



## *From Structural Violence to Criminal Event: A Cross-National Synthesis of Femicide Reporting in Media Discourse*

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**Abstract.** This study examines the gap between the increasing visibility of femicide in media coverage and the limited recognition of its structural dimensions. It synthesizes 16 international studies (2016–2025) to develop an analytical framework for examining femicide reporting, with relevance to the Indonesian context. Using a narrative literature review, the study integrates findings on terminology, framing, representation, discursive authority, and sensationalism. The findings show that femicide reporting operates along a continuum between structural politicization and individual depoliticization. Across contexts, coverage is characterized by de-gendered terminology, episodic and legal-procedural focus, victim-blaming, perpetrator rationalization, reliance on institutional sources, and sensationalism. These patterns suggest that increased media visibility does not necessarily enhance recognition of structural gender inequality, but often reinforces individualized interpretations of violence. The study proposes six analytical dimensions as a systematic framework for cross-context analysis and more gender-sensitive journalism.

**Keywords:** femicide, media framing, gender-based violence, news representation

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### INTRODUCTION

Femicide is an extreme form of gender-based violence referring to the killing of women because of their gender identity or within unequal power relations between men and women. Unlike homicide in general, femicide highlights structural dimensions—such as patriarchy, coercive control, and legal and social inequalities—that enable violence against women to occur systematically. Over the past two decades, femicide has received increasing global attention in academic discourse, public policy, and legal regulation.

However, cross-national studies indicate that legal recognition of femicide as a distinct criminal category is not always accompanied by discursive recognition in media reporting. In Brazil, for example, Rosa and Flores (2020) show that even after the enactment of the Femicide Law, media outlets remained inconsistent in using the term in news headlines. Similar patterns are observed in Austria, Germany, and Switzerland (Wetzstein et al., 2024), as well as in the United Kingdom (di Carlo, 2023), Romania (Roventă-Frumușani & Stoica, 2023), and the United States (Bouzerdan & Whitten-Woodring, 2018). These findings suggest that legal recognition has not been fully internalized in journalistic practice.

Mass media occupy a central position in shaping public perceptions of violence against women. As a discursive institution, the media do not merely reflect reality but actively construct it through event selection, language choices, narrative structures, and visual representation. In the context of femicide, media coverage plays a decisive role in determining whether the killing of a woman is understood as an isolated criminal event or as a manifestation of systemic gender inequality.

Despite the growing visibility of femicide in global media agendas, prior research reveals recurring representational problems. First, reporting often individualizes cases through episodic and legal-procedural framing, as observed in the United Kingdom, Colombia, and Nigeria (di Carlo, 2023; Pröll & Magin, 2022; Ogunlana et al., 2024). Second, crime-of-passion narratives and possessive framing normalize relational control and shift moral responsibility away from perpetrators (Correia & Neves, 2024; Basdogan et al., 2021). Third, victim representation frequently involves moralization and victim-blaming, shaped by class, ethnicity, and gender norms (Aldrete, 2024; Sela-Shayovitz, 2018; Nahdliyah & Robot, 2024). Fourth, sensationalism and the commodification of violence reinforce the dramatization and depoliticization of femicide (Rosa & Flores, 2020; Papa et al., 2025; Roventă-Frumușani & Stoica, 2023).

Although these studies provide important insights, existing research remains largely fragmented, context-specific, and methodologically heterogeneous. Most studies focus on single-country cases or isolated analytical dimensions, such as framing, discourse, or representation. As a result, the literature has not yet produced a systematic and transferable set of analytical indicators that enable cross-context comparison of femicide reporting. This limitation hinders the development of cumulative knowledge and restricts the ability to assess how media representations contribute to either the politicization or depoliticization of gender-based violence. Addressing this gap requires a more integrative analytical approach that synthesizes findings across contexts and theoretical perspectives. This study is theoretically positioned at the intersection of feminist media studies, framing theory, and critical discourse analysis. Feminist media studies conceptualize femicide as a structural manifestation of gender inequality and patriarchal power relations. Framing theory provides tools for analyzing how news narratives shape meaning through selection and emphasis, while critical discourse analysis enables examination of how language and representation reproduce or challenge power relations. These perspectives are integrated to explain how femicide reporting is simultaneously shaped at the levels of meaning construction, representation, and power relations. Together, these perspectives provide a complementary analytical lens for examining how femicide is constructed, interpreted, and ideologically positioned within media discourse.

By integrating these perspectives, this study develops a multidimensional analytical framework that captures both structural and discursive aspects of femicide reporting. Based on a synthesis of 16 cross-national studies (2016–2025), the framework consists of six operational dimensions—terminology, framing, victim representation, perpetrator representation, discursive authority, and sensationalism—providing a systematic and transferable tool for cross-national analysis. Accordingly, this study aims to identify cross-national patterns in femicide reporting and develop a structured set of analytical indicators.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a narrative literature review to synthesize conceptual and thematic findings from previous research on femicide reporting. The approach focuses on the interpretation of representation patterns across diverse contexts rather than statistical aggregation. Narrative reviews emphasize qualitative analysis, enabling the identification of patterns and the construction of coherent explanations of complex issues (Whitley & Kite 2025). This approach is particularly suitable for examining media discourse, as it allows comparison of how studies conceptualize framing, terminology, actor representation, and journalistic practices, while identifying recurring analytical categories. In this study, the review is used to develop an operational analytical framework rather than to estimate effect sizes. Narrative reviews also support theory development by synthesizing findings into new analytical perspectives (Rumrill, Cook & Stevenson 2020).

The analysis is guided by an integrative framework combining feminist media studies, framing theory, and critical discourse analysis, enabling examination of both structural and discursive dimensions. The literature search was conducted using Google Scholar with the keyword “femicide in news,” followed by screening of titles, abstracts, and references. This reflects the iterative nature of narrative reviews (Dekkers, Carey & Langhorne 2022). Five inclusion criteria were applied: publication between 2016–2025, peer-reviewed articles, explicit focus on femicide, analysis of media reporting, and English language. Sources were also appraised based on relevance and conceptual contribution (Dekkers et al. 2022).

From an initial pool, studies were excluded due to limited relevance, duplication, or insufficient conceptual contribution. The final sample consists of 16 articles representing diverse national contexts, enabling cross-national comparison. The analysis was conducted in four stages: (1) close reading to identify key concepts, (2) extraction of analytical variables, (3) grouping into thematic clusters, and (4) conceptual synthesis into a systematic analytical framework (Rumrill et al. 2020; Dekkers et al. 2022).

Table 1 summarizes the selected studies and provides the empirical basis for the cross-national synthesis.

**Table 1**  
**Summary of Analyzed Literature**

Number	Author(s)	Country	Focus	Approach	Key Findings
1	Papa et al. (2025)	Cyprus	Media representation of femicide	Content & discourse analysis	De-gendering, immigrant victim-blaming, visual commodification
2	di Carlo (2023)	United Kingdom	Digital media coverage	Framing analysis	Individualization, medicalization, minimal use of “femicide”
3	Liberia Vayá et al. (2020)	Spain	Digital media coverage	Content analysis	Feminist media more structural and ethical
4	Nahdliyah & Robot (2024)	Indonesia	Gender representation	Critical discourse analysis	Victim subordination, institutional dominance
5	Cappuccio et al. (2024)	Italy	Headline corpus analysis	Computational analysis	National vs. local variation in gender terminology
6	Aldrete & Fernández-Ardèvol (2023)	Mexico	Thematic vs. episodic framing	Framing analysis	De-gendering in episodic frames
7	Wetzstein et al. (2024)	Austria, Germany, Switzerland	Gender labeling in news	Quantitative content analysis	Depoliticization and relational euphemism
8	Aldrete (2024)	Mexico	Victim and perpetrator representation	Quantitative analysis	Victim-blaming and social stereotyping
9	Pröll & Magin (2022)	Colombia	Femicide framing	Content analysis	Legal and episodic framing dominance
10	Roventă-Frumușani & Stoica (2023)	Romania	Single-case representation	Discourse analysis	Sensationalism and gender invisibility
11	Bouzerdan & Whitten-Woodring (2018)	United States	News framing of femicide	Framing analysis	Dominance of human-interest and procedural frames
12	Sela-Shayovitz (2018)	Israel	Cross-ethnic representation	Content analysis	Ethnic and class bias in victim construction
13	Basdogan et al. (2021)	Turkey	Ageist and sexist framing	Content analysis	Moral framing and ageism
14	Rosa & Flores (2020)	Brazil	Femicide headlines	Foucauldian discourse analysis	Double-smashed body & perpetrator passivization
15	Ogunlana et al. (2024)	Nigeria	Femicide and rape reporting	Content & discourse analysis	Legal-procedural dominance

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16	Correia & Neves (2024)	Portugal	Intimate partner femicide narratives	Narrative analysis	Property narrative and relational victim-blaming
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Source: Author's analysis (2026)

## RESULT

### Synthesis Findings

The synthesis of 16 studies published between 2016 and 2025 reveals recurring and cross-contextual patterns in femicide reporting across different national contexts and media systems. Although variations exist, the findings show broadly similar tendencies in terminology, framing, victim and perpetrator representation, discursive authority, and sensationalism. Based on the identification of key concepts, extraction of analytical variables, and thematic categorization, this study formulates six operational analytical dimensions for examining femicide reporting.

The first dimension concerns how media categorize and label the killing of women. Across studies, the use of gender-specific terminology is often inconsistent or avoided. In several contexts, such as Romania and the United Kingdom, the term femicide is rarely used, while media in Cyprus, Austria, Germany, and Switzerland tend to employ neutral expressions such as “tragedy” or “murder,” even when cases meet femicide criteria. These patterns reflect a tendency toward de-gendering, in which the gender-based nature of violence is not explicitly recognized. Feminist media studies highlight that such omissions marginalize structural gender inequality, detaching violence against women from its broader socio-political context. Framing theory further suggests that neutral terminology directs audience interpretation toward individual events rather than systemic issues.

From a critical discourse perspective, language operates as a social practice shaped by power and ideology. As Hunt (2021) argues, lexical choices play a key role in constructing social reality. The absence or substitution of gender-specific terms can therefore normalize violence by obscuring its gendered dimension. Cross-national variation indicates that terminology is influenced not only by journalistic routines but also by local discursive contexts. Key indicators in this dimension include the use of gender-specific terms, neutral language, references to gender inequality, and identification of victim–perpetrator relations.

The second dimension concerns framing. The synthesis shows that femicide reporting is predominantly characterized by episodic framing, often combined with a legal-procedural news focus. In the United States, coverage emphasizes procedural developments and human-interest elements, while in Colombia and Nigeria reporting centers on chronological events and legal processes. Such episodic framing tends to isolate individual cases from broader gender-based violence contexts. Consequently, attention is directed toward immediate circumstances, limiting the interpretation of femicide as a structural issue. Violence is thus more likely to be understood as an isolated incident rather than as a manifestation of systemic gender inequality. De Maio (2023) similarly argues that media coverage frequently presents femicide as discrete events, obscuring its structural roots.

Some variations exist. In Portugal, for instance, a property narrative frames the victim as belonging to the perpetrator, while thematic framing remains limited. These patterns reflect the persistence of patriarchal norms, particularly through narratives that normalize control within intimate relationships. From a critical discourse perspective, framing functions as a mechanism that privileges certain interpretations while marginalizing others (Hunt, 2021). In femicide reporting, this often results in the prioritization of individualized and procedural accounts over structural explanations. Key indicators include episodic, thematic, human-interest, moral, possessive, and crime-of-passion frames, alongside legal-procedural emphasis.

The third dimension concerns the representation of victims. Across studies, victim portrayal frequently reflects patterns such as victim-blaming, moralization, and idealization. In contexts such as Mexico and Turkey, victims are sometimes depicted as having violated social or gender norms, while in Israel representation varies according to ethnicity and class. In Brazil and Cyprus, visual representation

may involve commodification through aestheticized images. These patterns demonstrate how media representations reproduce gendered norms and power relations by implicitly regulating which victims are considered “worthy” of sympathy. Victim-blaming and moralization shift attention away from structural violence toward individual behavior, reinforcing assumptions about women’s responsibility for their own victimization. Harvey (2019) argues, gender is socially constructed through discourse and institutional practices, including the media.

A recurring feature is the construction of the “ideal victim,” typically portrayed as respectable, maternal, or morally upright. This selective representation shapes audience perception by privileging certain narratives while marginalizing others who do not conform to normative expectations (De Maio, 2023). In addition, victims’ voices are often absent or minimized, reflecting an imbalance in discursive authority. Institutional and perpetrator perspectives tend to dominate, while victims are positioned as passive objects. Hunt (2021) highlights, discourse not only constructs meaning but also regulates whose voices are legitimized within representation.

The fourth dimension concerns how perpetrators are represented. Across studies, dominant modes of representation include medicalization, emotional rationalization, and humanization. In several contexts, such as the United Kingdom, Turkey, and Romania, violence is often linked to emotional distress, jealousy, or mental instability, while in Portugal emphasis on professional status may contribute to a more favorable portrayal. These patterns indicate a tendency to individualize the causes of violence by foregrounding personal or psychological factors, thereby shifting attention away from structural gender inequality. As Harvey (2019) argues, media discourse plays a key role in reproducing ideologies that define what is considered normal or acceptable, often reinforcing patriarchal understandings of gender relations.

Within this framework, representational modes shape how responsibility is interpreted. Medicalization and emotional rationalization can mitigate perceived culpability by presenting violence as the result of personal crisis rather than deliberate action, while humanization may further soften moral evaluation. At the same time, selective patterns are evident, with perpetrators from minority groups more likely to be negatively portrayed, reflecting broader social hierarchies. De Maio (2023) notes that such framing can justify perpetrators’ actions and dilute accountability. Linguistic structures reinforce these dynamics, as passive constructions obscure agency. Overall, perpetrator representation plays a central role in shaping interpretations of causality and responsibility in femicide reporting.

The fifth dimension concerns discursive authority and the use of sources. Across contexts, femicide reporting shows a strong reliance on institutional sources, particularly law enforcement. In Indonesia, reporting is heavily based on police narratives, while in Mexico and Nigeria similar patterns reinforce legal-procedural framing. The dominance of official sources directs attention toward criminal justice processes and frames femicide primarily as a legal issue rather than a broader social problem. As De Maio (2023) notes, reliance on official sources narrows the scope of interpretation and limits the inclusion of broader social context.

This reliance also reflects an imbalance in whose voices are legitimized in media discourse. Institutional actors are positioned as authoritative narrators, while perspectives from victims, survivors, or gender experts are marginalized. However, variation exists. In Spain, feminist-oriented media more frequently include structural context and support information. From a discursive perspective, such shifts can be understood as a reconfiguration of authority, where alternative voices challenge dominant narratives. Harvey (2019) emphasizes that media are not only sites of reproduction but also arenas of contestation in which dominant discourses can be challenged.

The sixth dimension concerns sensationalism. Across studies, femicide reporting is frequently characterized by hyperbolic language, graphic detail, emotional dramatization, and tabloid-style presentation. In contexts such as Romania and Brazil, coverage often foregrounds the brutality of violence through explicit descriptions, while in others it emphasizes emotionally charged elements, including narratives involving children or pregnancy. These forms of sensationalism increase audience engagement but simultaneously shift attention toward the immediacy and intensity of individual cases rather than their

structural causes. As De Maio (2023) argues, such reporting obscures the structural roots of gender-based violence and promotes superficial understanding.

This mode of representation also raises ethical concerns. Repeated emphasis on victims’ bodies and suffering can contribute to the commodification of violence, transforming victims into objects of visual and emotional consumption. Harvey (2019) highlights that media play a central role in constructing social meaning through images and narratives, shaping how violence is perceived and valued. From a critical discourse perspective, recurring use of hyperbolic and graphic language functions as a discursive strategy that reinforces particular interpretations. Hunt (2021) notes that such patterns normalize certain meanings while marginalizing others. In this context, sensationalism amplifies emotional impact while obscuring structural context, reinforcing individualized and depoliticized understandings of femicide.

Taken together, these six dimensions indicate that femicide reporting across contexts tends to emphasize individual cases, legal processes, and emotional narratives, while giving less attention to structural gender inequality. Although variations exist, the overall pattern suggests a tendency toward depoliticization. Across contexts, this reflects not merely variation but a recurring discursive logic in which individualization and depoliticization are reproduced through the interaction of multiple coded dimensions, including terminology, framing, representation, and discursive authority.

### Indicators for the Analysis of Femicide News Reporting

Drawing on a synthesis of 16 cross-national studies (2016–2025), this study develops a multidimensional framework for analyzing femicide reporting. The framework integrates six core analytical dimensions—terminology, framing, victim representation, perpetrator representation, discursive authority, and sensationalism—highlighting how these elements interact in shaping media constructions of femicide. To operationalize these dimensions, the analysis is organized into three interrelated levels: textual, representational, and structural. For clarity and analytical coherence, the indicators are presented in two tables.

While the framework consists of six core dimensions, several operational sub-dimensions—such as categorization, news focus, and framing of violence—are included to capture specific aspects of textual construction. Although media texts often contain overlapping elements, this study adopts a mutually exclusive coding approach to ensure analytical consistency and comparability. Each article is classified based on its most dominant feature within each dimension, determined by the narrative emphasis in the headline, lead paragraph, and recurring themes. This approach prioritizes the primary interpretive orientation of the text rather than capturing all co-occurring elements, enabling clearer identification of dominant patterns.

Table 2 presents the textual-level indicators, focusing on how terminology, categorization, news focus, and framing shape the initial interpretation of femicide cases, particularly whether it is constructed as a gender-based issue or an isolated criminal event. Table 3 presents the representational and structural indicators, covering the dominant representation of victims and perpetrators, source authority, and forms of sensationalism. Together, these tables provide a systematic framework for analyzing how femicide is constructed across media contexts.

**Table 2**  
**Textual-Level Indicators for Femicide Reporting**

Dimension	Indicator	Description
Terminology	Use of femicide/feminicide	Explicit use of the terms femicide or feminicide in the headline or article to define the event
	Neutral/euphemistic terms	The event is described using neutral or softened expressions (e.g., “tragedy,” “dispute,” “conflict”) that downplay the violent nature of the act, without emphasizing the victim’s gender as a central element of the narrative
	Gender reference	The victim’s gender is explicitly emphasized as a salient element of the narrative (e.g., repeated references such as “woman,” “wife,”

		“girlfriend,” or clear gender-based relational context), without using the term femicide
Categorization	Crime Issue	The event is presented primarily as a criminal act
	Social/Gender Issue	The event is presented as part of a broader social issue or gender inequality
News Focus	Legal Procedural	Primarily focus on the investigation and judicial process
	Victim-Centered	Primarily focus on the victim and the impact experienced
	Perpetrator-Centered	Primarily focus on the perpetrator as the primary subject
	Social Impact	Primarily focus on the broader social impact of the event
Type of Frame	Thematic Frame	The event is primarily linked to broader social context
	Moral Frame	The event is primarily evaluated in moral terms
	Human-interest Frame	Emphasizes emotional aspects of the event
	Episodic Frame	The event is primarily presented as an isolated case
Framing Violence	Possessiveness	Violence is primarily explained through ownership/control over the victim
	Crime-of-Passion	Violence is primarily explained as an emotional outburst
	Factual Presentation	Violence is described in a factual or descriptive manner without attributing motive, emotion, or relational justification

Source: Author’s analysis (2026)

Table 2 outlines the textual-level indicators used to examine how femicide is constructed through language and narrative organization. These indicators capture key dimensions of textual construction, including terminology, categorization, news focus, framing type, and the framing of violence, all coded based on their dominant presence within each article. At the level of terminology, the analysis distinguishes between the explicit use of femicide/feminicide, gender-explicit references to victims, and neutral or euphemistic expressions. This distinction is central to determining whether the killing of women is explicitly recognized as gender-based violence or linguistically minimized.

Categorization further indicates how the event is positioned, distinguishing between crime-oriented reporting and social or gender-oriented interpretations. Similarly, the dominant news focus identifies whether the article emphasizes legal procedures, victim experiences, perpetrator perspectives, or broader social impact. Framing is captured through the identification of a dominant frame type. Thematic framing links the event to broader social contexts, while moral framing emphasizes normative judgment. Human-interest framing foregrounds emotional aspects, whereas episodic framing presents the case as an isolated incident.

In addition, the analysis identifies the dominant framing of violence, distinguishing between possessiveness, crime-of-passion, and factual presentations. These categories capture how violence is explained, whether through relational control, emotional motivation, or neutral description. Overall, these textual indicators determine how femicide is initially constructed—either as an individual criminal case or as part of a broader pattern of gender-based violence—thereby shaping the interpretive entry point for audiences.

**Table 3**  
**Representational and Structural Indicators**

Dimension	Indicator	Description
Victim Representation	Victim-blaming	The victim is primarily portrayed as responsible, explicitly or implicitly, for the event
	Moralized	The victim is primarily portrayed as engaging in deviant or inappropriate behavior, implying moral judgment of their lifestyle

	Idealized	The victim is primarily portrayed as morally innocent, respectable, and deserving of sympathy
Perpetrator Representation	Neutral Representation	The victim is presented with minimal characterization, without blame, moral judgment, or strong evaluative framing
	Medicalization	The perpetrator is primarily portrayed in terms of mental illness or psychological instability
	Emotional rationalization	The perpetrator's actions are primarily explained as the result of emotional reactions (e.g., jealousy, anger, heartbreak)
	Humanization	The perpetrator is primarily portrayed with positive or sympathetic characteristics
	Neutral Representation	The perpetrator is presented in a straightforward manner, with clear attribution of responsibility and without justification or sympathetic framing
Sources & Authority	Police dominance	The article relies primarily on law enforcement as the main or sole source of information, with no or only minimal inclusion of other sources
	Experts	The article includes one or more experts (e.g., gender experts or specialists) who provide additional interpretation or context
	Source diversity	The article incorporates multiple types of sources (e.g., police, experts, perpetrators, victims' families, witnesses), with no single source clearly dominating the narrative
Sensationalism	Hyperbolic language	The article primarily uses exaggerated or dramatic language to intensify the event
	Graphic detail	The article emphasizes detailed or explicit descriptions of violence
	Emotional dramatization	The article primarily emphasizes emotional shock, distress, or dramatic reactions
	Tabloid visuals	The article relies on dramatic or tabloid-style visuals to attract attention
	Neutral/Descriptive	The article presents the event in a factual and descriptive manner without the use of exaggerated language, emotional dramatization, or graphic detail.

Source: Author's analysis (2026)

Table 3 presents the representational and structural indicators, which extend the analysis to how meaning is further shaped through actor representation, source structure, and journalistic style. Each dimension is coded based on its dominant form within the article. At the representational level, the analysis identifies the dominant portrayal of victims and perpetrators. Victim representation is categorized into victim-blaming, moralized/deviant, idealized, or neutral/minimally characterized forms. These categories capture how responsibility and moral judgment are assigned, as well as how sympathy is constructed. Perpetrator representation is similarly classified into medicalized, emotionally rationalized, humanized, or neutral/agency-clear forms. These distinctions reflect different modes of explaining or mitigating responsibility, ranging from psychological attribution to emotional justification or straightforward attribution of agency.

At the structural level, the analysis examines the dominant source configuration. Articles are categorized as police-dominant, expert-expanded, or multi-source diverse, reflecting differences in how interpretive authority is distributed. This dimension highlights the extent to which reporting is driven by institutional perspectives or incorporates broader viewpoints. Finally, sensationalism is analyzed as a dominant reporting style. The framework distinguishes between hyperbolic, graphic, emotional, and visual/tabloid forms of sensationalism, as well as neutral/descriptive presentation. This dimension captures how journalistic style shapes audience engagement and influences whether reporting emphasizes emotional intensity or factual clarity.

Together, these representational and structural indicators demonstrate how femicide reporting is shaped not only by language, but also by the interaction of narrative emphasis, source authority, and stylistic choices. This level complements the textual analysis by revealing how meaning is reinforced and stabilized within media discourse.

## DISCUSSION

The findings extend existing scholarship by demonstrating that femicide reporting is structured through the interaction of discursive and representational mechanisms that reproduce depoliticized interpretations of gender-based violence. By integrating feminist media theory, framing analysis, and critical discourse analysis, this study shows that femicide is not merely underrecognized as a structural issue, but actively constructed as an individualized phenomenon through recurring patterns in terminology, framing, and representation. The synthesis of 16 cross-national studies indicates that femicide reporting operates along a continuum between structural politicization and individual depoliticization. Despite variations across social and cultural contexts, dominant patterns remain consistent, including individualization of cases, criminal-procedural framing, perpetrator medicalization, and sensationalist emphasis on dramatic detail. These recurring configurations suggest the presence of a shared discursive logic that privileges individualized explanations over structural interpretations.

The findings reveal a paradox of visibility. Media attention to femicide has increased, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic and the rise of global anti-violence movements. However, this quantitative expansion of coverage has not been accompanied by deeper structural analysis. In the United Kingdom (di Carlo, 2023), the United States (Bouzerdan & Whitten-Woodring 2018), and Nigeria (Ogunlana et al. 2024), reporting remains dominated by procedural and episodic framing. Similarly, in Austria, Germany, and Switzerland (Wetzstein et al. 2024), the use of gender-specific terminology is limited. These patterns indicate that femicide is frequently constructed as an individual criminal event rather than as a manifestation of systemic gender inequality. Increased visibility thus operates within established journalistic logics that prioritize event-driven reporting, limiting the transformative potential of media attention.

A consistent pattern across contexts is the rationalization and medicalization of perpetrators. Explanations based on mental illness, emotional distress, jealousy, or personal crisis are frequently used (Sela-Shayovitz, 2018; di Carlo, 2023; Roventă-Frumușani & Stoica, 2023). This narrative strategy shifts attention from structural power relations to individual pathology. The findings suggest that individualization is produced through a configuration of reinforcing elements, including episodic framing, reliance on police sources, and passive grammatical constructions that obscure perpetrator agency (Rosa & Flores, 2020). Depoliticization thus emerges not from a single factor but from the interaction of multiple discursive mechanisms that reshape causal attribution.

The dimension of victim representation further reveals patterns of victim-blaming and moralization. In Mexico (Aldrete, 2024), Turkey (Basdogan et al., 2021), and Portugal (Correia & Neves, 2024), victims are often portrayed as having contributed to the circumstances of violence. Possessive narratives reinforce patriarchal norms of control, presenting women as objects of ownership within intimate relationships. These representations demonstrate that media discourse actively constructs social morality by defining which victims are considered legitimate or deserving of sympathy. In this sense, reporting contributes to the regulation of gender norms, reinforcing expectations of acceptable femininity while marginalizing those who deviate from them.

Sensationalism further shapes the representation of femicide. Research in Brazil (Rosa & Flores, 2020) and Romania (Roventă-Frumușani & Stoica, 2023) show that graphic detail and hyperbolic language are used to enhance news value. While these practices increase audience engagement, they also produce symbolic violence by transforming victims into objects of spectacle. Sensationalism thus operates not only as a commercial strategy but as a discursive practice that reinforces depoliticized and consumable representations of violence.

Finally, the findings indicate that representations of victims and perpetrators are shaped by intersecting social hierarchies, including ethnicity, class, age, and migration status (Sela-Shayovitz, 2018; Wetzstein et al., 2024). Minority perpetrators are more likely to be demonized, while majority perpetrators are more frequently rationalized. This suggests that femicide reporting is embedded within broader systems of inequality and cannot be understood independently from processes of social stratification.

Taken together, these findings demonstrate that femicide reporting is not a neutral reflection of events but a discursive practice that reproduces hierarchical meanings and interpretive biases. Media discourse plays a central role in shaping how gender-based violence is understood, often reinforcing individualized and depoliticized interpretations. This underscores the importance of analyzing femicide reporting as part of a broader system of discursive power in which meanings of violence are continuously constructed and negotiated.

## CONCLUSION

This study synthesizes 16 international studies (2016–2025) to develop a transferable framework for analyzing femicide reporting, with relevance to the Indonesian media context. Moving beyond fragmented research, it identifies six analytical dimensions: terminology, framing, victim representation, perpetrator representation, discursive authority, and sensationalism. The findings show that femicide reporting operates along a continuum between structural politicization and individual depoliticization. Across contexts, coverage is characterized by euphemistic terminology, episodic and legal-procedural framing, victim-blaming, perpetrator rationalization, reliance on institutional sources, and sensationalism. These patterns indicate that increased media visibility does not necessarily enhance structural understanding of gender-based violence but often reinforces individualized interpretations. Overall, these patterns reflect a recurring discursive logic that constructs femicide as an individual rather than structural issue. The study contributes by providing a systematic framework for cross-context analysis and supporting more gender-sensitive journalism.

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