of the society.

In this context, this study aims to reveal the ways we speak, write and think about femicide. By looking at news media, it can be understood what the existing discourse about femicide is and how existing sexist discourse contributes to its happening. The findings of this study should be considered in this context.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS OF THE NEWS TEXTS OF FEMICIDE INCIDENTS

This chapter of the thesis will present the findings of the analysis based on the news texts pertaining to femicide and attempts of femicide²⁵ and the discussion of these findings. Borrowing the conceptual and methodological insights from FCDA, I will explore the explicit and implicit meanings within the news texts about femicide in the Turkish press. However, in order to be able to analyze the news texts critically, an effort to provide a descriptive understanding of the incidences based on the information in the news reports may be useful. Therefore, a general picture of femicide as it is treated in the news texts will be presented in the first part of this chapter before engaging in the critical analysis. Although news texts' value is limited in providing full and accurate understanding of the reality of the dynamics of the phenomenon, they may present, at least, a partial reality.

I will classify the cases depending on their 'reasons', the victim/perpetrator relationship, the location of the incidents, the form of the murder, and the ages of the victims because femicide has usually been debated in the literature with reference to these factors (Abu-Odeh, 2000, Sev'er and Yurdakul, 2001, Welchman and Hossain,

²⁵ Although I think that violence against women is a totality and I do not differentiate between different forms of violence against women, since the subject of this study is femicide, I collected the news reports of the cases of femicide. However, since there are some attempted femicide cases in which the women had survived, I also included them in my analysis.

2005, Yirmibeşođlu, 2007). Later, I will continue with the critical analysis in the second part of this chapter.

The news texts analyzed within this study were borrowed from the archive of Directorate General on the Status of Women (KSGM) which obtained them from the Media Monitoring Center (Medya Takip Merkezi).²⁶ Media Monitoring Center collects all kinds of news texts about women (from health to education, from motherhood to employment) that are published in newspapers on a monthly period and scans them to store in digital format. They compound the reports in a compact disc each month and submit them to KSGM. In this way, they create a women's news reports archive for KSGM.

It is also essential to explain the method used for primary source selection and the methodological interface implemented to identify the concept of femicide. For the purpose of this study, initially, the whole archive of 2009 composed of approximately 20000 news reports, was copied and examined. These reports were scanned, and among them, the ones that were related to violence against women and girls were singled out. Afterwards, among these news reports the cases of femicide and attempts of femicide 1159 were identified to examine.

One point that should be made clear here is that there are different definitions of the phenomenon of femicide proposed by researchers and activists. These different interpretations may lead to methodological differences in the collection and interpretation of data (Report of Understanding and Strengthening Femicide, 2008:

²⁶ Media Monitoring Center is a private institution that was founded in 1999 to provide service to organizations, companies, individuals and agencies in the field of media tracking and measurement.

1). In this respect, the understanding of the phenomenon and the definition of femicide employed by the author of this dissertation also affected the data analyzed. On this context, in this study, all cases of murders of women committed by people close to and/or where the perpetrators are known to victims are considered as femicide.

Consequently, the differentiation of the cases was mainly based on the relationship between the victim and the assailant. These constituted spouses or other intimate partners, blood relatives, and relatives by marriage. The cases in which the perpetrator was either unknown or distantly known to the woman, as in the relationship between an employee and her employer for example, were not included.

Another point that should be made clear is that the news texts related to femicide and femicide attempts published in 2009²⁷ have been studied in this research. In this context, it is noteworthy to indicate that cases studied are those reported in 2009, not necessarily those that occurred in that year. Thus, while most crimes were reported on or just after the day it was committed, an event which occurred earlier but was discovered and reported in 2009 was also included for analysis.

Also, as pointed out before, the cases in which the crimes were not known to be committed by men who were known to the victims were not included.²⁸ However, those cases where the perpetrator was unknown when the case was first investigated and reported, but later as the story unfolded the identity of the perpetrator was

²⁷ Although the study was completed in 2012, since I started studying at the beginning of 2010, I collected the news reports of 2009.

²⁸ In many of those cases, suspicion of femicide was due to circumstantial evidence such as the crime having being committed at home with no evidence of any other crime such as burglary. Yet, as the research was dependent on the cases as they are represented in the newspapers, I did not include these.

clarified as a person known to the victim, were included. There were also some reports about cases investigated as suicide, despite other suspicions. These kinds of incidents were also excluded from the sample in order to avoid possible contamination of the data despite the fact that there are many femicide cases that were intentionally made to look like suicide.

Since I examined all news reports about femicide and femicide attempts reported in many different newspapers (local and national) during 2009, there was usually more than one news report about each case. Hence, there was the risk of multiple counting of the same case. I had to read the reports carefully and differentiate each case. There were also many news reports giving information about the process of submission to the court of a past event that had already been included. Had I not pinpointed such cases, this would have also led to multiple counting.

Additionally, there were a few cases that were reported as a 'typical' femicide of/or femicide attempts; however, when examined meticulously, it was understood that the victim was male, and the crime was committed either by a female or a male perpetrator. I also had to be aware of such cases. Consequently, in order to be able to gather the news texts of incidents of femicide that fit in and/or exemplify the definition of the phenomenon used in this study, a detailed and careful reading of the news texts and paying close attention to the details of the incidents were essential.

5.1. Looking Further to the Incidents of Femicide

I identified a total of 258 different incidents²⁹, 197 of which are femicide cases and 61 of which are femicide attempts³⁰. Since it is not possible for all femicide incidents and femicide attempts to be reported in the newspapers, it is clear that the number of the incidents collected is less than the actual incidents. Unfortunately, it is probable that many more women have indeed been victims of femicide than those reported in the media. Nevertheless, the numbers give an idea about the prevalence of the phenomenon and may help to show the magnitude of the phenomenon and comprehend the significance of the issue. For instance, 258 incidents a year means at least one woman is murdered or is a victim of an attempted murder every two days. Below a discussion of the cases is presented with respect to the criteria of prevalence of the phenomenon according to the victim/ perpetrator relationship, the region in which the incident took place, the ages of victims and perpetrators, the forms of murder and ‘reasons’.³¹

5.1.1. Who generally commits femicide?

Perpetrators were classified into four groups: current/former intimate partners, family members and blood relatives, relatives by marriage and stalkers. According to the data, current/former intimate partners include husband (current, separated, divorced and/or *de facto* husband (marriage by religious ceremony only), cohabiting partners, current/former male fiancés, current/former boyfriend; male family members or

²⁹ My analysis based on 1159 news reports of femicide and attempted femicide incidents about these 258 cases.

³⁰ The number of news texts identified is higher than the number of cases. Since I examined all national and local newspapers, there is usually more than one report about a particular incident.

³¹ Such details about each case are provided by different available news reports on the same cases.

blood relatives consist of fathers, brothers, sons, male cousins, uncles; male relatives by marriage refers to fathers-in law, brothers-in-law, etc.; and stalkers meaning those with one-sided attachments. The relationship of the perpetrator is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Relationship of the Perpetrator to the Victim by Incident

<i>Perpetrators</i>	<i>Number of Incidents</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Current/Former Partner	213	82.6
Male Family Members and Blood Relatives	29	11.2
Male Relatives by Marriage	10	3.9
Stalkers	6	2.3
Total	258	100

According to these data, most of the cases (82.6 %) are committed by current/former intimate partners of the women. Femicide committed and/or attempted by male family members and blood relatives of women, (11.2 %), is the second highest form. These are followed by crimes committed by male relatives of women by marriage (3.9 %) and stalkers (2.3 %).

In the literature on femicide in Turkey, the victim/perpetrator relationship emerges as a critical factor that defines the phenomenon. While the murders committed by male family members and blood relatives have usually been considered as ‘custom (töre) killings’, the ones that are committed by current or former intimate partners are usually considered as homicide. Furthermore, while the former is often defined as a social problem arising from patriarchal cultural practices of Kurdish people, the latter is usually assumed to be isolated incidents that have no socially explainable character and is not associated with patriarchal relations. As a consequence of such an understanding, for example, the state has shown a tendency to intervene in what is

called ‘custom (töre) killings’³², while it has largely isolated itself from intervening in the prevention of other cases of femicide.

This idea became very evident in the approach of Selma Aliye Kavaf, Minister of State for Women and Family (May 2009-July 2011), in the case of the murder of Ayşe Paşalı (December 2010). After the murder of Ayşe Paşalı attracted great interest in the media, Minister Kavaf stated that this was a singular crime, and sometimes the law could be inefficient in preventing such singular crimes.³³

However, the story of the murder of Ayşe Paşalı is enough to see that there were lots of actions that could have been taken by the state institutions in order to prevent similar future threats to other women. According to her daughter, Ayşe Paşalı got divorced because she had been subjected to violence for years and she had been threatened with death by her husband many times. The death threats had continued after the divorce. Thereupon, she demanded protection from the state within the scope of Law No 4320 (Law on the Protection of Family). However, since she had been divorced and was no longer in a conjugal union, she was outside the protection of the said law and the court decided not to accord her any protection. On the 7th December, 2010, she was murdered on the street by her ex-husband.³⁴ Considering the continuous violence that she had been subjected to throughout her marriage by her ex-husband, and the lack of protection by the state, it is difficult to regard the

³² It is my contention that, as has already been argued, emphasizing ‘custom (töre) killings’ as a social problem of some specific ethnic groups is also problematic, and the solutions suggested (education and development) are also questionable.

³³ ‘Bakan Kavaf’a göre A.P.’nin ölümü münferit (According to Ministry Mrs. Kavaf, the Murder of A.P is Mundane)’. Bianet. 27.12.2010. Retrieved from <http://bianet.org/bianet/kadin/126834-bakan-kavafa-gore-a-p-nin-olumu-munferit>, 10.10.2011.

³⁴ ‘Ayşe Paşalı’nın kızı bu açıklamaları yapmıştı (Explanations of the daughter of Ayşe Paşalı)’. Milliyet Online. 05.12.2011. Retrieved from <http://video.milliyet.com.tr/video-izle/Ayşe-Pasali-nin-kizi-bu-aciklamalari-yapmisti-f3pXwAZdGWcU.html>, 10.10.2011.

event as being mundane. Moreover, considering that the threats existed both before and after the divorce and her request for protection was refused because she was considered to be out of the scope of the law, it is difficult to argue that the state could not be more effective in protecting her. All of this means that the Law No. 4320 (Law on the Protection of Family), which is one of the main pieces of legislation with the specific aim of combating violence against women, is deficient in its scope and ineffective in its application. As the law only accedes protection to those who are in legal familial unions, it falls short of protecting women who are not married but subjected to violence by men.

On this regard, according to the data analysis presented in a more detailed manner in the following table, out of 213 current/former partners; 134 are current husbands. However, 79 out of 213 are former and/or *de facto* (religious) husbands, and former and/or current boyfriends or fiancés. So, killings and the death threats towards women do not stem only from their current or legal husbands, but also from partners that are not in a conjugal relationship such as former or religious husbands, boyfriends and fiancés.

Table 2: Relationship of the Perpetrator (Current/Former Partners) to the Victim by Incident (Detailed)

<i>Partner</i>	<i>Number of Incidents</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Current Husband	134	62.9
Former Husband	19	8.9
De Facto (Religious) Husband (Marriage by religious ceremony only)	13	6.2
Current Boyfriend	24	11.6
Former Boyfriend	15	6.6
Current Fiancé	3	1.5
Former Fiancé	5	2.3
Total	213	100

Thus, as opposed to Minister Kavaf's arguments, it is clear that the state has the responsibility and the obligation to prevent such crimes. There are so many legal and socio-political actions that the state and the governments can take, and among them, revising the Law No 4320 (Law on the Protection of Family), the inadequacy of which has already been proven, is a most important avenue to pursue. Extending the scope of the law to cover those outside of the legal marriage is only a necessary first step, although it is far from being sufficient.³⁵

5.1.2. Where does femicide take place?

Table 3: The Prevalence of Femicide Incidents and Femicide Attempts by Regions

<i>Regions</i>	<i>Number of Incidents</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Marmara	63	24.6
Aegean	51	19.9
Mediterranean	49	19.1
Central Anatolia	35	13.7
Southeast Anatolia	25	9.8
East Anatolia	17	6.6
Black Sea	16	6.3
Total	256³⁶	100

³⁵ There have been some recent developments regarding whether the law for the protection of women against violence and the existing Law No 4320 on the Protection of Family should be converted to a Fundamental Law. It has been reported that according to the Draft Law on the Protection of Women and Family Members against Violence, there will be no requirement of familial relationship for women in order to benefit from the law; the women will seek protection not only from their current husbands, but also from former husbands, de facto husbands (by religious marriage), fiancés, and boyfriends. Furthermore, the women will not have to prove the violence any more. In addition, the individuals, organizations and the public officers that witness the violence will also be responsible to inform the authorities. Those that do not apply the law will also be penalized ('Şiddete Karşı Kanun Tasarısı Taslağı (The Draft Law on the Protection of Women and Family Members against Violence). Bianet. 20.07.2011. Retrived from <http://bianet.org/bianet/bianet/131585-siddete-karsi-kanun-tasarisi-taslagi>, 10.11.2011.

³⁶ The cities where two of the cases occurred were not given in the news reports. That is why I made calculations for 256 cases.

As it can be followed from Table 3, one fourth of all reported femicide incidents and attempts in 2009 took place in Marmara (24.6 %). This is followed by incidents and attempts in Aegean (19.9 %), Mediterranean (19.1 %), Central Anatolia (13.7 %), Southeast Anatolia (9.8 %), East Anatolia (6.6 %), and Black Sea (6.3 %) regions in descending order.

Keeping in mind that roughly 29.5 % of the population of Turkey lives in Marmara Region, it is not surprising to have the highest frequency of femicide is in this region. Similarly, in Central Anatolia, South East Anatolia, Black Sea and East Anatolia regions, the frequency of incidents of reported femicide cases corresponds to the proportions of populations living in these regions (16.1 %, 11.7%, 10.3 %, 8.2 %, respectively). The frequency of incidents of femicide appears to be higher than expected in the Mediterranean and Aegean regions where approximately, 12.7 % and 11.5 % are of the total population of Turkey resides respectively. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to speculate in the exact reasons for this situation because these regions are among the most modernized, urbanized and densely populated parts of the country where a complex socio-economic and cultural structure exists. Thus, it is impossible to identify the specific causal factors (which may be manifold) for this phenomenon in this thesis.³⁷

In the Turkish literature, regional prevalence of femicide often refers exclusively to ‘custom (töre) killings’ as the dominant approach. It is argued that the phenomenon is more common in South-eastern and Eastern parts of Turkey. On the other hand, other forms of femicide have usually been excluded from such region based analysis,

³⁷ The population proportions of regions in Turkey are calculated by myself based on the provincial population of Turkey in 2009 derived from Address Based Population Registration of TÜİK (Turkish Statistical Institute).

most probably because these were often considered as isolated, singular and non-systematic events. Some studies problematize the phenomenon with limited understanding of ‘custom (töre) killings’ which results in the collection of cases that seem to be committed by male family members of the women in a premeditated way due to ‘unapproved’ behaviors of the victims, referring to an ‘honor code’ (TBMM Report, 2006; Yirmibeşoğlu, 2007, Sev’er and Yurdakul, 2001).

There may be some ‘unique’ forms of femicide committed in the eastern and south eastern parts of the country that may differ to some extent, from other femicide incidents related to varying operations of patriarchy. Restricting the phenomenon of femicide to such ‘unique’ forms may result in finding that femicide is more prevalent among people in the Eastern and South Eastern parts of Turkey. This approach may provide a limited but sensational knowledge about the phenomenon. However, since femicide is conceptualized comprehensively in this study, any and all possible similarities among different incidents cannot be considered theoretically significant, and a holistic approach is adopted in analyzing the phenomenon.

When these proportions are considered in relation to the proportion populations of these regions to the population of Turkey, Thus, what is significant for this research is not regional distribution of femicide or identification of the most prominent regions in this regard. Considering femicide as a whole, the real significance of the research is in the extent to which it can demonstrate the prevalence of femicide in the country.

5.1.3. Victims and Perpetrators by Age

Ages of victims and perpetrators are categorized into 16 age groups with 4-year intervals. These tables show that the victims and perpetrators of femicide and femicide attempts may be more prevalent in certain age groups. For example, most of the victims ranged from age 15 to 45 years while for most of the perpetrators ranged from ages 21 and 50 years.

Table 4: Victims by Age

<i>Age Groups</i>	<i>Number of Victims</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
10-14	2	0.1
15-20	35	16.7
21-25	34	16.2
26-30	45	21.4
31-35	26	12.4
36-40	29	13.9
41-45	17	8
46-50	8	3.8
51-55	4	1.9
56-60	1	0.5
61-65	5	2.4
66-70	1	0.5
71-75	1	0.5
76-80	1	0.5
81-85	0	0
86-90	1	0.5
Total	210	100

Table 5: Perpetrators by Age

<i>Age Groups</i>	<i>Number of Perpetrators</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
10-14	0	0
15-20	12	6.3
21-25	18	9.5
26-30	25	13.2
31-35	31	16.4
36-40	25	13.2
41-45	26	13.7
46-50	21	11.1
51-55	11	5.8
56-60	11	5.8
61-65	4	2.1
66-70	2	1
71-75	3	1.6
76-80	0	0
81-85	0	0
86-90	0	0
Total	189	100

The relatively high prevalence of victims and perpetrators in some age groups may create a tendency to suggest that the victims and perpetrators in certain age groups is the norm. This may affect society's understanding of these murders in general. Since most victims and perpetrators are between 15 to 50 years old, the incidents where the involved people are in lower or higher age groups may be considered more 'extraordinary'. That may create the idea that incidents in which the victims and perpetrators are of certain ages that are more common are more 'understandable'. However, although not very frequently, there are also victims and perpetrators in the lowest and highest age groups. For example, the lowest age among victims is 12 and the highest is 80, which shows that such violence is a problem which young girls and elderly women have also been exposed to. Likewise, the lowest age of a perpetrator is 16 and the oldest perpetrator is 71, which demonstrates that young boys and

elderly men may also commit femicide. Although less in number, they are still significant.³⁸

5.1.4. Forms of Femicide

Table 6 shows that most common methods of committing femicide are shooting with a gun (43.7 %) and stabbing (39.1 %). This is followed by strangling (8.1 %), beating/ beating with an object (3.8 %), and slitting the throat (3.1 %). The category ‘other’ includes such forms as pouring hot water/oil, cutting the nose, burying, throwing from somewhere (e.g. from a balcony), burning, and cauterizing the genital organ.

Table 6: The Prevalence of the Method of Committing or Attempting Femicide

<i>The method of committing or attempting femicide</i>	<i>Number by method</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Shooting with a gun	113	43.7
Stabbing	101	39.1
Strangling	21	8.1
Beating/Beating with an object	10	3.8
Slitting the throat	8	3.1
Other	10	3.8
Total³⁹	263	101.6

According to the data, in most of the cases the crime was committed by stabbing or shooting with a gun. These two are among the forms that lead an incident to be considered as having occurred spontaneously. As these forms are widespread among femicide and femicide attempts, an understanding that most of these incidents are

³⁸ This point will be elaborated in critical analysis in part of this chapter.

³⁹ The number of methods is higher than the number of cases because in some cases more than one method is used.

committed spontaneously may be generated. In other words, incidents of femicide committed by stabbing and shooting with a gun may be regarded as spontaneous killings, while others may be perceived as premeditated.

Yet, when the news texts are examined in detail, it can be deduced that many of these incidents are not spontaneous, rather, they are planned crimes. The excerpt below extracted from a news text will help illustrate this point:

The couple of Aysel Y. and Necati Y., married for four years, were living in İstanbul with their children. Aysel Y. left her home and went to her father's home in the district of Doğubeyazıt, Ağrı because she had been beaten by her husband for a while. After he called her wife's family to talk to her and was refused by her, he went to Ağrı. After an argument with his wife, he found out that his wife had started divorce proceedings and shot her with the rifle that he had taken with him⁴⁰

In this piece of news, although it is stated that he went to see his wife because he wanted to reunite, when they had a dispute about the divorce request of the woman, he drew his rifle and killed the woman. It is interesting that although he claimed that he had gone to persuade his wife to unite, he had taken a rifle with him. It may be deduced that he had, in fact, probably made up his mind to kill her under some conditions.

Similarly, as it is pointed out by Pervizat, according to the studies by Latin American feminists on the murders committed in South America which were assumed to be 'spontaneous' acts of violence under 'unjust provocation', it was discovered that often these crimes were not committed at the time of the argument that created the 'provocation', but that they generally they took place after (Pervizat, 2005: 63).

⁴⁰ 'Madness of Divorce', Cumhuriyet, 07. 01. 2009.

Therefore, the assumption that makes a distinction between ‘passion killings’ and ‘honor killings’ based on the timing of the incident, the former being premeditated and the latter being committed spontaneously, should be questioned. This is not a simple matter as not only does it affect the approaches to these murders, but also it may, almost certainly, affect the punishments given to the perpetrators of ‘custom (töre) killings’ as opposed to the other perpetrations of the so-called ‘spontaneous’ occurrences of femicide. In addition, since the number of incidents that was committed by stabbing and shooting with a gun is much more than the number of incidents committed in other ways, this situation increases the likelihood of considering femicide committed by stabbing and guns as more ‘ordinary’ than the others; i.e. normalizing the most prevalent form of femicide in social perception.

5.1.5. The ‘Expressed Reasons’: Understanding the Scope of the ‘Expressed Reasons’ and the Extent of Women’s Control

When the news texts are examined, it may be observed that the motives expressed (which I prefer to call ‘expressed reasons’) are mainly represented in the media as reasons per se. In other words, there is a tendency, in the reporting, to ‘accept’ or ‘share’ the ‘expressed reasons’ of the crime as the ‘objective reasons’ behind it. Only 7 % of the incidents were reported as committed without a ‘reason’. The rest were all reported with ‘reason/s’ although some of them may not give any idea about the dynamics of femicide. For instance, one of the most often stated motives is ‘having an argument’ or ‘dispute’ (22.8 %). Even though ‘having a dispute’ as a ‘reason’ may not tell much about the motive for the killing of a woman because the reader does not know the reason for the dispute, it is routinely presented as a motive

and as self-explanatory. The very few reports that do not mention any ‘reason’ and the high number of reports that are presented with ‘dispute’ as a ‘reason’ may also indicate the presence of a strong desire to connect the killing of a woman to a reason rather than attribute it to the opposite, i.e. non-reason. This apparent preoccupation to figure out the ‘reasons’ for these incidents lies behind what I have called ‘discourse of reason’.

It is a well-known principle of journalism that the reporters look for answers to the questions of Who? What? Where? When? Why? when reporting the news. Probably, the ‘discourse of reason’ which is dominant in these news texts, stems from this professional guideline; i.e. the need to look for the answer to the ‘Why’ question. However, independent of the purpose, such a ‘discourse of reason’ may go beyond the purpose of satisfying journalistic accuracy criteria and have some negative implications in terms of feeding into and strengthening the dominant patriarchal values.

In the case of reporting femicide, representing the ‘expressed reasons’ of perpetrators as ‘objective reasons’ may reflect a perspective that almost argues that had there not been such a ‘reason’, the said crime would not have been committed. Therefore, mentioning ‘reasons’ has the risk of rationalizing the crime and rendering the real dynamics behind the act such as unequal gender relations, the will to control women, women’s behaviors, and women’s bodies invisible. Had the murders been committed without any ‘reason’, they would probably become less explainable and acceptable for both the journalists and the public.

Moreover, since most of the 'reasons' expressed are based on women's behaviors, acts, and ideas, the 'discourse of reason' often puts the blame on the woman for the crime. It may, in fact, give credence to the idea that certain kinds of behaviors, acts and/or ideas may be punished in such ways --not in an explicit but in a subtle way. Therefore, I claim that the 'discourse of reason' about femicide acts as a rationalizing force and causes this kind of media reporting of the crime to be counterproductive in preventing and combating femicide.

Moreover, as one can never really know whether the stated explanations articulated the 'real' motives of the perpetrator or if they were bogus, using the term 'expressed reasons' may help to reduce the assumed credibility of the perpetrators claims and encourage a more 'questioning' and/or 'skeptical' collective attitude towards these crimes and their perpetrators in the society.

Table 7: The ‘Expressed Reasons’ of Incidents by Femicide and by Femicide Attempts.

<i>The groups of ‘expressed reasons’</i>	<i>Number of Incidents</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Leaving/ Seeking Divorcing /Divorcing	59	24.4
Actual/Suspected/ Potential Adultery⁴¹	51	19.2
Rejecting reunion proposal	27	11.2
Behaving in a ‘disapproved’ way in terms of ‘family values’⁴²	17	7
Resisting the man/Objecting to his demands/ Ridiculing his manhood	17	6.9
Economic Problems	15	6.2
Jealousy	14	5.8
Honor	12	4.9
Rejecting Marriage or Relationship Proposal	8	3.3
Problems related with custody	3	1.2
Other⁴³	17	7

⁴¹ Some examples of practices that I included in this group: seeing a couple of men’s shoes in front of the door, finding a love letter, reading a love message on the mobile phone of the partner, talking to a man on the Internet, talking to a man on the telephone, using the vehicle (minibus) driven by the same man for transportation, seeing the woman with a man at home in the bed, seeing the woman in another man’s car, having a shower two times in the same day. Besides, this should be noted here that in most of the cases, the perpetrators are partners who committed the crimes with such an ‘expressed reason’. However, in some other cases, male family members and blood relatives, and male relatives by marriage also committed the crime by accusing the mother, sister, bride, and sister-in-law of adultery. Therefore, in most of the cases, women were murdered by their partners; however, sisters, daughters, mothers, and brides were also murdered with ‘expressed reason’ of adultery in a few of the cases. In such cases where the women were murdered by her family members because of actual, suspected or potential adultery, are added under the group *Behaving in a ‘disapproved’ way in terms of family values*.

⁴² Some examples of practices that are included in this group: Leaving her husband and starting to live with a man she has met on the Internet, getting married to a man that the family did not approve of, having a boyfriend, cheating her husband, getting or seeking divorce from her husband, coming home late, eloping, having sexual intercourse with men out of wedlock, seeking marriage with her boyfriend, meeting with her boyfriend, requesting a song on the radio for her boyfriend, suspicion that she is having a sexual relationship with men for money, working at a bar.

⁴³Some examples of practices that I included in this category: Seeking civil marriage, a dispute between the father and the step-mother about caring for the disabled daughter, a woman’s refusal to

Table 7(Continued): The ‘Expressed Reasons’ of Incidents by Femicide and by Femicide Attempts.

<i>The groups of ‘expressed reasons’</i>	<i>Number of Incidents</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Dispute	55	22.8
Unknown	17	7
Total	299	128.7

When ‘expressed reasons’ are examined, it is often seen that certain ones are repeated. I categorized them in 13 different groups. Table 7 helps one understand the spectrum of ‘expressed reasons’ and their prevalence. The most common one is *Leaving/Seeking Divorce/Divorcing* (24.4 %). *Actual/Suspected/Potential Adultery* is the second most commonly ‘expressed reason’ in the incidents reported (19.2 %). After that comes the *Rejecting Reunion Proposal* (11.2 %). *Behaving in a ‘Disapproved’ Way in terms of ‘Family Values’* (7 %), *Economic Problems* (6.2 %), *Jealousy* (5.8 %), *Resisting the Man/Objecting to his Demands/ Ridiculing his Manhood* (6.9 %), *Honor* (4.9 %), and *Rejecting Marriage or Relationship Proposal* (3.3 %), *Problems related with custody* (1.2 %) that all appear as ‘expressed reasons’ of femicide in the cases reported. In addition, there is a category of *dispute*, as I have already mentioned, that tells the reader even less about the content and nature of the ‘reasons’; however, it is one of the most frequent ones (22.8 %) reported. Lastly, ‘*other*’ is 7 % among all cases as the ‘expressed reason’.

In some cases, the events were reported with more than one ‘expressed reason’, either in the same report or in different reports about the same event. This is why the

leave and divorce upon the request of men, seeking to take the woman’s jewellery, having a dispute about men being alcoholic.

total numbers of ‘expressed reasons’ are much more than the total number of cases in Table 7. Such differences in the ‘expressed reasons’ given for the same event might be based on different sources of the information, perpetrator, victim, and witnesses.

My analysis shows that different ‘expressed reasons’ for the same event may sometimes contradict each other or they might be relational ‘expressed reasons’ due to the nature of the practices and notions that were included as ‘expressed reasons’. The contradictive ‘expressed reasons’ for the same event usually mean that the perpetrators explain why they committed the crime; however, others (witnesses, children, or the women if they survive) make a totally different claim. For example, according to the news reports of an incident of femicide that occurred in January 2009, the man explained that he committed the crime because his wife had cheated on him. However, since the woman had survived, she argued that it had nothing to do with adultery, but it was because of a dispute after the woman got angry with her husband because he had been a guarantor for someone for a huge amount of money.

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Such contradictions may probably be due to the perpetrator’s intention to take advantage of the ‘unjust provocation’ clause in the courts. The news reports about a particular incident of femicide may be very illuminative about these contradictory ‘expressed reasons’ and possible reasons behind such different explanations.

⁴⁴ ‘*Horror of Angry Husband*’, *Hürriyet*, 01.13.2009.

The story of an incident is as follows: When the event was first reported, it was relayed that the man committed the crime because he suspected that his former wife acted in a pornographic movie. However, their daughter, one of the witnesses in the court, claimed that her father committed the crime because of a dispute about money. According to her explanations, the man asked for some money from his wife and the woman refused to give it to him. After that, according to the daughter's testimony, he killed the woman. Despite the daughter's testimony, however, his penal servitude for life was reduced to 18 years because the judge interpreted the 'reason' – his suspicion about his wife's acting in a pornographic movie-- as an act of 'unjust provocation'.⁴⁵ This is not a unique and isolated case; in fact, the perpetrators take the advantage of 'unjust provocation' in similar ways very often. Therefore, the contradictive 'expressed reasons' may be a result of this aim.

Different 'reasons' may be expressed for a particular incident of committed or attempted femicide. For instance, the incidents for which 'expressed reasons' are reported as *Leaving/Divorcing/Seeking Divorce* in some of the news texts are also reported in other news texts as *Rejection the Proposal of Reunion, Actual/Suspected/Potential Adultery, Behaving in a 'Disapproved' Way in terms of 'Family Values', Jealousy, Honor, Resisting the Man/Objecting to his Demands/Ridiculing his Manhood* and *Problems related with Custody*. Similarly, cases that are expressed as committed due to *Actual/Suspected/Potential Adultery* in

⁴⁵ The information collected was based on different news reports about the incidents. The reports; 'Killed his wife because he likens', Bursa Haber, 01.19.2009; '/She was like a woman in a porno movie', Cumhuriyet. 01.19. 2009; 'The madness of 'I saw my wife in a porno movie"', Radikal. 01.19.2009; 'My dad killed my father because she didn't give money', Posta, 01.23.2009; 'Murder of money, not about porno'. Radikal. 01.23.2009; 'Not an issue of porno but money', Taraf. 01.23.2009; 'He killed my mother because of money'. Sözcü. 01.23.2009.

some news *texts* are also expressed as being caused by *Jealousy, Leaving/Seeking Divorce/Divorce, Honor, Behaving in a 'Disapproved' Way in terms of 'Family Values', Economic Problems, and Rejection the Proposal of Reunion* in other news reports.⁴⁶

These intersections about 'expressed reasons' are probably not only based on perpetrators' own varying explanations, but may also be due to different interpretations of the claims of the perpetrators by the reporters and journalists. Since in reality too 'expressed reasons' are closely related to each other and cannot be differentiated easily, when they are represented in the news, the explanations of the perpetrators may simply be interpreted in different but intersecting ways by the reporters and journalists.⁴⁷ For instance, if a perpetrator claims that he committed the crime because of adultery, the case might be reported as either a result of adultery or result of jealousy, or even as an 'honor crime' owing to the perpetrators own interpretation of the 'expressed reasons'. Similarly, although the perpetrators may not have mention jealousy himself as a result of *honor*, etc. probably because the journalist interprets it in this way. For example, although the man does not mentioned jealousy himself, the journalist may report the case in that way, because she or he interprets the situation as 'jealousy'. This is significant firstly because many analysts and scholars assume the opposite; that is, the 'expressed reasons' in

⁴⁶ These different 'expressed reasons' may be either inherent to only one report about the same case or may be represented in different reports about the same case.

⁴⁷ Although I tried to classify mutually exclusive-jointly exhausted groups of categories for 'expressed reasons' when real life reflections of these 'expressed reasons' are considered, it is impossible to create such totally independent groups of 'expressed reasons'.

the news are taken as the explanations of perpetrators when sometimes they may be interpretations of the 'expressed reasons' by the journalists.

These discussions shows that it is difficult to deduce an accurate picture of 'expressed reasons' and not possible to deduce the exact 'reasons' for a particular incident from these. Nevertheless, it is possible to acquire a general picture. These 'expressed reasons' may only be considered as providing some ideas about the extent of different reflections of the domination of women and the extent of the control of women, women's bodies and behaviors.

Among all the incidents of committed and attempted femicide studied in 2009 (258 cases), twelve are reported as having been committed by the 'expressed reason' of *honor*. In only three of them, *honor* is reported as the only 'expressed reason'. Similarly, *jealousy* is reported as the 'expressed reason' in fourteen cases and in only three of the cases, it is the only 'expressed reason'. Thus, the total number of cases in which *jealousy* and *honor* are the 'expressed reasons' is relatively low (14+12=26 out of 258 cases). When one thinks intently in the literature femicide is often discussed exclusively with reference to these 'reasons', it is significant to understand them.

It is my contention that this is probably owing to the different interpretations of the notions of 'honor' and jealousy by perpetrators of these cases and by journalists who report them, the latter itself being shaped by due patriarchal value system itself. In reality, I argue that 'honor' and jealousy should not be considered as 'expressed

reasons' of femicide, but rather their frequent appearance in the public discourse about femicide owing to the social mechanisms that make them appear as 'reasons' for femicide, in the media; albeit real or bogus, make understanding 'honor' and jealousy significant.

'Honor' and jealousy are abstract notions. Their meanings may change from one person to another, and different people may attribute different meanings to them. Therefore, 'honor' or jealousy cannot be explained without reference to some kind of behavior, act or idea. They only become concrete with references to practices, and behaviors. However, since people attach different meanings to 'honor' and jealousy and consequently to their and other people's practices, and behaviors, other 'expressed reasons' such as adultery, divorce, behaving in a disapproved way according to the family, rejection of the proposals of reunion, marriage or relationship can come to be considered as related to 'honor' or/and jealousy.

On the other hand, an emotion or 'expressed reason' such as 'jealousy' is not based on individuals' personal feelings alone. Rather, it is an emotion that is impacted also by social relations, and in this context, gendered social relations. Emotions have been assumed as 'natural' and therefore, been considered as one of the topics of psychology (Sirman, 2010: 30). As far as is known, jealousy is observed in all the continents, albeit different levels and 'reasons'. There are some conditions that jealousy is not being observed despite the conditions such it could be considered as 'ordinary'. There are also some other conditions that jealousy reaches to a marginal level. These leads to consider jealousy not only an individual emotion but also as a

social notion (Tillion, 2006 :122). The field of sociology of emotions, therefore, argues that emotions are constructed socially to some extent. As Sara Ahmed, one of the scholars of this subject, argues, emotions also have some social functions in society. According to her, it is not the object itself but rather one's approaches determines the emotion. What kinds of feelings an object arouses is rather about how the object and the feeling are put into circulation. This is called 'the cultural politics of emotions' (2004). For instance, Sirman mentions that for a child, the fear of black people is probably internalized by observing the attitudes of people around them. Adapting such an argument, Sirman interprets jealousy as an emotion that is shaped by social relations and is related to how it is circulated (Sirman, 2010: 31). By considering jealousy as not only an individual feeling but also as constructed within social relations and by claiming that there is also jealousy behind femicide, I argue that femicide cases committed with the 'expressed reason' of jealousy have a social dimension and should be considered as a social problem, rather considering as individual and mundane events. 'Honor' and jealousy, then, are some of the mechanisms that are socially created and utilized to discipline women's bodies.

In addition, 'honor' and jealousy should not be considered as two distinct phenomenon that have no relationship with each other, with the former assumed to be peculiar to the Eastern world and the latter as peculiar to the Western world. They are not totally different mechanisms in practice. There are some practices that can be explained by either jealousy or 'honor' in all societies. Furthermore, in some situations, a particular practice may be an 'expressed reason' for femicide related to 'honor' in other cases, the same practice may be an 'expressed reason' for femicide

related to jealousy. Also, a practice may be considered as related to both jealousy and 'honor'. These different representations are to some extent related with the complexity of 'honor' and jealousy in reality and such complexity is reflected in the varied and sometimes contradictory appearance and content of the news texts about same event.

Considering the debates about conceptualizing 'honor' as peculiar to the East and jealousy as peculiar to the West in the context of femicide reflected in the terms 'custom (töre) killings' and 'passion killings', I point out that such a distinction is not appropriate. Although the study of 'expressed reasons' is significant to comprehend the scope of the phenomenon of femicide, defining the issue on the basis of 'expressed reasons' are not advisable. It is my contention that in reality, these murders are not as distinct as they are assumed to be in theoretical debates which are based on references to 'expressed reasons'. There may be some incidents that do not fit into the existing definitions but they should not be theoretically considered as ordinary murder cases.

Also, 'honor' and jealousy may not be enough to comprehend the dynamics behind these murders. Mostly, a patriarchal conception of masculinity is related to the occurrence of these murders. While 'honor' and jealousy are also related to such a masculinity conception, a different dynamic is also often behind these murders that is economic problems.

When economic problems are presented as the only 'expressed reasons' for cases of femicide in news texts, people may think that men feel pressured due to economic problems and hence, they commit these crimes. However, for instance, when the

incidents for which economic problems are the ‘expressed reason’; are examined in more detail, it is seen that many of these cases were also related to *Resisting the Man/Objecting to his Demands/Ridiculing his Manhood*. In these cases, women usually wanted men to find a job, and may express their dissatisfaction with the existing situation with words that are claimed to be ‘insulting’ to men. Therefore, reducing such cases to only economic problems and ignoring their relationship with masculinity may lead to seeing ‘expressed reasons’ of murders as gender-neutral.

Groups of ‘expressed reasons’ of femicide cannot be considered independent and mutually exclusive. In this thesis, ‘expressed reasons’ are classified into groups for analytical purposes, and to make their range visible. According to the ‘expressed reasons’ found in the news reports of femicide cases studied, men want to do whatever they want, want things to happen according to their wishes and when things do not transpire as they want, violence, the most drastic form of which is femicide, results.

5.1.6. Conclusion

In this part of the analysis, I have tried to provide a portrayal of femicide as it is represented in the news texts. I classified the cases based on the victim/perpetrator relationship, the location of the incidents, the form of the murder, the ages of the victims and perpetrators and ‘expressed reasons’.

According to the analysis, femicide is mostly committed or attempted by current/intimate partners of the victim. Although, the literature, on the other hand, is full of arguments about ‘custom (töre) killings’ which define the crime committed

mainly by male members of the family and the murders, the ones that are committed by partners, are assumed as being singular and not-systematic events. However, as the data show that they are widespread, it is, therefore, my argument that they should not be regarded as individual cases when considering the phenomenon of femicide and developing solutions to prevent it. The preceding research shows the limitations of the term ‘custom (töre) killings’ as well as the inaccuracy of such an understanding of the issue.

‘Custom (töre) killings’ are also assumed to be committed in premeditated fashion upon a ‘family council’ decision. However, while some forms of femicide may really be committed spontaneously, when the news reports are examined in detail, it is observed that many femicide cases are usually premeditated. Therefore, ‘premeditation’ cannot be a criterion that differentiates between different forms of women killing.

In the literature, the common perspective that comprehends ‘custom (töre) killings’ and ‘passion killings’ as two distinct phenomena considers the former as a result of patriarchal relations in specific societies, e.g. Kurdish communities in Turkey- and the latter as more related with individual anger and gender neutral because women also commit such crimes. On the other hand, others argue that ‘custom’ and ‘passion’ killings are different reflections of similar values and norms that result from different operations of patriarchy in different contexts (Mojab, 2006). Although I support the latter argument to some extent, what I further develop from my analysis is that the distinction is not as clear as it is claimed, at least in Turkish context. The force

behind ‘custom (töre) killings’ is considered to be ‘honor’, whereas it is assumed to be jealousy for ‘passion killings’. After examining the news texts in this research; I have seen that ‘honor’ and jealousy are not as distinct as they are usually assumed to be. Although in real life there may be some unique forms of femicide due to different operations of patriarchal relations in different contexts that may fit well into the definitions of these unique forms, there are also many incidents that cannot be explained with reference to either of these categories. Also, while the range of the perpetrators, the forms, the regions, the ages, and the range of ‘expressed reasons’ are considered, it can be seen that there are probably many incidents that coincide with both of these two different bases of femicide.

Drawing a clear distinction between these cases does not facilitate the understanding of the phenomenon; on the contrary, it limits studies on this issue. Therefore, defining violence against women, and particularly femicide, limited definitions may produce specific and/or sensational information. Academic studies that aim to provide deeper understanding of the issue need a comprehensive perspective. A holistic approach to the issue is required not only to produce scientific knowledge but also in order to help develop effective preventive policies.

A holistic approach and a better understanding is also essential in order to amend the existing legislation and to ensure its effective implementation. For instance, the Turkish Criminal Code should define the crime in a more concrete and comprehensive sense in order to prevent the ‘expressed reasons’, mainly defined in terms of woman’s behaviors and ideas, from being considered as ‘unjust

provocation'. The Law No 4320 (Law on the Protection of Family) should also be improved to combat domestic violence more effectively and to protect victims better.

5.2. A Critical Inquiry to the Representation of News Texts of Femicide Incidents in Turkish Newspapers

This part of the chapter aims to illustrate different manners of framing of femicide incidents in the news texts. It does not seek to produce generalizable results but to develop an interpretative endeavor of understanding the ways of reporting the phenomenon. As it has been discussed in the previous chapter, the analysis is based on the assumption that the way of presenting 'factual' information (framing), may differ based on subjective process. It is about the interpretation of isolated items of events by journalists. Beyond the reliability of the factual information about the incidents, the framing is more associated with how 'factual information' is used in news texts. It is, in fact, the framing that departs journalists from the assumed objectivity norm and results in bias (albeit unintended). According to Entman, defining the problem, diagnosing the causes, making moral judgments, and suggesting remedies are the main aspects of framing (McQuail, 2005: 343). For example, race related news often represent the events as problematic for the society, not for the immigrant group (McQuail, 2005: 344).

Therefore, this part of the chapter is not about the validity of knowledge about facts of the event; rather, it is about the story --framing. I will carry out an analysis on how information about 'expressed reasons', ages of perpetrators and victims, the form of committing murder, or some other details framed in the news texts. The study of framing of news texts will be based on Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis

(FCDA). Since FCDA makes use of the basic premises of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), FCDA and CDA will be debated in relation to each other.

5.2.1. Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis as the Method

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is the theory and method of examining how individuals and institutions use language. In particular, it focuses on social problems and how discourse produces and reproduces power and domination. CDA critically analyzes power relations to problematize social issues and provides ‘solutions’ to them (Fairclough, 1995). The theory and the method of CDA is interpretative, contextual, and constructivist. This means that critical discourse analysts aim to interpret the meanings of texts. Texts not only have manifest meanings but also produce latent meanings which can be examined by CDA. The significant point within CDA is that ‘society and culture are dialectically related to discourse: society and culture are shaped by discourse’ (Richardson, 2007: 17). Fairclough also argues that critical analysis is used ‘to show up connections which may be hidden from people and not easily be observed’ (Sunderland and Litoselliti, 2002: 21).

Based on the premises of CDA, this study will employ FCDA to news reports of the cases of femicide because of its focus on discourses about a gendered phenomenon. FCDA is significant for this study because it aims to reveal the workings of power in discourse and maintenance of gendered social arrangements (Lazar, 2007: 141). The main aim of FCDA is “to show up the complex, subtle and sometimes not subtle, ways in which frequently taken-for-granted gendered assumptions and hegemonic power relations are discursively produced, sustained, negotiated, and challenged in different context and communities” (Lazar, 2007 : 142). Thus, FCDA is not

descriptive and neutral because its main motivation is to uncover or make transparent the social processes and mechanisms that can perpetuate injustice, inequality, and discrimination in overt or subtle, pernicious forms (Fairclough and Wodak, cited in Sunderland and Litoselliti, 2002: 21). In short, the main concern of FCDA is to criticize the patriarchal discourses in the society (Lazar, 2007: 145).

While examining news texts to reveal the unequal gendered relations re-enacted and circulated by means of discourse as natural and taken-for-granted (Lazar, 2007: 147), the task of FCDA is to analyze representations of sexist and gendered assumptions. However, since gender relations are interrelated with other systems of power such as race/ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, age, culture, and geography (Lazar, 2007: 149), discourse should also be considered through interaction with other factors related to these features (Fairclough, 1995: 103). Fairclough claims that the texts reflect some choices and the representational analysis of the texts aims to understand those who made the choices such as “what is included and what is excluded, what is made explicit or made implicit, what is foregrounded and what is backgrounded, what is thematized and what is unthematized, what process types and categories are drawn upon to represent events and, so on” (Fairclough, 1995: 104). In fact, the analysis of representation is assumed to be based on the analysis of what is in the text. However, as Fairclough argues, the absences are also significant in the text since they also reflect a choice (1995: 106).

FCDA in this context applies some strategies focusing on the choice and the meanings of words; such as naming and reference, predication, syntax and transitivity, modality, presupposition, rhetorical tropes, hyperbole, metaphors, and metonym. However, lexical analysis,--meaning the choice and the meanings of the

word--, naming and reference are the strategies that are more relevant to my analysis due to the subject matter.

The meanings of words are significant because words are important as they are value-laden and have connoted and denoted meanings. All types of words such as nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs carry connoted meanings in addition to their denoted meanings (Richardson, 2007: 47). *Naming and reference* is also significant in the sense that *naming* is about referring to people. How people are named in discourse is significant because it may impact the way that they are viewed (Richardson, 2007: 49). For example, in a case of sexual violence, it really matters if the report refers to the man who acted violently towards a woman as a ‘monster’; it means that he is blamed for the attack. However, if the woman is referred as ‘a Lolita’, ‘a divorcee’, or ‘an unmarried women’, it is assumed that the woman is responsible for the attack because ‘she invited the attack’ or because she ‘led the man on’ (Richardson, 2007: 51).

The questions that I will focus on are about the ways actors are defined, adjectives used to label them, whether there are any postulates and prejudgments (Binark and Bek, 2010:148). I will also consider if the murders are justified, or represented as an individual case related to individual problems (Binark and Bek, 2010:168-169) or if they are disapproved of and condemned. During my analysis, keeping these questions in my mind, I will focus on both overtly expressed and ‘less obvious, nuanced, implicit’ meanings of the news texts (Lazar, 2007: 151).

5.2.2. Critical Examination of News Texts

This part of the study is an interpretative analysis of news texts of femicide in the Turkish newspapers. The main objective of this part is to build a framework about the discourse of femicide and to enumerate how the details such as the ‘expressed reason’, the methods of the murder, ages of the victims and perpetrators and so on presented in the news texts may affect the framing of the incidents of femicide and in what ways. By doing this, the study attempts to show that to what extent they are given in a justified language.

5.2.2.1. Different Manners of Framing

From the analysis of the news reports, I identified mainly three manners of framings of news coverage of femicide in the Turkish press: ‘Neutral’⁴⁸; ‘Unjustifiable/Inexcusable’, ‘Justifiable/Excusable’.

Since this is an interpretative study, considering time and space limits, I identified twelve incidents⁴⁹ (and 58 different news reports about these incidents) to be representative to examine as representative of these three manners of framing. In this section, I will analyze the news reports of the incidents. First, I will examine the frame used in reporting the each case and discuss the implications and possible underlying meanings of these manners of framing.

⁴⁸ For this research, ‘neutral’ does not mean reporting in a way which directly reflects the ‘facts’ about the murder; rather, it means not using judgmental or emotional expressions about either for the case or the subjects of the cases and/or any other detail about the incidents.

⁴⁹ The frequency of these different frames is not a concern of this study. The frames are constructed based on the details of the cases, such as the ‘expressed reasons’, the form of femicide, the ages of the victims and/or perpetrators; etc. So, the number of cases that I have chosen to examine under one type of frame is not indicative of the prevalence of that particular frame. Rather, I tried to use as many cases as possible, rich in terms of different details.

5.2.2.1.1. Examination of News Texts of Femicide Incidents Reported in ‘Neutral’ Frame

5.2.2.1.1.1. Incident I

The murder was committed by the woman’s husband by stabbing. The ‘expressed reason’ of the murder was dispute. The headline of the news report is given below:

*Killed his wife with a knife, after a dispute*⁵⁰

The headline provides information about the relationship of the perpetrator to the victim, the weapon used for the murder and also the ‘expressed reason’. There are not any judgmental expressions in the main text. The report did not describe the perpetrator or the victim. The text does never use any word, phrase or expression that condemns either the incident or the perpetrator. Furthermore, there are not any expressions that may be considered as a sign of sympathy or empathy towards the victim. The full report will be illustrative of my arguments stated above:

A man killed his wife with a knife over a dispute in Antalya. According to the AA reporter, Zübeyde D. (40) and her husband Hasan D. (45) started quarreling in the building in the district of Karşıyaka. As a result of the increased tension, Hasan D. wounded his wife in various parts with a knife that he took from the kitchen.

Hasan D. ran away as soon as the neighbors came to their door on hearing the noise. Zübeyde D. died despite the intervention from 112 emergency service team came after citizens’ call.

Woman’s body was sent to the morgue in the Forensic Medicine Institute in Antalya for an autopsy.

⁵⁰ Belde, 03.03.2009.

*Hasan D, the father of two children, was arrested by the Homicide Bureau as a result of follow-up teams.*⁵¹

Judgmental, sympathizing or empathizing phrases are value-laden. In terms of my approach to news reports, non-existence of such phrases means that the report neither judges the case nor the perpetrator. In addition to that, there are not any expressions implying that it is not an individual, but a social and systematic problem. Nor is there any mention of femicide that relates it to the general problem of violence against women. The lack of judgmental expressions about the perpetrator, the victim and the case places this news report in the category of ‘neutral’ in terms of framing.

5.2.2.1.2. Examination of News Texts of Femicide Incidents Reported in ‘Unjustifiable/Inexcusable’ Frame

5.2.2.1.2.1. Incident II

The news reports about the second incident give detailed information. According to these reports, the attempted murder was realized by woman’s husband by skewering woman’s stomach and cutting her nose and ears. The ‘expressed reason’ of the murder was *suspected adultery*. In the headlines, the incident was presented as ‘savageness’ and ‘brutality’ as expressed in the examples below:

*Brutal torture in Ağrı*⁵²

*Brutal murder in Ağrı*⁵³

*Bloodcurdling torture in Ağrı*⁵⁴

⁵¹ ‘Killed his wife after a dispute, with a knife’, Belde, 03.03.2009.

⁵² Hürriyet, 05.07. 2009

⁵³ Ortadoğu, 05.07. 2009

*Brutality permitted by the state*⁵⁵

*Brutal attack to young women*⁵⁶

*Negligence and Brutality*⁵⁷

As it is understood from the headlines, this case is considered as ‘brutality’ which is also expressed in the phrases in the main texts of the news reports. For example;

*‘Bloodcurdling torture in Diyadin district of Ağrı*⁵⁸

*The brutality is realized in that way...*⁵⁹

Both the headlines and the phrases above indicate that reports explicitly denounce the murder defining it as ‘torture’ and ‘brutality’. However, it is important that, the incident was defined as ‘brutality’, not because a woman was killed but because ‘how’ the woman was killed. This can be clearly inferred from the third phrase below:

*The claims about the cause of the brutality are horrifying*⁶⁰

In that sentence; the murder was depicted as ‘brutality’, instead of referring to it as ‘murder’. This is most likely because of the form of the murder -- skewering a woman’s stomach and cutting her nose and ears—was regarded savage. The

⁵⁴ Anayurt, 05.07. 2009.

⁵⁵ Takvim, 05.07. 2009.

⁵⁶ Sabah, 05.07. 2009.

⁵⁷ Akşam, 05. 07. 2009.

⁵⁸ ‘Brutality permitted by the state’, Takvim, 05.07. 2009.

⁵⁹ ‘Relatives held, husband cut’, Posta, 05. 18. 2009.

⁶⁰ ‘Negligence and Brutality’, Akşam, 05. 17. 2009.

following headlines can also be illustrative in understanding how the reports are critical of the form of the incident:

*Skewered her and cut her nose and ears!*⁶¹

*Offenders cannot be human*⁶²

Moreover, its being considered a ‘töre’ related killing is probably another reason for the incident’s being described as ‘brutality’. This is clear in the headlines below:

*Töre brutality*⁶³

*Torture of Töre*⁶⁴

*Once again, the brutality of ‘töre’*⁶⁵

In the first two headlines, ‘töre’ is described as ‘torture’ and ‘savagery’ and defined as ‘brutal’. Also, the emphasis on ‘once again,’ in the third one, reflects the idea that this was not the only incident related to ‘töre’, as many more murders have been committed or murder attempts have been realized. This means that crime is considered as a social problem, not a mundane event; however, this is a social problem derived from ‘töre’ and not from general patriarchal social order.

The case was probably considered as ‘töre’ related due to its representation as a premeditated murder. Below are the excerpts that represent this situation:

⁶¹ Sözcü, 05.17.2009.

⁶² Güneş, 05.17.2009.

⁶³ Bugün, 05.17.2009.

⁶⁴ Cumhuriyet, 05.17.2009

⁶⁵ Vatan, 05.17.2009.

*The husband was called in immediately from İzmir and the decision of death sentence of the woman was made*⁶⁶

*With the family decision about 'clearing the honor'*⁶⁷

*The family council had decreed of 'clearing the honor' about Y.A. who was claimed to have a forbidden affair*⁶⁸

In conclusion, this incident may be considered as portrayed in an 'unjustifiable/inexcusable' manner of framing for two reasons: the form of the murder was seen as 'brutal' and it is considered as being related to 'töre'.

5.2.2.1.2.2. Incident III

According to the news reports about this incident, the woman was murdered by her husband by stabbing. The represented 'expressed reason' was *jealousy*. The headlines of the news reports below show that the murder was found to be 'unjustifiable/inexcusable' because of the age of both the perpetrator and the victim.

*Grandfather of 77 murder of jealousy*⁶⁹

*Such jealousy in this age*⁷⁰

*Killed 56-year-old wife for honor*⁷¹

⁶⁶ 'Once again, the brutality of 'töre', Vatan, 05.17.2009.

⁶⁷ 'Skewered her and cut her nose and ears!', Sözcü, 05.17.2009.

⁶⁸ 'Negligence and Brutality', Akşam, 05. 07. 2009.

⁶⁹ Bugün, 08. 29. 2009.

⁷⁰ Taraf, 08 .29. 2009.

⁷¹ Star, 08. 29. 2009.

Similar emphases are also evident in the texts as can be seen in the excerpt below:

In Basmane neighborhood of Izmir, the fatal quarrel between wife and husband due to jealousy is of a kind that makes one say ‘such jealousy in this age’⁷²

In this sentence, the phrase ‘*such jealousy in this age*’ implicitly states that in the cases where victims and perpetrators are of other ages, these kinds of murders might be considered as ‘reasonable’.

There is no expression either showing empathy with the woman, such as ‘unfortunate woman’, or judging the perpetrator, such as ‘bestial man’. Therefore, the news text judges the case only because of the age of the people involved in the incident.

Such an emphasis on the age implicitly attaches an ‘unreasonable’ nature to the murder and implies that in the cases of femicide the victims and perpetrators under certain ages may be more ‘reasonable’. So, I might say that this case is reported in an ‘unjustifiable/inexcusable’ manner of framing because of the ages of the victim and perpetrator. However, I should emphasize that although these news texts are critical of the incident, they do not strongly condemn it.

In addition, in the reports there is not any expression showing that the murder was a reflection of a more systematic problem.

5.2.2.1.2.3. Incident IV

In the fourth incident, according to the reports, the girl (victim) was murdered by her cousin with a gun due to *her rejection of marriage proposal*. The news reports emphasized the age of the victim since she was considered too young to get married.

Headlines are illustrative of the emphasis on the age:

⁷² ‘*Such jealousy in this age*’, Taraf, 08.29.2009

*'Marriage' bullet to 12 years old girl*⁷³

*Shot **the girl of 12** to not to let her marry someone else*⁷⁴

In the main texts, there are not any judgmental expressions directed either to the case or to the perpetrator. However, the emphasis on the age is more related with the relationship between the age and the 'expressed reason' and it probably demonstrates that the 'expressed reason' is considered as 'inappropriate' and 'unreasonable' because of the girl's age. Thus, this case may be considered as reported in an 'unjustifiable/inexcusable' manner of framing due to the victim's age. These news reports disapprove of the murder. On the other hand, the reports do not condemn it strongly or not represent the incident as a social problem.

5.2.2.1.2.4. Incident V

According to the information in the news reports about the fifth incident, the woman was murdered by her brother due to the 'expressed reason' of *suspected adultery*. It was reported that the man choked her with a wire and burned her. In the below sentence, the phrase of *'the bloodcurdling murder'* may suggest that the report sees the murder as 'inexcusable':

*The brother of the murdered woman upon **a family council decision** and her body was burned because of suspected adultery, told about the reason of the **bloodcurdling murder***⁷⁵

An important detail about this incident is its being seen as 'töre'-related case. This is probably because the case is represented as premeditated and committed by a family

⁷³ Takvim, 07. 11.2009.

⁷⁴ Şok, 07. 12.2009.

⁷⁵ Yeni Şafak, 01. 14. 2009.

decision in many of the news texts as also represented in the previous sentence. The following headlines show how the incident was perceived in relation to ‘töre’ and how it is condemned:

*Suspect of Töre in the murder*⁷⁶

*Nurgül is another victim of Töre*⁷⁷

*A victim of töre while trying to get divorced*⁷⁸

Moreover, the murder is not handled as a mundane case but as a social problem that may be inferred from the sentence below:

*With the dark mentality of the Middle Ages, a young woman is killed in Istanbul*⁷⁹

‘The dark mentality’ in this sentence probably refers to ‘backwardness’ of ‘töre’ as the relations under ‘töre’ have been usually identified with such ‘backwardness’. Therefore, it is obvious that the problem is not framed as a particular case that is a result of individual anger, rather, it was represented as a problem derived from the structural social relations related with ‘töre’.

Another reason of regarding this incident as ‘inexcusable’ may also be related to the form of murder --choking and burning. In the headline below, the form of the murder was emphasized:

⁷⁶ Sabah, 01. 14. 2009.

⁷⁷ Milliyet, 01. 14. 2009.

⁷⁸ Radikal, 01. 01. 2009.

⁷⁹ ‘They burned for töre’, Posta, 01.14.2009.

*They **burned** for töre*⁸⁰

In the following headline, the woman's situation is reported in an emotional tone that may show empathy with her:

*My sister was shaking out of fear*⁸¹

Consequently, this incident is reported in an 'unjustifiable/ inexcusable' manner of framing. Because, first, it is considered as a 'töre'-related incident, and second, the form of the murder --choking and burning—is considered as 'brutal'. This case is condemned strongly.

5.2.2.1.2.5. Incident VI

Based on the reports about this incident, the murder is committed by the rejected lover of the woman. The 'expressed reason' was the *rejection of relationship proposal*. The man committed the murder by stabbing. As it can be seen in the headlines below, the case is described as '*horror*' which means it is interpreted as 'unreasonable' in general:

*The **horror** of love in the elevator*⁸²

*The **horror** of psycho in the elevator*⁸³

Additionally, when the main texts are examined, we see that the details are mainly about the 'expressed reason' of the murder;

⁸⁰ Posta, 01. 14. 2009.

⁸¹ Yeni Şafak, 01. 14. 2009.

⁸² Milliyet, 02.20.2009.

⁸³ Bugün, 02.21.2009.

*The statement of Sezai K. caused goose pimples*⁸⁴

This phrase may mean that the case is considered as ‘unreasonable’ due to its ‘expressed reason’ - rejection of his proposal of a relationship. Also, the woman is described as ‘*unfortunate*’ in the main text which might demonstrate the view that the woman does not deserve to be murdered. Additionally, any expression that might be considered as referring to the issue as a social phenomenon does not appear in any of the news reports. The headline ‘*the horror of psycho in the elevator*’ may also demonstrate that this case is considered as a ‘mundane’ case committed by an unknown man.

In conclusion, although the reports do not strongly condemn the murder, they are not ‘neutral’ probably because the ‘expressed reason’ seems ‘unreasonable’. It may be concluded that this incident is framed in an ‘unjustifiable/inexcusable’ frame and the murder is disapproved.

5.2.2.1.2.6. Incident VII

According to the news reports, in this case, the murder was committed by the woman’s husband by slitting her throat as a result of a *dispute* about the woman leaving home on the day before. In one of the news reports, the incident is reported in a totally ‘neutral’ frame. The news text does not include any phrases judging the incident or the man. It does not consist of any criticism against the man, did not condemn the murder, and/or did not express empathy towards the woman.

However, in another news text, we see the expression of ‘*unfortunate woman*’. It shows that this news text regards the incident as ‘unreasonable’ because it expresses

⁸⁴ ‘*The horror of love in the elevator*’, Milliyet, 02.20.2009.

some sympathy and empathy with the woman. The adjective ‘*unfortunate*’ may mean that the woman does not deserve to be murdered. This tone of the report might be due to the form of the murder --slitting her throat—because it is considered as ‘brutal’ as it is understood from the emphasis on the headline:

*Butcher husband cut his wife’s throat*⁸⁵

And/or it might be related to the fact that the woman had many serious health problems as expressed in the sentence below:

*Meryem Toma whose right leg has been cut because of diabetes and who lost vision in her eyes, left her home and went to her father’s home*⁸⁶

Therefore, the case is considered as ‘unreasonable’, albeit not in a strong language. This may be only evident with the emphasis on ‘unfortunate woman’. Nevertheless, it may be regarded as being reported in an ‘unjustifiable/inexcusable’ manner of framing because of the expression showing empathy towards the woman.

5.2.2.1.2.7. Incident VIII

In the news text depicting this case, the incident was reported as the murder of a woman by her husband committed by stabbing as expressed as a result of a *dispute*. There are not much value-laden expressions used about the man and woman. In the news text of the incident, the event is described in a quite ‘neutral’ way. Nevertheless, it was described as ‘*painful*’ in the sentence below that is worth being analyzed:

⁸⁵ Hürriyet, 04. 28. 2009.

⁸⁶ Bugün, 04. 28. 2009.

*When the police opened the door with the help of a locksmith, the ‘painful’ event came into view*⁸⁷

The incident defined as ‘painful’ probably because the woman had many problems with her family about her husband, she had even offended with her family. Most likely, because of this, the murder is considered as ‘unreasonable’. Preference of such an expression in the headline suggests that the woman does not deserve to be killed because she was self-sacrificing for her husband. This is also emphasized in the headline below:

*He killed his wife who crushed her family for the sake of him*⁸⁸

The emphasis of the woman’s self-sacrifice in the headline, and depicting the event as ‘*painful*’ in the main text implicitly means that the case is ‘unreasonable’ because the couple had a good relationship. However, although the murder is considered as ‘unreasonable’ there are no expressions blaming the perpetrator or condemning the murder. It might be said that the framing used in describing the murder as ‘unjustifiable/inexcusable’. However, the language is not too sharp that it does not condemn the murder strongly, but only disapproves of the case.

5.2.2.1.2.8. Incident IX

The incident was reported as committed by the woman’s husband by slitting her throat as a result of *suspected adultery*. In the headlines of many news reports about this incident, not much judgmental expressions are used. They are more to inform the

⁸⁷ Taraf, 08. 19. 2009.

⁸⁸ Taraf, 08. 19. 2009.

readers about the ‘expressed reason’, the perpetrator’s relationship to the victim, and the location of the murder as can be seen below:

*Stabbed his chatting wife in the courtyard of a mosque*⁸⁹

*Cut her throat, Execution of his wife due to chat*⁹⁰

*Killed at the mosque saying you are cheating on me*⁹¹

*Murder due to chat at the mosque*⁹²

*Killed his wife who chatted*⁹³

*Execution of his wife due to chat*⁹⁴

In addition to the above headlines, there are some phrases in the main texts of the news reports consisting judgmental expressions towards the case. In the excerpts below, we come across the word ‘*brutal*’ to define the husband and ‘*brutality*’ to refer the murder:

*Chat on the Internet resulted in a **brutal** murder in Kütayha*⁹⁵

*Justification for **Brutality**, Chat on the Internet*⁹⁶

⁸⁹ Hürriyet, 07. 15. 2009.

⁹⁰ Şok, 07. 15. 2009.

⁹¹ Taraf, 07. 15. 2009.

⁹² Habertürk, 07. 15. 2009.

⁹³ İstanbul Gazetesi, 07. 16. 2009.

⁹⁴ Star, 07. 15. 2009.

⁹⁵ ‘Cut his wife’s throat due to chat on the Internet’, Radikal, 07. 15. 2009.

⁹⁶ ‘Cut his wife’s throat due to chat on the Internet’, Radikal, 07. 15. 2009.

The use of ‘brutality’ to refer to the case is probably about the form of the murder -- slitting her throat. The below sentence from one of the news reports is also illustrative for such an approach to the incident:

*Erhan U. killed his wife in a **brutal** way by slitting her throat*⁹⁷

In this sentence, ‘slitting one’s throat’ is explicitly defined as ‘brutal’. These news texts seem to consider ‘slitting one’s throat’ more ‘barbaric’ than any other form of murder such as ‘shooting with a gun’ or ‘stabbing’. In addition, the emphasis put on how the murder was committed. The headlines below may show the level of significance attached to the method of the murder:

*Cut his wife’s throat due to her chat on the Internet*⁹⁸

*Bloody execution of the wife due to chat at the mosque*⁹⁹

In many of the reports, there are not any judgmental expressions about the incident or words that may be considered as a sign of empathy towards the woman other than the expressions such as ‘brutal’ and ‘brutality’ about the perpetrator and the murder. In that case, it may be argued that the incident is reported in an ‘unjustifiable / inexcusable’ manner in terms of framing because of its form. The murder is not clearly condemned but the case is disapproved due to its form.

In addition to the form of the murder as a detail that affected the framing of this incident, what is also worth analyzing is that, according to the news texts, the man

⁹⁷ ‘Cut his wife’s throat due to chat on the Internet’, Radikal, 07. 15. 2009.

⁹⁸ ‘Baby cried, Mother died’, Takvim, 07. 15. 2009.

⁹⁹ Star, 07. 15. 2009.

suspected that his wife had cheated on him because she was chatting with someone on the Internet. In the forthcoming days, it was reported that the person whom the woman chatted with was her father meaning that the woman in fact did not cheat her husband. It should be underlined, that following this revelation, the headlines' emphasis became the *father* as seen below:

*Chat with the father sent her to the cemetery*¹⁰⁰

*Chat with the father sent her to death*¹⁰¹

*Had chatted with her father*¹⁰²

The emphasis on the *father* in the headlines is probably to bring attention to the 'expressed reason' of the murder. It is based on the assumption that 'it is a very usual act for anyone to chat with one's father'. Therefore, these headlines probably aimed to emphasize its being an 'extraordinary' and 'unreasonable' 'expressed reason'.

In addition to them, another report headlined as 'Damn!'¹⁰³ may also show how the murder is considered as 'unreasonable' because the adultery was not actual and even suspected. There is no such an expression as 'Damn!' in the below headlines that used in the news reports before it was revealed that the woman did not cheat on her husband.

¹⁰⁰ Ege Telgraf 07.16.2009.

¹⁰¹ Istanbul Gazetesi, 07. 18. 2009.

¹⁰² Takvim, 07. 16. 2009.

¹⁰³ Şok, 07. 17. 2009.

Not only the headlines, but also the language of main texts of the news reports changes after it was revealed the adultery was not an actual one. The below phrases are significant to show such change:

*24-year-old Esra Ulu was a victim of a misunderstanding*¹⁰⁴

*The tragic truth was revealed during the funeral of the unfortunate woman*¹⁰⁵

The woman is portrayed as a victim. She is represented as ‘a *victim of misunderstanding*’ implying that if there was not such misunderstanding, the woman may be deserved to be murdered. In addition, she is portrayed as an ‘*unfortunate*’ woman probably because the adultery claim was refuted. All these implicitly mean that if there was not such a misunderstanding and if the adultery claim was true, then the murder would be a ‘reasonable’ one.

It may be said that the incident is reported in an ‘unjustifiable/inexcusable’ manner of framing. What is unique for the incident and related news texts is that when the adultery claim was unwarranted, the tone of the story was critical of the murder only because of its form, but not of the murder itself. The degree of judgments was not superior in these news reports. However, after it is realized that there was no adultery, the murder is judged more explicitly, and the tone of being ‘unjustifiable/inexcusable’ becomes stronger.

5.2.2.1.2.9. Incident X

According to the reports, this incident was committed by the woman’s husband whom she had left a few days ago. The murder was committed by stabbing due to the

¹⁰⁴ ‘*Had chatted with his father*’, Takvim, 07.16.2009.

¹⁰⁵ ‘*Had chatted with his father*’, Takvim, 07.16.2009.

‘expressed reason’ of *suspected adultery*. The headlines below about the case give details about the ‘expressed reason’ of the murder, the perpetrator, the weapon used and the location of the crime.

*Murder of Jealousy*¹⁰⁶

*Her only fault is to be beautiful*¹⁰⁷

*She died with her husband’s knife strokes at her father’s home*¹⁰⁸

*The message text calling death for Meryem: Don’t call me again!*¹⁰⁹

In addition to the headlines, the main texts are also aimed at giving information about the case. Therefore, in these reports, I did not come across any judgmental expressions. However, after it was revealed that the claim of adultery was unfounded; in the following news reports, the framing of the events change. For instance, the below headline refer to the woman as a ‘victim’ only after the adultery claim was refuted.

*The victim of wrong message*¹¹⁰

This excerpt below will be illustrative of how the neutral framing turned upside down:

The police investigating the reality of the text message that caused the murder of the woman revealed how the woman is a victim of a ‘cheap’ reason. Yet, the message

¹⁰⁶ Olay, 09. 16. 2009

¹⁰⁷ Posta, 09.16. 2009.

¹⁰⁸ Yeni Şafak, 09. 16. 2009.

¹⁰⁹ Vatan, 09. 16. 2009.

¹¹⁰ Sabah, 09. 26.2009.

that killed the woman was not for her. Meryem Belen was in the same shift as her friend S.T. wanted to borrow Meryem's phone because she did not have any credits.

*The **unfortunate** woman could not decline her friend's request. Then, S.T. sent some text messages to her boyfriend. Reply to the text messages of her friend who had problems with her boyfriend came to Meryem Belen's phone at midnight. Then, what led to the woman's death took place ¹¹¹*

The news report defines the murder as '*cheap*'. The phrase '*because the message calling her death was not for her*' explains the reason why the murder is considered as '*cheap*'. According to the phrases, the murder is considered as 'unreasonable' because the 'expressed reason' -adultery- of committing the murder was unwarranted. When the 'expressed reason' is reported as 'suspected adultery', the tone was quite 'neutral'. Yet, when it is learnt that it was unfounded, the tone of the framing turned to an 'unjustifiable/inexcusable' manner.

5.2.2.1.3. Examination of News Texts of Femicide Incidents Reported in 'Justifiable/Excusable' Frame

5.2.2.1.3.1. Incident XI

According to the reports available for this case, the woman was murdered by her brother with a gun due to the 'expressed reason' of 'actual adultery'. The headline below justifies the case by representing the explanation of the perpetrator and defining the *actual adultery* as 'forbidden love':

¹¹¹ Sabah, 09. 26. 2009.

*Murder of **Forbidden love***¹¹²

*Execution to **forbidden love***¹¹³

According to the reports, the woman left her husband and went to İzmir with her child to live with her boyfriend. As the woman is married with a child, this is probably the reason why the ‘expressed reason’ of adultery is referred as ‘*forbidden love*’. Such an expression is not only present in the headline, but also in some of the main texts:

*A married woman with a child left her husband to live with a man she met on the Internet. The relatives of the young woman chased up that **forbidden love**. The chase ended with a murder yesterday morning*¹¹⁴

The emphasis on ‘*forbidden love*’ in the excerpt and in the headline strengthens the idea that there is something ‘wrong’ with what the woman did and every ‘fault’ has a consequence, which is murder in this case. It may also implicitly put the blame on the victim and imply that she deserves to be killed. Therefore, it may be stated that the news texts interpret the ‘expressed reason’ of the incident as ‘reasonable’.

In addition, as can be understood from the excerpt below, it seems that it was her brother who planned the murder:

The brothers of the woman heard that the couple was in İzmir and the brother Sıddık Çetin went to the city. While Goncağül Köseoğlu and İsmail Urcan were walking in

¹¹² Haber Express, 01.13.2009.

¹¹³ Sabah, 01. 13. 2009.

¹¹⁴ ‘*Execution in the middle of the street*’, Hürriyet, 01.13.2009.

the Konak at 08.15, the brother following them first shot İsmail Urcan in his back
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In this incident, the blame was put on the woman probably because it was not a potential or suspected adultery but an actual one. Therefore, the news reports of this case implicitly justify the case, and the case is reported in an ‘unjustifiable/inexcusable’ manner of framing.

5.2.2.1.3.2. Incident XII

This incident is an attempted murder. According to the report available, the crime was committed by the woman’s husband by stabbing. The ‘expressed reason’ of the murder was represented as *actual adultery*. There is only one report about this incident which is as follows:

*Another savagery occurred in Esenyurt , Istanbul. Mustafa Çam (53) was supporting his family by working in the civil sector. One working day, his shift ended early and he went home. While Çam **hoped** to have a restful day with his wife, he faced with **an unexpected sight**.*

*Çam, found his wife and his cousin Sait Ç. his daughter's father-in-law, in the same bed. The civil worker **went mad by what he saw**, committed murder with a knife he took from the kitchen. **‘Cheated on husband’**, first stabbed Sait Çam, and then, his wife who tried to escape many times. Sait Çam could not survive and the injured wife was taken to the hospital. Arrested Çam expressed that ‘he did not hesitate while he was stabbing them’¹¹⁶*

In this report, the condition of the murder was defined as ‘*an unexpected sight*’. In this phrase, the emphasis of the sight being ‘*unexpected*’ and the phrase ‘*went mad*

¹¹⁵ ‘Execution to forbidden love’, Sabah, 01.13.2009.

¹¹⁶ ‘Couldn’t bear to be cheated on’, Sabah, 08.19.2009.

by *what he saw*' portray the man as 'poor' and as one who may have lost control under such conditions. The news text emphasizes the 'inevitability' of the perpetrator's situation in a quite implicit way.

In addition, the emphasis on the feeling of '*hope*' of the man is a sign of empathy towards man. Furthermore, the husband is described as a 'cheated on husband'. By not referring the man as 'brutal' or in another critical way may also lead to the idea that he was the real 'victim'; a victim of a woman's adultery. Moreover, the news report does not represent any expression that would make the reader empathize with or sympathize the woman.

The incident, then, is not condemned and judged. The focus on the 'inevitability' of the condition for the man, representing him as the 'victim' even implies that the murder was 'reasonable'. This is probably connected with the 'expressed reason' of the incident--adultery. In this case, as it is not reported as a potential or suspected adultery but an actual one, the blame was put on the woman. Therefore, the manner of framing of the incident is 'justifiable/ excusable'. The news report about this incident implicitly justifies the case.

5.2.2.1.4. Discussion of the Findings

According to the analysis of the twelve incidents, I have mainly identified three main types of framing the incidents; 'neutral', 'unjustifiable/inexcusable' and 'justifiable/ excusable'. As it may be inferred from the analysis such differences may appear to be associated with some aspects of the incident such as the 'expressed reason', timing of the incident, ages of victims and perpetrators, incidents being considered 'töre' related and so on.

In the 'neutral' framings, we are generally informed about the details of what the motive of the incident was, who the victims and perpetrators were, which weapons were used, what the ages of the victims and perpetrators were, and/or the location of the crime. Furthermore, in the incidents framed in the news texts as 'neutral', there may not be any expressions that may be a sign of blaming the perpetrator or empathizing with the victim or condemning the blame. This may be because news texts do not question murder in general and do not express any 'value'. Thus, I argue that the details of the crime are considered neither in a 'reasonable' nor 'unreasonable' manner. Rather, they are reflected as 'taken for granted'. The absence of such expressions obscures the reality of the incident as a social issue and represents it as a criminal case of a mundane event.

On the other hand, the news reports of the incidents framed in 'justifiable/excusable' and 'unjustifiable/ inexcusable' ways do not only include information about the details of the incidents, but also indicates some values; they either judge or justify the cases. Below I will compare the results of critical analysis based on the details that affect the manner of framing the news texts.

5.2.2.1.4.1. 'Expressed Reasons'

One of the factors that may affect the frames of news texts is 'expressed reasons' of the incidents. If 'expressed reason' of murder is believed as 'unreasonable', then the incident is reported in an 'unjustifiable/inexcusable' manner of framing. However, if it is considered as 'reasonable', then the manner of framing of the incident is usually 'justifiable/excusable'. On the other hand, if it is considered as 'taken for granted', it is probably framed in a more 'neutral' tone.

Considering any ‘expressed reason’ as ‘unreasonable’ or ‘reasonable’ or ‘taken for granted’ may be associated with many factors about the ‘expressed reasons’. However, to provide a framework for all different situations of their being considered as ‘reasonable’ or ‘unreasonable’ is not possible within the limits of this study. Nevertheless, comparisons of the incidents below in terms of their ‘expressed reasons’ will give an idea about what kinds of ‘expressed reasons’ are considered ‘unreasonable’, ‘reasonable’ or ‘taken for granted’.

For instance, in incident I, the ‘expressed reason’ is a dispute and we do not see any reference to ‘expressed reason’ of the incident in the news text or any expression showing it to be ‘reasonable’ or ‘unreasonable’. On the other hand, in incident VI, we are faced with an ‘expressed reason’ –rejecting marriage proposal—that is considered as ‘unreasonable’; therefore, the incident is framed in a more ‘unjustifiable/ inexcusable’ manner.

In incidents II and V, the ‘expressed reasons’ are reported as *suspected adultery*. The reports do not represent ‘expressed reason’ of suspected adultery as ‘reasonable’ or ‘unreasonable’. The ‘expressed reasons’ are represented as ‘taken for granted’. On the other hand, in incident XI, the ‘expressed reason’ is reported as *actual adultery* and the blame is implicitly put on the woman due to adultery. Similarly, in incident XII the ‘expressed reason’ is reported as *actual adultery*. It is seen in the analysis that there are many expressions showing a sign of empathy and sympathy towards the man, and blaming the woman. Thus, by blaming the woman and showing empathy to the perpetrator, in the news reports, these murders or murder attempts are justified. In these examples, *actual adultery* seems very significant in determining

the manner of framing of the news texts of the incidents. It may be better understood by also examining the incidents of IX and X. In both cases, the ‘expressed reasons’ are reflected as *suspected adultery*. Another common point between these two incidents is that later, the adultery claims are refuted, as represented in the news reports on the following days. The news texts reported with the ‘expressed reason’ of *suspected adultery* do not have any expression showing that the ‘expressed reason’ is believed to be ‘reasonable’ or ‘unreasonable’. However, after the adultery claim is unfounded, the tone of the news reports changes and some expressions are used demonstrating the ‘expressed reason’ as ‘unreasonable’. So, after the adultery claim is refuted, the manner of framing turns into ‘unjustifiable/inexcusable’.

Accordingly, we may say that if the ‘expressed reason’ is considered as ‘reasonable’ as in the cases in which the ‘expressed reason’ is *actual adultery*, the manner of framing is usually ‘justifiable/ excusable’. On the other hand, if the ‘expressed reason’ is considered as ‘unreasonable’ as in the examples of *rejection of the proposal of relationship, unwarranted adultery*, it is reported in an ‘unjustifiable/inexcusable’ manner of framing. However, if it is represented as ‘taken for granted’ like ‘expressed reason’ of *dispute*; incidents are reported in a ‘neutral’ frame.

5.2.2.1.4.2. The Forms of Femicide

Forms of femicide may also affect the frames of the incidents reported. Some forms of committing femicide are seen as more ‘brutal’. In these cases, it is considered as ‘unreasonable’ to commit murder only in such a ‘brutal’ form. For instance, in incident II, woman is *skewered and her ears and nose are cut*. This way of

committing crime is regarded as too ‘brutal’ and thus, ‘inexcusable’. Related to this, it is reported in an ‘unjustifiable/inexcusable’ manner of framing.

It may be claimed that news texts of incident realized by shooting with a gun or stabbing do not usually contain any judgmental expressions related with the form of femicide. Similarly, incidents I, III, IV, VI, VIII, X, XI, XII in which the murder is committed by *stabbing* or *shooting with a gun*, there are not any expressions showing judgmental values towards the form of committing femicide. On the other hand, the incidents II, V, VII, and IX are considered as ‘brutal’ because of their form of committing and attempting femicide. They are framed in an ‘unjustifiable/inexcusable’ manner of framing due to their form.

5.2.2.1.4.3. The Timing of Femicide Cases: Premeditated or Spontaneous

The manner in which femicide or femicide attempts are reported may also differ by the timing of the events. Being represented as premeditated or spontaneous is one of the details that may affect the framing of incidents as well. This may be related to the fact that spontaneity is identified as the condition of ‘insanity’, which is considered as not having control over behaviors and thoughts. Being premeditated, on the other hand, may mean that the murder is planned cold-bloodedly.

For example, as in incident XII, murder is reported with ‘justifiable/excusable’ language. The case is considered as ‘reasonable’ probably because of its being spontaneous. On the other hand, incidents II and V, for instance, are two of the incidents that are represented as premeditated and reported in an ‘unjustifiable/inexcusable’ manner of framing.

Accordingly, the tendency is generally to frame a case that is represented as spontaneous in a ‘neutral’ or ‘justifiable/excusable’ frame. However, if the murder is represented as a premeditated one, then it is usually reported in an ‘unjustifiable/inexcusable’ manner of framing.

5.2.2.1.4.4. ‘Töre’- Related

‘Töre’ is another aspect that affect the framing of the news texts. For instance, incidents II and V are represented as related to ‘töre’. Both are referred as using the word ‘savageness’ and are deemed ‘unjustifiable/inexcusable’.

According to the FCDA, if any incident is represented as a ‘custom (töre) killing’ or considered as related to ‘töre’ in any way, the murder is explicitly condemned and news texts are reported in ‘unjustifiable/inexcusable’ framing. Such framing may be pertinent with the comprehension and interpretation of ‘töre’ in a usually condemned way in Turkey, as it has been made familiar in previous theoretical debates considering Turkey. As ‘töre’ is highly condemned in Turkey; killings that seem to be related to it may usually be interpreted as among worst among forms of femicide.

5.2.2.1.4.5. Ages of Victims and Perpetrators

Ages of victims and perpetrators may also shape the frame in which the incidents are reported. Age is either considered ‘reasonable’ or ‘unreasonable’. When it is ‘reasonable’, there may not be any phrases pointing out any significance of the age, thus, murders are ‘taken for granted’ for some age groups. However, if ages of victim and/or perpetrator are considered as ‘unreasonable’, then incident is framed in an ‘unjustifiable/inexcusable’ manner.

For instance, incident III is found ‘unreasonable’ because as it is emphasized both in headlines and in main texts, the ‘expressed reason’ of jealousy is found to be ‘odd’ for old people as the perpetrator is 77, and the victim is 55. In addition, incident IV is reported in an ‘unjustifiable/inexcusable’ manner of framing because of the age of the victim. She is found to be ‘too young’ for getting married; therefore, the ‘expressed reason’ is considered as ‘unreasonable’.

5.2.2.1.4.6. Other Factors

Some other factors related to the incidents or people involved to the crime may also affect the manners of framing of the events. For instance, in incident IX, the report’s language illustrates that the woman does not deserve to be murdered because she made many sacrifices to her husband. That is most likely why the incident is reported in an ‘unjustifiable/inexcusable’ manner of framing.

Health problems of the victim may also be significant in shaping the framing of the news reports. For example, in incident VII, the incident is framed in an ‘unjustifiable/inexcusable’ manner because the victim had many serious health problems. Because of this, reporters may have felt sympathy for her.

5.2.2.1.5. Conclusion

After analyzing the news texts, I also need to discuss the implications of these different manners of framing by looking for an answer of what these different manners of framing mean as a whole. The ‘justifiable/excusable’ manner of framing is generally related with the ‘expressed reason’ of the murder or murder attempt. In

such incidents, 'expressed reason' is considered 'reasonable' and woman is blamed. Thus, such a manner of framing obviously justifies the cases.

On the other hand, the 'neutral' manner of framing may sound favorable at first sight because it never justifies cases. When the news texts of incidents that are reported in this manner are subjected to FCDA, judgmental expressions or phrases cannot be found towards either the case or the perpetrator. However, as Fairclough argues, not only what is written in the texts is open to critical analysis but also the absences may reveal significant meanings (1995: 106). In that sense, in the news reports of 'neutral' framing, there are no judgmental expressions about the murder and perpetrator, and the victim was not sympathized or empathized with. There is also no sign of condemning the incidents. This is probably because the cases are interpreted as 'usual' and/or 'common'. Not judging incidents of femicide and considering the cases as 'usual' and/or 'common', may be considered as a sign of 'justifying' the cases implicitly.

The 'unjustifiable/inexcusable' manner of framing may also sound as not justifying the cases. Nevertheless, they also necessitate further interpretation. The news reports in the 'unjustifiable/inexcusable' manner generally assume details about victims, perpetrators, and the incidents as 'unreasonable' and they disapprove or condemn particular cases. This means that if they are committed with some other details that could be considered 'reasonable' (e.g. if the ages are 'proper', if it is not considered 'töre'-related, if the 'expressed reason' is understandable, etc.), they might be reported in either a 'neutral' or 'justifiable/excusable' manner. Therefore, although 'unjustifiable/inexcusable' manner of framing judges cases, it also implicitly justifies

the phenomenon in general because it is only critical towards certain cases but not all cases of femicide.

In conclusion, it could be argued that all these framings are not pertaining to femicide itself but are connected with such details as ‘expressed reason’ of incidents, ages of the victims and the perpetrators, the health condition of women, and being related to ‘töre’, the form of the incident, etc. Depending on all these details, it could be presented within ‘neutral’, ‘unjustifiable/inexcusable’, ‘excusable/ justifiable’ manners of framing. All those mean that some incidents of femicide might be considered as ‘reasonable’, ‘justifiable’ and ‘excusable’ or be ‘taken for granted’ when committed with certain ‘expressed reasons’ in certain forms, with certain perpetrators and victims of certain ages, etc. This means that their manner of framing may be ‘neutral’, ‘unjustifiable/inexcusable’ and ‘justifiable/excusable’ for particular incidents; however, over all, they implicitly have a ‘justifying discourse’ regarding the phenomenon of femicide.

Moreover, the analysis presents that some details of femicide and femicide attempts may affect the manner of framing in which the news texts are reported. Either one or more of these details may be effective in the framings of the news reports of a particular incident. However, what should also be underlined is that not all these details have the same degree of effect on the shaping of framings of the news texts.

It may be argued that the framing of news reports is mainly dependent on the ‘expressed reasons’ of the incidents. The second factor that the framings are dependent on its consideration as ‘töre’-related. Other factors such as age, timing, and form also affect the frames of the incident reports. However, generally, if the

‘expressed reason’ of the incident is not regarded as ‘significant’ in shaping the frame of the news reports, we may come across with the reports that are framed based on these factors.

For example, the ‘expressed reason’ of incident VII is *dispute*. In the news report of this case, there are not any expressions judging the case due to its ‘expressed reason’. The ‘expressed reason’ does not much affect the frame of the news report at all. However, particularly in this and similar cases, the reports of murders and attempted murders are framed under the effect of other factors such as being ‘töre’-related, ages of the victims and perpetrators, timing of the incidents, and form of the crimes. My contention is that if the ‘expressed reason’ of any incident is considered either ‘reasonable’ or ‘unreasonable’, the framing of the report is usually formed according to the ‘expressed reasons’. However, if it is not emphasized in the reports and ‘taken for granted’, then other details such as the ages of the victims and perpetrators, the forms and timing of the incidents may also be effective in shaping the language of the reports.

‘Töre’ is another element that affects the manners of framing mostly, in addition to the ‘expressed reasons’. If a case is considered and represented as ‘töre’ related, it may be framed in an ‘unjustifiable/inexcusable’ manner and be strongly condemned. However, among ‘töre’ and the ‘expressed reason’, ‘expressed reason’ is still more effective on the shaping of frames of the reports. For example, incidents II and V are represented as related with ‘töre’. As they are strongly condemned especially due to being ‘töre’ related, their ‘expressed reasons’ are not a matter of the framing. However, in incident XI, the murder is premeditated. Although premeditation is one of the assumed common features of ‘custom (töre) killings’, it was presented as

having nothing to do with ‘töre’. The murder is not condemned and it was reported in a ‘justifiable/inexcusable’ manner of framing. This may be a result of the differences of ‘expressed reasons’ between these incidents. Incidents II and V are reported as realized with the ‘expressed reason’ of *suspected adultery* while incident XII is represented as committed with the ‘expressed reason’ of *actual adultery*. Therefore, in the news reports of incident XII, instead of an emphasis on ‘töre’, the focus is on the ‘expressed reason’ which is defined as ‘forbidden love’. However, such preference completely changes the manner of framing of the news reports of incident.

The degree of judging cases may also differ among the details. Although I claim that the ‘expressed reason’ is the most significant affecting the manner of framings of the news texts of incidents, the degree of judging is most clear in the news reports about cases seen as ‘töre’-related. In other words, the ‘unjustifiable/inexcusable’ manner in the incidents represented related with ‘töre’ is more explicit. For instance, the news reports about the incidents considered ‘töre’-related strongly condemn the incidents. However, some others incidents in which their manner is considered as ‘unjustifiable/inexcusable’ is based on other details (‘expressed reason’, timing, form, age), but while the news reports disapprove of these cases, they do not include any expression of strongly condemning the event.

Moreover, each time the incidents considered as ‘töre’-related are reported, cases represented as a social problem. However, others are usually represented as isolated and random events. Representing the incidents related to ‘töre’ as the reflections of social events probably emerges from the understanding that ‘töre’ is the issue of particular communities in Turkey and femicide is the problem of these communities.

Although such an emphasis puts the problem in a social framework, reducing it to some specific cultures ignores the universality of the phenomenon of femicide and does not represent femicide as the consequence of patriarchal power relations.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The main purpose of this thesis was to understand the general ways of framing the news texts pertaining to femicide and to examine whether there was ‘justifying discourse’ in the news texts of femicide incidents. Moreover, it also aimed to provide a descriptive study of the phenomenon regarding perpetrator/victim relationship, location of the cases, ages of perpetrators and victims, the forms of committing femicide and ‘expressed reasons’ based on the news texts.

In the former part of the analysis, first, I examined the news reports of femicide incidents in terms of perpetrator/victim relationship. According to the findings, it is significant that many of the incidents of femicide have, in fact, been committed by current or former intimate partners of the victims. Although in the literature femicide has usually been conceptualized as ‘custom (töre) killings’ that were defined as being committed by family members and blood relatives, the research conducted for this thesis revealed that a relatively small proportion of incidents are committed by family members and blood relatives of the victims. This finding may be considered salient because being aware of the identity of perpetrators is useful for a comprehensive definition of the phenomenon and effective preventive strategies.

Moreover, it is important to notice that most of the cases occurred all over Turkey with significant proportions. The percentages were 24.6 % in Marmara, 19.9 % in the

Mediterranean, 13.7 % in Central Anatolia, 9.8 % in South East, 6.6 % in East Anatolia, and 6.3 % in Black Sea regions. The ages of victims and perpetrators are also provided. Accordingly, most of the victims are aged somewhere between 15 and 45 whereas the ages of most perpetrators range between 21 to 50. This may create a tendency to see femicide incidents as more ‘usual’ in certain ages, and as ‘unusual’ if victim and perpetrator are younger and older than these ages. It is also revealed that the common methods used for murders or murder attempts were *shooting with a gun* and *stabbing*, 43.7% and 39.1 % respectively. These two methods may suggest an incident as occurred spontaneously. Since, these methods are very widespread among the cases, it may cause most of the incidents to be understood as ‘spontaneous’ events. However, a detailed examination of the cases shows that they are usually planned murders.

Another very important point that was revealed through this part of analysis is about the spectrum of the ‘expressed reasons’ of incidents of both femicide and attempted femicide. A total of thirteen groups of ‘expressed reasons’ are classified. *Leaving/Seeking Divorce/Divorcing*, and *Actual/ Suspected/Potential Adultery* are outriding the others. There are also *Rejecting Reunion Proposal*, *Behaving in a ‘Disapproved’ Way in terms of Family Values*, *Economic Problems*, *Resisting the Man/Objecting his Demands/ Ridiculing his Manhood*, *Jealousy*, *Honor*, *Rejecting Marriage or Relationship Proposal*, *Problems related with custody*, *Dispute* and *Other*.

In addition, there could be more than one ‘expressed reason’ for each incident. This may be due to two reasons. The first one is being related to whom the information of

the ‘expressed reasons’ were gathered. In some cases, the ‘expressed reasons’ seemed to have been gathered from more than one person that may be the perpetrator, victim (if she had survived), children and/or other witnesses. In such cases, the perpetrators’ explanations could be in contradiction with the explanations of others, probably because perpetrators want to benefit from the article of ‘unjust provocation’ in the Penal Code as part of the defense. Secondly, it could be due to the different interpretations of the ‘expressed reasons’ by journalists. Journalists sometimes do not directly represent the explanations of the perpetrators but make an interpretation pertaining to the perpetrator’s explanations (e.g. if the perpetrator claims that he committed the murder because the woman was seeking divorce, the journalist may report that the crime was committed because any one of reasons such as ‘seeking divorce’, ‘jealousy’, or ‘honor’, etc.)

In the literature, ‘honor’ and jealousy have been debated as the main ‘reasons’ of femicide and this have led to different interpretations of the phenomenon such as ‘custom (töre) killings’ and ‘passion killings’. As already expressed in previous chapters, the latter has usually been interpreted as more ‘excusable’ compared to ‘custom (töre) killings’.

In the literature, there are some scholars and activists who are critical of considering one type of killing as ‘excusable’ compared to others (Mojab, 2002). They argue that although the motive may be different, ‘custom (töre) killing’ and ‘passion killing’ both aim at controlling women and that they emerged as a result of patriarchal domination. It can be argued that they are still assuming that these murders as two different phenomenon occurring in either Western or Eastern parts of the world. I

agree that the motives of the different forms of femicide may vary and that these are all committed with the same purpose, that is, to achieve control of women under patriarchal relations. However, it is deduced from the analysis that the line that divides the notion of 'honor' from jealousy is not as clear as it seems to have been defined and assumed in the literature. Any practice could be interpreted as related with only 'honor', only jealousy or both of them in the news texts. The relationship between 'honor' and jealousy, their being related to each other and not being two totally distinct notions all the time, makes me question the validity of such distinction between 'custom (töre) killings' and 'passion killings'. It is open to discussion that in reality how many cases that had occurred would fit into these definitions.

In this context, within the scope of this study, it is difficult to argue that there are 'custom (töre) killings' and that there are no occurrences of 'passion killings' in Turkey. The line between 'custom (töre) killings' and 'passion killings' is not as clear as in reality as it is in the definitions. Thus, in Turkey, there may be many femicide cases committed especially by women's current or former intimate partners as a result of jealousy, adultery, a suspicion of adultery, seeking divorce, and/or leaving. It is claimed throughout this study that such definitions are limited and not favorable to understanding the phenomenon. The study of the details of femicide and femicide attempts was important in understanding the significance of the term femicide and the essentiality of studying the subject from such a holistic perspective.

In the latter part of the analysis, Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis of the news reports of femicide incidents revealed how femicide was framed in the newspapers.

During the analysis it was realized that the framings are revealed mainly in three ways: 'neutral', 'unjustifiable/inexcusable' and 'justifiable/excusable'. According to analysis, these manners of framing differed pertaining to the 'expressed reason', the form and the timing of the incidents, the ages of the victims and perpetrators, incidents' being considered as 'töre'-related, etc..

First, twelve femicide incidents were examined in detail that are representative for different manners of framings. Then, these incidents were debated based on the factors such as 'expressed reasons', ages, forms or timing of the incidents, etc. I tried to show how and to what extent these details affected the framings of the news reports.

During this part of the analysis chapter, first, it is discussed how some factors reported may affect the manner of how the incidents. It is observed that if the details of the crime are considered to be 'taken for granted', then the news texts are framed in a 'neutral' manner meaning that they are not judgmental against the murder. On the other hand, if the details of the crime are regarded as 'unreasonable', then the news texts were reported in an 'unjustifiable/inexcusable' manner of framing that would either condemn or disapprove of the murder. Lastly, if the details of the crime were believed as 'reasonable', then the manner of framing of the news texts was 'justifiable/ excusable'.

I argued that a 'justifiable/ excusable' manner of framing obviously justifies the cases and the phenomenon of femicide. I also state that although 'neutral' and 'unjustifiable/inexcusable' manners of framing could seem not justifying the cases

and femicide; when they are examined in detail, it is seen that they also have ‘justifying discourse’. The ‘neutral’ manner of framing is problematic because although it does not assign the blame to the woman, it does not blame the man either and is not critical of the murder as well. Therefore, although it does not explicitly justify the cases, since it is also uncritical to the cases and femicide, it may also be considered as having ‘justifying discourse’. Moreover, although the news texts that were reported in an ‘unjustifiable/inexcusable’ manner of framing condemn or disapprove of the murders and usually put the blame on the man, I claimed that it also had ‘justifying discourse’. This is because the reports in this framing are not dealing with the femicide in general but pertaining to the details such as ‘expressed reason’ of the incident, ages of victim and perpetrator, health condition of the woman, incidents’ being related to ‘töre’, and etc. Thus, they are only critical of the particular incidents of femicide with certain ‘expressed reasons’, in certain forms, and with perpetrators and victims in certain ages, etc. However, they are not critical to the phenomenon of femicide over all. Therefore, I have pointed out that all three manners of framing of the news texts of femicide cases had ‘justifying discourse’ implicitly.

Nonetheless, it was also discovered that not all the details are significant in shaping the manner of framing of the news texts in the same degree. Among them the ‘expressed reasons’ and being ‘töre’- related are the most determinant ones on the manner of the reports. If the ‘expressed reasons’ are believed to be ‘reasonable’ or ‘unreasonable’, the manner of the reports is usually shaped according to the ‘expressed reasons’ of the incidents. However, if they are considered as ‘taken for granted’, form, timing, and age may also be effective on the manner of framing of

the news texts. But if the incidents are represented as ‘töre’-related, then they are strongly condemned in the news texts, dependent on the ‘töre’ factor. However, what should also be made clear is that among the ‘expressed reason’ and being related to ‘töre’, the former seems more significant in that it has an effect on the manner in which the incidents are reported. For example, in some cases, if the ‘expressed reasons’ are considered as ‘reasonable’ and the woman is blamed in the ‘expressed reason’, then although the features of the incident could be considered related to ‘töre’, they may not be represented as related to ‘töre’, and the murder or attempted murder is justified instead of being condemned.

The FCDA of the research reveals the ways we think about gender relations in general and the phenomenon of femicide in particular. However, since this study conceptualize mass media as the site where existing discourses come into play, the findings of the critical analysis part, in fact, illustrate the general discourse/discourses about femicide in Turkey. So, in the context of this thesis, ‘justifying discourse’ was not considered as created by the press through news texts and adopted by the readers. Rather, it was assumed that such ‘justifying discourse’ in the news texts was evident because such discourse had already existed in our lives. Therefore, by claiming that news reports have ‘justifying discourse’, I do not argue that mass media make these murders ‘justifiable’ in our (readers’) eyes. Rather I argue that the framing of the news reports is, in fact, about already existing ‘justifying discourse’ of femicide.

This means that the existing discourse already consisted of these three different manners about the issue and that is probably why we come across with them in the

news texts. What is being argued is that in fact we, as people, also have some justifying points about the phenomenon of femicide in our minds. State institutions, education processes and materials, legal regulations, and family may also produce and reproduce the same discourse. The journalists have also been constructed through such discourse. The public demands, the values and ideas of the readers are also comprised of the 'justifying discourse.

These justifications may be directly about femicide, or indirectly about women, sexuality, and control of women. Justifications may also be related to these notions this may be the reason that creates the 'expressed reasons' such as 'honor', jealousy and masculinity.

Additionally, FCDA of the news texts, thus, is also significant in showing how mass media contribute to the disciplining of women's bodies and contributes to the administration of women by producing news texts of femicide 'in 'justifying discourse'. I claim that mass media prefers representing some events as 'normal' so that it produces the knowledge of what is 'normal' and 'abnormal'. Similarly, such a 'justifying discourse' can also be considered as producing the knowledge of 'appropriate' and/or 'normal' behaviors assumed for women in order not to be a victim of femicide, by representing this cases not in a critical way.

Furthermore, I conceptualize a dialectical understanding of mass media and society, according to which I argue that the mass media is constructed through dominant discourses, while dominant discourses are also shaped by mass media. Accordingly, whereas a change in general discourses may affect the framings of incidents of femicide in news texts, a change in language of news texts and having an

unjustifiable discourse about femicide may also contribute to diminishing the existing justifying discourse which is essential to deal with the problem of femicide. Therefore, although I argue that mass media do not shape people's ideas, it is nevertheless significant to have a critical and unjustifiable discourse in the news texts about femicide.

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Bölümü :SOSYOLOJİ

TEZİN ADI (İngilizce) : FEMICIDE IN TURKEY: A DESCRIPTIVE AND CRITICAL STUDY BASED ON NEWS TEXTS OF FEMICIDE INCIDENTS IN 2009

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