

Femicides Through the Lens of Greek Media: A Critical Discourse Analysis



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Portrayal of Femicides in Greek Media

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Portrayal of Femicides in Greek Media

Table of contents

Abstract.....	4
1. Introduction.....	6
2. Femicides and the Greek context.....	10
2.1. Definition	10
2.1.1. The feminist approach and its critics	11
2.2 The social impact of mass media	12
2.3 Political parties in Greece and newspapers	14
2.4 Greek media approach to femicides	16
3. Theoretical Framework	18
3.1. Stuart Hall’s Representation Theory	18
3.1.1. The relationship between representation and culture	18
3.2. Encoding / Decoding Model	20
4. Approach / Methods.....	22
4.1. Critical Discourse Analysis	22
5. Results - Discussion.....	30
5.1. Theme 1: Vocabulary used for the victim, the perpetrator and the event	30
5.1.1. Terms used for the victim.....	31
5.1.2. Terms used for the perpetrator	33

Portrayal of Femicides in Greek Media

5.1.3. Terms used for the event	34
5.2. Theme 2: Police’s portrayal	35
5.3. Theme 3: Potential indicators of victim blaming	37
6. Conclusion and suggestions for further research	38
References.....	41
Appendix.....	45

Portrayal of Femicides in Greek Media

Abstract

This dissertation investigates the portrayal of femicides in the Greek context, specifically focusing on the femicide of Kyriaki Griva on April 1, 2024. The goal is to detect differences in the way various well-known newspapers, *I Kathimerini*, *Ta Nea*, and *I Efimerida ton Syntakton* (*Efsyn*), approach the topic. The study employs a critical discourse analysis using a mixed-methods research methodology.

The research was conducted by analyzing three articles from each newspaper, which covered the topic focusing either on the victim and the perpetrator, the murder itself, or the role of the police. This specific event was chosen not only because it is one of the most recent but also because it created a significant uproar in Greek society.

Key findings indicate differences in the portrayal of the event by each newspaper, influenced by their political leanings. Newspapers closer to the political orientation of the government (right-wing) exhibited more tolerance in placing blame on the police and the government in general. On the other hand, the left-wing newspaper was more critical of the governmental mechanisms. Moreover, applying a feminist critical discourse analysis revealed that the more left-leaning the newspaper, the more progressive its portrayal, emphasizing gender and power dynamics, as well as social justice, and criticizing traditional norms and practices.

The implications of this study for Intercultural Communication are significant. Future research could compare media portrayals of similar events across different cultures to detect differences and similarities, thereby enhancing intercultural communication. Additionally, the social impact of media portrayals could be measured through contributions from readers of these

Portrayal of Femicides in Greek Media

newspapers by answering some questionnaires regarding their opinion on the topic connecting it with the phrases used by each means.

In conclusion, this study highlights the important role of media representation in Greek society and the impact of political leanings on how media choose to portray specific cases. The insights gained from this research could provide valuable contributions to the understanding of media representation of femicides in Europe and worldwide.

Keywords: femicide, Greece, media representation, critical discourse analysis, feminist analysis

Portrayal of Femicides in Greek Media

1. Introduction

Femicide, broadly understood as the killing of women or girls because of their gender, is a phenomenon that has existed for a long time. People used to refer to it as homicide because they were unable to understand the specific motives behind the crime. Only after the 1970s was a name given to the phenomenon, and it started being studied more extensively (Dawson & Gartner, 1998). This research aims to explore the portrayal of femicides in the Greek media. More specifically, I aim to explore the connections between the political ideology and their approach to cases of femicide, which is still a controversial term in the Greek context. I selected three well-known Greek newspapers with varying political leanings: I Kathimerini, with a right/center-right leaning, Ta Nea, with a center leaning, and Efsyn, with a left leaning, to explore the links between political ideologies and discursive representations of femicides.

In the Greek context, femicides began spreading more after COVID-19. "He killed her because he loved her" or "crime of passion" are still some of the phrases used to describe these tragic events. The 28-year-old Kyriaki Griva, murdered by her former partner just outside a police station in Athens, the 41-year-old Georgia Mourati, murdered by her partner while pregnant in Chalkidiki, and the 29-year-old Nina, murdered by her partner in Crete, are only some of the cases recorded in 2024. Nevertheless, the Greek legal system still refuses to accept the term "femicide". Until 2018, there was no available data related to femicides, but only data related exclusively to the gender of the perpetrator and the victim as well as the place where the incident occurred (Weil et al., 2018). Through the last few years, the cases of femicides in Greece have increased dramatically, with femicide victims in 2024 increasing by 4.3% compared to 2021, confirming that at least 2 women per month were murdered by their husbands or another male member of their family

Portrayal of Femicides in Greek Media

(Louloudi et al., 2024). However, the term is still considered neologism, or as a new word which people still avoid using on the grounds that it is still not fully accepted as mainstream language.

This research explores the way femicide is represented in Greek newspapers across different political leanings. It aims to understand the links between political ideology and the representation of femicide and acceptance of the term in references to one particular femicide event—the murder of Kyriaki Griva. On the evening of Monday, April 1, the fifth femicide of the year occurred in Greece. The 28-year-old Kyriaki Griva was stabbed to death by her ex-boyfriend outside a police station in northern Athens. Griva had just left the station, where she had gone because she was afraid of her ex, who had been hanging around her house. The night of the murder, even though Kyriaki asked for a police escort to take her home, an operator reportedly told her that "patrol cars are not a taxi service.". The perpetrator was waiting for her outside the police station where he killed her. As mentioned before, the case triggered one of the biggest uproars in Greece, with numerous protests around the country, prosecutorial intervention as well as a lot of political reactions.

The tragedy and oxymoron of a woman being killed right outside of a police station, where she had gone to ask for help to stay safe from her abusive ex-partner, has garnered a lot of attention from the Greek society and media. The guiding research question of this study is how three different newspapers with different political leanings, portrayed a specific case of femicide which took place in Greece on the 1st of April 2024. By using data from three different newspapers, I Kathimerini, Ta Nea and Efsyn, and applying a critical discourse analytic approach, the research aims to uncover some of the complex discursive links between political ideology and representations of femicide. This approach is particularly valuable because it allows the reader to

Portrayal of Femicides in Greek Media

understand how one particular case of femicide can be linked to larger ideologies pertaining to politics and gender.

The results indicate there are some differences in how the newspapers cover the topic, with the political leaning of the media playing a crucial role in the portrayal of the event. The political leaning, or the relations of production, according to Hall's Encoding Model (1980) is a vital component of media production. Keeping in mind that some media power figures in Greece are somehow involved in politics or have relations with political figures and that the relations of production, or in other words the hierarchy of power stretching from craft services to top executives, including all the crews involved in between, play a vital role in the production of media, we can conclude that the political stance of the media power figures and as a result the political leaning of the newspaper in general plays a crucial role in the way an event is presented. Therefore, this research is important for understanding the complex links between the political leaning of the media and the way they portray the phenomenon of femicide, which is an under researched topic in general and in Greece in particular.

Lastly, it also contributes to the Intercultural Communication field on the grounds that this research is a good opportunity to gain some valuable insights of the Greek society regarding its perception on a such a sensitive topic as the femicides and compare its stance with this of other cultures. Rogers and Steinfatt (1999) define Intercultural Communication as 'the exchange of information between individuals who are unlike culturally'. Another definition by Jandt (2018) refers to it as 'communication between people and groups of diverse culture, subculture, or subgroup identifications'. The reason why this topic is so relevant to Intercultural Communication is because the media work as society's reflection. It mirrors and amplifies societal norms, values,

Portrayal of Femicides in Greek Media

and issues. For instance, media coverage focuses on events that are important within society at a specific period of time. In addition, it reflects what is considered acceptable and desirable, influencing and being influenced by societal behaviors. While the media serves as a platform for public discourse in a way that different opinions and perspectives are expressed and discussed, it is also shaped by the socioeconomic and political context of the society. In this way, by observing the media of a country, someone can get useful insights of the power structures and economic conditions of the region.

It is a well-known fact that Greek women have made many advances through the years regarding their right to equality under the law. According to Synggelakis and Lazaridis (1995), Greek law has implemented important provisions which at the same time are not sufficient enough. Gender equality issues in Greece cannot only be faced only through legislation. Greek society has adopted various stereotypes and perceptions which remains the most important obstacle to overcome. As a result, by comparing the ways with which media portray the news, someone can draw conclusions, detect differences and similarities between the cultures, and find means to enhance intercultural communication.

In this study, I start by providing some fundamental definitions of the word "femicide" and describing the feminist approach, with a reference to the social impact of media on the topic. Later, I focus on the Greek context and specifically how the Greek media approach the issue. During my analysis, I concentrate on the case of Kyriaki Griva, selecting three articles from three different newspapers to conduct a critical discourse analysis. Additionally, I attempt to incorporate a feminist discourse analysis, leaving room for future research. The final part of my dissertation is the

Portrayal of Femicides in Greek Media

conclusion, where the reader can find a summary of my key findings, limitations, and final thoughts.

2. Femicides and the Greek context

2.1. Definition

Femicides are considered a kind of homicide, but there is an important difference between the two terms and this is the reason why society needs to examine this issue as a distinct phenomenon. The context of femicide is based on the nature and the relationship between the victim and the offender. Thus, it is crucial to always examine the relational distance between the victim and the perpetrator.

As a result, femicides constitute an enduring problem worldwide. The term can be defined as “the killing of a woman by a male intimate partner” (Dawson & Gartner, 1998). However, this definition also does not reflect the complexity of the phenomenon. According to Kouroutsidou and Kakarouna (2021), the definition of the term femicide is the intentional murder of a woman, or of a person that defines herself as a woman, because of her gender. The term was first introduced in 1976 by Diana Russell, a feminist writer and activist, who used it to describe homicides with female victims. She used it in order to highlight discriminations, inequalities and violence that women used to face, which in some cases led to their death.

The word has a political purpose. Its use and assimilation in society tends to produce changes in the social order by transforming conventional perception, public awareness, scientific research, and policy making. Since the 1970s, the term has generated a theoretical concept which aims to reverse the existing patriarchal system (Corradi, et al., 2016). Patriarchy is a social

Portrayal of Femicides in Greek Media

formation of male-gendered power with a specific structure which is observed in many different aspects of society, from small-scale contexts like the family, up through larger institutional contexts like the police and the state (Ortner, 2022). The culture of patriarchy consists of a set of symbols and ideas related to the nature of things. More specifically, manhood and masculinity are associated with being human while womanhood and femininity are perceived as “other”. Overall, giving the phenomenon a name was crucial to reflect its significance and complexity as a specific form of homicide. According to Rivera (2005), words give meaning to the world, shape reality and produce social and political changes. In order to fight against something, first you need to name it, and this was exactly what Russell wanted to achieve by introducing the term femicide.

2.1.1. The feminist approach and its critics

According to Radford and Stanko (1996), the feminist theory is based on the belief that patriarchy and the oppression that comes after it are common threats in the structure of society. When analyzing the violence against women, the feminist approach focuses on the structure of relationships in a male-dominated culture, power, and gender (Adinkrah, 1999). Moreover, the explanations given by the feminist approach on the same topic consider gendered social arrangements and power crucial (Hunnicatt, 2009).

As for femicides, in particular, in approximately 90% of the cases, in an intimate context, the motives behind the crime were arguments of a domestic nature, including desertion, termination of a relationship or jealousy (Mouzon, 1999). Based on the feminist perspective, a man’s violent behavior against his intimate partner is caused by the desire to maintain power and

Portrayal of Femicides in Greek Media

coercive control over her (Yllö, 1993). This “structurally granted right” forms a woman's role in a relationship and makes submissiveness a necessary means to survival (Walker, 1979). The feminist approach also highlights the relationship between the cultural ideology of male dominance which limits women’s access to resources. This limitation leads to the subordinate position of women in the social structure as a result of the “legacy of the traditional family” (Taylor and Jasinski, 2011).

Nevertheless, the feminist perspective has some critics as well. A noteworthy example is Felson. Felson (2002) argues that domestic violence does not have sexist motives. According to him, men are generally more violent than women, and sexism does not play an important role in incidents such as rape or physical assault. In addition, Felson contends that the high rates of domestic violence are explained by the presence of contact and conflict within families.

To sum up, according to Felson, men are more violent by nature in comparison to women. However, the question is, what does this mean exactly? To what extent does this potential tendency influence men’s behavior, and to what extent does societal structure impact their behavior?

2.2 The social impact of mass media

In most cases, the first contact and acquaintance of a person with a social phenomenon takes place through the media or through the individual's interaction with people who have gained knowledge through being informed by them (Isaacs, 2016). The relationship between the media and society is a two-way street; the media not only shapes social consciousness but

Portrayal of Femicides in Greek Media

mirrors and constructs the respective dominant narratives available to the wider society (Monckton-Smith, 2012).

It is a well-known fact that the news media plays a crucial role in shaping society's perception of social issues, as well as public opinion regarding victims and offenders. Feminist scholars support that the media promote the concept of hierarchical gender roles, placing women subordinate to men. For instance, women who are not aligned with the stereotypical image of the "faithful and obedient wife and mother" tend to precipitate their abuse. On the other hand, violent men are just living up to societal forms (Belknap, 2007).

The responsibility and contribution of the media in the presentation of the issue of gender violence is very important. According to Kourou and Athanasiades (2022), it is argued that the way in which the women are portrayed by the media reflects the way they are treated by the society as a whole. The perception that the female gender is subordinate to the male is confirmed and consolidated through the media, since misperceptions and stereotypes around the issue of gender-based violence are perpetuated.

The situation can be characterized significantly complicated when it comes to femicides due to the role of law enforcement which is one of the main actors in this realm. Since it often works as a gatekeeper to crimes, crime news is, in many cases, portrayed from their point of view (Surette, 2007). By using law enforcement's reports, journalists ensure the credibility of the elements and access to police investigations. However, in many cases they can be characterized biased in terms of police's, and as a result government's, responsibility share.

According to Richards, et. al (2011), although a lot of research has been conducted regarding the media's portrayal of violence against women, little attention has been given to

Portrayal of Femicides in Greek Media

femicides. Generally speaking, the media's new coverage frames femicide as a common homicide without focusing on the nature of the crime, the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator, and the gender of the victim (Shayovitz, 2018). During the last years, and especially after the pandemic, I noticed that more and more articles have been written covering this phenomenon using the term femicide.

As mentioned before, the term femicide is still considered a neologism in the Greek realm. Based on Cambridge dictionary, neologism is defined as "a new word or expression, or a new meaning for an existing word". This new word is so recent that a big part of the Greek population is still unfamiliar with it. In my opinion, its limited use in the news media until recently has contributed to this phenomenon of neologism, which explains why the term was not widely used until now.

At this point, it is very interesting to examine how the portrayal of such a sensitive phenomenon as femicides is related to the relations of production. Relations of production according to Hall's Encoding Model (1980), can be considered the relations which include both the ones between the direct producers or workers, in this case columnists, and their employers or those who control their work, in this case, the political parties.

2.3 Political parties in Greece and newspapers

Currently, the governing party in Greece is Nea Dimokratia, a right-wing liberal party with 157 seats in the Greek parliament (Hellenic Parliament, n.d.). Right-wing parties in Greece represent a set of conservative and economically liberal ideologies. A newspaper representing such a party would likely advocate for economic liberalism, fiscal responsibility, pro-EU

Portrayal of Femicides in Greek Media

integration, military strength, and national sovereignty. The first newspaper that I am using is I Kathimerini, one of Greece's leading newspapers, recognized for its right/centre-right stance. It embodies a perspective that aligns with economically liberal and moderately conservative principles while upholding governance standards.

Through the years, centre parties in Greece, typically represent a balanced blend of moderate policies which aim to appeal to a wide range of voters. Their stances generally include, among others, social liberalism, pro-European Union, and an economy that balances free-market principles with necessary government intervention. Pasok - Kinima Allagis belongs in this spectrum and has 31 seats in the Greek Parliament (Hellenic Parliament, n.d.). Ta Nea, the second newspaper that I am using, is considered to follow a mostly centre stance, sometimes centre-right and some other times centre-left, depending on the topic, promoting social democracy and pro-European integration. It is also one of Greece's prominent newspapers which mostly advocates for moderate economic policies.

Lastly, left-wing parties in Greece mostly focus on social and economic equality and justice as well as the welfare state while advocating for a strong public sector. Syriza with 36 seats, Nea Aristera with 11 seats and Plefsi Eleftherias with 6 seats in the Greek Parliament are considered left-wing parties. (Hellenic Parliament, n.d.). The last newspaper that I am using is Efsyn. Efsyn represents left-leaning views with more collective approach to journalism. Its owner and main shareholder is the Syndicate of Newspaper and Magazine Workers SYN.P.E., making it one of the most secular newspapers in Greece. (Efsyn, n.d.)

Portrayal of Femicides in Greek Media

2.4 Greek media approach to femicides

According to Anastasio et al. (2004) there are some specific types used for media coverage on femicides. Some of them are the following;

1. The first type is connected with the description of the event using sensationalized phrases like “passion crime” or “he killed her because he was jealous.” While, on the one hand, this can be considered an informative perspective, on the other hand, it also emphasizes the dramatic element of the event.
2. The second type tends to blame the victim instead of the perpetrator. Of course, this strategy is not that obvious, but at the same time, there are some elements that the reader could observe and detect. For instance, in many cases, it is mentioned that the victim did nothing to end the relationship, even though she could have, or that the abuser was emotionally unstable and could not handle the situation in any other way.
3. The third type is related to some extent to the third one. Through this approach, the columnist tends to justify the perpetrator, but this time the focus is more on his circle, like family and friends. “He loved his wife,” “he never gave any prior signs,” and “he was always a nice person” are some of the arguments used.

Based on this, someone could conclude that, in their majority, the Greek media follows this pattern and has a highly sensationalized tone and language. For example, one of the articles

Portrayal of Femicides in Greek Media

from the most right-leaning newspaper which I use for my study has the title “Testimonies reveal the nightmare the 28-year-old was experiencing”. In another article from the most left-leaning newspaper that I used, describing police’s stance, the columnist uses the words “Embarrassment, indifference, total lack of sense of responsibility...”.

Regarding the second type, the aforementioned article from the right-leaning newspaper could belong to this category. Specifically, it mentions that “According to the victim's father, the young woman had a miscarriage after being beaten, even though she had told her family that she had had an abortion.” In other words, it gives the reader the impression that the young woman was previously abused but hid it from her family, even though she could have done something to change the situation.

Some other examples can be found in I Kathimerini’s article titled “Agii Anargyri: Femicide with the Hellenic Police in the Role of a Spectator”. For instance, the columnist mentions that “the victim had met in the previous days with her ex-boyfriend.” They got back together, and he was the person who accompanied her to the police station right before her murder. The question here is why his status as “ex-boyfriend” should be mentioned. Not only does this information not add any valuable insights to the article, but it could also be used as a “redeeming feature” for the killer, suggesting that she returned to her ex-boyfriend and characterizing this as a “crime of passion.”

Moreover, another example is the fact that the columnist mentions, “According to the testimony of the policewoman who met her, the 28-year-old did not wish to press charges against her former partner,” while it is also written earlier that “(the victim) had filed a complaint against him for bodily harm, as well as for rape and molestation, which she subsequently withdrew.” In

Portrayal of Femicides in Greek Media

this case, the columnist could focus more on the reasons why she withdrew the complaints.

Nevertheless, the columnist chose to mention twice that she changed her mind and did not pursue the complaint, giving the impression that it was her fault for not taking action sooner.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1. Stuart Hall's Representation Theory

Representation Theory, introduced by Stuart Hall, argues that the representation of various events through the media texts, most of the time, is not objective. Hall introduces a way of analyzing the operation and interconnection of coding and representation along “many fonts” of engagement. He supports that first, the practices used for representation are always related to the points of enunciation and second, that the representation is closely connected with the ideology (Rojek, 2009). A very typical example of Hall's representation theory could be the gender roles in television commercials. Even though during the last years this is something that has been changing, we still see in many cases the reproduction of traditional gender stereotypes such as women in domestic roles and men in roles that emphasize strength, work, and success.

3.1.1. The relationship between representation and culture

According to Stuart Hall (1997), culture is about “shared meanings”. Language is the privileged means with which we “make sense” of things. This meaning is produced and exchanged. Meanings can only be shared through our common access to language. So, language

Portrayal of Femicides in Greek Media

is central to meaning and culture and has always been regarded as the key repository of cultural values and meanings. The circuit of culture can be seen in the following figure.

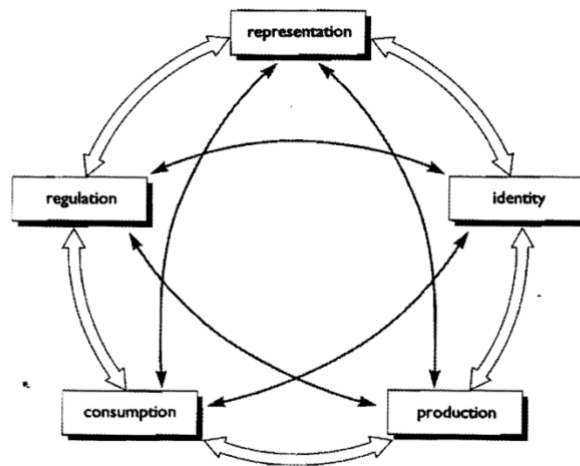


Figure 1. The circuit of culture, S. Hall (1997). Representation. Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices.

Language constructs meanings because it operates as a representational system. In the language we use signs and symbols- whether they are sounds, written words, electronically produced images and so on. In this specific work, as I analyze the way in which different newspapers represent the femicide which took place in Greece on the 1st of April 2024, I conclude that the language which is used in each case is indeed affected by the “sender”.

Portrayal of Femicides in Greek Media

3.2. Encoding / Decoding Model

Encoding/decoding model, also presented by Stuart Hall and first appeared in his article “Encoding/Decoding” in 1980, is related to how messages are produced referring particularly to television. In this study, I focus on encoding, and I attempt to adjust this model to newspapers’ articles. An example of encoding could be considered how the news broadcasts select the interviewees, the footage and the language used.

Based on Hall (1972), the four stages of the process of communication are the following: production, circulation, use (distribution or consumption) and reproduction. Many people have criticized the model for its simplicity and linearity, accusing Hall that he only focuses on the level of message exchange and that his work lacks structured conception of the different moments as a complex structure of relations. However, by thinking of this process in terms of a structure produced and sustained through the articulation of the distinctive stages of the process of communication, as mentioned above, with each of these stages having its own modality, form and condition of existence, we can perceive it as a “complex structure in dominance”. (Hall, et al. 1972)

According to Pillai (1992), Hall’s article has two main limitations. The first one has to do with the use of the terms “preferred meaning” and “preferred reading”. Hall tends to use these terms equivalently, while based on Pillai, a distinct description should be given. The “preferred meaning”, or the dominant codes, has to do with the text itself, so it is associated with the practices of the encoding, while “preferred reading” occurs when a correspondence between the encoded and decoded meaning is achieved, making it a property of the reader. However, Hall (1972) supported the idea that this correspondence between the encoded and the decoded

Portrayal of Femicides in Greek Media

meanings cannot be prescribed. Secondly, while Hall uses extensively the terms “prefer,” “represent,” “reproduce,” and “fix,” in his article, he does not clarify them. (Pillaei, 1992)

In a nutshell, Stuart Hall attempted to present a model which would not be the traditional transmission model sender – message – receiver and argued that perceiving communication as a process of meaning production including semiotic concepts as codes and signs would give better results (Ross, 2011). The model is visualized in the figure below.

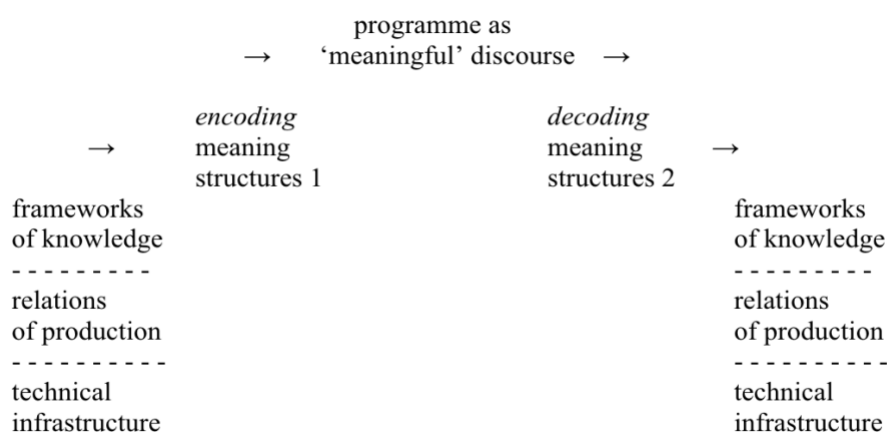


Figure 2. Hall's Encoding/Decoding Model (1972)

In this study, I will focus on the first part of the model, which is encoding. More specifically, I will select three specific articles of three well-known Greek newspapers and I will attempt to convert the content in a coded form in a way to examine the relations of production. My goal is to determine if there is a relevance between the newspaper and its political leaning with the way with which their columnists decide to portray the femicide of Kyriaki Griva. As previously noted, given that some media power figures in Greece are involved in politics or have

Portrayal of Femicides in Greek Media

connections with political figures, it can be concluded that the final media production is closely aligned with the political stance of these figures and, consequently, the overall political leaning of the publication. This is also closely linked to Hall's representation theory of which one of the main conclusions, as indicated above, is that representation is closely related to ideology.

4. Approach / Methods

4.1. Critical Discourse Analysis

Fairclough (2003) underlines the importance of language in social life by mentioning that "his approach of discourse analysis is based upon the assumption that language is an irreducible part of social life [...] so that social analysis and research always has to take account of language. There are many versions of discourse analysis (Van Dijk, 1997). One of them is the analysis of texts, which is the main research method that I plan to use. Text analysis is seen as not only linguistic analysis; it also includes what Fairclough (2000a) called "interdiscursive analysis", which in other words means seeing texts in terms of the different discourses, genres and styles they draw upon and articulate together.

Based on Halliday's (1978, 1994) approach to the linguistic analysis of text is always oriented to the social character of the texts. Approaching the media coverage of a phenomenon, such as femicides, in this way, gives space for the researcher to extend their research and probably associate their findings with the motives behind the choice of a specific way of writing or the formation of public opinion. In this specific context, the aim of this research is not only to make a text analysis of some Greek newspapers' websites but also to show that this topic can be represented in different ways, depending on the political line of the media. So, text analysis is an

Portrayal of Femicides in Greek Media

essential part of discourse analysis, but discourse analysis is not merely the linguistic analysis of texts. Text is a final product or final result, whereas discourse is a process of text construction.

(Mammadov, 2018)

The focus in this research is on linguistic analysis of the texts as part of a broader project developing Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a source of social analysis and research. But, what exactly is CDA and which are the critical and descriptive goals in discourse analysis?

CDA has been a prominent field of study since the 1990s, with notable contributions from influential researchers such as Teun van Dijk, Ruth Wodak, and Norman Fairclough. Each of these scholars has developed distinct approaches and theoretical frameworks within CDA, which diverge from traditional discourse analysis methods. Van Dijk, for instance, published his seminal work "Discourse and Society" in 1990, followed by several related books in subsequent years. Critical Discourse Studies emerged prior to the widespread recognition of CDA, focusing on how discourse contributes to the reproduction of larger social structures and revealing cultural and ideological implications. The term "critical" in discourse analysis refers to its exploration of power dynamics, hegemony, and resistance in language use (Ramanathan, 2015).

Yet, once I focus on the representation of the femicide of Kyriaki Griva on the 1st of April 2024 in Greece, it is obvious that I should examine the application of critical discourse analysis in media. More specifically, I refer to the application of Fairclough's analytical framework.

In the realm of applied linguistics, CDA has been extensively employed across different genres to analyze critical phenomena that give rise to specific ideologies, power dynamics, and dominance within various domains. This includes examining inequalities among races, genders,

Portrayal of Femicides in Greek Media

and social classes. One of the most significant areas where power and dominance are exercised is in the public sphere through the media. The media serves as a prominent domain where diverse ideologies are disseminated, influencing and potentially shaping public perception by imposing certain ideologies in their everyday lives.

The Fairclough's social theory of discourse focuses on analyzing social and political events within society from a linguistic perspective. In this theory, discourse is seen as a social practice that establishes power dynamics among various entities, leading to the emergence of power and ideological practices in society. This results in the representation of diverse worldviews from different perspectives. Fairclough (1992) emphasized that language use in society is a form of social practice rather than an individual activity, highlighting the correlation between language, power, and ideology. According to the social theory of discourse proposed by Fairclough (1992), there are three principles that define social practice. First, discourse both shapes and reflects social structures. Second, social practice constructs social identities and relationships between different entities and classes in society. Third, social practice contributes to the system of knowledge and belief, influencing functions of language such as identity, relational, and ideational functions. Moreover, the theory emphasizes the dialectical relationship between social structure and social practice, as well as between events and semiotics, recognizing the complex and contradictory nature of social practices. Overall, the social theory of discourse investigates how discourse interacts with society, focusing on interaction patterns between participants, social goals, and types of social events (Ramanathan, 2015).

Aligned with this theory, Fairclough (1992) introduced a three-dimensional model in CDA comprising text, discursive practice, and social practice. These dimensions are linked to

Portrayal of Femicides in Greek Media

semiotics as interpretations are generated to explain the existence of certain phenomena and highlight the discursivity of discourse. The three-dimensional framework aims to introduce principles that are challenging, as they are best understood when the text is analyzed within its social context. The first dimension of the framework, which is the one that I am focusing on in the current study, involves the analysis of text, examining linguistic features such as vocabulary, grammar, cohesion, and text structure. These features are categorized to facilitate linguistic analysis. The relationship between texts and social practice is mediated by discursive practice, which involves the production, distribution, and consumption of text shaped by social practice. Texts are interpreted differently based on social contexts, and their interpretation depends on the focus of the mode (Ramanathan, 2015). What I am trying to achieve in this work is to identify the process by which specific words and phrases are chosen. Based on Fairclough's theory, texts are strongly linked to their social context. However, my analysis does not focus on the interpretation of these texts, but rather on the preceding step: their production and the extent to which this is influenced by the social context, in this case, the political leaning of the media.

For this reason, and because the topic is the femicides, I am inclined to believe that the feminist perspective on critical discourse analysis is not only an interesting input, but it could also be considered mandatory for the completeness of my work. According to Lazar (2014), Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA), is a way to examine the complex, subtle, or sometimes not that subtle, production, sustenance, negotiation, and contest of taken-for-granted gendered assumptions and power asymmetries. It is important to mention here that there is a big difference between a CDA to study gender and a FCDA, which is the fact that in the first case, the methods used are the ones of CDA unchanged. On the other hand, in the second case, FCDA

Portrayal of Femicides in Greek Media

is based on the fundamental developments of critical feminist theory perspectives. For example, "gender" is perceived as an ideological structure and practice, or significant emphasis is given to the complexity of gender and power relations. In my analysis, even though I focus on the connection between the political leaning of the media and media representations, I believe that the feminist perspective is central to the analysis. This is because the topic is femicides in the Greek context, and I feel that it is a very interesting topic to be analyzed from a feminist perspective and has much to contribute to the Intercultural Communication field. Thus, my attempt in this work is to also examine the complex correlation between the political leaning of the chosen media and the gender representation occurred.

4.2 Data analysis procedures

I chose three articles of each newspaper each of them portraying in a specific way the victim, the murderer, the event itself and the role of the police. The chosen articles can be seen in the following table.

Newspaper	Articles
I Kathimerini	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="873 1675 1382 1850">• Agioi Anargyroi: Femicide with the Hellenic Police in the Role of a Spectator (Άγιοι Ανάργυροι:

Portrayal of Femicides in Greek Media

	<p>Γυναικοκτονία την ΕΛ.ΑΣ. σε ρόλο θεατή) (03/04/2024)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agioi Anargyroi: Testimonies reveal the nightmare the 28-year-old was experiencing (Άγιοι Ανάργυροι: Μαρτυρίες αποκαλύπτουν τον εφιάλτη που βίωσε η 28χρονη) (03/04/2024) • Agioi Anargyroi: Unanswered questions, new revelations and the chronicle of the crime (Άγιοι Ανάργυροι: Αναπάντητα ερωτήματα, νέες αποκαλύψεις και το χρονικό του εγκλήματος) (03/04/2024)
Ta Nea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agioi Anargyroi: Just 5 minutes dealt with 28-year-old Sunday at the station (Μόλις 5 λεπτά ασχολήθηκαν με την 28χρονη Κυριακή στο τμήμα) (05/04/2024) • Agioi Anargyroi: The 911 operator was listening live to the massacre of the 28-year-old woman (Άγιοι Ανάργυροι: Η τηλεφωνήτρια της

Portrayal of Femicides in Greek Media

	<p>Άμεσης Δράσης άκουγε ζωντανά τη σφαγή της 28χρονης) (02/04/2024)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agioi Anargyroi: Strict instructions and new plans after the fiasco of the Hellenic Police with the murder of Kyriaki (Άγιοι Ανάργυροι: Αυστηρές οδηγίες και νέα σχέδια μετά το φιάσκο της ΕΛ.ΑΣ. με τη δολοφονία της Κυριακής) (04/04/2024)
Efsyn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The indictment for the woman killer of Agioi Anargyroi (Το κατηγορητήριο για τον γυναικοκτόνο των Αγίων Αναργύρων) (02/04/2024) • Femicide in Agioi Anargyroi: Six “decapitations” for the chaos in the National Police (Γυναικοκτονία στους Αγ. Αναργύρους: Έξι κατατομήσεις για το χάος της ΕΛ.ΑΣ.) (03/04/2024) • It was not the "bad timing", but the inefficiency of the police (Δεν έφταιγε η “κακιά η ώρα”, αλλά η ανεπάρκεια της αστυνομίας) (03/04/2024)

Portrayal of Femicides in Greek Media

Table 1.

I am following a mixed-method research methodology. While I mostly examine the words and phrases used in each case and compare them with each other, which makes my research qualitative, I also added some elements of quantitative methodology, mentioning how many times some of the words or phrases are used, a data which also contributes to my final findings. By applying a mixed-method analysis, I managed to conduct a multi-level analysis, improving the validity of my findings which according to Dörnyei (2007) has been at the heart of the notion of triangulation ever since the introduction of the mixed-method approach in the 1970s.

Lastly, during my analysis, I make use of three themes, in an attempt to simplify my data, identify patterns and facilitate the communication of my findings in the end. The first theme, as indicated in table 2, is related with the vocabulary used for the portrayal of the victim, the perpetrator and the event itself which are the key components of the event. The second theme, has to do with police's portrayal. I chose this specific theme on the grounds that the goal of this study is to examine how the political leaning of the newspapers affects the way they describe a specific event. As the results showed, some newspapers are more critical towards the police's and government's role, and I believe that this theme gave many interesting insights regarding the extent to which the media put the blame on the government mechanism. Last but not least, since the topic is about femicides, I found it very important to analyze it from a feminist perspective. For this reason, the third theme I chose is related with the potential indicators of victim blaming detected in the articles. All these insightful results can be seen in the next chapter.

5. Results - Discussion

5.1. Theme 1: Vocabulary used for the victim, the perpetrator and the event

For the study's purpose, I chose three themes to analyze each newspaper's articles. As shown in table 2, the first theme has to do with words chosen to refer to the victim, the perpetrator, and the event itself.

	Kathimerini	Ta Nea	Efsyn
Language used for the victim	Kyriaki Griva (2), unlucky woman (1), young woman (4), 28-year-old woman (28), victim (11)	Kyriaki Griva (2), Kyriaki (5), prematurely dead woman (1), 28-year-old woman (11), unlucky woman (1)	Kyriaki Griva (1), Kyriaki (3), 28-year-old woman (17)
Language used for the perpetrator	Perpetrator (11), ex-partner (14), 39-year-old man (6), (the man) accused of murder (1)	Murderer (2), (provocative) perpetrator[(1) 4], ex-partner (3)	woman killer (1), perpetrator (9), ex-partner (8)

Portrayal of Femicides in Greek Media

Language used for the event	Femicide (3), murder (3), crime (3), murderous attack (4)	Massacre (1), femicide (2), murder (4)	Femicide (18), tragedy (1), atrocious crime,(1) bloody incident (1), (brutal) murder [(1) 4]
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Table 2.

The table shows that regarding the language used for the victim, the three newspapers use almost the same terms mostly the woman's name and her age. However, it is interesting to detect how many times each term is used and where the columnists pay more attention. The numbers in the brackets indicate the times that I observed the specific words in the articles.

5.1.1. Terms used for the victim

In the right-wing outlet, I detected that the columnist refers to the victim only with her full name and only in the article with the title "Agiou Anargyroi: Femicide with the Hellenic Police in the Role of a Spectator". In the other two articles, her name is not used at all. Nevertheless, the columnists tend to largely mention her age. In the article, the term "28-year-old girl" is used 13 times, in the article "Testimonies reveal the nightmare the 28-year-old was experiencing", the columnist uses the term 5 times, while in the article "Agiou Anargyroi: Unanswered questions, new revelations and the chronicle of the crime", the term is used 10 times.

Portrayal of Femicides in Greek Media

Regarding the way center-wing outlet, the vocabulary used to describe the victim in the articles titled “Agioi Anargyroi: Just 5 minutes dealt with 28-year-old Sunday at the station”, “Agioi Anargyroi: The 911 operator was listening live to the massacre of the 28-year-old woman”, and “Agioi Anargyroi: Strict instructions and new plans after the fiasco of the Hellenic Police with the murder of Kyriaki”, is almost the same as Kathimerini’s. However, the columnists use mostly her first name, instead of her full name. In the first article, the columnist mentions her only first name 4 times, while only one time her full name is used and only to quote police officer’s words. “Once he calmed down a bit, I asked him to give me the details of the woman who was lying on the ground, bleeding and he told me that all he knows is that her name is Griva Kyriaki.”. In the second article, the columnist does not use the victim’s name, while in the third one, her first name is used twice and her full name just once and again to quote Minister’s of Civil Protection words “Four days after the tragic incident of 1 April, when a young girl, Kyriaki Griva, was lost, we all continue to mourn and grieve.”. Her age is also mentioned, 4 times, 5 times and 2 times respectively.

Lastly, left-wing outlet’s articles “The indictment for the woman killer of Agioi Anargyroi”, “Femicide in Agioi Anargyroi: Six "decapitations" for the chaos in the National Police”, and “It was not the "bad timing", but the inefficiency of the police”, the pattern followed is similar to the previous cases. Her age is mentioned 4 times, 6 times and 7 times respectively. Her first name is not mentioned at all in the first article, three times in the second one and her full name is mentioned once in the last article.

As a result, we can conclude that the three newspapers use almost identical terms when referring to the victim of the femicide. However, based on this specific sample, one can observe

Portrayal of Femicides in Greek Media

that I Kathimerini does not use the victim's first name frequently, and even references to her full name are limited. In contrast, the other newspapers, particularly the centrist one, adopt a more personal tone by referring to the victim by her first name. Additionally, there is a notable difference in how the newspapers describe the victim: both I Kathimerini and Ta Nea label her as an "unlucky woman". Conversely, the left-wing outlet explicitly rejects the notion of bad timing or luck, placing clear blame on the police through its headlines. This could be because newspapers with a political leaning closer to the government tend to be more tolerant of the government's and police's actions, while those closer to the opposition's stance tend to be more critical.

Her age is also mentioned greatly, with the right-wing newspaper getting the first place, since it may work as an alternative way to refer to the victim. In my opinion, there are three reasons why age is mentioned that much in this specific case. The first one should be identification. Since the full name of the victim is given, the columnists want to distinguish the subject from other people with the same name and background. The second reason should be to give a more sensational character to the article, mentioning her young age and how unfair it was for such a young girl to lose her life.

5.1.2. Terms used for the perpetrator

Regarding the language used for the perpetrator, someone can also observe that all three newspapers use almost the same terms. The characterization "ex-partner" dominates in all the articles. In I Kathimerini's articles, "ex-partner" appears 14 times, in Ta Nea's articles 3 times and in Efsyn articles 8 times in total. This is evidence that, during recent years, more focus has

Portrayal of Femicides in Greek Media

been given to the relationship between the victim and the murderer by the media. We could assume here, that on the one hand, the media's focus on the victim-murderer relationship aims to increase awareness and prevention. In addition, understanding the dynamics of the relationship provides the context of the crime, helping the public understand the complexity of such societal phenomenon as femicides. On the other hand, it could work as a means to attract the audience's attention, creating, among other things, curiosity about what happened between the couple leading to this dramatic ending.

5.1.3. Terms used for the event

Lastly, as for the language used for the description of the event itself, more sensationalized phrases are used while we move more to the left based on the political leaning of the newspapers. In other words, the right-wing outlet uses more neutral vocabulary without so many adjectives. The more centrist one uses the word "massacre", which gives a more emotional character to the article. The left-wing newspaper is the one who uses the more emotionally charged phrases, using adjectives such as "bloody", "atrocious", and "brutal". Lastly, Efsyn is also the one who uses the term femicide way more (18 times) compared to the other two newspapers (3 and 2 times).

However, when reporting on the event itself, Efsyn, the most left-leaning newspaper and the most critical of the government, uses the most sensationalized language. It is easy to blame the perpetrator or evoke empathy in the reader, but describing a situation in a way that implicates those at fault is more complex. By using more passionate vocabulary, Efsyn effectively creates a sense of urgency directed towards the police or the government. Therefore, the next part of my

Portrayal of Femicides in Greek Media

analysis, as indicated in Table 3 (see Appendix), focuses on the second theme I chose which is how newspapers portray the police and to what extent they are held responsible for the death of a young woman who was killed right in front of the police station, despite having sought help.

5.2. Theme 2: Police's portrayal

The extent to which the newspapers assign blame to the police varies among the selected publications. All three criticize the inefficiency of the police mechanism in this specific case, but their tones and emphases differ.

For instance, the right-leaning publication uses the headline “The Hellenic Police in the role of spectator” in one of its articles, highlighting that the incident took place right outside the police station with the police just observing without taking any action. Despite this criticism, the language used in *I Kathimerini*, is relatively restrained compared to the other two newspapers. Phrases such as “it raises questions how the perpetrator managed to attack...” illustrate this less judgmental approach. Additionally, the publication often presents the police's perspective, noting, for example, a police officer's statement that her colleagues should have persuaded the young woman to stay inside the police station.

In contrast, the more centrist publication uses more judgmental language towards the police. The columnist points out that the police spent only five minutes on Kyriaki's case and describes the authorities' indifference as “criminal.” Like *I Kathimerini*, *Ta Nea* mentions that a police officer had advised Kyriaki to stay inside the station, although she did not follow this suggestion. Terms such as “fiasco” and “tragic handling” are used to describe the police's

Portrayal of Femicides in Greek Media

reaction, and the article notes efforts being made to address the current inefficiencies within the Greek police force.

On the other hand, the left-wing newspaper adopts a completely different approach, with clear and direct criticism of the police. Compared to the other newspapers, Efsyn uses way more critical phrases, as shown in Table 3 (see Appendix). As mentioned before, words like "embarrassment," "indifference," and "lack of sense of responsibility" highlight the columnists' disapproval. Titles such as "It was not the 'bad timing', but the inefficiency of the police" aim to put the blame only on the police and government rather than on luck. Efsyn critiques not only the system but also the police's response right after the murder. For instance, the newspaper criticizes the police for not taking a substantive position and corrects their initial misinformation, stating that the crime occurred in front of the police station, not in the area of Agioi Anargyroi. As it seems, Efsyn is also the only newspaper among the three that openly links the issue to the government, mentioning the opposition parties' stance on the incompetence of the Hellenic Police and the government's criminal indifference in preventing another femicide.

To sum up, newspapers play a crucial role in shaping public opinion, and when it comes to the portrayal of the police and government, we can see that a polarized media landscape is created. Pro-government newspapers tend to frame news stories in a way that supports and legitimizes government actions. In this case, one can observe that I Kathimerini and Ta Nea, not to the same extent, tend to, if not emphasize the positive developments of the government, at least downplay criticism by not showing the opposition's stance or by overshadowing the police's stance, trying to justify their actions. On the other hand, newspapers with opposition media outlets may focus more on exposing the government's inefficiencies, holding the government

Portrayal of Femicides in Greek Media

and the police accountable for what happened with Kyriaki Griva. Besides this, through my analysis, and applying FCDA at this point, the way the columnists portray “gender” is also connected with the political leaning of the media.

5.3. Theme 3: Potential indicators of victim blaming

An interesting and important topic I noticed in the articles is the potential tendency towards victim blaming. For this reason, I am choosing FCDA in order to analyze the phenomenon of femicide, where “gender” has a radical political status. In this specific case, Ta Nea implies that Kyriaki bears some responsibility for her fate by reporting that the police had asked her to stay at the station, but she did not comply, suggesting it was “her fault” she was not safe during the attack. Similarly, Kathimerini mentions that the victim had previously filed and then withdrawn complaints against her abuser for bodily harm, rape, and indecent assault. The article states that Kyriaki chose not to press charges against her former partner.

In contrast, the leftist newspaper presents the situation differently. The columnist notes that the young woman had been advised to file a complaint, but the 28-year-old refused, having done so in the past without any result. Here, the blame is placed on the police mechanism rather than the victim.

Why did the journalist in I Kathimerini not focus on the reasons behind Kyriaki’s withdrawal of her complaint? Probably, the victim considered the mechanism inefficient or feared her ex-partner’s reaction. Would anyone have been there to protect her if he reacted aggressively? Did she receive any emotional support from the government in her decision to

Portrayal of Femicides in Greek Media

leave the abusive relationship? These questions, although unanswerable in this case, should be considered for future incidents and in developing government prevention mechanisms.

In analyzing the choice of words in various articles, I also noticed a consistent pattern in how newspapers describe incidents involving individuals. However, one detail in an article from the right-wing publication stood out to me as particularly surprising and noteworthy. The article refers to the person who accompanied the victim to the police station and witnessed the crime as her "ex-boyfriend." Specifically, it states, "the victim had met in the previous days with her ex-boyfriend, with whom she had a relationship in the past." This characterization appears only in I Kathimerini's article.

This raises an important question: why mention this detail in an article focused on such a serious topic as femicide? Why would the reader need to know whether the person who helped her go to the police station was the man who has relationship with before her relationship with her murderer? In my view, this information is not only irrelevant but also potentially harmful. It could serve to humanize or justify the killer by implying that the crime was a "crime of passion" linked to her relationship with her ex-boyfriend. Maybe the columnist was trying to provide completeness to the article or perhaps they intended to add a sensationalist, gossipy element to attract readers' attention. Whatever the reason, whether intentional or not, I believe this inclusion is a significant mistake. It risks reinforcing harmful beliefs that the victim somehow "deserved" what happened to her.

6. Conclusion and suggestions for further research

To sum up, this study revealed significant insights into how three newspapers with different political leanings chose to portray a specific case of femicide in Greece, namely that of

Portrayal of Femicides in Greek Media

Kyriaki Griva. My findings showed that the political leaning of the media plays a crucial role in the portrayal of the event. More specifically, by applying critical discourse analysis, I noticed that the closer the newspaper was to the political leaning of the government, the more tolerant it was regarding the blame placed on the police and government mechanisms. Additionally, by applying feminist critical discourse analysis, I found that political leanings may also affect the gender and power relations portrayed in the articles. The left-wing newspaper was more progressive and did not hint at victim blaming, while I detected phrases in both I Kathimerini and Ta Nea that could be characterized as victim blaming. However, this is a very sensitive area, and I recommend further research on the topic.

This thesis reveals that each media outlet, depending on its political leaning, or in other words depending on the relations of production, uses different language in the portrayal of events. Especially when the topic is as tangible as femicides, it is important to pay attention to the language used. The language may influence public perception, while sensationalist or victim-blaming language can perpetuate harmful stereotypes. On the other hand, respectful and accurate language can foster empathy, a call for justice, and supportive and inclusive public discourse. The language also promotes accountability among perpetrators and institutions. Clear descriptions of the failures of law enforcement or legal systems can push for reforms and better protective measures.

Taking all this into consideration, a subject for further research could be how public opinion is affected by media representation. In the future, researchers could prepare questionnaires for readers of these newspapers to determine if and to what extent their opinions are influenced by the words and phrases used in the articles of these specific media outlets. My

Portrayal of Femicides in Greek Media

research focused on Stuart Hall's encoding model, and for this case, I suggest using the decoding model to achieve continuity between the two studies.

Despite the valuable insights gained from this study, there were several limitations. Firstly, the time constraints, as this is a master's dissertation and time was limited. Secondly, the sample size can be considered small. It was sufficient for this purpose, but a larger sample would provide more insights and a better understanding of the topic. These limitations suggest that the results should be interpreted with caution, and as mentioned before, further research is needed.

In conclusion, this thesis showcases the differences between the portrayals in pro-government and opposition media outlets, making it evident that political leanings greatly affect the framing of such events. Pro-government newspapers downplay systemic issues, while opposition outlets tend to criticize the police's and government's inadequacies. This phenomenon not only affects public opinion but also policy responses and societal attitudes toward gender-based violence. It is hoped that this research will inspire further studies and discussions that contribute to more balanced and responsible media practices and, ultimately, to the eradication of femicides in Greece and worldwide.

Portrayal of Femicides in Greek Media

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Appendix

	I Kathimerini	Ta Nea	Efsyn
Police's responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Hellenic Police in the role of spectator” • Agioi Anargyroi Police Station, a place where (the victim) "theoretically should be safe" • “The perpetrator appears to have followed her there and attacked her without anyone stopping him.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “They spent just five minutes on the 28-year-old Kyriaki at the police station” • “Criminal indifference of the authorities” • "According to the police, however, the officer told the 28-year-old woman to wait inside the police station in order to call a patrol car. But the 28-year-old 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “[...] even though (the woman) had called for help, she met her death outside the police station.” • “Embarrassment, indifference, total lack of sense of responsibility... Some of these or all of them together stem from the announcement issued by the headquarters of the Hellenic Police”

Portrayal of Femicides in Greek Media

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “It raises questions how the perpetrator managed to attack the 28-year-old so close to the security post without being stopped or previously checked by the police guard.” • “Police officer says his colleagues should have persuaded the 28-year-old to stay inside the station until the first available 	<p>woman,</p> <p>according to the Hellenic Police, did not wait and immediately came out of the police station.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The General Police Director of Attica ordered the conduct of an Administrative Examination, in order to determine whether there are responsibilities of police officers” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “After the tragedy where the authorities had issued a simple press release, today the Hellenic Police came back with a lengthy statement, trying to put the pieces together.” • “The woman was the victim of a brutal femicide, not "in the area of Agioi Anargyroi", as the initial information from the police defiantly stated, but in front of the police station.”
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Portrayal of Femicides in Greek Media

	<p>police car arrived”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “She had filed a complaint against him for bodily harm, as well as for rape and indecent assault, which she had subsequently withdrawn. According to the testimony of the police officer who met her, the 28-year-old woman did not wish to press charges against her former partner.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Strict instructions and new plans after the fiasco of the Hellenic Police with the murder of Kyriaki” • “The fiasco of the tragic handling of a domestic violence incident” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The police officer is recorded as saying "ma'am, this is not a taxi, this is a police car".” • “It was not the "bad timing", but the inefficiency of the police” • “The real issue, however, is the glaring and well-known gaps in the system of protection for battered women whose lives are at risk.” • “She was suggested to file a complaint, but the
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Portrayal of Femicides in Greek Media

			<p>28-year-old refused as she had done so in the past without result.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “With its usual methodology, the Police avoids to take a substantive position on the tragic incident that exposes them once again.”• “Many "initiatives", few results, with tragic consequences...”• “Unfortunately, the bell that keeps ringing seems not to be heard by the competent authorities who
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Portrayal of Femicides in Greek Media

			<p>stick to various excuses...”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “The opposition parties refer to the incompetence of the Hellenic Police. and criminal indifference of the government in preventing another femicide”
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Table 3.