



MINI ANALYSIS OF DANISH FEMICIDES 2022

BY CENTER FOR VIOLENCE PREVENTION



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INTRODUCTION

According to the UN, femicides represent the most extreme form of violence and the most violent manifestation of discrimination against women (UN Women, 2023). Femicide is an umbrella term that encompasses many different motives for murder and the relationships between the victim and the perpetrator, but the UN defines femicide as a gender-based killing of a woman or girl (UN Women, 2023). The common denominator for femicides is that women are killed because they are women.

In 2021, the Center for Violence Prevention (CFV) established a Danish Femicide Watch, which collects knowledge and data on the murder of women in Denmark. The aim of the initiative is both to raise awareness about the killing of women and to produce new knowledge that can be used in the work of preventing femicides. Based on the work of Femicide Watch, CFV published the report “Mapping and Analysis of Danish Femicides 2000–2021” in 2022, which maps 284 Danish femicides, making it the largest mapping of femicides in Denmark to date. However, the work is not finished. Therefore, CFV presents this publication as a mapping and analysis of Danish femicides committed in 2022. This smaller mapping is part of the ongoing work to monitor and gather knowledge on the killing of women in Denmark.

Globally, we saw a deeply concerning trend in 2022. The UN reports that the number of women and girls who were deliberately killed in 2022—nearly 89,000—was the highest annual number recorded in the last 20 years (UNODC & UN Women, 2023). The total number of murders worldwide has been declining since 2021, but this trend is not reflected in the number of femicides. Moreover, it is observed that most femicides are still gender-related, with more than half of all femicides being committed by a partner or other family members (UNODC & UN Women, 2023).

As a contribution to raising awareness and preventing femicides in both Denmark and the rest of the world, CFV aims with this mini-analysis to provide insight into the knowledge that can be derived from femicides in a Danish context. The publication includes an initial mapping of the femicides that took place in Denmark in 2022, followed by an analysis that identifies and addresses risk factors and warning signs prior to femicides committed by a current or former partner.

THE UN'S RECOMMENDATION OF A NATIONAL FEMICIDE WATCH

In 2015, the UN's independent expert on violence against women and girls, Dubravka Šimonović, urged UN member states to establish a national "femicide watch." Dubravka Šimonović, a Croatian lawyer specializing in human rights, held the position of UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences at the time. This mandate aims to integrate the fight against violence against women into the UN's human rights work ("Femicide Watch Initiative," n.d.).

The Femicide Watch Initiative, as Dubravka Šimonović's initiative was later called, aims to prevent femicides through the collection of national data on the killing of women. The purpose of the systematic data collection is to compare data across national and international levels. The goal is to identify gaps in national laws and policies, as well as the lack of implementation of preventive measures ("Femicide Watch Initiative," n.d.).

Since 2015, an increasing number of countries have started working to establish a femicide watch through data collection or research on femicides and their prevention. The list of countries is diverse and includes Argentina, Australia, Bolivia, Cambodia, Israel, Mexico, Norway, Sweden, and Turkey.

In Denmark, the Center for Violence Prevention (CFV) is paving the way for the establishment of a Danish femicide watch with its mapping of femicides from 2000 to 2021.

In addition to the initial mapping, CFV has also published an international literature review focusing on Intimate Partner Homicide and Intimate Partner Violence, with the aim of comparing international research on partner violence and femicides with knowledge from Danish femicide cases. The review points out that a selection of Danish perpetrators of femicides share fewer common traits with perpetrators in other countries, such as Sweden, the USA, and Spain. This applies to several parameters, including previous criminal records and employment status at the time of the crime.

The current mapping of femicides committed in 2022 is yet another step toward preventing femicides in Denmark, and CFV will continue to map femicides and collect knowledge and data on the killing of women in the future.

METHODOLOGY

There are many different approaches to and definitions of femicide. The Center for Violence Prevention (CFV) works based on an understanding of femicide that aligns with the framework recommended by the United Nations.

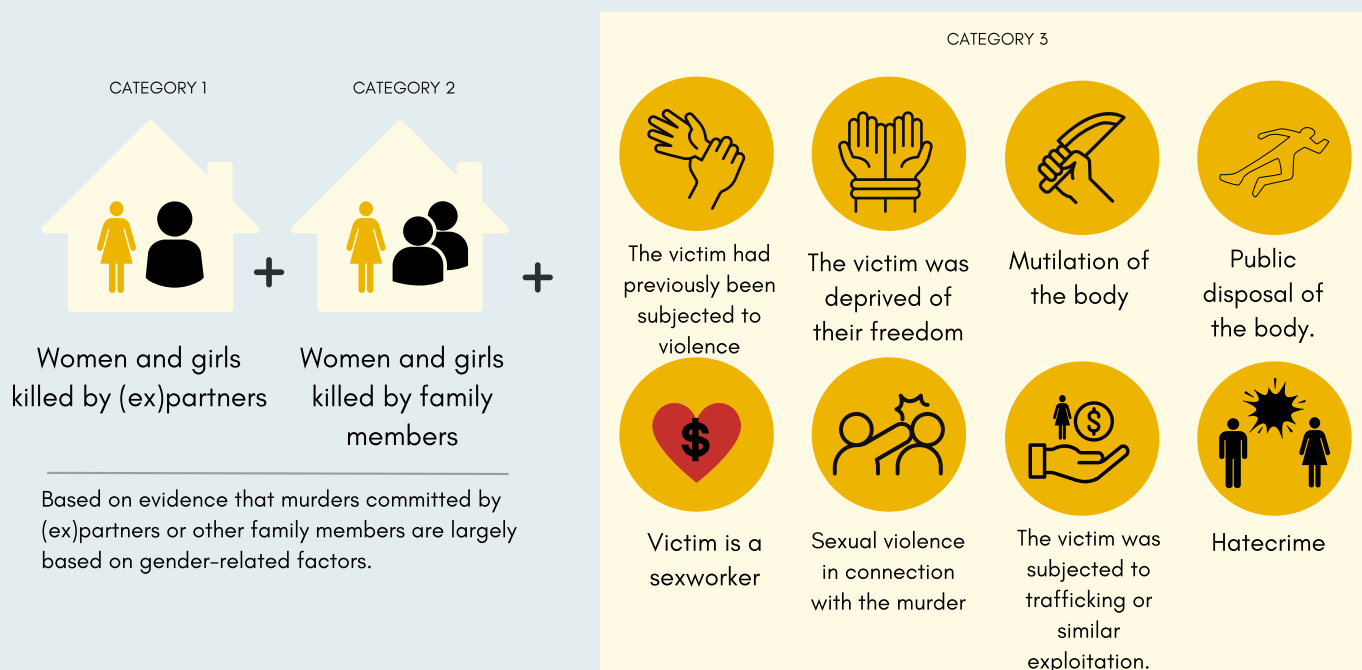
Since Šimonović urged UN member states to collect data on femicides, UN Women, in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), has developed a statistical framework aimed at promoting and improving the collection of information on the killing of women (UNODC & UN Women, 2022). CFV uses this approach so that our data can be more easily compared across countries and societies.

The UN's conceptual framework includes a definition of femicide as the killing of women or girls where there is a gender-related motive for the killing (UNODC & UN Women, 2022). In general terms, this refers to killings rooted in gender-related factors, such as ideologies about men's rights and privileges over women, social norms regarding masculinity, and the need to assert control or power, enforce gender roles, or prevent, oppose, or punish what the perpetrator deems unacceptable female behavior (UNODC & UN Women, 2022).

Femicides can thus occur in many different situations, both within the private and public spheres, and in various relationships between the victim and the perpetrator. The definition of femicide is therefore broad, and it can be a complex task to assess whether a particular killing constitutes a femicide or not. This is mainly because the gender-related aspect of a femicide is not always explicit. UNODC and UN Women (2022) therefore present three overarching categories for femicides:

1. Women killed by a current or former partner, such as a spouse, boyfriend, or intimate/sexual partner.
2. Women killed by other family members, such as a son, father, or uncle.
3. Women killed by another perpetrator, where at least one of the following criteria is met:
 - The victim had previously been subjected to physical, psychological, or sexual violence by the perpetrator.
 - The victim was subjected to exploitation, such as trafficking or slavery.
 - The victim was in a situation where she had been deprived of her freedom, such as kidnapping.
 - The victim was a sex worker.
 - The victim was subjected to sexual violence either before, during, or after the killing.
 - The killing of the victim was followed by mutilation of the body, such as improper treatment of the corpse.
 - The victim's body was disposed of in a public space.
 - The killing was a gender-based hate crime.

FIGURE 1: CHARACTERISTICS OF FEMICIDES



Source: UNODC & UN Women (2022). *Statistical framework for measuring the gender-related killing of women and girls (also referred to as "femicide/feminicide")*

In CFV's mapping of femicides, it has been with the UN's three categories in mind that we have identified and categorized a Danish murder as a femicide. This categorization ensures that murders of women resulting from honor-related conflicts, murders with sexual motives, or murders based on female gender identity – for example, of transgender women – or sexual orientation are also included in the mapping.

DATA FOUNDATION

The mapping has been carried out through ongoing monitoring of murders and suspicious deaths, and the data and information from the mapping are based on access to court rulings, police press releases, and news articles. The access to documents has varied in detail and length, as, for example, it is often seen that court records from confession cases are shorter than other case proceedings. After data collection, CFV has created descriptive statistics on significant background variables to provide an overview of the femicides. The collected information is divided into the following characteristics for each femicide:

- The victim's age and origin
- The relationship between the victim and the perpetrator
- The perpetrator's origin, gender, age, and employment status, previous contact with authorities, motive for the murder, method of murder, whether the murder has been solved, the verdict and sentence, as well as whether the perpetrator killed others in connection with the femicide, including suicide.

The above characteristics are highlighted because they are all considered fundamental and essential for an overall description of the events before, during, and after a femicide. In the preparation of the analysis, which particularly focuses on femicides committed by a current or former partner, we first conducted thorough readings of the access-to-documents material. This was followed by open coding, aimed at creating an overview of the different characteristics and themes that define the respective femicides. Here, we have, among other things, systematized knowledge about the various perpetrators' mental health and current life situations, history of violence, and explanations of the murder and the events leading up to it. Based on this, we have analyzed the data in light of Jane Monckton-Smith's (2020) research, which thematizes femicides over a timeline with eight stages leading up to (ex)partner murder. Monckton-Smith's (2020) research is widely recognized in the field of femicide studies, and her eight-stage framework is also included in the action plan against partner violence and partner femicide that the Danish government published in the summer of 2023.

The purpose of using Monckton-Smith's (2020) approach is precisely to examine whether the Danish femicides committed by a current or former partner can be understood within the theoretical framework of the eight stages as a predictor for partner murder. The timeline has been developed to support professionals working with risk assessments in the field. CFV's analysis also aims to contribute knowledge from a Danish context to the prevention of femicides committed by a partner or ex-partner. As described in the government's action plan (2023) against partner violence and partner femicide, we need greater focus on the perpetrator. Nearly two-thirds of the male perpetrators who killed a partner had previously subjected them to psychological violence (Rasmussen et al., 2016). Therefore, the analysis focuses on investigating the question: what risk indicators can be observed in the Danish perpetrators of murder? The methodology and considerations regarding the preparation of the analysis are further elaborated in the introduction to the analysis section itself.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Of the 12 femicides identified in 2022, we often only know what comes forward during the trial and is described in the case files. Some of the cases are described in more detail than others, and four of the femicides have not gone to trial at all because the perpetrator (the alleged perpetrator) committed suicide after the murder. Some information has therefore been found in various media outlets that have covered the femicides. We acknowledge that it can be problematic to read about femicides in the media, because we know that many relatives later file complaints with the Press Council, for example because they believe the media has represented the murder with a sensationalism that is not recognizable to them. Of the femicides in 2022, we have not yet found any complaints with the Press Council, but we are aware of the media's sometimes sensational coverage of femicides. We have chosen to include articles where witnesses speak about the relationship before the murder, or where the media has additional details about the trial process in relation to the case files.

This mini-analysis does not publish the names of the murdered women or the perpetrators. We have been in contact with several relatives of femicide victims who say it is difficult to see their loved ones' names circulating in places they are not familiar with. Therefore, when we refer to individual femicides here, we do not mention names. However, some of the women's names are included in CFV's Denmark map of femicides, which can be found on our website. Each femicide is listed with a short description, and in some cases, the name of the murdered woman.

CFV is aware that Danish women can also be murdered abroad. Currently, we do not have a record of the number of such femicides, but it is our intention to expand the mapping in the future. In the context of this mapping, we do know that a 30-year-old Danish woman was murdered in France in September 2022, and her Danish boyfriend was arrested and charged with the murder. We are aware of cases like this, and it is important for us to also remember these women when addressing the prevention of femicides. This current mapping of femicides is limited to murders committed within Denmark's borders in 2022."

OVERVIEW – FEMICIDES IN 2022

Note that in one of the 12 femicides, there are two perpetrators, which is why 13 perpetrators are listed in the various summaries

THE VICTIMS



24-year-old woman

murdered on January 9th in Amager.



50-year-old woman

murdered on January 22nd in Ebeltoft.



27-year-old woman

murdered on January 29th in Løgumkloster.



23-year-old woman

murdered on February 3rd in Aalborg



47-year-old woman

murdered on February 21st in Esbjerg.



73-year-old woman

murdered on April 23rd in Svendborg.



52-year-old woman

murdered on May 16th in Slagelse.



78-year-old woman

murdered on June 9th in Glesborg.



60-year-old woman

murdered on August 6th in Ølsted



54-year-old woman

murdered on August 24th in Skanderborg.



30-year-old woman

murdered in October in Præstø.



37-year-old woman

murdered on November 3rd in Holbæk.



11-month-old infant

murdered in October in Præstø.

RELATION BETWEEN VICTIM AND PERPETRATOR



2 out of the 13 perpetrators were **ex-partners** of the victim.

7 out of the 13 perpetrators were **partners** of the victim.

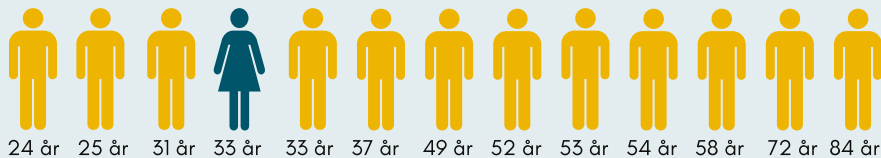
2 out of the 13 perpetrators had **no relationship** with the victim.

1 out of the 13 perpetrators had an **unknown relationship** with the victim.

1 out of the 13 perpetrators had a **non-romantic relationship** with the victim.

THE PERPETRATORS GENDER AND AGE

Age is stated at the time of the crime



EMPLOYMENT STATUS



3 out of the 13 perpetrators were **employed** at the time of the crime.

2 out of the 13 perpetrators were **living in an asylum center** at the time of the crime.

1 out of the 13 perpetrators was **not employed** at the time of the crime.

1 out of the 13 perpetrators was **retired** at the time of the crime.

The employment status of 6 out of the 13 perpetrators was **unknown** at the time of the crime.

THE PERPETRATORS MOTIVE



2 out of the 13 perpetrators were **unpredictable** at the time of the crime.

3 out of the 13 perpetrators' motive was **jealousy**.

2 out of the 13 perpetrators' motive was the victim's **desire for separation**.

1 out of the 13 perpetrators' motive was of a **sexual nature**.

The motive of 5 out of the 13 perpetrators was **unknown**.

PREVIOUS VIOLENCE - RELATED CONVICTIONS



3 perpetrators have previously been **convicted** for either indecent assault, endangerment, violence, or threats of violence.

5 out of the 13 perpetrators had **not previously been convicted** of violence.

5 out of the 13 perpetrators previous violence-related **criminal history is unknown**.

SUICIDE



3 out of the 13 perpetrators committed **suicide after the murder**.

In one femicide, it is **unknown** whether the perpetrator committed suicide.

Additionally, **1 perpetrator** attempted to commit suicide after the murder, and

1 perpetrator attempted to commit suicide shortly **before the murder**.

PUNISHMENT AND CONVICTION

In 8 out of the 12 femicides one or two perpetrators got convicted.

2 out of the 9 convicted perpetrators received a sentence of **commitment**.



1 out of the 9 convicted perpetrators received a sentence of **indefinite detention**.

5 out of the 9 convicted perpetrators received a **prison sentence of 12 years**.

1 out of the 9 convicted perpetrators received a **prison sentence of 16 years**.

MAPPING

THE VICTIMS

In 2022, 12 women were victims of femicide, which corresponds to one femicide per month. The youngest victim was 24 years old, while the oldest was 78 years old. This mapping shows that women become victims of femicide at all ages and at all stages of life, which is also reflected in CFV's mapping of femicides from 2000-2021 (Bernsen et al., 2022). Furthermore, the murders are geographically spread across Denmark.

In addition to the 12 femicides, an 11-month-old infant became a victim of filicide in connection with the murder of her mother. Filicide, in this context, can be understood as a type of extended femicide, where the perpetrator has either killed both their (ex)partner and children, or where the murders were committed to exact revenge on the children's mother.

RELATION BETWEEN VICTIM AND PERPETRATOR

In most cases, the perpetrator's relationship to the victim is either a partner or an ex-partner. In two cases in 2022, there were instances of remote killings, where the victim and the perpetrator had no prior knowledge of each other. Additionally, in one femicide with two perpetrators, the convicted woman had a romantic relationship with the victim, and the convicted man was also acquainted with the victim. The femicide, where the relationship is marked as unknown, involves a woman who was found murdered, and subsequently, her husband was found dead with no visible physical injuries. However, the police have not disclosed whether they suspect the man killed the woman and then committed suicide. It cannot, therefore, be ruled out that this was also a partner murder. This trend, where femicides are most often committed by a (former) partner, aligns with the Danish findings from 2000-2021, where the vast majority of femicides were also committed by a (former) partner (Bernsen et al., 2022). The same trend is observed globally, where the majority of murders of women are committed by a current or former partner (UNODC & UN Women, 2023).

THE PERPETRATORS

Gender, Age & Employment status

In all cases of femicides in 2022, the perpetrator was a man. However, in one of the femicides, there were two perpetrators, where a man was convicted for carrying out the murder, while a woman was convicted for assisting in planning the murder. In comparison to the mapping of femicides from 2000-2021, it is extremely rare for women to be the perpetrators. In the rare cases where women have been convicted of committing femicide, it has always been in some form of collaboration with a man (Bernsen et al., 2022). In terms of age, the perpetrators ranged from 25 to 84 years old. Additionally, the perpetrators had varying degrees of connection to the labor market at the time of the crime. In five out of the 12 femicides, we do not know if the perpetrator was employed at the time of the crime, but in the other femicides, it is clear that two perpetrators were employed, one was retired, and two were living in an asylum center.

Motive

The motive of the perpetrators is not always clearly presented in court or in the media. Additionally, a murder motive is rarely simple, but often consists of a complex interplay of several causes and incentives. Since all the murders are categorized as femicides and thus involve a gender-related aspect according to the UN's framework (UNODC & UN Women, 2022), this aspect is part of the perpetrator's motive complex to a greater or lesser degree. In our mapping, we find that jealousy is a motive in three cases, while separation is a motive in two femicides. Separation as a motive involves a breakup between the woman and the perpetrator, and most often we see that the woman wants to end the relationship, which is not tolerated or accepted by the perpetrator.

In four femicides, the motive is unknown. Of these, three of the perpetrators committed suicide, so the motives for the murders remain unknown. However, the police have reported that in one of the cases, there was a conflict-filled and turbulent divorce preceding the murder (TV2 Østjylland, 2022). In the same femicide, the perpetrator killed both his ex-wife and her new partner before committing suicide. The fourth femicide refers to the case where the police have not yet confirmed whether they suspect that the murdered woman's husband, who was later found dead, was the perpetrator.

Motive

Two of the murders are categorized as remote killings, where the victim and the perpetrator had no prior relationship before the murder. In one case, the motive was of a sexual nature, while the other case did not have a direct motive, as the perpetrator was later declared insane at the time of the crime. This refers to the murder of the 60-year-old woman, which is characterized as a femicide because the perpetrator was convicted of indecent treatment of a corpse, which, as mentioned above, meets the UN's criteria for classifying a murder as a femicide. Another perpetrator, who was also declared insane at the time of the crime, killed his then-partner. Thus, two out of thirteen perpetrators were declared insane at the time of the crime.

In comparison to other studies, the motives of separation and jealousy frequently appear in femicides committed by a current or former partner (Bernsen et al., 2022; Hedegård Thomsen 2020; Monckton-Smith, 2020). This trend is also seen in the Danish femicides in 2022, where five out of thirteen perpetrators' murder motives were influenced by either jealousy or separation.

Murder method

The women were mainly killed by strangulation or sharp violence. Strangulation, in this case, refers to a blockage of the air supply through the airways, and we have not distinguished between strangulation by hands or instruments. Sharp violence refers to, among other things, cuts, stabbings, and gunshot wounds. Strangulation was the method of murder in five femicides, while sharp violence was the method in four femicides. In the remaining three femicides, the method of murder is unknown.

Forensic pathologist Asser Hedegård Thomsen (2020) points out that partner murders with female victims often have jealousy and separation as motives, which may explain the difference in the number of cuts between female and male victims in heterosexual partner murders. Hedegård Thomsen (2020) and others argue that men are often so entrenched in their emotions that they inflict more injuries. In contrast, women more often kill in self-defense due to threats of violence from the man or during an attempted murder. In these cases, the woman often only has one attempt, resulting in fewer injuries to the man (Hedegård Thomsen, 2020, p. 37; Rye & Angel, 2019, p. 50). As seen in several of the femicides in 2022, the number of stabbings in connection with the murder is very high. In one femicide, for example, the woman was killed by 78 stab wounds. In another femicide, the woman was similarly killed by exactly 78 stab wounds.

Earlier punishments

There is a significant difference in whether the perpetrators have been previously convicted. In the four femicides where the woman was killed, and the perpetrator (or the suspected perpetrator) subsequently committed suicide, we do not know if there were any previous convictions. However, in the femicides that went to court, five perpetrators had no prior convictions. Regarding convictions for crimes against individuals, in one femicide, the perpetrator had previously received a conviction for threats of violence and assault. In another femicide, the perpetrator had been previously convicted for endangerment and indecent exposure, and the perpetrator also stated in court that he had previously been charged with aggravated assault.

Suicide

In three out of the 12 femicides, the perpetrator committed suicide after the murder. These femicides are also referred to as murder-suicides. In a fourth femicide, there may also be a case of murder-suicide, but the police have not yet confirmed whether the 47-year-old woman's murder was committed by her partner, who was later found dead. Additionally, in one femicide, the perpetrator had attempted suicide shortly before the murder. In another femicide, the perpetrator attempted suicide immediately after the murder but failed. This means that in half of the Danish femicide cases in 2022, there was either suicide or an attempt at suicide by the perpetrator.

Sentence & Punishment

In eight out of the 12 femicides, one or more perpetrators have been found guilty of murder. In the femicide with two perpetrators, the man was sentenced to 16 years in prison, along with permanent deportation from Denmark, while the woman who participated in the murder was sentenced to placement. In this case, the most aggravating circumstance was that the woman was 26 weeks pregnant, and as a result of the murder, the unborn child also died. Additionally, two other perpetrators were sentenced to placement, five perpetrators received 12 years in prison, one of whom was also sentenced to deportation from Denmark with a permanent entry ban, and one perpetrator was sentenced to preventive detention.

In the remaining four femicides, no sentence has been handed down. This is because the perpetrator committed suicide in three of the femicides, and the fourth femicide refers to the murder of a woman, where her husband was later found dead, but the police have not yet stated whether they suspect him to be the perpetrator.

Contact with authorities

In the mapping, we also examined whether there had been contact with authorities, such as the municipality, the police, or psychiatry, prior to the murder. Research indicates that factors such as mental illness or previous cases of psychological or physical violence can be risk factors for femicide (Monckton Smith, 2020; Rye & Angel, 2019; Rasmussen et al., 2016). In a report, Danner points out that personal crises related to divorce were common in a Finnish study of partner murder cases between 2003–2012 (Rasmussen et al., 2016).

In one femicide, we see that the perpetrator had been hospitalized in a psychiatric setting and was still receiving treatment when he committed the murder. In another femicide, the perpetrator had repeatedly visited his general practitioner due to unexplained pain. These pains were later assessed in a mental health evaluation after the murder, and were linked to a diagnosis of schizophrenia. This perpetrator had also been in contact with the police regarding incidents of physical violence against the victim. Additionally, he had previous convictions unrelated to violence. In a third femicide, the perpetrator had been under the police's radar due to divorce conflicts between him and the victim. Moreover, the police had been called at least once due to 'disturbances around the family' in a fourth femicide, and the perpetrator was detained by the police for up to 24 hours (Iwersen, 2022).

In the femicide where there are two perpetrators, a witness, who had previously been a mentor to the convicted woman, recounts that she met the perpetrator a few months before the murder. The witness observed that the woman, the victim's partner, was very angry with the victim. The witness became concerned and, therefore, made a worry notification to the municipality, as she felt that the woman was struggling mentally and needed help. As a result, we know that the municipality had some awareness of the situation in this case.

In over half of the 77 partner homicides committed between 2007–2017, either the police, the school, the municipality, or other authorities were aware of domestic violence prior to the murder (Rye & Angel, 2019). Therefore, we cannot rule out the possibility that more perpetrators may have been in contact with authorities, or that other institutions, such as the municipality, had further knowledge of the perpetrators or domestic violence.

ANALYSIS

This section will present an analysis of Danish femicides in 2022, focusing specifically on those categorized as partner or ex-partner homicides, using the mapping as a basis.

Drawing on Jane Monckton-Smith's (2020) research and the eight-stage model for partner homicide, the analysis aims to provide deeper insight into the risk indicators relevant to (ex)partner homicides in a Danish context. The analysis will therefore explore how these Danish (ex)partner homicides can be understood within the theoretical framework of the eight stages leading up to partner homicide, as outlined by Monckton-Smith (2020).

ANALYTICAL APPROACH

The analysis primarily relies on information obtained from public records and court rulings. In four out of the ten (ex)partner homicides of women committed in 2022, the perpetrator (or suspected perpetrator) committed suicide after the homicide, so no conviction is available for these femicides. Therefore, the analysis mainly focuses on the six femicides where there is more information available about the events leading up to and surrounding the homicide. In addition to the data from public records, the analysis also incorporates insights from news articles, where, for example, relatives or witnesses have commented on the events. In this context, we have evaluated the credibility and relevance of each source in an effort to achieve the most reliable data possible. It is important to note that the analysis is based on incomplete information, as we do not have access to all the knowledge and context surrounding these cases. Furthermore, there are significant ethical considerations in collecting data, particularly concerning the relatives and those left behind. Nevertheless, the analysis aims to provide valuable insights into the risk indicators for (ex)partner homicides committed against women in a Danish context, contributing to preventive efforts.

The analysis is structured in alignment with the chronological framework of Monckton-Smith's (2020) eight-stage model, and the findings are related to the key considerations at each stage.

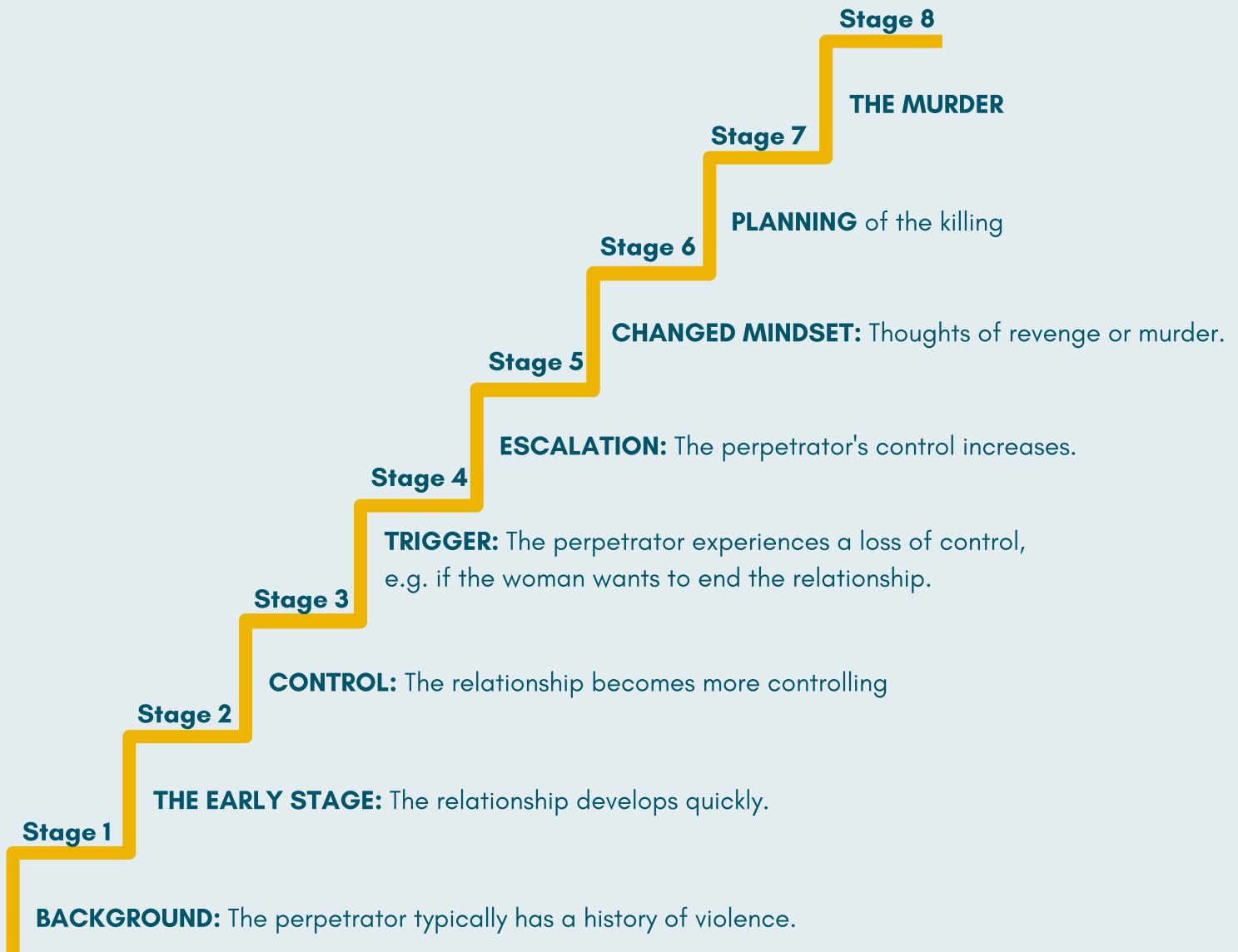
Based on the available data, which primarily consists of public records, it is challenging to address findings related to Stage 1, the perpetrator's history, and Stage 2, the early stages of the relationship, as the public records often do not provide detailed information in these areas. Some of the court rulings focus on how the relationship was at the beginning and how it developed over time. In other cases, witnesses have shared insights into these dynamics with the press. The analysis will incorporate examples and information from the different femicides as it progresses.

THE EIGHT STAGES

Jane Monckton-Smith's (2020) eight-stage model, based on a study of 372 homicides of women by a partner or ex-partner in England between 2012 and 2015, provides a detailed framework for understanding intimate partner homicides. Her research highlights that these killings are typically not impulsive or committed in the heat of the moment, but rather the result of a prolonged period of psychological or physical violence, threats, or stalking. Perpetrators are often driven by a need for control, and when they perceive a loss of control, this can escalate the violence, increasing the risk of homicide.

The model can be understood as a progression, with each stage representing a step toward eventual violence. The stages are as follows: The first stage focuses on the perpetrator's prior violent behavior. In this stage, the individual may have a history of controlling behavior, threats, or stalking, and may have exhibited violence towards others in previous relationships. The second stage involves the beginning of the relationship. At this point, the relationship often progresses quickly. A rapid progression can sometimes be a warning sign, with the perpetrator pushing for quick emotional or physical commitment from the victim. In the third stage, the perpetrator becomes more controlling and manipulative as the relationship develops. This often manifests in attempts to control the victim's finances, social interactions, and emotional experiences, creating a sense of dominance. Stage four is characterized by a triggering event, which sparks the escalation of violence. This might occur when the victim attempts to end the relationship, resist control, or when the perpetrator's jealousy intensifies. The triggering event acts as a catalyst for further violence. Stage five marks the escalation of conflict. The violence or controlling behavior intensifies, with the perpetrator possibly engaging in increased stalking, threats of suicide, or other actions to reassert control over the victim. In stage six, the perpetrator's thinking begins to shift. The individual starts to view revenge or murder as a possible solution to the perceived loss of control. This is a critical point in the process, as the perpetrator now sees violence as an option. In stage seven, the perpetrator begins to plan the murder. The degree of planning can vary, with some perpetrators meticulously planning over time, while others may decide to act in a matter of hours. This stage demonstrates a clear intent to commit the murder. Finally, stage eight is the murder itself. The act of violence culminates after a period of escalating abuse and control. In some cases, the murder extends to the children of the victim or the couple. This stage is the tragic end of the cycle, which has been building throughout the earlier stages. Monckton-Smith's model offers critical insights into the patterns of behavior that lead to intimate partner homicides, helping to identify risk factors and providing a framework for prevention. Understanding these stages allows professionals and authorities to spot early signs of escalating violence and take action before the situation turns fatal.

FIGURE 2: EIGHT STAGE MODEL FOR PARTNERKILLINGS ON WOMEN



Source: Monckton-Smith, J. (2020). Intimate Partner Femicide: using Foucauldian analysis to track an eight stage relationship progression to homicide. *Violence Against Women*, 26 (11). s. 1267-1285

The case files often provide the greatest insight into the period leading up to the actual femicide, where, on the eight-step scale, we are at step three or four — that is, the stage where the relationship becomes controlling or the perpetrator is triggered. The analysis of the first two steps is based solely on data from one of the femicides, which was a remote killing. This is due to a lack of sufficient data in the case files from (ex-)partner femicides concerning the perpetrator's background and the beginning of the relationship. Although we cannot document all eight steps in every femicide committed by a (former) partner, this does not exclude the possibility that they occurred to a greater or lesser extent.

Stage 1: A background involving violence

In the first step of the analysis, we have chosen to include information from the case involving the murder of the 22-year-old woman. As is well known, this was a remote killing and therefore cannot be directly mapped onto the eight-stage model of partner homicide (Monckton-Smith, 2020). However, during the trial it emerged that the perpetrator had a history of violent behavior towards previous partners. Monckton-Smith (2020) points out that a history of control, stalking, and violent behavior in relationships was present in all the partner homicide cases she studied. We have therefore chosen to include this perpetrator's background in the analysis to provide a concrete example of how step 1 can be identified.

In this case, witnesses who had previously been in relationships with the perpetrator described a pattern of psychological abuse, gaslighting, harassment, and stalking. They reported, among other things, that he isolated them from their friends, spoke to them in a demeaning manner, and used gaslighting tactics—such as telling them they were paranoid when they confronted him about the violence. In several cases, he was also physically violent. One witness stated that the perpetrator tracked her via GPS, and after the relationship ended, he continued to stalk her. Another former girlfriend described being stalked and harassed as well—for example, by the perpetrator breaking into her car and puncturing her tires. A third witness described how, at the age of 14, she was groomed by the perpetrator, who at that time was 26. She also recounted being subjected to gaslighting. Several of the ex-girlfriends further described experiences of coercive and non-consensual sex.

Thus, a pattern of violence emerges, consisting of psychological abuse such as gaslighting, grooming, harassment, and stalking, along with instances of physical violence prior to the murder. This shows that the risk indicators Monckton-Smith (2020) identifies in partner homicide can also be observed in other types of femicide, even when the perpetrator is not a current or former partner.

Stage 2: The beginning of the relationship

In the second step of the analysis, we likewise include only information about the perpetrator from the remote killing of the 22-year-old woman, as the case files in this instance contain extensive knowledge about the perpetrator's previous relationships. Monckton-Smith (2020) describes how such relationships often begin with the perpetrator being attentive and caring, but quickly develop into possessiveness and controlling behavior.

Independently of one another, three of the perpetrator's former partners testified in court, describing the following:

"The defendant was sweet and charming at first, and then suddenly it changed – he became controlling."

"The defendant was polite, kind, funny, and sweet, but he didn't stay that way. There was a lot of control."

"The defendant was really welcoming, nice, and down-to-earth, but he didn't stay that way. He became more controlling."

Monckton-Smith's (2020) study highlights one of the characteristics of these relationships: their rapid and accelerating development. In such relationships, jealousy is often accepted as an expression of love and care, and this expression of love quickly becomes a justification for various forms of controlling and possessive behavior. Over time, this can lead to the isolation of the victim from her friends and family. This is also reflected in the aforementioned perpetrator. In the other femicides brought to court, there is limited information about the beginning of the relationship. However, in several femicides, the relationship is generally described as controlling, which does not exclude the possibility that the perpetrator had a strong need to quickly establish a committed relationship from the outset.

A rapidly developing relationship and one characterized by control have thus been a recurring pattern for the perpetrator who committed the so-called remote killing of the 22-year-old woman. This raises the question of how the risk indicators that Monckton-Smith (2020) highlights for (ex-)partner homicides may also apply to other types of femicides.

Stage 3: Control in the relationship

In several femicides, we gain insight into the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator either through case files or media coverage. As described in the previous two sections, it is clear that the perpetrator who committed femicide against the 22-year-old woman exhibited a pronounced pattern of violence. This perpetrator used various tactics to maintain control both during and after the relationship in several cases. However, control and manipulation are also risk indicators that appear in several of the femicides committed by a current or former partner in 2022.

In one femicide, where the victim had been in a long-term relationship with her boyfriend, the victim's friend testified about a relationship marked by manipulation, gaslighting, and physical violence. The friend further described a cycle of violence, where the victim's then-boyfriend, the perpetrator, used love bombing. Love bombing is a technique where the abuser is extremely attentive and affectionate in an attempt to manipulate the partner. According to the victim's friend, the perpetrator would go from love bombing the victim for several days to being silent for long periods or breaking off the relationship, only to resume contact and love bomb the victim again. Additionally, the friend described how the perpetrator would manipulate the victim by telling her she did not remember situations correctly.

In another femicide, witnesses described how the 73-year-old victim was controlled by her then-partner, the perpetrator. The case files describe how the perpetrator "was very domineering and controlling in relation to the victim, including in matters of receiving visits at home and making calls from the home." This was confirmed by the victim's daughter, her friend, and her general practitioner, who also stated that the victim had told them she was afraid of her partner. The victim's daughter further described how she had witnessed "many arguments between the perpetrator and the victim, which were more outbursts of anger from the perpetrator, where her mother was 'put in her place by the perpetrator.'"

In a third femicide, the victim married her husband in 2012 in Afghanistan. The couple was evacuated to Denmark with their children in 2021 after the Taliban took power. A family member, who testified in the trial, described the relationship as very controlling. The family member explained how the perpetrator, the victim's husband, isolated the victim by, among other things, not allowing her to visit her family, locking her in, and using physical violence. Their stay at the Danish asylum centers was also fraught with conflict. Jydske Vestkysten reports that during the trial, it was revealed that the police had detained the perpetrator for up to 24 hours due to "disruption surrounding the family" (Iwersen, 2022). Thus, a pattern of control and dominance from the partner emerges.

In a fourth femicide involving a 50-year-old woman, few details about the relationship emerged during the trial, which was a confession case. However, it is evident that the perpetrator had two prior convictions for threats of violence and actual violence, which suggests a history of violent tendencies. Furthermore, he stated during the trial that he felt humiliated when the victim, according to him, flirted with other men in the town. Jealousy was the motive for the murder in this case, with the perpetrator having difficulty managing this jealousy. As a result, he checked and monitored the victim's text messages prior to the murder.

In a fifth femicide, we also see that the perpetrator monitored and checked his then-partner's, the victim's, text messages. Both this femicide and the femicide of the 50-year-old woman will be revisited at step 5, where this controlling behavior over text messages illustrates how the violence escalated and the situation worsened.

In a femicide involving two perpetrators, where the female perpetrator was in a relationship with the victim, the victim's sister testified that the victim was controlled by her partner. This included, for example, the partner deciding whether the victim was allowed to speak with her family. Several witnesses also testified that the relationship was conflict-ridden.

Stage 4: A trigger

Monckton-Smith (2020) finds in her research that the victim's desire to leave the perpetrator is often a decisive trigger for the escalation of violence or murder. For the Danish femicides of 2022 committed by a (former) partner, we similarly see that separation as a trigger is a recurring risk indicator.

We see that the 50-year-old woman had plans to leave her partner, the 73-year-old woman also wished to leave her partner, the 52-year-old woman wanted to separate from her partner, and the 27-year-old woman also talked about separating. Furthermore, the perpetrator in the murder of the 27-year-old woman stated during the trial that he experienced a loss of control, which was expressed, for example, by his wife "having her own opinion" and him feeling that she had sought contact with other men.

In the case of the murder of the 37-year-old woman, where two perpetrators were convicted, we see that the female perpetrator, who was in a romantic relationship with the victim, felt frustrated and jealous that the victim had married and become pregnant by another man. It is also worth noting that the female perpetrator had a close and romantic relationship with the male perpetrator, who was convicted of the actual murder. However, from the defendant's own statements and other testimonies in the case files, it appears that the victim's relationship with the new man and her pregnancy triggered a larger conflict. In addition, a witness testified that she experienced the female perpetrator as very frustrated and angry at the victim. Furthermore, the victim's sister stated that the female perpetrator became increasingly jealous, and the conflicts in the relationship grew larger. Therefore, we can understand the victim's pregnancy and relationship with another man as the triggering factor for the sense of loss of control experienced by the perpetrator.

In the case of the murder of the 24-year-old woman, the perpetrator's trigger was not the victim's desire to end the relationship. The perpetrator himself stated during the trial that his undiagnosed mental illness, which became increasingly prominent before the murder, was the triggering factor. In this way, this murder is atypical compared to the eight steps and other partner homicide cases. However, we also see examples of violence here in a similar manner, where other perpetrators subjected their partners to psychological and/or physical violence prior to the murder.

Stage 5: Escalation

The control trigger under step 4 represents the point at which the perpetrators attempt to regain control. This happens through an escalation of control, monitoring, stalking, or other behaviors. If the perpetrator succeeds in regaining control, the relationship can be said to return to step 3 – but it still poses a risk of further escalation (Monckton-Smith, 2020). Escalation and violent tactics such as control, surveillance, and stalking are also reflected in cases from 2022.

This is particularly evident in the case of the murder of the 52-year-old woman, where text messages sent by the victim shortly before the murder appear in the trial. In one text message, the victim describes how she is extremely afraid of what her partner might do in the aftermath of her stating that she wants to leave the relationship. In another text message, the victim describes how her partner monitors her by tracking her car, and in a third text message, the victim shares how she has experienced her partner sneaking into her bedroom while she was sleeping and checking her phone. In light of these text messages, it is clear that the victim is experiencing increased and intensified control from her partner after she expressed her desire to separate from him. Furthermore, in one of the messages, the victim states that her partner told her that her decisions would end in a tragedy for them all [the family, editor's note].

Prior to the murder of the 37-year-old woman, we also observe an escalation. During the trial, it was revealed that her female partner had threatened both the victim and the victim's unborn child with death. This was based on the victim's refusal to comply with her partner's wish for the victim to cut contact with her new partner. Additionally, it was revealed that the male perpetrator had a physical confrontation with the victim shortly before the murder.

Another tactic the perpetrator may use to regain control is threats of suicide. In the case of the murder of the 73-year-old woman, the mental evaluation of the perpetrator reveals that he attempted suicide before the murder and was admitted to psychiatric care in connection with this. The 73-year-old woman suffered from Parkinson's disease and required help from both home care and her partner. The mental evaluation states that the partner viewed helping the victim as an increased burden. This femicide will be addressed in the next analysis point, where the concept of "compassionate murder" will be discussed.

Stage 6: Thoughts of killing and revenge

When the perpetrator reaches the sixth phase, they realize their loss of control, which is when thoughts of murder or revenge arise. Monckton-Smith (2020) points out that longer and more difficult periods of illness have previously resulted in a form of "compassionate murder," where the perpetrator ends the suffering of the ill person by killing them. However, she notes that when steps 1-5 have been present in the perpetrator before and during the relationship, it is questionable whether the murder is about "mercy." This is what we see in the case of the murder of the 73-year-old woman. Here, the perpetrator frames the case as a "compassionate murder" in relation to the victim's illness, but the court bases its judgment on factors reflected in steps 2-5. For example, the court notes that on the day of the murder, the victim had been informed that she had secured an apartment for herself and that she intended to divorce. The court finds it indisputable that the victim's desire for a divorce and to move out of the perpetrator's home was the reason behind the murder. The fact that the victim had secured an apartment and wanted a divorce can be seen as the decisive factor in the perpetrator changing their mindset. The victim's wish to move out and divorce can be understood as the final loss of control, which gives rise to the possibility of murder in the partner.

In another femicide, where the 52-year-old woman also wanted a divorce, it appears that, for the partner, it is the victim's demands regarding the custody arrangement and division of assets that represent the ultimate loss of control. The perpetrator states in court that it "snapped" for him because, in that case, he would lose everything, and he also did not want to lose contact with their child.

The perpetrator in the murder of the 50-year-old woman used the same expression in his testimony in court – that "it snapped." He had read the victim's text messages on her phone, which included a message saying she wanted to leave him, and he also describes that some of the text messages were of a sexual nature and sent to another man. In court, the perpetrator talks about how he felt jealous, angry, and sad.

In this femicide, we can view the perpetrator's confirmation that the victim intended to leave him and possibly cheated on him as the decisive factor for a change in his thought process. It is on this basis that his mindset changes, and shortly after, he commits the murder. In the murder of the 27-year-old woman, the irreparable loss of control happens when the victim goes against her husband and tells his uncle in a phone conversation about the partner's alcohol and drug abuse. To the victim's mother, the perpetrator, and the victim's husband, explains that he killed the victim because "she answered back" (Havskov, 2022). In addition to the ongoing separation between the victim and the perpetrator, it was especially the perpetrator's belief that the victim was unfaithful to him, which contributed to the feeling of losing control, but the final loss of control occurred when the victim "went against him" in the phone conversation with the uncle.

Stage 7: Planning

The planning of the murder can range from a few hours to spanning over a year (Monckton-Smith, 2020). A common factor in the data we have on femicides committed by an (ex)partner in 2022 is that the planning phase is short. Most often, minimal time is spent planning and preparing the murder. We do not know the details leading up to the murder of the 73-year-old woman, except that it occurred on the same day the victim was told she had secured her own apartment.

In the cases of the murders of the 52-year-old woman, the 50-year-old woman, the 27-year-old woman, and the 24-year-old woman, it is evident that all were murdered after short-term planning. These murders happened as an immediate reaction from the perpetrators. However, although the planning was brief, and the perpetrators reacted immediately to a statement, text messages, or news, there were crucial circumstances that preceded the murders. Therefore, it was not simply a case of the perpetrators "snapping," and the murders did not happen purely impulsively or in a fit of rage. On the contrary, the murders are often the culmination of a preceding period of control and loss of control, and the perpetrators reacted to something that had been building up.

In the femicide involving the two perpetrators, we see that the planning took place over a longer period, at least over a day. After an overall assessment, the court found that the two perpetrators had a motive to kill the victim, and that the murder was planned in collaboration. In this case, the convicted man traveled to the city where the victim worked and waited outside her workplace until she finished her shift. The court found it indisputable that the woman, as part of the agreement with the man for him to kill the victim, told him where the victim worked and when she would finish. At the same time, the court also found it proven that the woman was complicit in the murder, as she met the man on the day of the murder, helped him change his phone number, and maintained telephone contact with him for hours leading up to the murder. Thus, in this femicide, we see a greater degree of planning.

Stage 8: The murder

Seven out of the ten femicides committed by a current or former partner occurred in the home. One of the murders is unknown in terms of location, another was committed in the parking lot in front of the victim's workplace, and a third murder occurred in a car. These crime scenes align with the typical crime scenes that Monckton-Smith (2020) identifies in her research. She also points out that these murders are often characterized by a high degree of violence – often more extreme than the violence that occurred during the relationship. This can also result in suicides, as seen in four femicides (including the case where the police have not yet indicated whether they suspect the man first killed his wife and then himself), as well as the suicide attempt after the murder of the 50-year-old woman.

In four of the ten femicides committed by an (ex)partner, the method of murder was strangulation. In an additional four femicides, the method was sharp force violence, including (kitchen) knives and firearms. In the two remaining (ex)partner murders, the method of murder is unknown. In one femicide, the woman was killed by 78 stab wounds, and in another, the woman was also killed by exactly 78 stab wounds. In a third femicide, the woman was killed by 27 stab wounds. A pattern of a high degree of violence and brutality is thus evident in these murders.

In addition to the many relatives of the murdered women, several children were also directly affected during the murders. An 11-month-old baby was killed along with its mother in Præstø. In another femicide, shared children were present when their mother was murdered. We also see another femicide where the couple's minor child witnessed part of the murder. Additionally, in some femicides, the perpetrator attempts to hide the murder. This is seen, for example, in a femicide where the partner kills the woman and their 11-month-old baby in their home, then tries to conceal the bodies in a forest. In another case, the perpetrator drives the car, in which the victim's body is found, into the harbor. In other cases, the perpetrator either turns themselves into the police or confesses to the murder in court.

CONCLUSION

In this publication, we have presented an overview of the identified femicides in 2022. The dissemination of this knowledge about femicides and the perpetrators who commit these murders is important for several reasons.

First, it helps raise awareness about a deeply serious issue: that women are being killed because they are women. Increased public awareness is crucial for both prevention and greater support for initiatives and changes. Second, the study helps identify the causes of femicides, and with a deeper understanding of these causes, more effective prevention measures can be developed. Additionally, disseminating knowledge about gender-based violence and murder can help break down the barriers that prevent victims from coming forward and reporting violence and abuse.

By analyzing common characteristics among the perpetrators, we gain a better opportunity to identify potential risks and prevent repetition. A mini-analysis of the Danish femicides committed by (ex)partners based on Monckton-Smith's (2020) eight-step model has contributed to a greater understanding of the dynamics, including the identification of warning signs and risk indicators leading up to a murder. In other words, such an analysis can improve the risk assessment process, which is crucial for both law enforcement and other professionals involved in prevention.

The analysis overall confirms that Monckton-Smith's (2020) research is also relevant in a Danish context. The eight predictable stages leading up to a partner murder of a woman are also reflected in the Danish femicides of 2022. Thus, the model is useful when developing prevention efforts in Denmark. Furthermore, we see that in a remote murder, certain patterns of a violent history in the perpetrator also appear, which we typically see in (ex)partner murder cases. This may warrant further investigation into the common characteristics that cross over among perpetrators of different forms of femicides.

We hope that this study can be used to raise awareness in society about the risks and prevention of femicides and that the findings can be applied in practice when professionals need to identify risk indicators and intervene before violence escalates.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the mini-analysis, we recommend the following:

- **General public education on violence and signs of violence**
 - More resources for information campaigns, education, and the activation of civil society.
- **Ensuring sustained funding for organizations preventing violence**
 - Implementation of nationwide counseling and support groups for victims of violence, perpetrators, and relatives.
- **Violence prevention education targeted at professional groups in direct contact with citizens**
 - Implementation of the eight-stage model as a practical risk tool to prevent violence and murder.
- **Closer collaboration between authorities**
 - Faster access to health records in cases of suspected violence.
- **Greater focus on research on femicides in a Danish context**
 - Securing funding for research aimed at the prevention of femicides.



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