

Mediation of Gendered Life and Death Within Intersecting Regimes of Patriarchy, Authoritarianism, and Necropolitics

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Abstract

This article examines how Turkish news media mediate fatal violence against women, trans women, and those self-identified as travesti within intersecting regimes of patriarchy, authoritarianism, and necropolitics. Extending feminist and queer media scholarship, it argues that the Turkish case reveals a shift from spectacularized representation to epistemic erasure, in which silence itself becomes a necropolitical tool. Drawing on feminist visual framing and critical discourse analysis of nine femicide and transphobic hate crime cases (2021–2024), the study traces how Islamist, pro-government, and alternative outlets reproduce or resist these regimes. Queer-feminist journalism, by contrast, enacts a counter-hegemonic praxis of radical care and remembrance that re-inscribes life and grievability. The article contributes to existing research by conceptualizing “mediated grievability” and revealing how visibility, denial, and mourning shape media governance of life and death. Ultimately, it underscores the urgent need for trans and travesti inclusive feminist media practices that politicize loss and affirm marginalized lives.

Keywords

femicide; gender; hate crime; mediation; necropolitics; news media; queer feminist media; Turkey

1. Introduction

Violence against women, as well as the transgender and travesti community, shares a common political grammar, aiming to discipline nonconforming bodies and identities in line with patriarchal, heteronormative, and authoritarian systems (Zengin, 2019). Turkey presents a particularly telling case for analyzing the entanglement of media, gendered violence, and necropolitics, understood as the exercise of power through

the decision of whose lives are protected and whose deaths are tolerated, ignored, or rendered socially invisible (Mbembe, 2003, 2019).

Since its rise to power in 2002, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) has combined pro-market neoliberalism with Islamist populism, embedding patriarchal, nationalist, and militarist rhetoric, framed as protecting family values, into state governance (Cosar & Ozcan, 2021). Scholars have described the resulting climate as “patriarchal authoritarianism” and “neoliberal patriarchy,” reflecting the fusion of Islamism, nationalism, populism, and militarism (Cosar & Ozcan, 2021). The AKP’s authoritarian consolidation accelerated after the failed 2016 coup attempt when states of emergency were declared, opposition voices silenced, and hundreds of journalists prosecuted or imprisoned (Sarac et al., 2023).

These dynamics have systematically constrained press freedom while mobilizing conservative gender norms to marginalize women and transgender/travesti/gender-nonconforming communities (Güney, 2022; Zengin, 2024). The government’s 2021 withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention, a Council of Europe treaty to prevent and combat violence against women, was justified through conservative claims that the treaty endangered family values and encouraged homosexuality (Güney, 2022; Zengin, 2024). Beyond symbolic withdrawal, state practices have been widely criticized for failing to prevent femicides and hate crimes with perpetrators often receiving reduced sentences on grounds of “unjust provocation” or “good conduct.” Protection orders are inconsistently enforced, reflecting the institutionalization of patriarchal impunity (Fincher, 2018; Özgenç, 2025).

Statistics underline the persistence of these dynamics. According to the We Will Stop Femicide Platform (Kadın Cinayetlerini Durduracağız Platformu, 2025), a women’s rights-focused Turkish civil society organization in Turkey, at least 394 women were murdered in Turkey in 2024, most by individuals known to them as partners, relatives, or male acquaintances. In parallel, the Kaos GL Association reported in 2024 that anti-transgender/travesti/gender-nonconforming rhetoric and practices have become institutionalized (Özgenç, 2025). While exact numbers of hate crimes are unavailable, the report highlights systemic marginalization, particularly targeting transgender people and activists who face heightened risks of detention, censorship, and restrictions on assembly.

Within this context, the media becomes a key site where authoritarian and heteropatriarchal ideologies converge to shape public understandings of gendered violence. Over the past two decades, the AKP has consolidated control over traditional media through seizures, financial pressure, and intimidation, transforming once-mainstream outlets into instruments of state propaganda (Akser, 2025). As a result, the Turkish media landscape is polarized. Islamist and pro-government outlets reproduce state-aligned nationalist and patriarchal discourses while alternative, feminist, and queer media challenge these discourses by amplifying the voices of marginalized groups (Ataman & Çoban, 2023; Comeforo & Görgülü, 2022; Yeşil, 2016).

The media environment produces not only news but also discourses that determine which deaths are grievable and which lives remain disposable (Bayramoğlu, 2021; Zengin, 2019). However, scholarship often treats femicide and hate crimes as separate phenomena (Hazar, 2018), overlooking how discursive and visual strategies intersect to render some lives intelligible while others remain unrecognized (Adak, 2022). In line with Sumiala’s (2022) analysis of mediated death as a cultural and communicative act, this article addresses

these gaps by asking: (a) How do Islamist, pro-government, alternative, and queer feminist news media each mediate fatal violence against women and the transgender/travesti/gender-nonconforming community? Moreover, (b) in what ways do these framings normalize, erase, or contest gender-based violence within Turkey's broader necropolitical and authoritarian context?

Through an integrated framework that primarily draws on mediated death and the concept of grievability, with supportive theoretical frameworks of necropolitics, queer necropolitics, queer feminist, and trans feminist scholarship, the article conceptualizes the mediation of death as a contested site of meaning-making, exclusion, and resistance. It employs a four-stage visual framing model (Rodriguez & Dimitrova, 2011) in conjunction with feminist critical discourse analysis (CDA; Lazar, 2007, 2018; Mills, 1998) to examine how language and imagery shape the political intelligibility of gendered death. The study examines how visual and discursive strategies reproduce or resist necropolitical logics with a particular focus on queer feminist media practices as modes of witnessing and remembrance that contest erasure and foster coalitional resistance (Haritaworn et al., 2014; Zengin, 2016, 2024).

2. Femicide, Hate Crime, and Necropolitics in Turkey

Previous studies indicate a dramatic rise in femicide cases in Turkey since the early 2000s. Toprak and Ersoy (2017) found that motives such as separation, jealousy, and honor were captured as primary drivers of femicide between 2000 and 2010. An analysis of 1,744 femicide cases reported between 2000 and 2019 reveals that most victims were killed by current or former partners with similar motives (Erbaydar et al., 2022). Afsar (2016) draws a direct correlation between this trend and treating femicide as routine, acceptable, and unpreventable.

The media plays a crucial role in constructing public understanding of gender-based violence. Previous research has demonstrated that Turkish media tend to report such crimes with heavily sensationalist language, victim-blaming narratives, and other editorial and journalistic choices that serve to justify the perpetrators' actions (Basdogan et al., 2021; Genç & Aydemir, 2018; Koç, 2020). Such narratives trivialize violence and normalize it as part of everyday life. Sensational coverage often focuses on the forensic details of crimes while structural issues, such as gender inequality, patriarchal norms, or legal impunity, are frequently overlooked (Erükçü-Akbaş & Karataş, 2023; Yılmaz et al., 2015).

Hate crimes follow similar patterns (Demiryakan & Ensari, 2017; Güzel et al., 2025). Depiction of hate crimes against the transgender/travesti/gender-nonconforming community in the Turkish media landscape, particularly violence targeting transgender people, often fails to address the underlying societal homophobia and transphobia that produce and reproduce such violence. Perry et al. (2020) note that when incidents involving transgender/travesti/gender-nonconforming people are reported, coverage often emphasizes the perceived deviance of victims.

Pro-government media outlets' portrayal of gender-based violence reveals a particularly insidious form of media complicity. Unlike more general sensationalist reporting, these outlets consistently frame femicides in ways that align with government and patriarchal authority. Coverage often shifts responsibility away from perpetrators and toward victims by highlighting women's and queer people's lifestyles, choices, or relationships, subtly suggesting culpability. Relatedly, perpetrators' actions are rationalized through narratives of mental instability which depoliticize the violence and obscure the systemic conditions that

enable it. More broadly, pro-government reporting rarely situates these cases within structural patterns of gender inequality, state inaction, or intersecting vulnerabilities (Alat, 2006; Bas et al., 2022; Caltekin, 2022; Koç & Tunalı, 2021).

To fully understand the persistence of gender-based violence targeting women and transgender/travesti/gender-nonconforming people, we must also examine how authoritarianism, media control, and patriarchal governance intersect to produce and sustain a culture of silence and violence.

3. Theoretical Framework: Mediation of Death

Beyond illustrating a neutral or objective act, the journalistic depiction of death is a form of mediation concerning state power, norms, and values embedded in society. This phenomenon is particularly apparent in media framings of violence targeting women and the transgender/travesti/gender-nonconforming community who stand on the frontline of gender-based violence. In such cases, journalism plays a critical role in shaping the very conditions of witnessing the distant suffering of others (Sontag, 2003).

The death-and-mediation nexus arises at the juncture of biopolitics and necropolitics. Foucault's (1978) notion of biopolitics is crucial for understanding modern nation-states' power over populations through regulatory mechanisms. However, this management of life is also accompanied by decisions over death. Mbembe's (2019) theory of necropolitics expands on Foucault's (1978) analysis of biopolitics and biopower by emphasizing the sovereign's power to decide who may live and who may die. Necropolitics is not just about physical death but also about social death which is the symbolic erasure of individuals and groups from the domain of the public (Islekel, 2022). More insidiously, necropolitical regimes determine whose deaths will be rendered socially and politically legible.

Queer necropolitics expands Mbembe's framework by centering the everyday forms of violence that shape queer and trans death-worlds (Haritaworn et al., 2014). It shifts attention to the ordinary process—bureaucratic neglect, everyday discrimination, and social abandonment—through which queer and trans lives are treated as ungrievable. This means that their existence is often erased in daily life and becomes legible in public discourse mainly through exceptional and violent events. In the context of hate crimes, queer necropolitics helps to expose how death is mediated and normalized through social abandonment (exclusion, stigma, and neglect in everyday life) and political abandonment (state inaction, lack of protection, and legal impunity; Zengin, 2024).

In contexts where state and societal structures fail to protect women and the transgender/travesti/gender-nonconforming community, the media's treatment of their deaths becomes a key site where these logics of abandonment are naturalized or contested (Kuntsman, 2014). These necropolitical regimes determine whose lives are socially recognized as worthy of grief. Tuchman's (1978) concept of "symbolic annihilation" captures the media's role in reinforcing this erasure through condemnation, exclusion, and trivialization. Building on this, Butler's (2004, 2009) theory of grievability underscores that mourning is a political act: For a life to be grievable, it must first be socially recognized as a life.

In this context, media narratives are crucial in shaping whose losses enter the public sphere and whose remain invisible. Feminist scholars have long emphasized how patriarchal ideologies shape media narratives

about gender-based violence, often through discourses that blame victims (Fairbairn & Dawson, 2013; Lloyd & Ramon, 2017), emphasize personal rather than structural causes, or frame violence as aberrational rather than endemic (Berns, 2017; Meyers, 1997). These framing mechanisms are not limited to textuality. Visuality is pivotal in shaping perception in today's media ecology, particularly on digital and social platforms (Bas et al., 2022).

While previous research has shown that direct images of the dead are relatively rare (Griffin, 2010; Zelizer, 2010), the visual elements in images of mourning relatives, protest scenes, and sanitized crime scenes carry substantial affective and ideological weight. As Zelizer (2010) argues, visual representations often operate in ambiguous ways, simultaneously revealing and concealing, inviting empathy while reinforcing norms about what is "appropriate" to see. Photographs help shape collective memory and political action (Chouliaraki, 2006; Sontag, 2003). Whether the death is perceived as a personal tragedy or an issue of social injustice is closely tied to the visual medium.

Images do not merely document events; they frame the moral and emotional terms through which suffering is interpreted and socially processed (Sontag, 2003). Chouliaraki (2006) argues that such framing often positions the suffering subject at a moral distance, rendering them an object of pity rather than an agent of political concern. The media's aestheticization of suffering can thus obscure and reproduce the structural conditions that produce violence.

Drawing on Zengin's (2016) concept of gender killings to foreground the structural conditions that produce women and transgender/travesti/gender-nonconforming communities as killable subjects, this article adopts a queer feminist media critique, grounded in intersectional feminist and queer theoretical traditions, to explore the mediation of death. Zengin (2016) argues that overlapping regimes of violence expose how occupying a gendered position can constitute a threat to life under masculinist and heteronormative rule. As such, the category of gender must be rethought as a contested site of both violence and political alliance. Attentive to these entanglements, a queer feminist media critique enables an integrated analysis of gender-based violence and underscores the urgency of coalition.

As discussed earlier, the media atmosphere in Turkey is shaped by a complex interplay of neoliberalism, religious conservatism, authoritarian populism, and entrenched patriarchy (Kaygusuz, 2018; Tuğal, 2016). The result is a fractured media landscape in which journalistic mediation of death can variously reproduce dominant ideologies or offer space for counter-narratives. Therefore, this article proposes understanding the mediation of the death and grievability nexus with supportive frameworks of necropolitics, queer necropolitics, and trans feminist scholarship, so that we can move beyond a critical examination of the media landscape to reimagine journalism as a potential site of resistance and re-existence against the normalization of violence.

4. Methodological Framework

This study analyzes nine cases of fatal violence through thirteen news articles reported in Turkish media between 2021 and 2024, encompassing femicides and transphobic hate crimes targeting transgender/travesti/gender-nonconforming individuals. It examines how Islamist, pro-government, alternative, and queer-feminist outlets construct, obscure, or politicize gendered death within an authoritarian context.

Engaging with Mbembe’s (2019) concept of necropolitical governance—the symbolic control over who may live, die, or be grieved—the research explores how distinct ideological ecosystems shape representation, visibility, and power.

Unlike large-scale content analyses that prioritize frequency over meaning (Fairbairn & Dawson, 2013; Lloyd & Ramon, 2017; Richards et al., 2013), this study deliberately employs a small, strategically selected sample to enable interpretive depth and comparative synthesis. The limited number of cases is a conscious design choice rooted in feminist and queer critical discourse traditions, which privilege ethical witnessing, symbolic unpacking, and contextual nuance over statistical generalizability. Each case functions as a discursive microcosm, revealing how ideological orientations shape visibility, culpability, and grievability. This approach allows the study to foreground the relational dynamics between media polarization, necropolitical framings, and the (in)visibility of gendered death.

To ensure analytical transparency, Table 1 provides an overview of the nine cases and 13 corresponding news articles, listing victims’ names, years, outlets, ideological alignment, type of violence, key framing features, and visual framing notes.

Table 1. Media representations of fatal gender-based violence.

| Victim Name | Media Outlet | Type of Violence | Media Ideology | Key Framing Features | Visual Framing Notes |
|----------------|---|------------------------|----------------|---|---|
| Serpil Gül | <i>Yeni Şafak</i> (“Türkiye’yi ayağa,” 2024) | Femicide by husband | Islamist | Denotative: episodic street murder Stylistic: sensationalist tone, spectacle of death Connotative: emotional shock, male-centered narrative Ideological: symbolic annihilation, depoliticization, necropolitical erasure | ID-style portrait and panoramic crime scene images reduce death to spectacle; stylistic distance weakens public empathy; absence of institutional critique. |
| Sümeyye Yavlak | <i>Hürriyet</i> (“Sümeyye’yi markette,” 2024) | Femicide by ex-husband | Pro-government | Denotative: intimate partner killing Stylistic: courtroom and witness dramatization Connotative: moral spectatorship, aestheticized remorse Ideological: patriarchal justification, depoliticization of systemic failure | Video uses close-ups on perpetrator’s remorse; blurred police footage and emotional witness scenes frame murder as personal tragedy |

Table 1. (Cont.) Media representations of fatal gender-based violence.

| Victim Name | Media Outlet | Type of Violence | Media Ideology | Key Framing Features | Visual Framing Notes |
|----------------|---|------------------------|----------------|---|---|
| Sümeyye Yavlak | <i>Demirören News Agency</i> (Kır, 2023) | Femicide by ex-husband | Pro-government | <p>Denotative: domestic crime scene</p> <p>Stylistic: sentimental realism, funeral imagery</p> <p>Connotative: privatization of mourning</p> <p>Ideological: individualized tragedy, absence of institutional critique</p> | Montage of family crying, funeral car arrival, and smiling victim photo dramatize grief but depoliticize gendered violence |
| Pınar Bektaş | <i>Hürriyet</i> ("İstanbul'un Sultangazi," 2023) | Femicide by ex-husband | Pro-government | <p>Denotative: domestic killing</p> <p>Stylistic: blurred imagery, narrative sequencing</p> <p>Connotative: moral spectacle, gendered pedagogy</p> <p>Ideological: syntactic erasure, depoliticization of femicide</p> | Blurred visuals of police cars and grieving relatives; cinematic sequencing emphasizes emotional shock over political context |
| Gonca Özdemir | <i>Evrensel</i> ("Darbedilmiş halde," 2024) | Femicide by husband | Alternative | <p>Denotative: repeated domestic abuse</p> <p>Stylistic: emotive detail, survivor testimony</p> <p>Connotative: empathy and victim humanization</p> <p>Ideological: oscillation between compassion and depoliticization</p> | Smiling portrait contrasts with violent death; visual humanization evokes empathy but isolates tragedy from systemic critique |
| | <i>Demirören News Agency</i> (Aytekin et al., 2024) | Femicide by husband | Pro-government | <p>Denotative: domestic gun attack</p> <p>Stylistic: sensational visual trauma (wedding dress)</p> <p>Connotative: hierarchy of sympathy (focus on husband's injury)</p> <p>Ideological: depoliticization, silencing of victim agency, romanticized symbolism</p> | Photo of coffin with wedding dress; visual symbolism sanctifies family values and aestheticizes the murder |

Table 1. (Cont.) Media representations of fatal gender-based violence.

| Victim Name | Media Outlet | Type of Violence | Media Ideology | Key Framing Features | Visual Framing Notes |
|-------------|---|---|----------------|--|---|
| Fadimana Ok | <i>Demirören News Agency</i> ("Damadına ateş," 2024) | Femicide by father | Pro-government | Denotative: domestic gun attack Stylistic: sensational visual trauma Connotative: hierarchy of sympathy (focus on husband's injury) Ideological: depoliticization, silencing of victim agency, sensationalism, sympathy for perpetrator | Graphic crime scene and hospital photos emphasize violence and pity without political or structural context |
| | <i>Yeni Akit</i> ("Kadını kocası," 2024) | Femicide by father | Islamist | Denotative: fabricated account Stylistic: exaggerated sequencing Connotative: moral blame, victim culpability Ideological: punishment of female agency, narrative distortion, fabrication, victim-blaming, erasure of feminist resistance | No verified visuals; textual sequencing implies the victim's refusal triggered her death, reinforcing patriarchal blame logic |
| Sevda Kuş | <i>Bianet</i> (Kepenek, 2024) | Femicide by ex-husband (police officer) | Queer feminist | Denotative: institutional femicide Stylistic: protest-centered framing Connotative: affective witnessing, feminist solidarity Ideological: counter-memorial resistance, systemic critique, visual resistance, interpellation into feminist subjectivity | Protest photo showing "No to the love that kills" sign; visualizes feminist resistance and politicizes grief |

Table 1. (Cont.) Media representations of fatal gender-based violence.

| Victim Name | Media Outlet | Type of Violence | Media Ideology | Key Framing Features | Visual Framing Notes |
|---------------------|--|------------------------|----------------|--|---|
| Kadir Murat Sözübir | <i>BirGün</i> ("Fatih'te trans," 2021) | Transphobic hate crime | Alternative | Denotative: trans murder, home setting Stylistic: minimalist visual restraint Connotative: isolation, cishnormative empathy gap Ideological: marginalization of the victim, lack of structural critique | Instagram photo of the victim alone in the parking lot; minimalist composition conveys isolation and social vulnerability |
| | <i>Demirören News Agency</i> (Atik et al., 2021) | Transphobic hate crime | Pro-government | Denotative: crime report with no victim image Stylistic: procedural neutrality Connotative: emotional distance Ideological: institutional dominance, cishnormative erasure, cishnormative framing | Generic police and street visuals; absence of victim imagery reinforces cishnormative erasure |
| Ecem Seçkin | <i>Bianet</i> (Yılmaz, 2024) | Transphobic hate crime | Queer feminist | Denotative: hate-motivated killing Stylistic: intimate, unposed imagery Connotative: everyday dignity, counter-visibility Ideological: grievability restoration, trans-feminist justice, radical care, everyday resistance, systemic critique | Intimate selfie; unposed and personal framing humanizes the victim, counters the transphobic spectacle, and invites relational witnessing |
| Sudenaz U. | Kaos GL (Tar, 2024) | Transphobic hate crime | Queer feminist | Denotative: home invasion and protest aftermath Stylistic: raw graffiti aesthetic Connotative: grassroots dissent, collective grief Ideological: queer necropolitical resistance, visual dissent | Photograph of graffiti reading "Trans murders are political"; a raw, activist aesthetic transforms the street into a political archive |

4.1. Analytical Design and Theoretical Integration

Methodologically, the study combines visual framing analysis with feminist and trans-informed CDA. To ensure analytical consistency, each case was examined using a unified framework that integrates visual framing and feminist CDA, enabling systematic comparison across ideological media types.

The visual analysis follows Rodríguez and Dimitrova's (2011) four-stage model, interpreted narratively rather than enumeratively. First, the denotative level identifies what is literally depicted and who occupies the visual field. Second, the stylistic-semiotic level examines how photographic composition, cropping, lighting, and repetition shape the viewer's affective entry point. Third, the connotative level explores cultural, emotional, and moral associations evoked by the image, how gestures, colors, and spatial hierarchies mobilize empathy or distance. Finally, the ideological level analyses how the image, through its visual grammar, positions victims and perpetrators within broader structures of meaning, reproducing or challenging state and patriarchal narratives. The model's sequential logic, moving from visual literalness to ideological abstraction, allows causal interpretation: It demonstrates how formal visual decisions generate political effect.

The textual analysis applies CDA to reveal how power and ideology operate through language (Fairclough, 1995, 2001; van Dijk, 2008). Building on Mills's (1998, 2004) feminist adaptation of CDA, the analysis examines voice, agency, and interpellation to determine how narratives invite readers into specific gendered or ideological positions. It further draws on Lazar's (2005, 2007, 2018) feminist CDA, emphasizing the discursive mechanisms that sustain or contest patriarchal and state authority. These feminist approaches are extended through trans-feminist perspectives (Billard & Zhang, 2022; Pearce et al., 2020), which expose the epistemic and affective marginalization of trans and gender-diverse subjects, mainly where mainstream journalism produces sensationalism or erasure.

4.2. Data Collection

The dataset consists of publicly available online news published between 2021 and 2024, sampled across four editorial orientations: Islamist (*Yeni Akit*, *Yeni Şafak*), pro-government (*Demirören News Agency [DNA]*, *Hürriyet*), alternative (*Evrensel*, *BirGün*), and queer-feminist (*Bianet*, *Kaos GL*). Systematic keyword searches related to femicide, trans murder, and gender-based violence yielded 80 items. After deduplication and the exclusion of fabrications and derivative reports, the final corpus comprised 13 news articles covering nine distinct cases.

Case selection prioritized diversity in victim identity (cis woman, trans woman, travesti) and media ideology. The term travesti is a culturally specific identity common in Turkish and some Latin American contexts as a distinct self-identification. In contemporary Turkish LGBTQ+ activism, travesti and trans *kadın* (trans woman) are distinct but overlapping identities. While many individuals prefer trans women to affirm their womanhood, others consciously reclaim travesti as a marker of pride, visibility, and resistance against systemic marginalization. Therefore, it remains untranslated due to its culturally specific meaning (Goldberg & Beemyn, 2021).

Beyond their ideological and identity-based diversity, the selected cases were also chosen for their symbolic significance and their capacity to complement one another in illustrating the structural patterns of gendered

and transphobic violence across Turkey's polarized media landscape. During the sampling period, publicly accessible records predominantly documented murders of trans women and those who are self-identified as travesti. No confirmed reports of fatal violence targeting gay, lesbian, bisexual, non-binary, or intersex people were found. Following Zengin (2016), this absence is interpreted as discursive silence, a symptom of necropolitical erasure in state-aligned media.

Articles were coded using a unified codebook covering visual and textual variables, enabling cross-case comparison and ensuring analytical consistency. This structure allowed for the identification of recurring patterns and divergences in the mediation of gendered death. This methodological design connects micro-level framing choices to macro-level structures of authoritarian control, revealing how Turkish media enact the politics of grievability (Butler, 2009) and necropolitics of visibility (Mbembe, 2019).

5. Analysis and Discussion

In a media landscape fractured by authoritarianism, neoliberal populism, and entrenched patriarchy, the representation of fatal violence targeting women and transgender, travesti, and gender-nonconforming people in Turkey becomes more than reportage; it becomes a battleground of meaning. This section offers a critical cartography of how death is mediated, politicized, or erased across four distinct media ecologies: Islamist, pro-government, alternative, and queer-feminist.

Drawing on a curated corpus of nine emblematic cases reported between 2021 and 2024, the analysis traces how visual and textual strategies shape public recognition, moral legibility, and political accountability. To structure the analysis, the discussion is organized into three thematic subsections, each delineating a distinct mode of media representation and its political implications: Spectacle and Sentimentality, Erasure and Silence, and Counter-Visualities and Resistance. Each theme is developed comparatively to reveal how representational practices reflect and reproduce broader necropolitical logics, and how alternative and queer-feminist media intervene to disrupt them.

5.1. Spectacle and Sentimentality

5.1.1. Visual-Textual Aesthetics of Emotional Consumption

Across Islamist and pro-government media, femicide is consistently transformed into a spectacle of emotional consumption. Drawing on Chouliaraki's (2006) and Zelizer's (2010) insights into the aestheticization of suffering, these outlets frame women's deaths as tragic episodes rather than politically actionable injustices. Crime-scene panoramas, blurred police footage, forensic close-ups, and sentimental headlines position audiences as passive spectators rather than engaged witnesses to systemic failure.

As shown in Figure 1, *Yeni Şafak*'s coverage of Serpil Gül's murder ("Türkiye'yi ayağa," 2024) exemplifies this logic. The article presents distant, panoramic crime scenes and formal ID-style portraits. These stylistic choices depersonalize the victim and invite voyeuristic consumption. The connotative register evokes shock and pity, but not critique. Ideologically, the syntax "a brutal husband shot his wife in the head," foregrounds the male perpetrator as an active subject while rendering the woman a grammatical object (Lazar, 2007;

Mills, 1998). This framing privatizes femicide, recasting it as an isolated act of male rage rather than a symptom of patriarchal impunity (Fairbairn & Dawson, 2013; Richards et al., 2013).



Figure 1. Islamist media newspaper *Yeni Şafak*'s visual framing of the Serpil Gül femicide case. Source: "Türkiye'yi ayağa" (2024).

Hürriyet ("Sümeyye'yi markette," 2024) and *DNA*'s (Kır, 2023) coverage of Sümeyye Yavlak's killing deploys what might be called sentimental realism. Their reports feature close-up shots of grieving relatives and remorseful perpetrators, alongside extensive quoting of the murderer's emotional justifications: "I was under the influence of drugs," "I seek your forgiveness." These choices humanize the perpetrator, portraying him as psychologically complex, while the victim is reduced to a tragic absence. This imbalance reproduces what Butler (2009) calls differential grievability: the man's remorse is legible, the woman's suffering abstract.

As illustrated in Figure 2, the visual emphasis on happy family scenes, smiling victims, family sorrow, and funeral rituals dramatizes grief but forecloses structural critique. These outlets fail to interrogate the systemic failures that enabled the murder, such as ineffective protection orders, the erosion of legal safeguards following Turkey's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention, and the normalization of patriarchal violence. Instead, femicide is aestheticized as melodrama. The moral economy of mourning becomes privatized: Audiences are invited to empathize but not to act. This pattern is not incidental. Across the corpus, Islamist and pro-government outlets repeatedly center perpetrators' emotional states, use sensational visual grammar, and frame femicide as episodic tragedy. These strategies depoliticize gendered violence and obscure its structural roots. In contrast, alternative and queer-feminist media attempt to re-center victim subjectivity and institutional critique, though they too sometimes rely on affective templates, such as smiling portraits or symbolic imagery, that risk containment unless explicitly linked to systemic analysis.



Figure 2. Still image extracted from the video footage of DNA's Sümeyye Yavlak femicide case. Source: Kır (2023).

5.1.2. Mainstream Ambivalence and Ideological Containment

The case of Pinar Bektaş ("İstanbul'un Sultangazi," 2023) exemplifies how mainstream media domesticate femicide through linguistic and visual containment. *Hürriyet's* coverage describes the murder as an "argument that suddenly escalated," using phrases like "for reasons unknown" and "an argument arose." This language performs what Mills (2004) calls syntactic erasure; violence is narrated without agency, obscuring prior abuse and structural culpability. The framing isolates the event from broader patterns of gendered violence, rendering it episodic and emotionally charged but politically inert. The coverage reinforces a narrative of personal misfortune or an individualized tragedy (Brodie, 2020).

Visual strategies reinforce this depoliticization. *Hürriyet's* video montage includes blurred police lights, grieving relatives, and dramatic sequencing, which dramatize sorrow while suppressing institutional critique. The absence of historical context, such as prior threats, legal neglect, or ineffective protection orders, reflects a necropolitical logic in which women's deaths are mourned privately but not politicized publicly (Butler, 2004, 2009; Mbembe, 2019). This aligns with Lloyd and Ramon's (2017) concept of affective containment, where emotional excess substitutes for structural analysis.

Evrensel's coverage of Gonca Özdemir ("Darbedilmiş halde," 2024) offers a partial corrective. The outlet includes testimony from the victim's mother, detailing 17 years of abuse and threats, situating the death within a continuum of coercion and fear. However, even this progressive outlet leans toward sentimental framing, featuring a smiling portrait and domestic imagery that evokes empathy but risks aestheticizing suffering. DNA's coverage (Aytekin et al., 2024), by contrast, uses the symbol of a wedding dress placed on the coffin, a visual trope that fuses love, loss, and feminine virtue. While emotionally evocative, this image reaffirms heteronormative ideals of womanhood defined by sacrifice, echoing patriarchal scripts that obscure systemic violence.

In the case of Fadimana Ok, the contrast between *DNA*'s spectacle ("Damadına ateş," 2024) and *Yeni Akit*'s fabrication ("Kadını kocası," 2024) reveals two facets of patriarchal media governance. *DNA* foregrounds gore and police reenactment, transforming femicide into an affective commodity. *Yeni Akit* distorts chronology, implying that Fadimana's refusal to meet her husband provoked her death. This sequencing enacts discursive victim-blaming (Fairbairn & Dawson, 2013; Gill, 2007; Lloyd & Ramon, 2017), framing female autonomy as a trigger for male violence. These coverages exemplify how media can reproduce patriarchal scripts that punish female agency and obscure the structural conditions of femicide, reinforcing necropolitical regimes that render women's resistance both invisible and punishable. Both outlets naturalize violence as reactive morality, reinforcing what Mbembe (2019) calls necropolitical pedagogy, the production of death as a social lesson that upholds patriarchal order.

Together, these cases illustrate how mainstream and conservative media deploy a grammar of ambivalence: They mourn women's deaths but refuse to politicize them. Through syntactic erasure, sentimental imagery, and moralized sequencing, femicide is reframed as personal tragedy rather than structural injustice. Even alternative outlets, while more critical, sometimes reproduce affective templates that risk containment unless explicitly linked to institutional critique.

5.1.3. Counterpoint: Politicizing Grief Through Feminist Reportage

In contrast to mainstream depoliticization, *Bianet*'s coverage of Sevda Kuş's murder (Kepenek, 2024) exemplifies feminist counter-spectacle. The protest image accompanying the report, featuring a sign reading "no to the love that kills," operates across multiple semiotic registers (see Figure 3). Denotatively, it documents dissent; stylistically, it isolates a solitary protester, symbolizing collective outrage through intimate scale. Connotatively, the phrase subverts romantic discourse, exposing "love" as a euphemism for patriarchal control. Ideologically, the image reframes grief as accusation, echoing critiques found in Fairbairn and Dawson (2013) and Lloyd and Ramon (2017) regarding the romanticization and depoliticization of gendered violence.



Figure 3. *Bianet*'s visual framing of the Sevda Kuş femicide case. Source: Cinsel Şiddet Haberleri İçin Görsel Arşiv (2020).

Beyond visual framing, *Bianet*'s textual strategy foregrounds trial monitoring and explicitly critiques the use of psychiatric defenses, particularly the "momentary madness" plea, as a recurring tactic to evade accountability. This narrative resists the normalization of male violence and exposes the structural leniency embedded in Turkey's judicial system. By naming these mechanisms, *Bianet* re-politicizes mourning and transforms individual loss into collective indictment.

Through this lens, narration functions as a feminist and queer strategy of critique, echoing Zengin's (2016, 2024) conceptualization of gendered death as a site of political contestation and memorial resistance. Rather than merely documenting violence, such narrative practices re-inscribe grievability and challenge the necropolitical erasure of marginalized lives by depending on a concept of queer feminist witnessing, a praxis that refuses to isolate grief from its political context. Rather than aestheticizing suffering, *Bianet*'s coverage interpellates the reader into a feminist critique of institutional justice (Cavallaro, 2020; Mills, 1998). The outlet's refusal to center perpetrator psychology or sentimentalize victimhood marks a shift from affective containment to political mobilization. In doing so, *Bianet* challenges the dominant media grammars that render gendered death mournable only within the confines of private tragedy. Its reportage insists that grief must be public, politicized, and structurally interrogated. This counter-discursive stance not only disrupts necropolitical norms but also affirms the possibility of media as a site of resistance and radical care.

5.1.4. Synthesis: Affect, Spectacle, and Necropolitical Mediation

Across Islamist and pro-government outlets, three interlocking mechanisms structure the mediation of femicide.

First, these outlets foreground male subjectivity through emotional testimony, psychiatric defenses, and legal drama. Perpetrators are portrayed as remorseful or psychologically unstable, while victims are rendered passive or absent. This narrative strategy aligns with Mills (1998, 2004) and Lazar (2007, 2018), who identify how patriarchal discourse privileges male voice and agency. Second, forensic imagery, blurred footage, and dramatic sequencing aestheticize death. Visual grammar amplifies affect while suppressing critique, producing what Zelizer (2010) might describe as cinematic logic. The spectacle of violence becomes a consumable event, detached from its structural causes. Third, emotional proximity is cultivated through images of mourning families and sentimental tropes (e.g., wedding dresses on coffins), yet these representations lack institutional critique. This kind of unpolitical empathy, which remains affective but fails to engage with structural critique or mobilization, reflects what Lloyd and Ramon (2017) term "affective containment," in which emotional excess substitutes for systemic analysis. It also aligns with Butler's (2009) notion of "privatized mourning," in which grief is confined to the personal sphere, foreclosing its potential as a site of political resistance.

Alternative media partially disrupt these grammars by including survivor testimony and contextualizing abuse histories. However, they often remain vulnerable to "affective containment"—where affective imagery and emotional narratives substitute for structural analysis and foreclose political mobilization. Only queer-feminist outlets like *Bianet* and *Kaos GL* consistently re-inscribe femicide as political violence, linking mourning to critique and resistance. Taken together, these patterns illustrate how Turkish media function as structures of necropolitical domination (Mbembe, 2019), regulating which deaths are narratable, mournable, and politically legible. Through selective visibility and framing, media outlets distribute grievability unevenly, reinforcing patriarchal-authoritarian norms and shaping the moral economy of public mourning.

5.2. Erasure and Silence

5.2.1. Uneven Visibility and the Necropolitics of Recognition

If cisgender women's deaths are spectacularized, trans and travesti deaths are often erased or misrepresented. This asymmetry is not incidental; it is a necropolitical performance. As Mbembe (2003) argues, selective visibility is a mode of governance: The state and its ideological apparatuses determine which lives are publicly mourned and which are rendered socially invisible. While cis female victims are framed as moral cautionary tales, trans victims are frequently misframed, minimized, or omitted altogether, producing what Butler (2004) and Zengin (2016) describe as ungrievability.

Mainstream coverage of Kadir Murat Sözübir's murder (Atik et al., 2021) exemplifies this dynamic. *DNA* reproduces the perpetrator's "trans panic" defense (Atik et al., 2021), quoting his claim that he "panicked when he realized." This framing casts trans identity as deception and danger, a discursive script identified by Billard and Zhang (2022) as legitimizing transphobic violence. *BirGün* version ("Fatih'te trans," 2021), while less sensational, remains entrapped in pro-government narrative structures. It emphasizes criminality and omits the structural conditions of transphobia, economic precarity, and social abandonment that shaped Sözübir's vulnerability.

Visually, *BirGün's* use of Sözübir's Instagram self-portrait (see Figure 4), a solitary figure in a dimly lit parking lot, evokes isolation and marginality. While not overtly voyeuristic, the image reproduces a sense of affective distance. The absence of relational or communal context reinforces what Chouliaraki (2006) describes as a mode of moral spectatorship: The viewer is positioned to observe rather than act. The image aestheticizes loneliness but fails to politicize the conditions that produce it.



Figure 4. Alternative media newspaper *BirGün's* visual framing of Kadir Murat Sözübir's transphobic killing. Source: "Fatih'te trans" (2021).

In contrast, queer-feminist outlets such as *Bianet* and *Kaos GL* transform this absence into critique. Their coverage foregrounds structural violence, judicial neglect, and community resistance. Through intimate

imagery, protest iconography, and explicit naming of transphobia, these platforms reframe mourning as political action. They resist the fragmentation of trans lives and insist on their legibility within broader necropolitical regimes.

5.2.2. Transphobic Normalizations and Journalistic Complicity

Trans murders in Turkey are rarely framed as hate crimes, and this omission reflects a broader pattern of journalistic complicity in transphobic normalization. The case of Ecem Seçkin, as reported by *Bianet* (Yılmaz, 2024), illustrates the transformative power of naming. The article quotes the perpetrator's courtroom claim that Seçkin "was not a woman," exposing how transphobia is embedded not only in social discourse but also in juridical reasoning. This framing reveals how gender nonconformity is pathologized and weaponized to justify violence, a discursive pattern that has been widely associated with trans-panic legitimization, and which aligns with broader critiques of media representation discussed by Billard and Zhang (2022).

Bianet's visual strategy resists this logic. The article pairs its critique with an unposed, everyday selfie of Seçkin, an image that restores her personhood without sensationalizing her death. This image is a casual, unposed, intimate, and resistant selfie. Denotatively, it is a photo of a young woman in a personal moment. At the same time, it stylistically resists the dominant media tropes that often frame trans women through spectacle, deviance, or tragedy (Bell-Metereau, 2019; Pearce et al., 2020). The connotative power of the image lies in its everydayness which invites the reader to relational modes of being, sensing, and witnessing. In other words, the image is carefully chosen to resist dominant visual regimes that shape how trans subjects are seen and interpreted, aligning with the representational critiques articulated by Billard and Zhang (2022).

By explicitly identifying the murder as a hate crime and condemning judicial neglect, *Bianet* interrupts the necropolitical logic of erasure. Its reportage links personal loss to structural abandonment, state inaction, lack of legal protection, and societal transphobia, demonstrating the power of feminist CDA to expose macro-level inequalities through micro-level textual and visual framing (Lazar, 2007, 2018). This approach exemplifies queer feminist witnessing: the act of transforming grief into political critique and resistance (Buscemi, 2023; Haritaworn et al., 2014; Zengin, 2016, 2024). In doing so, *Bianet* challenges the dominant media grammars that render trans lives legible only in death, and even then, only through distorted or dehumanizing frames. Its coverage insists that mourning must be politicized, and that justice requires not only recognition but structural accountability.

5.2.3. Writing Against Disappearance: *Kaos GL* and the Politics of the Wall

The murder of Sudenaz U., as covered by *Kaos GL* (Tar, 2024), exemplifies counter-documentation in the face of institutional silence. The graffiti image reading "trans murders are political" operates as visual testimony against the bureaucratic erasure of trans lives (see Figure 5). Denotatively, it captures unsanctioned public writing; stylistically, it is raw and immediate; connotatively, it transforms urban space into a site of memory and resistance; ideologically, it asserts collective refusal to accept invisibility (Haritaworn et al., 2014; Zengin, 2024).



Figure 5. *Kaos GL's* visual framing of the Sudenaz U's transphobic killing case. Source: Tar (2024).

In contexts where state institutions and mainstream media fail to record trans deaths, such imagery functions as a counter-archive of existence. It enacts what Mbembe (2019) describes as resistance to necropower, reclaiming visibility as a form of survival. The wall becomes a medium through which grief is politicized and silence is broken. *Kaos GL's* narrative embeds the graffiti within a broader critique of legal obstruction, including restricted case files and delayed indictments. The inscription is not merely aesthetic; it is a juridical protest. It challenges the mechanisms that render trans deaths administratively invisible and socially ungrievable. By situating the image within a discourse of state neglect and transphobic violence, *Kaos GL* transforms mourning into mobilization.

This act of public inscription resists the dominant media grammars that aestheticize or omit trans death. Instead, it affirms the political significance of naming, remembering, and demanding justice. In doing so, *Kaos GL* contributes to a queer feminist media praxis that refuses disappearance and insists on the visibility of lives systematically denied recognition.

5.2.4. The Epistemology of Silence

Comparative analysis of trans coverage reveals three systemic patterns of erasure. First, violence is justified through panic or self-defense claims, as seen in *DNA's* coverage of Kadir Murat Sözübir's murder (Atik et al., 2021). These narratives center the perpetrator's emotional state while casting trans identity as deception or provocation (Billard & Zhang, 2022). Second, reports omit structural factors such as systemic transphobia, economic precarity, and legal neglect. Even alternative outlets like *BirGün* ("Fatih'te trans," 2021), while less sensational, often fail to situate trans deaths within broader regimes of marginalization. Third, only sensational or exceptional cases receive coverage, while others vanish from public discourse. This uneven visibility reflects what Tuchman (1978) termed symbolic annihilation, now intensified by the logics of queer necropolitics (Kuntsman, 2014).

These omissions are not passive; they constitute an active discursive practice that sustains disposability. The refusal to name trans murders as hate crimes, to humanize victims, or to engage with structural violence enacts an affective economy of non-recognition. In this sense, silence is not absence but presence: a

necropolitical act that affirms the boundary between mournable and unmournable life (Butler, 2004; Zengin, 2016). Mainstream media's failure to document, contextualize, or politicize trans deaths reinforces the epistemic conditions under which violence is normalized and accountability deferred. By contrast, queer-feminist outlets challenge this logic, insisting that visibility must be paired with critique and that mourning must be mobilized toward justice.

5.3. Counter-Visualities and Resistance

5.3.1. Radical Care as Media Praxis

Within queer-feminist media platforms such as *Bianet* and *Kaos GL*, journalism becomes a practice of radical care (Mills, 1998; Pearce et al., 2020; Zengin, 2024), not as sentimentality, but as political labor. This form of care entails naming, witnessing, and archiving marginalized death in defiance of systemic erasure (Haritaworn et al., 2014; Zengin, 2024). It is a deliberate refusal to allow violence against trans/travesti/gender-nonconforming people to be forgotten, misframed, or depoliticized.

Through courtroom monitoring, protest documentation, and the use of intimate, unsensational imagery, these outlets transform reporting into a political ethics of mourning, in line with Butler's (2004) argument that public grief can resist derealization and affirm the grievability of marginalized lives. Mourning is not privatized or aestheticized; it is politicized. *Bianet*'s coverage of Sevda Kuş (Kepenek, 2024), for example, pairs legal critique with protest iconography, reframing grief as indictment. *Kaos GL*'s publication of graffiti reading "trans murders are political" (Tar, 2024) turns urban space into a counter-archive, asserting visibility where the state refuses recognition. This media praxis challenges dominant grammars of spectacle and silence. It insists that grief must be public, structurally contextualized, and mobilized toward justice. In doing so, queer-feminist outlets enact a form of journalistic resistance in which care is not passive empathy but active confrontation with necropolitical regimes.

5.3.2. Re-Inscribing Life: *Bianet*'s Feminist Witnessing

In *Bianet*'s coverage of Sevda Kuş (Kepenek, 2024) and Ecem Seçkin (Yılmaz, 2024), feminist witnessing emerges through three interlinked semiotic operations. First, *Bianet* uses unposed portraits and personal images to restore subjectivity. In Seçkin's case, the everyday selfie resists spectacle and affirms her identity beyond the moment of death. The image is banal in form but powerful in function, denotatively ordinary, connotatively present, and ideologically relational, aligning with Mills's (1998) feminist stylistic analysis and resonating with Billard and Zhang's (2022) critique of representational logics in trans media production. Second, the reporting explicitly names institutional failures, judicial leniency, psychiatric defenses like "momentary madness," and systemic transphobia. These critiques expose how legal and media systems reproduce impunity and invisibility. Third, mourning is reframed as a public protest. In the case of Sevda Kuş, the protest sign "no to the love that kills" transforms grief into accusation, recoding "love" as patriarchal violence. The image and its framing invite readers to engage not only emotionally but also politically.

Together, these strategies mobilize counter-memory practices that challenge necropolitical erasure, drawing on Zengin's (2016) trans/feminist critique of gendered violence and memorialization. *Bianet*'s feminist reportage refuses containment and insists on visibility, accountability, and structural transformation. It re-inscribes life not as spectacle, but as resistance.

5.3.3. *Kaos GL* and the Archive of the Street

Kaos GL's coverage of Sudenaz U. (Tar, 2024) extends queer-feminist media praxis into the public sphere where resistance is inscribed not only in text but on walls. The graffiti reading "trans murders are political" functions as a counter-documentation, an ephemeral yet enduring visual testimony against bureaucratic silence and juridical neglect.

The image, denotatively, captures unsanctioned public writing. Stylistically, it is raw and defiant, resisting aesthetic polish. Connotatively, it transforms urban space into a communal archive of dissent. Ideologically, it asserts a collective refusal to accept invisibility, aligning with Glissant's (1997) notion of the right to opacity and the rejection of state-sanctioned visibility regimes that demand respectability or victimhood for recognition.

Kaos GL's narrative embeds this graffiti within a broader critique of legal obstruction, including restricted case files and delayed indictments. The act of photographing the graffiti becomes a form of journalistic witnessing, blurring the boundary between reportage and activism. It affirms that to represent death ethically is to politicize it, to name it, to contextualize it, and to resist its erasure. In doing so, *Kaos GL* transforms mourning into militant memory. The wall becomes a medium of survival, a site where grief is not privatized but made public, insurgent, and enduring. This gesture exemplifies how queer-feminist media reclaim visibility as resistance, refusing the necropolitical logic that renders trans lives disposable.

5.3.4. Counter-Visualities as Necropolitical Refusal

Across queer-feminist media, counter-visualities operate through three interlinked processes that resist dominant necropolitical grammars.

First, these outlets foreground everyday, unsensational images—selfies, protest signs, intimate portraits—over forensic spectacle. This visual strategy restores subjectivity and challenges the aestheticization of death. Second, individual killings are explicitly linked to systemic transphobia, patriarchal impunity, and legal neglect. The coverage names hate crimes, critiques judicial defenses, and situates mourning within broader structures of abandonment. Third, grief is reframed as a public protest and collective indictment. Visual and textual elements invite readers to move beyond empathy toward accountability and mobilization.

These practices re-inscribe grievability, challenging the necropolitical division between visible and invisible suffering (Butler, 2004; Zengin, 2016). They also demonstrate the transformative potential of feminist CDA when paired with visual framing: Textual critique gains embodied resonance when coupled with affective imagery that demands justice rather than pity (Lazar, 2018; Rodríguez & Dimitrova, 2011). In doing so, queer-feminist media enact a refusal not only of silence but also of the terms under which recognition is granted. Their counter-visualities assert that to represent death ethically is to politicize it, to name its conditions, and to demand structural change.

5.4. Comparative Synthesis of Media Necropolitics and Feminist Interruption

The comparative synthesis of the case analyses and Table 1 reveals distinct ideological and visual regimes that structure the mediation of gendered death in the Turkish press. Across outlets, representations of femicide and transphobic killings operate as technologies of governance, producing a stratified visibility in which grief is selectively distributed and recognition is ideologically contingent. Islamist and pro-government media frame gendered killings through spectacle, sentimentalism, and moral pedagogy, transforming structural violence into private tragedy and aestheticized morality tales. Their reliance on crime-scene imagery, emotional spectacle, and perpetrator-centered narration sustains patriarchal authority while depoliticizing violence.

By contrast, alternative media offer partial disruption; they humanize victims and occasionally highlight systemic neglect yet remain constrained by affective containment and editorial caution. Their narratives oscillate between empathy and silence, revealing the limits of oppositional journalism within a polarized public sphere. In sharp contrast, queer-feminist outlets such as *Bianet* and *Kaos GL* produce counter-visualities that re-politicize death through protest, care, and collective mourning. Their use of graffiti, protest banners, and intimate imagery transforms mourning into a form of critique, reclaiming visibility for those rendered ungrievable.

This uneven terrain exemplifies what Mbembe (2019) defines as necropolitical governance: the regulation of life and death through symbolic and affective economies. Following Butler's (2004) notion of grievability, the data illustrate how Turkish media hierarchize which lives are mourned and which are erased, and how public empathy is rationed along ideological lines. The refusal to name trans murders as hate crimes, the centering of perpetrator psychology, and the privatization of grief all function as mechanisms that sustain this necropolitical order.

Methodologically, combining feminist CDA with Rodríguez and Dimitrova's four-stage visual framing model allows for a granular understanding of how micro-level textual and visual choices, lexical framing, source selection, and image composition generate macro-level effects of recognition and erasure. In doing so, the study extends previous femicide scholarship (Fairbairn & Dawson, 2013; Lloyd & Ramon, 2017; Richards et al., 2013) by integrating transphobic killings into a unified analytical matrix, revealing shared patterns of disposability across different embodiments of femininity.

Ultimately, this synthesis demonstrates that Turkish media do not merely mirror gendered violence; they mediate and moralize it, constructing hierarchies of life and loss. Within this regime, queer-feminist journalism emerges as a site of feminist interruption: it refuses the spectacle of death, archives marginalized lives, and reclaims mourning as a political act. When such journalism insists that "trans murders are political," it exposes the structure behind every spectacle and every silence, transforming journalism from documentation into resistance, from mourning into mobilization, and from witnessing into the practice of living politically against the machinery of ungrievability.

6. Conclusion

This article has critically examined the representational politics surrounding fatal violence against women and transgender/travesti/gender-nonconforming communities in Turkey, arguing that such deaths are symbolically and materially embedded within a broader necropolitical regime. Our findings underscore how Islamist and pro-government media participate in these regimes not only through sensationalism or moral justification, but often through a more radical form of exclusion: outright erasure.

Unlike their sensational coverage of cis women's deaths, Islamist and pro-government media outlets frequently refuse to report on the deaths of trans and queer people at all, effectively denying their social existence. This strategy of omission resonates with Bayramoğlu's (2021) analysis of media discourse during the AIDS crisis, where queer people and migrant sex workers were framed as external to the imagined moral and national body. During that period, Islamist and nationalist media discursively quarantined queerness as a contaminating force. Today, that same media logic operates through silence rather than spectacle. This shift from hypervisibility to non-recognition represents not an improvement but a transformation in necropolitical strategy towards an epistemic and affective form of violence that renders inevitable deaths unreportable and ungrievable.

Even alternative media, while more willing to engage, frequently do so within the boundaries of heteronormative and nationalist respectability. As discussed above, alternative media often remain constrained by the foundational framings of state-aligned news agencies. Much like the earlier pathologization of queer subjects during the AIDS crisis (Bayramoğlu, 2021), current portrayals of murdered women and transgender people continue to obscure the political and systemic nature of their deaths. The repetition of such framings reflects a broader necropolitical order in which the lives of women and transgender/travesti/gender-nonconforming people are continually exposed to violence and denied full recognition. This phenomenon reveals the deep entrenchment of hegemonic media logic, even in critical spaces.

Our most notable finding is how queer feminist alternative news media disrupt these dominant narratives by transforming both the language and visual aesthetics of reporting. Through gestures of radical care, protest, and the refusal to dehumanize or depoliticize their subjects, these platforms enact what we identify as a practice of "re-inscribing life and grievability." They offer counter-memorial spaces where those denied life, grief, and mourning in Islamist, pro-government, and even alternative media are symbolically and politically reclaimed. Rather than reinforcing the inevitability of death, these outlets articulate a vision of justice grounded in affective solidarity, collective memory, and structural critique.

However, queer feminist media initiatives remain structurally fragile, often lacking the financial and institutional resources to sustain robust journalism. As a result, their coverage is often restricted to trial monitoring and protest reporting, without entirely disrupting the dominant media grammars that depoliticize gender-based violence. Together, the strategic silence of pro-government media and the structural constraints of alternative media reveal the pressing need for a queer feminist media praxis, one that not only gives visibility to marginalized deaths but also politicizes them through intersectional critique.

Moreover, our cross-media, cross-ideological approach reveals how stories are told and the political economies of recognition, denial, and mourning that structure the media landscape in Turkey. In doing so,

we extend current debates by shifting the focus from representational fidelity to the affective power of media narratives in governing life and death. Nevertheless, this research only sheds light on the mediation of death in the context of fatal violence targeting women and transgender/travesti/gender-nonconforming people. As discussed, queer feminist media practices challenge dominant ideologies, reimagining journalism as a site of resistance, care, and collective survival in the face of systemic erasure. Ultimately, this research underscores the pressing need for further investigation into the shrinking space of alternative media and the intersection of media necropolitics, particularly its impact on systematically marginalized and gendered communities.

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