Abstract

Perspectives on intimate partner murders.

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This paper will be based on a research about 337 so-called « passion crimes » in France over ten years. I will show that, 1) men and women do not kill their intimate partner (and some others...) in the same circumstances or for the same reasons, and 2) men and women who eventually kill an intimate partner share a specific model of relationship.

Feminist sociologists analyse intimate partner murders as an extreme effect of the power dynamics of gender, while psychologists focus on the subjective aspects of object relations. As can be expected, the debate between these approaches is a very conflictual one. But our study points to the complex interplay of social, intrapsychic and intergenerational factors in the development (or in consequence, the prevention and treatment) of violence in the sphere of gender and family relations. Any attempt to reconcile psychological research with equalitarian advocacy, to create links between feminist and clinical approaches, must understand how society encourages the merging and proprietorship model of love... as the relationship between men and women is the only one where the dominant and the dominated are supposed to, and in fact often do, love each other, whatever love means for an individual.

A small part of our results have already been published in several papers, and a book: