

Abstract

This study focused on the agency of battered women who kill in Turkey by conducting face-to-face interviews and using news articles covering the stories of three battered women who killed their abusers. Using a feminist poststructuralist theory and intersectionality analysis, the study analysed the patterns surrounding the agency of battered women who kill. Male violence in Turkey continues to be an unresolved problem, which continues to only grow. In the mainstream media and discourse, female victims of male violence tend to be portrayed within the victimhood concept. Thus, it creates an image of a weak, passive woman who does not have an agency. However, battered women who kill tend to conflict with the image of a passive victim. The act of killing does not fit the traditional understanding of femininity. The interview findings showed that battered women who killed their abusers were commonly understood as desperate, weak, and ignorant women. While the act of killing was justified, it was through a justification of an act conducted by someone who lacked agency. The news portrayals supported the findings of the interviews and showed that battered women who kill were justified when the woman was portrayed as a victim who killed specifically while she was being battered and was a mother who killed to save her child(ren). Yet, when the act of killing was brutal, and it was an abuser outside of marriage, her agency was acknowledged only in order to criminalize her. The main interpretation of the agency suggests that battered women who kill tend to be understood in a simple duality of victim/criminal.