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„Wer ist schuld? Gender- und nationalitätsbezogene Effekte von Femizidberichten"

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Disclaimer

The study presented in this thesis was part of a larger research project that I conducted together with colleagues of the AdME-team at the IPKW Vienna. This is why I write "we" when describing our considerations and procedure. However, the thesis itself and the described experiment were written and carried out by myself.

1 Introduction

In 2020 at least 139 women[1] were killed by their current or former partners in Germany (Bundeskriminalamt (BKA), 2021). For Austria, the relative numbers are even higher with 31 murders of women in the same period (Autonome Österreichische Frauenhäuser (AÖF), 2022). These so-called femicides[2] are only the most visible tip of the iceberg of gender-based intimate partner violence (Zara & Gino, 2018), which one in four women in Germany experience (European Union Agency for Human Rights, 2014). Every person can go through violence in a relationship but for women, the danger is much higher: 80% of the victims of intimate partner violence (IPV) in Germany that are known to the police are women (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend (BMFSFJ), 2021)[3]. Despite the comparably high prevalence of gender-based violence and its possibly fatal outcome, research and policy efforts regarding this issue have only recently been taken on (Hochschule für Polizei und öffentliche Verwaltung Nordrhein-Westfalen (HSPV NRW), 2022). In this context experts and activists address criticism to the mass media for their way of reporting on femicides. They particularly criticize the downplaying of the systemic problem behind femicides by calling the murders "relationship tragedies" and similar (e. g. Dyroff et al., 2020; Lambrecht, 2021). First evidence from research into German-language news coverage of femicides and IPV underpins international findings of questionable patterns of victim blaming and trivialization (Meltzer, 2021; Wetzstein & Prinzellner, 2021). This minimization of the widespread structural problem of IPV and femicides adds a second layer onto the already existing gender-biased discrimination and consequently reduces the chances of change. This gives sufficient grounds to ask how the news coverage about femicides might influence its audience.

So far communication scholars have focused on the content of femicide news coverage and have not yet studied possible media effects of femicide reports on recipients. Previous research has shown how the consumption of general crime news can not only affect the audience's perceptions and fear but also cultivate and sustain stereotypes (e. g. Arendt, 2012; Custers & Van

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[1] By "women" or "female gender" we understand persons who are presenting as female or are read as such in the social sphere.

[2] The term "femicide", first coined by sociologist Diana Russell in 1976, usually describes all forms of murders of women due to their gender. This phenomenon is prevalent wherever society is based on a patriarchal system (Corradi et al., 2016). In Western Europe cases in which femicides are carried out by (former) partners or family members make up the overwhelming share (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), 2021). But it should still be noted, though, that there are other occurrences as well. However, femicides carried out by male family members or men who are not the victim's partners are not captured in the official crime statistics in Germany.

[3] Experts believe that the dark figures for male victims of IPV are much higher due to social role expectations. Recent studies support this assumption (Jud et al., 2022). Nevertheless, for femicides the gender disparity is evident (BKA, 2021).

den Bulck, 2013). The reason for these effects lies in the disproportional and decidedly negative journalistic portrayal of foreign perpetartors (e. g. Hestermann, 2021; Vaes et al., 2019). Some studies even found connections between crime news coverage and political voting as well as real-life violence against marginalized groups like asylum seekers (Couttenier et al., 2019; Mastrorocco & Minale, 2018; Scheufele & Brosius, 2001). To date, the attention of researchers in the field of media effects has focused on the criminal offenders and their characteristics, as the inherently negative connotation of the news can easily lead to adverse outcomes for the respective social group. Victims or survivors of violent crimes have so far only been side notes in this context. This research focus is also in line with ongoing debates in the field of journalism on whether to reveal the nationality of a perpetrator or not (Dittrich & Klimmt, 2021; Schade, 2017).

The relationship and cultural proximity between offender and victim might very well be a deciding factor for effects on recipients, though (Pfeiffer et al., 2018; Schmuck et al., 2021). This applies in particular to the topic of IPV and femicides, for which not only the origin of the involved parties but also their gender are highly salient as social group characteristics. As a result, the issue seems to have great potential for political instrumentalization (Menke, 2020): When a girl was killed supposedly by Afghan men, then-chancellor of Austria Sebastian Kurz for instance stated to the press that there would be "no deportation stop to Afghanistan" with him (Punz, 2021).

With this study, we therefore expand the research field of crime news effects on the pressing topic of femicide, taking into account the gendered relationship between perpetrator and victim as well as their characteristics. The goal is to answer the questions of if and how femicide news influences its audience. For this purpose, we conducted an experiment to test how the nationalities of victims and perpetrators portrayed in femicide reports might affect recipients' attitudes. We discuss the findings of our moderated mediation analysis as well as its implications for the journalism practice.

2 Femicide on the news

Since most people in Europe do not have personal experience with grave violent crimes, media reports are the main source of information on this topic (Althoff, 1999). The coverage of lethal violence against women and girls has therefore been the focus of many studies from severely affected regions so far. Researchers have come to the unanimous verdict that crime news generally depict a distorted picture of reality: Violent crimes, as well as foreign offenders, are overrepresented in comparison to their actual numbers (Hestermann, 2021; Hribernik, 2019;

Ihle et al., 2015). Similarly, scholars have detected several problematic patterns in the news coverage of IPV and femicides. Broadly speaking, the media ignores the systemic problem of gendered violence in patriarchal societies (e. g. Andelsman & Mitchelstein, 2019; Halim & Meyers, 2010; Johanssen & Garrisi, 2019; Richards et al., 2011). Instead, femicides are described as tragic but singular cases of escalating violence within relationships (Sela-Shayovitz, 2018; Spies, 2020; Sweeney, 2012). The societal level of the problem is played down (Koç, 2020) and the perpetrators might even receive understanding (Isaacs & Mthembu, 2018). And instead of putting the cases in the social context, journalists hold the victims at least partly responsible (Bagai & Faimau, 2021; Basdogan, 2021; Mason & Monckton-Smith, 2008). As Taylor (2009) showed in a Florida newspaper content analysis, women get blamed both directly and indirectly for their murders. In a large-scale text analysis of newspapers, Belmonte and Negri (2021) confirmed these findings for Italian coverage of gender-based violence. Accordingly, the female victims are met with stereotypes and prejudices. At the same time, the male perpetrators are pulled out of the spotlight. These media paradigms have been observed in several cultural settings and can't be pigeonholed within socio-political categories, apart from a structure that stems from patriarchy.

For the German media landscape, Meltzer (2021) undertook an extensive content analysis of newspaper coverage of physical violence against women and girls. Its results mirror those from earlier studies in other regions: The overwhelming amount of articles report on killings, while everyday forms of violence are underrepresented. These numbers stand in contrast to the official police statistics, according to which the fatal outcomes of gendered violence only make up less than one per cent of cases. Meltzer also identified patterns in the studied articles similar to her international colleagues. The biggest share of articles presented violence against female persons as singular cases and only a few reported thematically on the structural problem.

Cautious cause for hope can be found in the few studies that show slight signs of a change of mind in the way journalists handle femicides. According to these papers, reports in North America more often touch upon the structural relevance of violence in romantic relationships and previous incidents (Fairbairn & Dawson, 2013; Richards et al., 2011). Developments in Spain also illustrate the potential of conscientious media coverage in cooperation with societal awareness: Here journalistic and civil engagement joined forces and achieved success with political decision-makers (Comas-d'Argemir, 2015). A study from Turkey also showed how singular femicide cases can encourage social engagement through media attention (Eldén & Ekal, 2015). But the political instrumentalization of crimes always holds potential danger, as another Turkish

case shows. Here violence against women is once again used to promote patriarchal structures instead of abolishing them (Algan, 2020).

3 Victims and perpetrators of crime in the spotlight

Although communication research has long been looking into the question of to what extent and in which way journalism reports on crime, the portrayal of victims has only been a sidenote. Migrants and other social minorities rarely show up as victims of crimes in the news coverage, even though their relative risk of victimization is much higher than that of the native population (Bundesministerium des Innern und für Heimat (BKI), 2022). Instead, journalists seem to prefer native victims who are seen as innocent as possible and elicit sympathy and empathy in the recipients. Thus, cases with women and children as victims are favored (Hestermann, 2017; Lin & Phillips, 2014; Meltzer, 2021). But earlier studies also showed that for female victims of violent crimes less personal information is given to describe them (Anastasio & Costa, 2004). This lack of personalization might in turn reduce empathy and increase victim blaming among the recipients.

In contrast to their depiction as victims, migrants are much more present in the role of perpetrators in crime news. Measured by their actual proportion in the crime statistics, foreign suspects are dramatically overrepresented in the news, while native suspects are rarely identified as such (Dittrich & Klimmt, 2021; Hestermann, 2021; Hribernik, 2019). The same can be said for ethnic and religious minorities, whose characteristics even get emphasized. This is oftentimes accompanied by an especially negative and stereotypical description (Arendt et al., 2017; Jäger et al., 2002). In this context, the lack of differentiation by journalists between single perpetrators and societal groups is particularly problematic. One example of this is how Muslims are put into context with religiously motivated terrorist attacks (Betus et al., 2021; Hoewe & Bowe, 2018; Kanji, 2018). The media also establish and perpetuate stereotypes such as "dangerous foreigners" or "criminal asylum seekers" this way (Thiele, 2015).

3.1 Social identity in the context of crime

Stereotypes are one possible outcome when individuals are ascribed to a different social group than one's own. This grouping is related to humans' basic need for orientation in their social environment, as described in the concept of Social Identity Theory (SIT), first introduced by Tajfel and Turner (1986). One mechanism to help with this need is the categorization of other people into those close to us, the ingroup, and those who do not belong with us, the outgroup. These classifications are made based on various characteristics, such as ethnicity, nationality, or religion, that are automatically assessed. Members of the own ingroup are consequently

evaluated more positively while people belonging to the outgroup are devaluated (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). This ingroup bias is also a factor that communication scholars need to take into account when researching media effects. Regarding crime news, the categorization of the depicted actors into the in- or outgroup might be a deciding factor in influencing recipients. Considering the intergroup threat theory, a biased evaluation of offenders or victims could work as a mediator for the link between crime content and attitudes towards social groups. The perception of threat from an outgroup can have several effects, including a heightened sense of ingroup-belonging and negative attitudes toward others (Branscombe et al., 1999; Stephan et al., 2016). For the context of terror news, Knupfer and Matthes (2021) found that the religion of victims significantly predicted perceived similarity to them, which in turn had affective and cognitive effects on recipients. For crime news, Custers and Van den Bulck (2013) showed how the level of identification with the victims determines the relationship between media consumption and the fear of becoming a victim oneself.

Based on SIT and previous findings we assume that nationality is an important factor in the categorization into social groups. Therefore, we expect to see higher levels of identification with victims of the same nationality compared to foreigners.

> H1: Readers of articles with German victims perceive more similarity to them than readers of articles with Afghan victims.

The boundaries between the ingroup and the outgroups might be even stronger when there is a feeling of threat from the outside (Branscombe et al., 1999). If a person of the own social group is attacked by a foreigner, this difference in characteristics is more salient. This phenomenon is reflected not least in the way the police deal with offences, as an analysis of crime statistics showed (Pilgram et al., 2012). According to the authors, the cultural proximity between perpetrator and victim is crucial. Also, the willingness to report violent crimes depends on this relationship, with the highest rate seen for foreign perpetrators (Pfeiffer et al., 2018). Dixon and Maddox (2005) also found that heavy crime news consumers evaluated victims of Black perpetrators more favorable than those of Whites. Therefore, we assume that the perceived similarity to German victims is the strongest when the perpetrators are identified as Afghans.

> H2: The positive effect of German victims on perceived similarity is stronger if the perpetrators are Afghan than if they are a) German or they are b) undisclosed.

3.2 Perpetrators and victims of femicides

The link between femicides and the origin of the perpetrators has barely been researched to date. Preliminary results of a content analysis of German-speaking newspapers give hints that

a perpetrator's migration background might affect how the cases are presented (Wetzstein & Prinzellner, 2021). In her content analysis, Meltzer (2021) showed that German newspapers are more likely to identify the male perpetrators' nationality or origin than that of the female victims. Likewise, other potentially stereotyping characteristics like the actors' religion and especially their residential status are way more salient for the perpetrators.

As mentioned before, victims have only played a minor role for the research of crime news effects to date. One exception is a study by Schmuck and colleagues (2021), that found that the religion of the victims of Islamist-based terror attacks decides the amount of emotional reaction in recipients of news reports. Muslim victims accordingly receive less compassion if their religion is emphasized – which in turn predicts less support for victim compensation. This is evidence of the fact that not only negative stereotypes based on the perpetrators' characteristics can have adverse effects on social groups. If some victims are seen as more worthy of support than others, this discriminates against already marginalized groups. In H2 we established the assumption that the relationship between the victims' and the perpetrators' nationalities will influence the readers' perception of similarity. Since ingroup members are seen more favorably than those of the outgroup, we assume that those victims that are seen as more similar will receive more leniency and understanding. In the context of femicides this means that they should not be made responsible for becoming the victim of gender-based violence, as has been observed in news coverage. Therefore, we assume an effect of the victims' nationality on victim blaming, mediated through perceived similarity:

H3: Perceived similarity to the victims is negatively associated with victim blaming.

3.3 Adverse effects of crime news

Another potentially problematic aspect of crime news coverage lies in the previously described disparity in the presentation of "native" and "foreign" suspects, which can affect the audience's perceptions of and attitudes towards specific groups (e. g. Dixon, 2006; Dixon & Azocar, 2007; Mastro et al., 2009; Vaes et al., 2019). This effect can even go beyond affective and cognitive components and influence recipients' actions. One example of this would be how the approval of harsh sanctions such as the death penalty can be influenced by media reports about minorities as perpetrators (Dixon, 2006). European scholars also observed a relationship between exposure to crime news and the outcomes of political elections from which anti-immigration parties benefited (Burscher et al., 2015; Couttenier et al., 2019). And even real-life violence against minority groups could be put into context with news coverage about crimes committed by foreigners (Scheufele & Brosius, 2001).

To elicit potentially discriminating effects journalists don't necessarily need to describe foreign perpetrators as different or in a more negative way, than suspects of the majority population. It is already sufficient that they constantly emphasize their belonging to a minority for these perpetrators, which cognitively activates this information in the recipients. This effect is also described as priming since the processing of further information is prepared or influenced during this procedure. In regard to crime coverage, this means that the mention of for example the nationality of a suspect produces a connection with the messages that are presented at the same time. Associations like that of "dangerous foreigners" in turn then lead to a processing of the content that is consistent with the activated stereotype (Hansen, 1989; Dixon & Maddox, 2005). As a result, the depiction of crime and the involved actors can affect attitudes towards the respective societal groups. These effects might even go beyond the concrete exposure situation. Through the priming, characteristics deciding a person's belonging to a group, such as nationality, ethnicity or religion, are especially salient. These attributions will then be used to categorize people into the in- or outgroup. In an experimental study, Dixon and Maddox (2005) even showed that US recipients' memory performance can depend on a perpetrator's skin color. For the German-speaking context this means that if crime news routinely mentions the nationality of suspects if they are *not* natives, the attribute "foreign" might become crucial for the categorization as criminal or dangerous. In a 2007 study, Dixon and Azocar found that heavy crime news users automatically assume perpetrators to be Black, even if the skin color was not mentioned. This is clear evidence of a priming effect on the "Black criminals" stereotype.

For the Austrian context, Arendt (2012) showed that the constant mentioning of perpetrators' nationality can not only increase the assumed share of foreign criminals but also the implicit stereotype of "criminal foreigners", that is, the automatic association between the two characteristics. To activate these implicit associations, already small doses of stimuli in form of crime news are sufficient (Arendt, 2013). In contrast to explicit stereotypes containing clear judgments, media content might even affect implicit stereotyping in the recipients if they do not believe the presented information to be true. In general, the context of violence and terror seems to strengthen the priming effect for xenophobic stereotypes (Saleem & Anderson, 2013).

The relationship between the presence of offenders' nationality and attitudes towards the respective social groups has been well established in literature. It remains unclear, though, how the victims' characteristics come to play in this relationship. For the phenomenon of femicides, it is conceivable that the presence of foreign perpetrators will activate an outgroup bias. In line with the mechanism hypothesized in H3, for victims perceived as very similar to themselves, recipients might try to put the blame on factors outside of them. Then the cause for the femicides

might be seen in the cultural background of the killers. But this effect could even more so be assumed for constellations in which both the perpetrators and the victims are foreigners, thus making it a problem "of the others". Since we cannot assume a clear relationship between perceived similarity to the victims and the causal attribution of femicides as an imported problem we propose a more explorative research question:

> RQ1: How is perceived similarity to the victims related to the assumption that femicides are an Afghan problem imported to Germany?

4 Gender as a moderator

Another factor that might play a role in the effects of femicide news is the gender of the recipients. So far, gender is usually not more than a control variable for researchers studying the effects of crime news. However, intimate partner violence and femicides are clearly gendered issues. Therefore, gender should also be a point of focus when investigating possible outcomes. In societies built on patriarchal structures such as Germany and Austria, people make different experiences in their life based on their gender, due to an unequally distributed access to power. One of the results is that women are four times more likely to experience physical or sexual violence than men (BMFSFJ, 2021). We can accordingly assume that women have more first or second-hand experiences with (physically) abusive relationships and the difficulties of leaving them. As the affected group of femicides, they might also be more knowledgeable about the underlying structural causes and the patriarchal mechanisms that discriminate against them. These assumptions are supported by the fact that men show more misogynistic attitudes in general (Rottweiler & Gill, 2021) and agree stronger with myths about domestic violence (Peters, 2003) than women. In a study investigating the effects of news coverage about sexual violence, Mastro and colleagues (2009) found a doubled ingroup bias for white men, showing more understanding for similar perpetrators. Accordingly, we expect women to show an ingroup bias towards victims they perceive as similar in regard to the attributed causes of the murder:

> H4: The negative relationship between perceived similarity and victim blaming is stronger for women than for men.

If women see similar victims as less responsible for their own death because of their actions or characteristics, they might blame other factors for the femicide. As argued previously for RQ1, such a factor might be the origin of the perpetrator. However, we also assume that women as potential victims of IPV and femicides have more experience with and knowledge of the issue as a general problem of patriarchal societies. Therefore, we can't make out a clear hypothesis for the moderating effect of gender on the relationship between perceived similarity to the

victims and seeing femicides as an imported problem. This is why we propose the following research question:

RQ2: How does the readers' gender affect the relationship between perceived similarity to the victims and the assumption that femicides are an Afghan problem?

To sum up all of the above considerations, we expect a moderated mediation of victims' nationality on causal attributions of femicides and IPV. Figure 1 shows our hypothesized model.
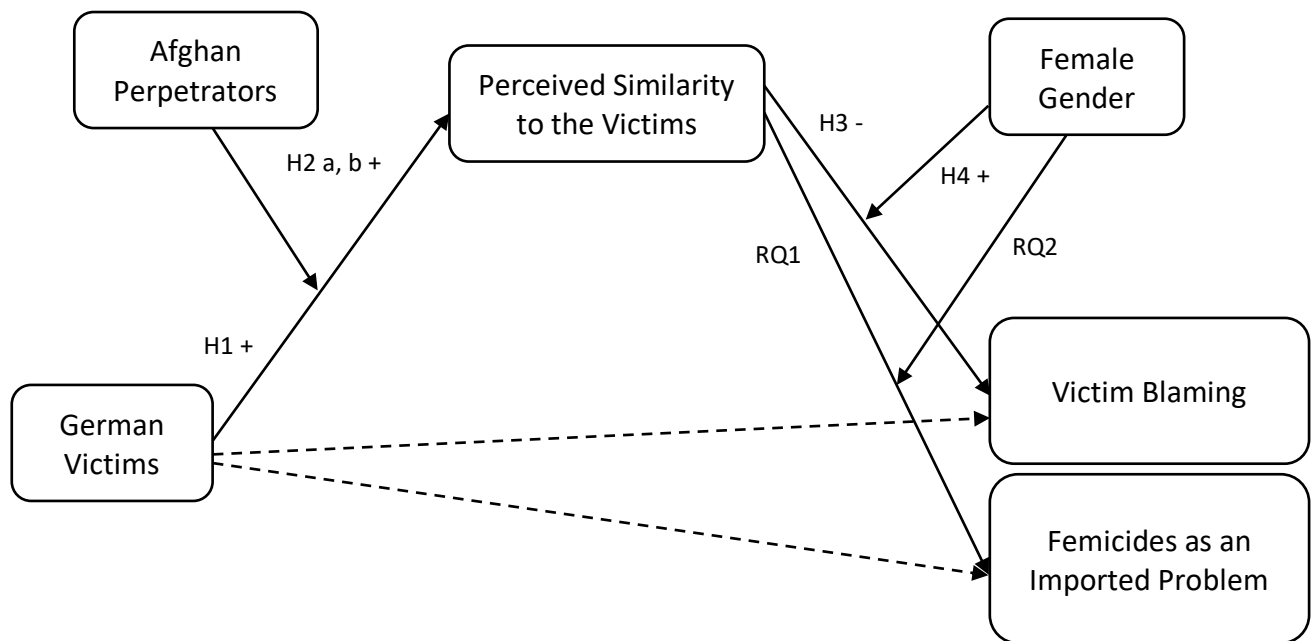
Figure 1. Conceptual model.

5 Method

5.1 Design

To test how the nationalities of victims and perpetrators portrayed in femicide news might affect recipients' attitudes we constructed a two-by-three between-subject survey experimental design. We manipulated the involved parties to be either German or Afghan. We chose this country of origin because Afghans make up the second largest non-European population of foreigners in Germany (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2022). But other than Syrians, the biggest group, they have been coming to Germany for a longer period of time (Destatis, 2021).

Therefore, they are probably not as strongly connected to the large inflow of asylum seekers in 2015/2016, which could skew readers' attitudes[4].

To address the ongoing journalistic debate on the necessity of mentioning the origin of offenders, we added a third option: in these cases, the nationality of the perpetrators was not disclosed. In addition to the six experimental groups, a control group was included to establish baseline levels for the dependent variables. Those participants were shown articles unrelated to the issue of femicides or crime.

The experiment was conducted online within a larger survey. Our experiment followed another one about an unrelated topic of incidental news exposure. Aiming for a representative sample of the German population, we commissioned the polling company respondi to recruit participants. Data was collected in April 2022. The experiment was programmed and conducted with Qualtrics. For statistical analysis, we used R Studio and the PROCESS v4.1 macro by Hayes (2022).

5.2 Sample

The obtained quota sample consists of 374 individuals living in Germany. Age ranges from 18 to 65 with a mean age of 44 years ($M = 43.72$, $SD = 13.1$). 44.9% of the participants are female, one person identifies neither as male nor female. Since our model includes gender as a moderator, we excluded this person to ensure statistical power and used gender as a dichotomous variable. The highest level of education for 54% of the sample is compulsory school or apprenticeship, 23.8% have a high school degree, and 22.2% have an academic degree. 97.9% of the participants hold German citizenship, one person is Syrian or Turkish, respectively. In six more cases respondents state other nationalities (1.6%). The overwhelming share of respondents states not to have any non-German speaking migration background (88.5%), 2.4% indicate a first-generation, and 9.1% a second-generation migration background. Since our hypotheses focus heavily on identification with the German nationality, we control for migration background in the analyses.

We exclude individuals from the data prior to analysis who finished the questionnaire in above-average short or long amounts of time or who failed attention checks. Participants are randomly assigned to the seven experimental conditions ($n = 51$-56). Randomization checks for age ($F_{(6, 372)} = 0.80$, $p = 0.57$), gender (X^2 (6, N=374) = 1.36, p = .97), education (X^2 (12, N=374) =

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[4] During this time period, in which many people came to Germany fleeing the wars in the Middle East and northern Africa, several incidents happened that have had a lasting impact on crime reporting (Arendt et al. 2017).

15.14, p = .23), nationality (X^2 (18, N=374) = 15.51, p = .63), migration background (X^2 (12, N=374) = 12.10, p = .44), political predisposition ($F(6, 372)$ = 1.86, p = 0.08), frequency ($F(6, 372)$ = 0.53, p = 0.79) and quality of contact to foreigners ($F(6, 372)$ = 0.60, p = 0.73), misogyny ($F(6, 372)$ = 0.51, p = 0.80), and violence acceptance ($F(6, 372)$ = 1.03, p = 0.41) show no significant results. Therefore, we can assume randomization was successful. Political predisposition shows a tendency toward significance, but the effect size is small (η^2 = .03) and we control for it in all further analyses. Descriptive statistics for all experiment groups are displayed in Appendix A.

5.3 Procedure

Before starting the questionnaire, participants have to agree to terms and conditions. Afterwards, we measure demographics (age, gender, formal education), misogyny, violence acceptance, and political predispositions. We also assess frequency and quality of contact with foreigners before the experimental exposure to prevent possible effects on the answers. Respondents are then assigned randomly to an experimental condition and are shown two articles reporting on cases of femicides (n = 323). The control group (n = 51) sees two articles unrelated to the topic, informing about tap water. The articles are shown in randomized order on one page each, with a timed button to ensure participants spend at least 20 seconds per text before continuing the survey. After stimulation, the dependent variables, as well as immutable controls such as nationality and migration background, are assessed.

In the introduction, we provide the participants with a trigger warning, informing them about the topic of the survey. After finishing the questionnaire, participants are debriefed thoroughly. The text contains information about the issue of IPV and femicides as well as hotlines to contact for help. Prior to the field phase, the internal review board at the Department of Communication, University of Vienna evaluated the study design including planned measures.

5.4 Stimulus material

We show participants of the six experimental groups two articles, each about a case of femicide. The articles are constructed to resemble the typical German-speaking (online) news coverage of the same topic in tonality, style, number of details given etc. The layout is rather simple but the color scheme leans towards German-language boulevard newspapers. The goal was to create stimuli that represent the real-life characteristics of femicide news coverage and to portray a spectrum of such cases (Reeves et al., 2016). Thus, in the first text, a younger victim was killed by her former, previously abusive partner, and in the second one, the actors were an older, long-time married couple. We manipulated the nationality of the victims and perpetrators

according to the experimental design and made it salient by repeating it in the text and head-lines. We did, however, make sure to not give any information about potential motives for the murders so as to not influence recipients' attitudes. Neither did we make any indications of cultural causes or victim blaming. The first article has 171/174 words (depending on the experimental condition), and the second one has 193/194 words. For the control group, the articles about tap water have comparable lengths (142 and 145). All stimuli can be found in Appendix B.

5.5 Measures

We measure all items on a 7-step Likert-type scale unless stated otherwise. We asked participants to indicate their agreement with items on scales ranging from 1 (not at all/very low) to 7 (entirely/very high). If needed, items were recoded to fit this scheme. Before calculating index mean scores we tested internal reliability with McDonald's Omega, using the psych package for R (Revelle, 2022).

5.5.1 Dependent variables

We originally measured victim blaming with nine items from Peters' (2003) Domestic Violence Myth Acceptance scale. Those items encompass statements relating to the factors of victim blaming based on their behavior or character, exoneration of the perpetrator and minimization of the issue. We translated the items to German and slightly adjusted them if deemed necessary. Exploratory factor analysis suggests three factors that can be interpreted in the dimensions of 1) blaming the woman for staying, 2) men not being able to control their temperament, and 3) downplaying IPV as a consequence of fights and minimization. However, only factor one displays an eigenvalue > 1. We thus continue analysis with victim blaming operationalized unidimensionally through the three items loading on this dimension (McDonald's ω = .78, 95% CI [.68, .90], Cronbach's α = .76, M = 3.76, SD = 1.64). For further analysis, we use the standardized coefficients obtained during the factor analysis.

We developed two items to test whether participants perceived femicides as a problem that was imported to Germany by Afghans. These were presented together with two "decoy" items in order to minimize priming effects on the respondents. As expected, these two statements lowered the reliability of the overall scale, thus we exclude them for the analysis. The two items referring to femicides as an imported issue correlate strongly (Spearman-Brown coefficient = .86). They are then scaled in the same way as the measures for victim blaming to allow

comparability of estimates[5]. All items representing the dependent variables as well as the mediator can be found in Appendix C.

5.5.2 Mediator and Moderators

We measure perceived similarity to the victims only in the femicide groups since the construct directly relates to the actors presented in the articles. Participants indicated their agreement with two statements based on Knupfer and Matthes (2021) (Spearman-Brown coefficient = 0.75, M = 2.90, SD = 1.62).

We recoded the nationality of the perpetrators into dummy variables before entering them into the models. Since there are three categories (German/Afghan/undisclosed), we run the models twice for each dependent variable switching the reference, so we can see the differences between all groups compared to each other. We introduced gender into the models as a dichotomous variable with 1 = female.

5.5.3 Covariates

To control for personal predispositions, we assessed misogyny with four items from Rottweiler and Gill's (2021) scale, which are also present in Piggott's (2004) scale on internalized misogyny in women. The resulting index proves to be reliable (McDonald's ω = .86, 95% CI [.75, .94], Cronbach's α = .76, M = 3.02, SD = 1.49). We initially measured violence acceptance with four items based on Ulbrich-Herrmann (2001). We dropped item four to ensure internal reliability of the scale (McDonald's ω = .87, 95% CI [.71, .88], Cronbach's α = .87, M = 1.98, SD = 1.35). Based on von Sikorski et al. (2021) and Knupfer and Matthes (2021) we also included frequency (1 = never to 7 = very often, M = 4.40, SD = 1.65) and quality of contact to foreigners. The latter was measured by two items on a seven-point Likert-scale, rating their experience as negative/positive and uncomfortable/comfortable and then combined into a mean score (Spearman-Brown coefficient = 0.96, M = 4.87, SD = 1.44). To indicate their political views, we asked participants to place themselves on a ten-point scale from 1 (= left) to 10 (= right) (M = 4.92, SD = 1.52). Apart from migration background we also control for age and education as demographics. We group participants into low (compulsory school, apprenticeship), middle (high school degree), and high (academic degree) categories of formal education. These were dummy coded, using the mid-level as reference in the models.

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[5] This was done by performing a minimum residual factor analysis with a one-factor solution. Factor scores were estimated with the "tenBerge" method (Revelle, 2021).

5.6 Manipulation check

After stimulus exposure, we asked participants about the nationalities of the victims and perpetrators in the articles they had just read. For either, they could choose between German, Afghan or not mentioned in the article. Fisher's exact tests for count data for both the victims ($p < .001$) and the perpetrators ($p < .001$) yield highly significant results. We thus deem the manipulation successful.

We are aware that the choice of Afghanistan as the foreign nationality in our stimuli might actually manipulate more factors than just the country of origin. Since Afghans come from an Islamic country, it is conceivable that German recipients expect Afghans to be Muslim. In addition, Afghans have come to Germany in recent decades primarily as refugees which could determine the majority population's image of them (bpb, 2019). To test participants' assumptions, we conducted a supplementary manipulation check. For this, we asked about the actors' religion (Christian, Muslim, not mentioned) and residential status (not asylum seekers, asylum seekers, not mentioned). Fisher's exact tests again show highly significant results for the religion of the victims ($p < .01$) and the perpetrators ($p < .001$). The same can be said for the residential status of the victims ($p < .001$) and the perpetrators ($p < .001$).

6 Results

Table 1 presents all regression models' results. Figures 2 and 3 visualize the results of the moderated mediation models for victim blaming and the assumption of femicides as an imported problem. Overall, we do not find many significant results. However, there is an indirect effect of victims' nationality on the level of victim blaming, via perceived similarity. This mediation effect is moderated by the perpetrators' nationality and the readers' gender.

German victims positively predict perceived similarity to the victims, compared to Afghan victims (b=0.86, SE=0.29, p=0.003). This effect is only significant when the perpetrators' nationality is entered into the model with the undisclosed condition as a reference group. In the second run, this time with Afghan perpetrators as the reference group to allow the comparison with German perpetrators, the direct effect of German victims on perceived similarity is not significant anymore (b=-0.13, SE=0.30, p=.674). Therefore, we have to reject H1 in which we assume a generally higher score of perceived similarity for German victims. Using Afghan perpetrators as the reference group to test the moderations proposed in H2, we find no significant interaction between victims and German perpetrators (b=0.60, SE=0.42, p=.167). Thus, we reject H2a). We do however find a significant positive moderation effect for the condition of undisclosed perpetrators (b=0.99, SE=0.41, p=0.018). If there is no mention of the offenders' origin,

participants perceive German victims as more similar to them than Afghans. This goes against our assumption in H2b), that Afghan perpetrators would strengthen the positive effect of German victims on perceived similarity. Hence, H2b) is also rejected. The interaction of victims' and perpetrators' nationalities on perceived similarity to the victims is depicted in figure 4. Perceived similarity to the victim groups does not differ significantly when comparing German perpetrators to either of the other conditions.

Perceived similarity is not directly associated with victim blaming (b=-0.01, SE=0.04, p=.870), thus rejecting H3 (control group baseline: M = -0.1, SD = 0.88). Neither is there a significant relationship between similarity to the victims and the assumption that femicides are an imported problem (b=0.01, SE=0.04, p=.896), answering RQ1 (control group baseline: M = 0.05, SD = 0.90). The interaction of perceived similarity to the victims and the readers' gender is not significantly related to victim blaming overall (b=-0.10, SE=0.05, p=.073). But probing yielded a conditional negative effect for the interaction of female gender and perceived similarity to the victims (b=-0.10, SE=0.04, p=.014). These numbers support H4, as the relationship is not significant for men. The interaction is visualized in figure 5. Additionally, the model results howed a negative conditional indirect effect of German victims' nationality on victim blaming via perceived similarity. This relationship is only significant for the combination of undisclosed perpetrators and female readers, though (b=-0.09, 95% CI [-0.20, -0.01]. To answer RQ2, we do not find a moderation of gender on the relationship between perceived similarity to the victims and the assumption of femicides as an imported problem (b=-0.07, SE=0.06, p=.252). To test the robustness of our findings we run the models again, once without control variables and once excluding participants with first generation migration background (n=8). The results do not differ from the previously observed effects, thus deeming them robust.

Table 1. Unstandardized path coefficients.

Variables	Perceived Similarity to the Victims				Victim Blaming		Femicides as Imported Problem	
	Perpetrators' Nationality Reference Group							
	Undisclosed		Afghan					
	b	*SE*	*b*	*SE*	*b*	*SE*	*b*	*SE*
Covariates								
Age	-0.02*	0.01	~		0.02***	0.00	0.01*	0.00
Education low	0.52*	0.22	~		0.16	0.11	-0.02	0.12
Education high	0.40	0.23	~		0.00	0.13	-0.18	0.13
Political predisposition	-0.09	0.06	~		0.09**	0.03	0.05	0.03
Migration background	-0.30	0.21	~		-0.02	0.11	-0.07	0.01
Frequency of contact	0.07	0.05	~		-0.02	0.03	0.02	0.03
Quality of contact	0.16*	0.06	~		-0.07	0.03	-0.17***	0.04
Misogyny	0.10	0.06	~		0.19***	0.03	0.07*	0.03
Violence acceptance	0.27***	0.07	~		0.05	0.04	0.17***	0.04
Predictors								
German victims	0.86**	0.29	-0.13	0.30	-0.01	0.09	-0.09	0.09
Undisclosed perpetrators			-0.63*	0.29				
German perpetrators	0.25	0.29	-0.38	0.29				
Afghan perpetrators	0.63*	0.29						
German victims X undisclosed perpetrators			0.99*	0.41				
German victims X German perpetrators	-0.41	0.41	0.60	0.42				
German victims X Afghan perpetrators	-0.99*	0.41						
Perceived similarity					-0.01	0.04	0.01	0.04
Gender[a]					-0.01	0.18	-0.02	0.19
Gender X perceived similarity					-0.10[b]	0.05	-0.07	0.06
Adj. R^2	0.18		~		0.34		0.28	

Note. *N* = 323.
[a]Male is the reference category.
[b]Probing yielded a significant effect for female gender (*b* = -0.10*, *SE* = 0.04).
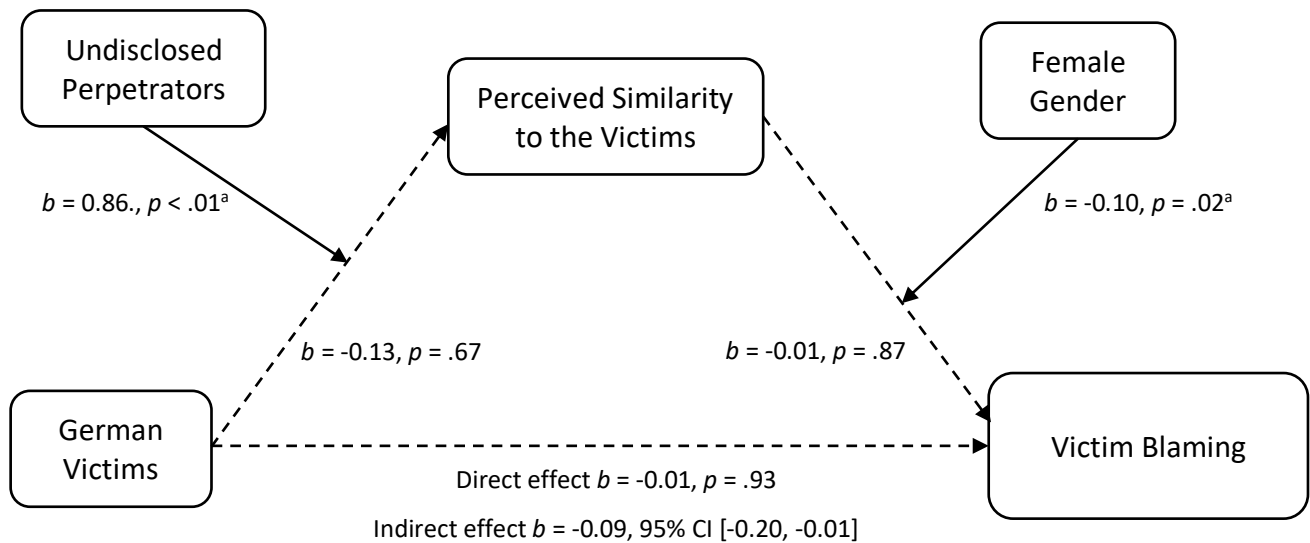*p<.05. **p<.01. ***p<.001.

Figure 2. Moderated mediation model for victim blaming.

Notes. German victims as a predictor of victim blaming, fully mediated by perceived similarity to the victims, conditional for undisclosed perpetrators and female readers. The reference group of perpetrators' nationality is Afghan. Dotted arrows indicate insignificant effects, solid arrows represent significant effects. Covariates (age, education, political predisposition, migration background, contact frequency and quality with foreigners, misogyny, violence acceptance) are not displayed but statistically controlled.
[a]Values were obtained by probing the moderator variable.

Figure 3. Moderated mediation model for the assumption that femicides are an imported problem.

Notes. The reference group of perpetrators' nationality is Afghan. Dotted arrows indicate insignificant effects, solid arrows represent significant effects. Covariates (age, education, political predisposition, migration background, contact frequency and quality with foreigners, misogyny, violence acceptance) are not displayed but statistically controlled.
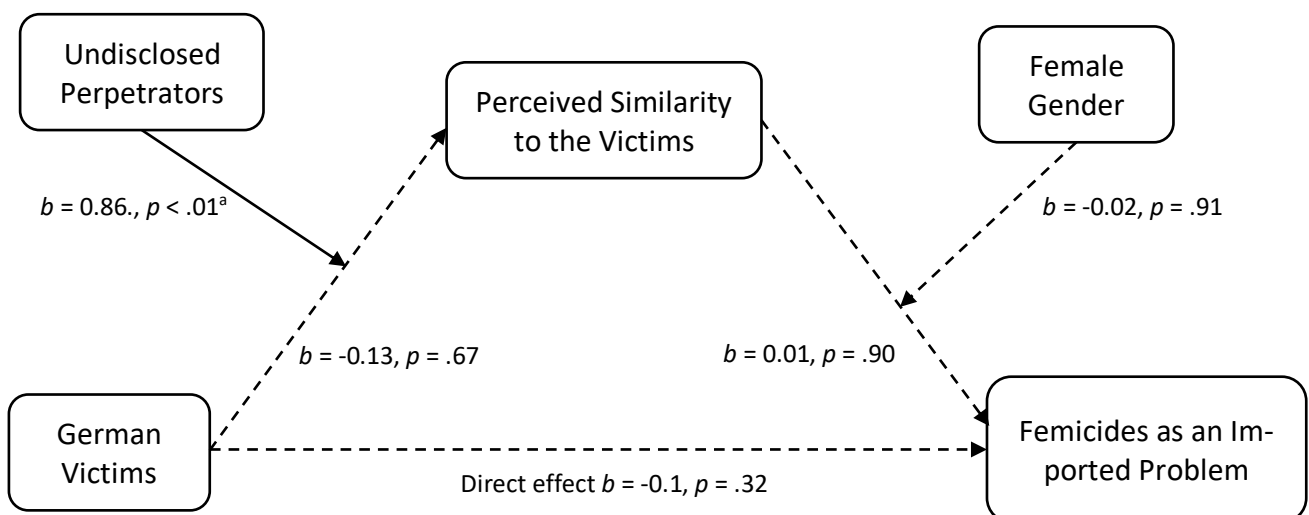[a]Values were obtained by probing the moderator variable.
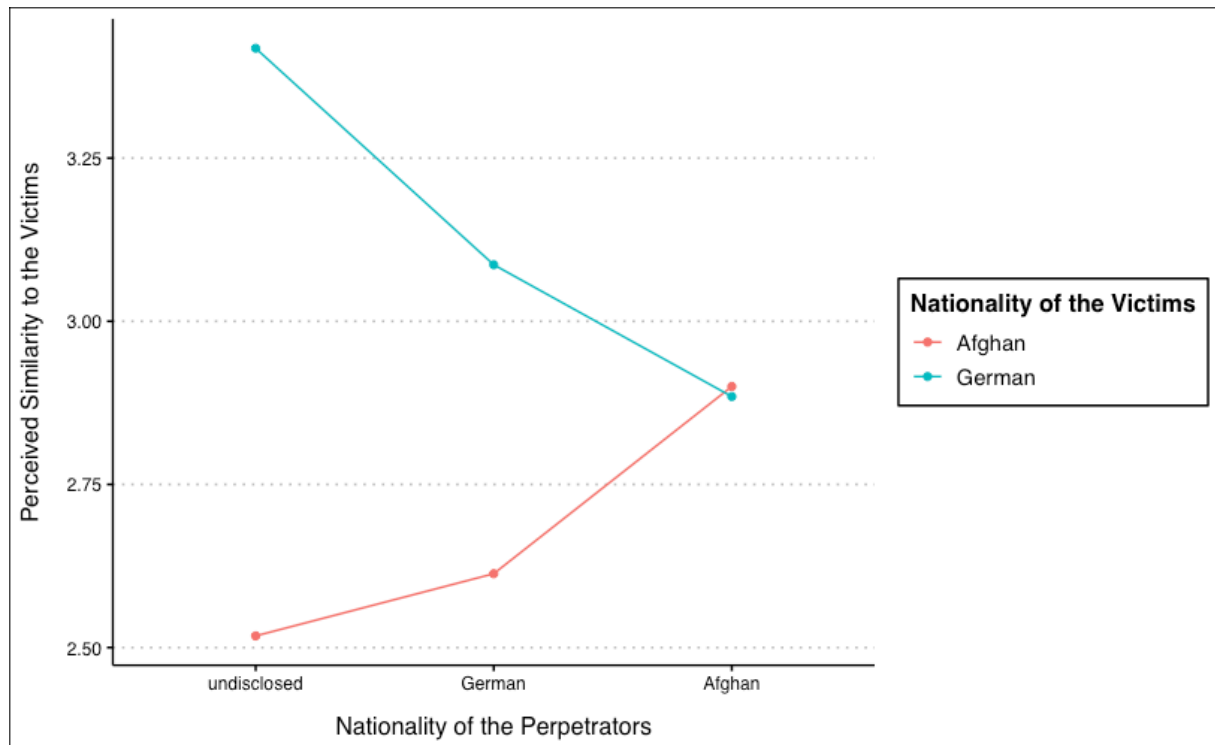
Figure 4. Interaction effect of the victims' and perpetrators' nationalities on perceived similarity to the victims.
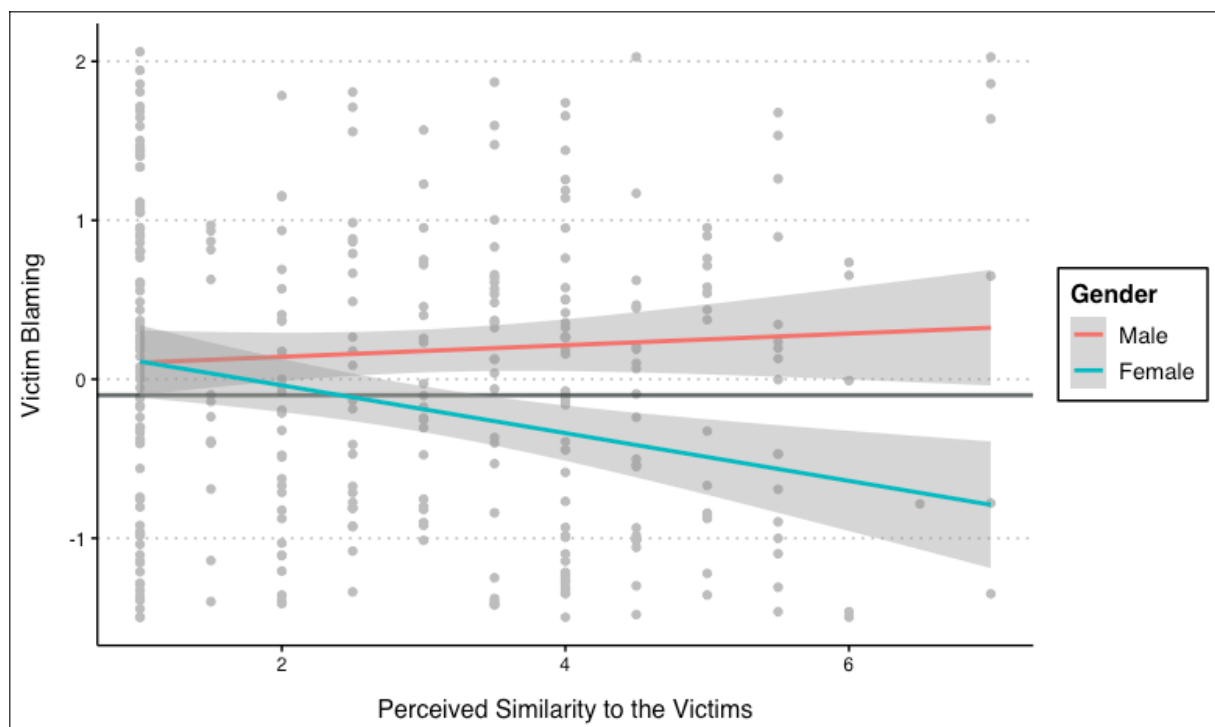

Figure 5. Interaction effect of the readers' gender and perceived similarity to the victims on victim blaming. The shaded bands represent the 95% confidence interval for the linear regression lines. The grey horizontal line depicts the control group's baseline value of victim blaming (M = -0.1, SD = 0.88).

7 Discussion

Femicides are a problem prevalent all over the world, including in Germany. Loud criticism concerning this issue is brought up against news media because of their problematic reporting practices. Since the news coverage of crimes is of great interest to the audience, it is likewise in the focus of communication research. In the past, studies have found several effects of crime news consumption on the recipients' perceptions and attitudes. The priming of stereotypes has been of particular interest, based on the over-proportional and negative way of depicting foreign offenders in news reports. So far, possible media effects in relation to victims of crimes have largely been overlooked. But considering SIT (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), the relationship between perpetrators and victims might be crucial for said media effects on the audience. Therefore, we investigated how the nationalities of victims and perpetrators shown in femicide news affect recipients' attitudes towards causal attributions for IPV and femicides. Based on the idea of an ingroup bias through perceived threat by foreigners (Knupfer & Matthes, 2021; Schmuck et al., 2021), we assumed a mediated effect via perceived similarity to the victims. As femicides also specifically heighten the salience of the involved parties' gender, we also looked into the moderating effect it might have for the readers.

7.1 The role of nationality: Perceived similarity and victim blaming

Originally, we assumed a positive effect of German victims on perceived similarity to them. However, this effect was only found when comparing the condition with undisclosed perpetrators to that with Afghan perpetrators. For German perpetrators, the effect was not significant, thus the victims' nationality does not seem to have any influence. Contrary to our expectations, the perceived similarity to German victims was not the highest when the perpetrators were Afghans. We assumed that the outgroup threat would make group boundaries more salient, therefore strengthening the ingroup bias (Branscombe et al., 1999; Stephan et al., 2016). Instead, the victims' nationality did not have any effect on participants' perceived similarity to them under this condition. A possible explanation might lie in the nature of the reported cases, in which the women were killed by their (former) partners. Maybe the idea of a relationship with an Afghan man feels so foreign to Germans, that this lowers their identification with the victims. In the 2016 social survey of the German population, over half of the respondents stated that they would be rather to very uncomfortable if an asylum seeker married into their own family. For potential Turkish spouses, the numbers were slightly lower but still well over 40% (GESIS, 2021). These findings suggest that Germans would not be fond of a romantic relationship with

Afghans either. In consequence, German women who nevertheless do pursue this might be seen as deviants and therefore less as ingroup members, as Stephan et al. (2016) suggest.

Perceived similarity to the victims did not directly affect victim blaming, but when taking the gender of the readers into account, we found a negative association for women. The more they identify with the victims, the less they think women's behavior or characteristics are the causes for IPV. But the conditional indirect effect of German victims on victim blaming via perceived similarity also means that Afghan women are blamed more for staying in abusive relationships. This finding hints toward an ingroup bias of German women, granting their own more leniency than women of the outgroup. Similarly, Knupfer and Matthes (2021) found more perceived similarity and compassion to Christian victims, compared to the Muslim outgroup. Compassion in turn predicted support for restrictive policies, thus deeming the Muslim victims' harm less important. Schmuck et al. (2021) also observed an ingroup bias on support for victim compensation, which was predicted by more compassion for non-Muslims. These two studies specifically investigated the issue of terror news but the ingroup favoritism regarding attitudes towards victims seems to transcend this context.

7.2 Not a foreign problem?

We did not find evidence for an effect on the recipients' perception of femicides as an imported problem in Germany, regardless of the actors' nationalities. This finding is surprising, considering the extensive literature on the priming of stereotypes through crime news consumption (e. g. Arendt, 2012; 2013; Dixon, 2008; Mastro et al., 2009). An explanation for the different results might lie in how we measured the participants' attitudes: Most stereotype effects studies use the technique of implicit association tests (IAT), which makes it possible to assess respondents' unconscious attitudes and perceptions. Since this is quite a time-consuming task within an experiment, we could not reasonably employ this method in our study. The statements we presented to the participants would probably relate more to explicit stereotypes, rather than implicit ones. According to Arendt (2013), our dose of stimuli could have either been too low or too high for priming effects. Another difference to previous research investigating stereotyping effects of crime news is that we only looked into one specific nationality as foreigners. Other studies usually either measure stereotypes towards "foreigners" in general or a whole ethnic group. These more diffuse group categorizations might more easily enable outgroup devaluation than scapegoating one specific nationality.

As explained above, the Afghan nationality might actually manipulate more than one category for group categorization. Stereotypes are not constructed only through single attributes such as

someone's nationality. Instead, the characteristics that are used for the categorization into social groups can overlap intersectional. Research usually points to the interplay of ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and social status, which also manifests itself through more severe experiences of discrimination against group members belonging to several minorities (Remedios & Snyder, 2015). Likewise connected are the origin, residential status, religion, and phenotypical features such as people's skin color (Thiele, 2015). In German print media, Wigger (2019) identified stereotypes about male migrants, that related sexual violence to the origin of these men and Islam. Similarly, an automated text analysis showed how German news coverage associates Muslims with negative concepts such as violence and terror (Arendt & Karadas, 2017). Schmuck and colleagues (2020) found that exposure to a negative depiction of Muslims as criminals can promote polarization in the audience by reinforcing anti-Muslim prejudices. The additional manipulation checks we conducted showed that participants assumed the Afghan victims and perpetrators to also be Muslims and asylum seekers. It is possible that even though there was no effect on the attribution of femicides to Afghan immigrants, respondents might still see the cause in the other two categories.

Of course, there is also the problem of social desirability when asking respondents about their group-related attitudes. The previously described debate about whether media reports should mention the nationality of an offender did not only take place within the field of journalism but also in front of the broader audience. Our participants might have been somewhat aware of this argument, which could have led to a negation effect, as Arendt's 2019 study suggests. At the end of the questionnaire, participants had the opportunity to leave a comment in an open text field. Several people used this opportunity to voice their concerns both about stereotyping media reports and the statements we used to measure their stereotypes. While our stimuli articles are very close to real-world reports about femicides, we see that the statements about femicides as an Afghan problem might have been a bit too much "on the nose". This could have again led to a negation effect due to social desirability (Arendt, 2019).

7.3 A gendered issue

The level of victim blaming is the same for both observed genders for no identification, but for men it does not decrease with higher values of perceived similarity. This could mean that even if men identify with the portrayed women based on their nationality, it does not change their attitudes towards the issue in general. It is possible that women as the more affected group of IPV and femicides have more personal experience or acquired knowledge on the topic. Therefore, they might know better about the many hurdles to leaving an abusive relationship and

don't blame the victims. Men on the other hand might not have these insights, thus attributing the responsibility at least partly to the women regardless of their similarity.

This relationship is possibly also related to the way we measured victim blaming. As the other two dimensions of the scale were not interpretable, our items merely assessed the women's responsibility for leaving abusive partners. This is a very restricted view of victim blaming and other dimensions relating more to the exoneration of the perpetrator might still be affected for men. Mastro et al.'s (2009) study on the effects of sexual violence news supports this explanation to some extent. They found evidence for a doubled ingroup bias of White men, offering perpetrators similar to them more leniency. Furthermore, we did not measure and control for the participants' attitudes toward the perpetrators. It is possible that there is a backfire effect for men, who might fear being identified with these offenders. To relieve guilt from their alleged ingroup they would then push the blame onto the victims. However, we hope that controlling for violence acceptance would have dampened such a mechanism to some degree.

As explained before, the categorization of social groups does not rely on single characteristics but rather on several, overlapping attributes. It is therefore possible, that the gender of recipients does not only affect the relationship between perceived similarity and attitudes. Instead, it might already come to play when the group identification is taking place, thus influencing how similar the victims are perceived. We conducted an additional analysis of a model assuming a three-way interaction of the two nationalities and gender on perceived similarity. The results suggested an interaction of victims' nationality and gender, conditional on the perpetrators' nationality. The second path from perceived similarity onto attitudes remained unaffected. But this analysis produced outcomes that proved extremely difficult to interpret. Also, the respective groups to which the observed effects would apply became exceedingly small. Thus, we do not believe that our study provides sufficient statistical power to make valid statements about this relationship, which is why we did not report the results. It does seem logical that the identification would be stronger for women. Additional analysis comparing the level of perceived similarity for men and women did not show a significant difference, though (t(312.37) = -0.322, p = 0.748).

7.4 Limitations and future research

Our study gives valuable insights into the dynamics of victim-perpetrator group categorization in the context of femicides. It is, however, subject to some limitations. First of all, our stimulus material was created very close to classic (online) newspaper coverage. Alternative media sources like social media content might also play an important role for effects of crime news,

though (Näsi et al., 2021). Furthermore, our experimental conditions did not directly relate to the dependent variables, thus highlighting the importance of perceived similarity as a mediator. But we did not directly manipulate similarity apart from the mentioned nationality. Neither did we manipulate the level of victim blaming or causal attribution to Afghans in the presented articles, since we wanted to investigate if simply mentioning the nationalities has an effect.

Another limitation lies in the respondents we surveyed. Our participants were overwhelmingly Germans and we controlled for migration background. It makes sense to look into the effects crime news might have on the majority population's attitudes toward minority groups, since they usually hold societal and political power over them. However, it would also be interesting to survey the potentially discriminated groups. While the general population might not perceive a bias through media content, the affected social group would be much more sensitive to this kind of bias and thus fear its effects (Baugut, 2022).

In our quota-based sample, we only had one person who did not identify within the binary gender categories. To achieve statistical power, we excluded this person and used gender as a dichotomous variable. This approach is reasonable, but we also lose representation of gender spectrum through our categorization. Related to this, our study focused on femicides and IPV within heterosexual relationships. In our case, women were the victims and men were the perpetrators. However, men are of course also victimized by abusive female partners. Furthermore, IPV also exists in homosexual relationships (Rollè et al., 2018). Once again, we focused on the majority population, which is also the most represented in mainstream media news coverage. And lastly, we can't make any statements about long-term effects of femicide news, since our design was solely cross-sectional.

Future research should therefore consider taking into account the viewpoint of the affected minority groups as well as the specific aspects of femicide news that might facilitate adverse effects.

8 Conclusion and implications for journalism practice

The debate of whether journalists should disclose an offender's nationality when reporting about crime has been going ongoing (Dittrich & Klimmt, 2021; Schade, 2017). Our findings give more insight relating to effects this might have on the audience, as we explore the much under-researched victim's role. According to our results, the victims' nationality is only relevant for ingroup definition in cases where the perpetrators' nationality is not mentioned. Only then, German victims are perceived as more similar than Afghans, which in turn predicts less victim blaming for female readers. Should journalists, therefore, disclose nationalities even more than

they already do? As we know from past content analyses of crime news, the overwhelming share of disclosed nationalities identifies foreigners. For perpetrators native to the respective country their origin is usually not referenced. But they make up the larger part of criminal offenders and also the news coverage about it (Hestermann, 2021). In these cases, the victims' characteristics seem to then play a bigger role in the recipients' attitudes towards them. For the issue of femicides, this is expressed in the extent to which they blame the victims. The stronger agreement with victim blaming for Afghan victims again illustrates the intersectionality of discrimination, which especially minority women experience (Remedios & Snyder, 2015). In the bigger picture, this could potentially have consequences for societal and political efforts to address the issue of IPV and femicides (Comas d'Argemir, 2015).

Despite the substantial evidence regarding stereotyping effects of the over-representation of foreign offenders (e. g. Arendt, 2012; Dixon, 2008), German journalists do not seem perceptive to this problem. Instead, the habit of identifying minorities as criminals has even increased in the past years following the surge of immigration in 2015 (Arendt et al., 2017; Dittrich & Klimmt, 2021; Hestermann, 2021). As Dittrich and Klimmt, as well as Hestermann (both 2021) argue, journalists are thus submitting to the demands of right-wing populist voices. In doing so, they play into the hands of actors who want to instrumentalize gender-based violent crimes for their political goals (Hestermann & Hoven, 2020; Menke, 2020). But this does not only hold true for right-wing populism. Gender roles and misogyny are central to radicalization in all directions of extremism (Orav et al., 2018; Rottweiler et al., 2021; United Nations Development Programme, 2021).

In light of our own findings and taking the results of researchers before us into account, we would like to propose some guidance for journalists reporting on femicides: Ideally, the nationality (or other characteristics such as religion or residential status) should not play a role for crime news. But if journalists are so adamant about mentioning the nationality of foreign offenders, they should at least also do so for German perpetrators. This might help to reduce the influence of victims' characteristics on causal attribution. Additionally, information that personalizes the victims, apart from their origin, should be given. This could help reduce victim blaming regardless of their nationality. Plus, it might even reach the male audience who does not seem to perceive IPV and femicides as a relevant issue so far. And lastly, in line with Altmeppen et al. (2020), we would like to emphasize the possibility of not reporting on a case of femicide, if there is no larger societal context in it.

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Appendix A: Descriptive Statistics

Nationality								
Victims	Control	Afghan	German	Afghan	German	Afghan	German	Full Sample
Perpetrators		Und.	Und.	German	German	Afghan	Afghan	
	(n = 51)	(n = 56)	(n = 55)	(n = 53)	(n = 52)	(n = 55)	(n = 52)	(n = 374)
Covariates	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)
Age (years)	43.41 (14.84)	43.2 (13.78)	41.93 (12.01)	46.49 (13.69)	42.65 (11.57)	43.15 (12.75)	45.37 (13.01)	43.72 (13.10)
Politics	4.63 (1.22)	5.18 (1.59)	4.96 (1.72)	4.85 (1.22)	4.88 (1.48)	5.35 (1.64)	4.56 (1.58)	4.92 (1.52)
Frequency	4.53 (1.72)	4.64 (1.67)	4.33 (1.75)	4.49 (1.49)	4.38 (1.62)	4.29 (1.66)	4.15 (1.66)	4.40 (1.65)
Quality	4.68 (1.53)	5.12 (1.55)	4.89 (1.49)	4.95 (1.38)	4.90 (1.25)	4.79 (1.34)	4.70 (1.56)	4.87 (1.44)
Misogyny	3.05 (1.37)	2.8 (1.59)	3.18 (1.75)	3.12 (1.55)	3.12 (1.40)	2.84 (1.36)	3.03 (1.44)	3.02 (1.49)
Violence	2.06 (1.39)	2.02 (1.50)	2.28 (1.53),	1.92 (1.33)	1.65 (1.04)	1.93 (1.24)	1.97 (1.31)	1.98 (1.35)
Migration (%)	5.9	8.9	16.4	5.7	9.6	9.1	7.7	9.1
Female (%)	45.1	44.6	41.8	49.1	46.2	40.0	48.1	44.9
Education (%)								
Low	56.9	55.4	58.2	54.7	54.6	41.8	50.0	54.0
Middle	21.6	14.3	27.3	24.5	23.1	36.4	19.2	23.8
High	21.6	30.4	14.5	20.8	15.4	21.8	30.8	22.2

Notes. Mean and standard deviation for age, political predisposition (*Politics*; 1 – left, to 10 – right), frequency of contact with foreigners (*Frequency*; 1 – never, to 7 – very often), and quality of contact with foreigners (*Quality*; 1 – negative, to 7 – positive), misogyny, and violence acceptance (*Violence*) per group. For first-generation migration background (*Migration*), gender, and education relative frequencies of categories are presented.

Appendix B: Stimulus Material

Group 1: Undisclosed perpetrators, Afghan victims

Mann (36) tötet Ehefrau

Münster. Ein 36-Jähriger hat am vergangenen Montag seine Ehefrau (29) umgebracht. Als die Afghanin abends von ihrer Arbeit heimkam, erwartete ihr Gatte sie wohl schon in aufgebrachter Stimmung. Nachbarn konnten jedenfalls lautes Geschrei vernehmen und alarmierten daraufhin die Polizei.

Frau aus Afghanistan konnte nicht mehr gerettet werden

Als die Beamten eintrafen fanden sie die Frau mit mehreren Stichwunden auf dem Küchenboden liegend vor. Die mutmaßliche Tatwaffe, ein großes Küchenmesser, lag neben dem leblosen Körper. Reanimationsversuche der Polizisten konnten der Frau nicht mehr helfen.

Ehemann gestand die Tat

Der Ehemann saß währenddessen mit dem Kopf in die Hände gestützt am Tisch und ließ sich widerstandslos abführen. Er gestand dann auch den Mord an seiner Frau gegenüber den Beamten. Auslöser für die Tat war womöglich die krankhafte Eifersucht des Mannes, die schon in der Vergangenheit immer wieder zu Streitereien zwischen den Eheleuten geführt hatte. Das sagte zumindest die Schwester der getöteten Frau bei der Polizei aus. Dass ihr Schwager aber einmal so weit gehen würde hatte sie nicht erwartet.

Mord nach 15 Jahren Ehe: Mann erschießt seine Frau

Ulm. In der beschaulichen Reihenhaussiedlung ist man geschockt über die Ereignisse vom letzten Freitag. Ein 57-jähriger Mann soll hier seine Ehefrau erschossen haben. Die aus Afghanistan stammende Frau (49) verstarb noch in derselben Nacht im Krankenhaus an einer Schussverletzung. In der Nachbarschaft ist man fassungslos: „Sie wirkten so glücklich zusammen und waren auch sehr freundlich", sagt eine Anwohnerin über das Paar.

Ehemann hatte Waffenschein

Zuerst hallten am Freitagabend zwei Schüsse durch die vorstädtische Stille, dann waren wenig später die Sirenen der herbeigerufenen Polizei zu hören. Der Ehemann hatte scheinbar seine Sportwaffe, für die er einen Schein besaß, auf seine Frau gerichtet und zweimal abgedrückt. Wie genau es zu der Tat kam ist laut der örtlichen Polizeisprecherin derzeit noch unklar. Es sei jedoch ausgeschlossen, dass es sich um einen Unfall gehandelt hat.

Frau aus Afghanistan wurde wohl von Schüssen überrascht

Die Ehefrau war gerade dabei gewesen die Reste des Abendessens abzuräumen, als es zu den Schüssen kam. Was den Mann dazu angetrieben hat, seine Ehe nach 15 Jahren auf diese Weise zu beenden, muss noch geklärt werden. Bisher hat er laut Polizei keine Aussage gemacht.

Group 2: Undisclosed perpetrators, German victims

Mann (36) tötet Ehefrau

Münster. Ein 36-Jähriger hat am vergangenen Montag seine Ehefrau (29) umgebracht. Als die Deutsche abends von ihrer Arbeit heimkam, erwartete ihr Gatte sie wohl schon in aufgebrachter Stimmung. Nachbarn konnten jedenfalls lautes Geschrei vernehmen und alarmierten daraufhin die Polizei.

Frau aus Deutschland konnte nicht mehr gerettet werden

Als die Beamten eintrafen fanden sie die Frau mit mehreren Stichwunden auf dem Küchenboden liegend vor. Die mutmaßliche Tatwaffe, ein großes Küchenmesser, lag neben dem leblosen Körper. Reanimationsversuche der Polizisten konnten der Frau nicht mehr helfen.

Ehemann gestand die Tat

Der Ehemann saß währenddessen mit dem Kopf in die Hände gestützt am Tisch und ließ sich widerstandslos abführen. Er gestand dann auch den Mord an seiner Frau gegenüber den Beamten. Auslöser für die Tat war womöglich die krankhafte Eifersucht des Mannes, die schon in der Vergangenheit immer wieder zu Streitereien zwischen den Eheleuten geführt hatte. Das sagte zumindest die Schwester der getöteten Frau bei der Polizei aus. Dass ihr Schwager aber einmal so weit gehen würde hatte sie nicht erwartet.

Mord nach 15 Jahren Ehe: Mann erschießt seine Frau

Ulm. In der beschaulichen Reihenhaussiedlung ist man geschockt über die Ereignisse vom letzten Freitag. Ein 57-jähriger Mann soll hier seine Ehefrau erschossen haben. Die aus Deutschland stammende Frau (49) verstarb noch in derselben Nacht im Krankenhaus an einer Schussverletzung. In der Nachbarschaft ist man fassungslos: „Sie wirkten so glücklich zusammen und waren auch sehr freundlich", sagt eine Anwohnerin über das Paar.

Ehemann hatte Waffenschein

Zuerst hallten am Freitagabend zwei Schüsse durch die vorstädtische Stille, dann waren wenig später die Sirenen der herbeigerufenen Polizei zu hören. Der Ehemann hatte scheinbar seine Sportwaffe, für die er einen Schein besaß, auf seine Frau gerichtet und zweimal abgedrückt. Wie genau es zu der Tat kam ist laut der örtlichen Polizeisprecherin derzeit noch unklar. Es sei jedoch ausgeschlossen, dass es sich um einen Unfall gehandelt hat.

Frau aus Deutschland wurde wohl von Schüssen überrascht

Die Ehefrau war gerade dabei gewesen die Reste des Abendessens abzuräumen, als es zu den Schüssen kam. Was den Mann dazu angetrieben hat, seine Ehe nach 15 Jahren auf diese Weise zu beenden, muss noch geklärt werden. Bisher hat er laut Polizei keine Aussage gemacht.

Group 3: German perpetrators, Afghan victims

Deutscher (36) tötet Ehefrau

Münster. Ein 36-Jähriger aus Deutschland hat am vergangenen Montag seine Ehefrau (29) umgebracht. Als die Afghanin abends von ihrer Arbeit heimkam, erwartete ihr Gatte sie wohl schon in aufgebrachter Stimmung. Nachbarn konnten jedenfalls lautes Geschrei vernehmen und alarmierten daraufhin die Polizei.

Frau aus Afghanistan konnte nicht mehr gerettet werden

Als die Beamten eintrafen fanden sie die Frau mit mehreren Stichwunden auf dem Küchenboden liegend vor. Die mutmaßliche Tatwaffe, ein großes Küchenmesser, lag neben dem leblosen Körper. Reanimationsversuche der Polizisten konnten der Frau nicht mehr helfen.

Deutscher Ehemann gestand die Tat

Der Ehemann saß währenddessen mit dem Kopf in die Hände gestützt am Tisch und ließ sich widerstandslos abführen. Er gestand dann auch den Mord an seiner Frau gegenüber den Beamten. Auslöser für die Tat war womöglich die krankhafte Eifersucht des Mannes, die schon in der Vergangenheit immer wieder zu Streitereien zwischen den Eheleuten geführt hatte. Das sagte zumindest die Schwester der getöteten Frau bei der Polizei aus. Dass ihr Schwager aber einmal so weit gehen würde hatte sie nicht erwartet.

Mord nach 15 Jahren Ehe: Deutscher erschießt seine Frau

Ulm. In der beschaulichen Reihenhaussiedlung ist man geschockt über die Ereignisse vom letzten Freitag. Ein 57-jähriger Deutscher soll hier seine Ehefrau erschossen haben. Die aus Afghanistan stammende Frau (49) verstarb noch in derselben Nacht im Krankenhaus an einer Schussverletzung. In der Nachbarschaft ist man fassungslos: „Sie wirkten so glücklich zusammen und waren auch sehr freundlich", sagt eine Anwohnerin über das Paar.

Deutscher Ehemann hatte Waffenschein

Zuerst hallten am Freitagabend zwei Schüsse durch die vorstädtische Stille, dann waren wenig später die Sirenen der herbeigerufenen Polizei zu hören. Der Ehemann hatte scheinbar seine Sportwaffe, für die er einen Schein besaß, auf seine Frau gerichtet und zweimal abgedrückt. Wie genau es zu der Tat kam ist laut der örtlichen Polizeisprecherin derzeit noch unklar. Es sei jedoch ausgeschlossen, dass es sich um einen Unfall gehandelt hat.

Frau aus Afghanistan wurde wohl von Schüssen überrascht

Die Ehefrau war gerade dabei gewesen die Reste des Abendessens abzuräumen, als es zu den Schüssen kam. Was den Mann Deutschland dazu angetrieben hat, seine Ehe nach 15 Jahren auf diese Weise zu beenden, muss noch geklärt werden. Bisher hat er laut Polizei keine Aussage gemacht.

Group 4: German perpetrators, German victims

Deutscher (36) tötet Ehefrau

Münster. Ein 36-Jähriger aus Deutschland hat am vergangenen Montag seine Ehefrau (29) umgebracht. Als die Deutsche abends von ihrer Arbeit heimkam, erwartete ihr Gatte sie wohl schon in aufgebrachter Stimmung. Nachbarn konnten jedenfalls lautes Geschrei vernehmen und alarmierten daraufhin die Polizei.

Frau aus Deutschland konnte nicht mehr gerettet werden

Als die Beamten eintrafen fanden sie die Frau mit mehreren Stichwunden auf dem Küchenboden liegend vor. Die mutmaßliche Tatwaffe, ein großes Küchenmesser, lag neben dem leblosen Körper. Reanimationsversuche der Polizisten konnten der Frau nicht mehr helfen.

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Der Ehemann saß währenddessen mit dem Kopf in die Hände gestützt am Tisch und ließ sich widerstandslos abführen. Er gestand dann auch den Mord an seiner Frau gegenüber den Beamten. Auslöser für die Tat war womöglich die krankhafte Eifersucht des Mannes, die schon in der Vergangenheit immer wieder zu Streitereien zwischen den Eheleuten geführt hatte. Das sagte zumindest die Schwester der getöteten Frau bei der Polizei aus. Dass ihr Schwager aber einmal so weit gehen würde hatte sie nicht erwartet.

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Group 5: Afghan perpetrators, Afghan victims

Afghane (36) tötet Ehefrau

Münster. Ein 36-Jähriger aus Afghanistan hat am vergangenen Montag seine Ehefrau (29) umgebracht. Als die Afghanin abends von ihrer Arbeit heimkam, erwartete ihr Gatte sie wohl schon in aufgebrachter Stimmung. Nachbarn konnten jedenfalls lautes Geschrei vernehmen und alarmierten daraufhin die Polizei.

Frau aus Afghanistan konnte nicht mehr gerettet werden

Als die Beamten eintrafen fanden sie die Frau mit mehreren Stichwunden auf dem Küchenboden liegend vor. Die mutmaßliche Tatwaffe, ein großes Küchenmesser, lag neben dem leblosen Körper. Reanimationsversuche der Polizisten konnten der Frau nicht mehr helfen.

Afghanischer Ehemann gestand die Tat

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Frau aus Afghanistan wurde wohl von den Schüssen überrascht

Die Ehefrau war gerade dabei gewesen die Reste des Abendessens abzuräumen, als es zu den Schüssen kam. Was den Mann aus Afghanistan dazu angetrieben hat, seine Ehe nach 15 Jahren auf diese Weise zu beenden, muss noch geklärt werden. Bisher hat er laut Polizei keine Aussage gemacht.

Group 6: Afghan perpetrators, German victims

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Die Ehefrau war gerade dabei gewesen die Reste des Abendessens abzuräumen, als es zu den Schüssen kam. Was den Mann aus Afghanistan dazu angetrieben hat, seine Ehe nach 15 Jahren auf diese Weise zu beenden, muss noch geklärt werden. Bisher hat er laut Polizei keine Aussage gemacht.

Group 7: Control

Wie viel Wasser braucht der Mensch eigentlich?

Ohne Wasser geht nichts im Körper. Denn Wasser ist Bestandteil aller Körperzellen und nötig für den Stoffwechsel. Doch Experten warnen hier vor einem Irrtum: dem Glauben, man müsse unbedingt trinken, bevor sich überhaupt ein Durstgefühl einstellt. Dahinter steckt die Annahme, der Körper müsse ständig mit ausreichend Flüssigkeit versorgt bleiben. An diesem Argument sei jedoch nichts dran, so die neuesten Erkenntnisse des nationalen Instituts für Gesundheitsprävention: „Durst sei ein Signal des Körpers. Damit will er sagen: Ich brauche jetzt Wasser, nicht früher und nicht später", heißt es in einer Pressemitteilung des Instituts. Ausdrücklich warnen die Wissenschaftler vor unnötigen Belastungen für die Nieren. Gerade Personen mit Nierenerkrankung sollten diesen Rat berücksichtigen, betonen die Wissenschaftler. Sie weisen außerdem darauf hin, dass in vielen Ländern der Welt Leitungswasser höchsten Standards genügt. Es gebe keinen Grund, ständig Mineralwasser zu trinken.

Stiftung Warentest: Leitungswasser in Deutschland hat gute Qualität

In Deutschland ist Leitungswasser besser als sein Ruf, sagt die Stiftung Warentest in der aktuellen „test". Sie hat 32 stille Mineralwässer getestet und nicht einmal jedes zweite für gut befunden. In der Hälfte der untersuchten Produkte fanden die Tester Keime, Spuren aus Landwirtschaft und Industrie oder andere kritische Stoffe. Keiner der Stoffe war in den gefundenen Mengen gesundheitsgefährdend. Die Bezeichnung "natürliches Mineralwasser" sei jedoch fragwürdig, heißt es in dem Bericht. Neben den stillen Mineralwässern untersuchte die Stiftung Warentest an 20 Orten in Deutschland die Qualität des Leitungswassers. „Beim Trinkwasser in Deutschland stimmt die Qualität", betont der Bericht. Zwar wurden zum Beispiel in Berlin mehrere Verunreinigungen gefunden, doch auch in der Hauptstadt sei es völlig unbedenklich, Wasser aus dem Hahn zu trinken. Die Warentester raten deshalb zu Leitungswasser. Gleichzeitig empfehlen sie, gelegentlich den Zustand der Wasserleitungen zu prüfen.

Appendix C: Items

Victim Blaming

Die nächsten Fragen drehen sich um die Themen <u>Gewalt und Kriminalität</u>. Wie sehr stimmen Sie den folgenden Aussagen zu?

Ich habe nicht viel Mitleid mit einer misshandelten Frau, die immer wieder zu dem Täter zurückkehrt. Wenn es einer Frau nicht gefällt, kann sie gehen. Wenn eine Frau weiterhin mit einem Mann zusammenlebt, der sie schlägt, ist sie selbst schuld, wenn sie wieder geschlagen wird. Viele Fälle von häuslicher Gewalt entstehen, weil Frauen ständig mit ihren Partnern über Dinge streiten.* Wenn ein Mann gewalttätig wird, liegt das daran, dass er die Kontrolle über sein Temperament verloren hat.* Gewalttätige Männer verlieren so sehr die Kontrolle, dass sie nicht mehr wissen, was sie tun.* Häusliche Gewalt ist die Folge eines kurzzeitigen Wutausbruchs.* Häusliche Gewalt betrifft nicht viele.* Häusliche Gewalt kommt in meiner Nachbarschaft selten vor.*

* Items were excluded from the analysis due to eigenvalue < 1.

Femicides as an Imported Problem

Und wie sehr stimmen Sie den folgenden Aussagen zu? Dass Frauen von ihren (ehemaligen) Partner getötet werden …

… ist keine Seltenheit.* … kommt oft vor.* … passiert eher bei Paaren aus fernen Kulturkreisen wie Afghanistan. … ist ein Phänomen, das aus Afghanistan nach Deutschland eingeführt wurde.

* Items were excluded from the analysis.

Similarity

Es geht weiterhin um die Opfer, über die in den Artikeln berichtet wurde. Wie hoch nehmen Sie die Ähnlichkeit zwischen sich und den dargestellten Opfern wahr?

Wenn Sie an Ihr eigenes Leben denken, wie viele Gemeinsamkeiten sehen Sie zwischen sich selbst und den dargestellten Opfern?

Misogyny

Nun werden Ihnen einige Aussagen <u>zum Zusammenleben</u> gezeigt. Wie sehr stimmen Sie diesen Aussagen zu? Es gibt dabei kein Richtig oder Falsch, bitte antworten Sie einfach aus dem Bauch heraus.

Die meisten Frauen versuchen Macht zu erlangen, indem sie die Kontrolle über Männer gewinnen. Wenn die Dinge nicht so laufen wie sie sollen, spielen Frauen meistens das Opfer. Manchmal stören mich Frauen schon allein durch ihre Anwesenheit. Ich glaube, dass die meisten Frauen lügen würden, nur um voranzukommen.

Violence Acceptance

Und wie sehr stimmen Sie den folgenden Aussagen zu?

Körperliche Gewalt gegen andere ist im Grunde ganz normales menschliches Verhalten, um sich durchzusetzen. Ich bin in bestimmten Situationen durchaus bereit, auch körperliche Gewalt anzuwenden, um meine Interessen durchzusetzen. Man muss leider zur Gewalt greifen, weil man nur so beachtet wird. Ich persönlich würde nie Gewalt anwenden, aber es ist gut, dass es Leute gibt, die sich auch körperlich wehren, wenn es sein muss.*

* Item was excluded from the analysis to ensure scale validity.

Appendix D: Abstract

Femizide und Gewalt im sozialen Nahraum sind ein Problemfeld, das Frauen und Mädchen in patriarchalen Gesellschaftsstrukturen weltweit betrifft (Zara & Gino, 2018). Auch in Deutschland und Österreich sind die Zahlen der Tötungen von Frauen durch (ehemalige) Partner vergleichsweise hoch (AÖF, 2022; BKA, 2021). Expert*innen und Aktivist*innen kritisieren in diesem Zusammenhang insbesondere die problematische Berichterstattung in den Massenmedien über Fälle von Femiziden (Dyroff et al., 2020; Lambrecht, 2021). Diese zeichnet sich durch Muster von Victim Blaming, Trivialisierung und Verharmlosung aus (Basdogan, 2021; Johanssen & Garrisi, 2019; Meltzer, 2021; Richards et al., 2011). Zu den Effekten der Femizidberichterstattung gibt es jedoch bisher keine Forschung. In der allgemeinen Wirkungsforschung von Verbrechensberichterstattung hat man sich bislang auf die Effekte der Darstellung von Täter*innen fokussiert. In diesem Zuge wurde festgestellt, dass die Nennung der Nationalität von Verdächtigen einen stereotypisierenden Einfluss auf Einstellungen gegenüber Minderheiten hat (z. B. Arendt, 2012; Dixon & Maddox, 2005). Allerdings fehlt es bislang an Forschung, die die Rolle der Opfer und des Zusammenspiels der Nationalitäten von Täter*innen und Opfern in den Blick nimmt.

Um der Frage nachzugehen, wie sich Nachrichteninhalte über Femizide auf Rezipient*innen auswirken, führen wir ein Survey-Experiment mit $N = 374$ Teilnehmer*innen in Deutschland durch. Der oben beschriebenen Forschungslücke entsprechend liegt der Fokus dabei auf der

Rolle der Opfer und deren Nationalität (deutsch/afghanisch). Außerdem betrachten wir die Wechselwirkung mit der Nationalität der Täter[6] (deutsch/afghanisch/nicht genannt) sowie den moderierenden Einfluss des Geschlechts der Rezipient*innen für die möglichen Effekte. Den Befragten werden somit Artikel über Femizide mit Tätern und Opfern vorgelegt, deren Nationalitäten wir in einem 2x3-Design manipulieren.

Basierend auf der Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) gehen wir davon aus, dass die Nationalität von den Akteur*innen in Femizidberichten ein entscheidender Faktor für die Einordnung in die In- oder Outgroup ist. Mitglieder der Ingroup werden dabei positiver beurteilt, als jene der Outgroup. Die Wahrnehmung und Durchsetzung der Ingroup-Grenzen wird noch verstärkt durch Bedrohung ausgehend von einer Outgroup (Branscombe et al., 1999; Stephan et al., 2016). Die gefühlte Ähnlichkeit bzw. Identifikation mit den Opfern ist hier maßgeblich als Mediator für den Effekt auf die Wahrnehmung bzw. Beurteilung (Custers & Van den Bulck, 2013; Knupfer & Matthes, 2021). Vor diesem Hintergrund gehen wir davon aus, dass deutsche Opfer als ähnlicher wahrgenommen werden, als afghanische (H1). Dieser Effekt sollte noch verstärkt werden von einer Bedrohung durch die Outgroup, also bei afghanischen Tätern im Vergleich mit deutschen (H2a) und ohne Nennung (H2b). Da die Ingroup eher positiv beurteilt wird, nehmen wir an, dass Opfern von partnerschaftlicher Gewalt weniger Mitschuld zugeschrieben wird, je ähnlicher sie wahrgenommen werden (H3). Zusätzlich untersuchen wir, inwiefern die wahrgenommene Ähnlichkeit zu den Opfern sich darauf auswirkt, dass die Ursache für Femizide auf die Nationalität der Täter und Opfer zurückgeführt wird und daher als "importiertes Problem" gesehen wird (FF1). Der negative Effekt von wahrgenommener Ähnlichkeit auf Victim Blaming fällt für weibliche Befragte als potentiell selbst Betroffene stärker aus (H4). In diesem Zusammenhang fragen wir außerdem, inwiefern sich das Geschlecht der Rezipient*innen auf die Beziehung zwischen wahrgenommener Ähnlichkeit und Femiziden als importiertes Problem auswirkt (FF2).

Die Ergebnisse unserer Mediationsanalyse weisen kein klares Muster auf. Deutsche Opfer werden nur dann als ähnlicher wahrgenommen als afghanische, wenn die Nationalität der Täter nicht genannt wird. Wir finden einen negativen Zusammenhang zwischen der wahrgenommenen Ähnlichkeit zu den Opfern und Victim Blaming. Dieser ist jedoch nur für Frauen signifikant. Ein negativer Effekt von deutschen Opfern auf Victim Blaming wird demnach vollständig durch die wahrgenommene Ähnlichkeit zu ihnen mediiert. Dieser Zusammenhang ist zusätzlich bedingt durch Täter ohne genannte Nationalität und weibliche Rezipientinnen. Zur Beurteilung

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[6] Da wir von Femiziden durch (ehemalige) Partner in heterosexuellen Beziehungen ausgehen handelt es sich hier ausschließlich um weibliche Opfer und männliche Täter.

von Femiziden als nach Deutschland importiertes Problem können wir keine signifikante Beziehung beobachten. Dieser Befund ist vor dem Hintergrund der umfangreichen Literatur zu einem Zusammenhang zwischen der Nationalität von Verdächtigen und der Begünstigung von Stereotypen überraschend (Arendt, 2012; Dixon & Maddox, 2005; Mastro et al., 2009). Der Grund für diese Diskrepanz zur bisherigen Forschung liegt vermutlich in der Operationalisierung der stereotypen Ursachenzuschreibung von Femiziden (Arendt, 2013).

Unsere Ergebnisse zur Interaktion der Nationalitäten von Opfern und Tätern widersprechen unseren Annahmen zur wahrgenommenen Bedrohung durch die Outgroup. Stattdessen deuten die Befunde auf einen stärkeren Einfluss der Täternationalität und eine generelle Ablehnung romantischer Beziehungen zu Afghanen hin (GESIS, 2021). Für die journalistische Praxis bedeutet dies, dass die Überrepräsentation ausländischer Nationalitäten durch die Identifizierung einheimischer Täter als solche ausgeglichen werden sollte. Eine verantwortungsvolle Berichterstattung könnte so diskriminierende Effekte von Schuldzuschreibung für ausländische Opfer von Femiziden vermeiden. Der moderierende Einfluss des weiblichen Geschlechts auf den Zusammenhang von wahrgenommener Ähnlichkeit zu den Opfern und Victim Blaming untermauert zusätzlich die Notwendigkeit, auch das männliche Publikum zu erreichen und über die strukturellen Hintergründe von Femiziden zu informieren.