

Interdisciplinary and Community-Based Approaches to Understanding and Confronting Femicide



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Introduction

Highlighting approaches across academic disciplines and outside of academia improves our understanding of important social issues. This project focuses on diverse approaches to understanding *femicide* to improve research and public awareness around issues of gender-based violence (GBV).

The Problem

Nearly one in three women experience gender-based violence in her lifetime.¹ For too many women, this violence escalates to the point of femicide.

Research

Research attempts to collect data & understand the root causes of femicide. Scholars have coined different terms to conceptualize and spread awareness of distinct aspects of the problem.

Femicide identifies the murder/homicide of women because of their gender.²

Feminicide/feminicidio coined by Marcela Lagarde, analyzes the different levels of violence which includes the violation of women’s rights, impunity, and institutional violence.³

About **12 women** a day are murdered across Latin America and the Caribbean.⁴

Community Advocacy

Activism provides a pathway for demanding change and spreading awareness about violence against women. Activists engage with the community and institutions to affect social change.

Common focus areas for organizations:

- justice for the intentionally murdered and disappeared women, and women subject to GBV;
- reform in penal codes;
- inform national and international communities;
- and organize programs to help emotional and physical recovery.⁵

Examples of organizations/groups addressing femicide and GBV:



Legal Advocacy

Through judicial and legislative systems, nations can address femicide and punish acts of violence against women as a way to demonstrate their commitment and obligation to protect women and their rights.

Some countries have revised their penal codes to allow for the prosecution of femicide as a distinct form of homicide.

Case Study Example: Mexico
Mexico codified *feminicidio* in its Penal Code as a crime in all 32 states as a result of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights “Cotton Fields” ruling, condemning Mexico for its ongoing resistance in addressing *feminicidio*.⁶



Media Coverage

The mass media shapes how the public views and understands femicide. This provides journalists with the ability to frame the issue in ways that can be harmful or beneficial.

Some harmful reporting practices include:

- Victim-blaming,
- stereotyping,
- sensationalism,
- perpetrator justification
- and apathy⁸

Ethical guidelines for journalists:

- Global example: "Reporting on Violence Against Women and Girls: A Handbook For Journalists" by UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
- Regional example: "Coverage of Gender Violence Cases in Puerto Rico" edited by Norma Valle and Firuzeh Shokooh Valle (femicide journalists)

Art

Professional artists and activists use different mediums and techniques to bring attention to the pervasiveness of femicide. Art also provides a way for communities to process violence against women and grieve together.



Street art in Mexico:
Paste Up Morras (Paste Up Women)
Individuals and collectives place graphic art and feminist phrases in public spaces.⁹

Art Installation:
Elina Chauvet’s “Red Shoes”



Gathers women together in Mexico to commemorate women lost to femicide and GBV. The installation also traveled to Brazil.¹⁰

Literature Cited

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² Celeste Saccomano, The Causes of Femicide in Latin America. Report. Institut Barcelona D’Estudis Internacionals (IBEI), 2015. 4-7. Accessed March 25, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep14204.5>
³ Saccomano, The Causes of Femicide in Latin America, 5.
⁴ The Global Americans, “Femicide and International Women’s Rights: An epidemic of violence in Latin America.” *The Global Americans*, 2022, <https://theglobalamericans.org/reports/femicide-international-womens-rights/>.
⁵ “Take Five: Fighting Femicide in Latin America.” UN Women – Headquarters, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2017/2/take-five-adriana-quinones-femicide-in-latin-america>.
⁶ García-Del Moral, & Neumann, P. (2019). “The Making and Unmaking of Feminicidio/Femicidio Laws in Mexico and Nicaragua.” *Law & Society Review*, 53(2), 452–486. <https://doi.org/10.1111/asr.12380>.
⁷ García-Del Moral, & Neumann, P. (2019). “The Making and Unmaking of Feminicidio/Femicidio Laws in Mexico and Nicaragua.” *Law & Society Review*, 53(2), 452–486. <https://doi.org/10.1111/asr.12380>.
⁸ Cristina del Mar Quiles, “How We Report on Machista Violence Matters”, trans. Juana Ponce de León, Women’s Media Center, (2021).
⁹ Mar García, “Feminists Artists Fight Back: Part of a Burgeoning Protest Culture Among Women, Urban Artists are Drawing Attention to One of Mexico’s Most Urgent Social Crises”, trans. Shannon Kirby, Global Press Journal, (2021).
¹⁰ Joshua Barajas, “This Artist’s Red Shoes Stand in For All the Women Lost to Violence”, PBS, (2020).

Conclusion:

Each approach is unique in its expression, yet they depend on and interact with one another to increase awareness about femicide and gender-based violence. The interaction among the disciplines can be seen through the influence art and media have on creating new policy or academic literature and through the use of art as protest by activists. The different disciplines dependency on each other is crucial to spreading awareness about femicide and working towards finding an end to the violence against women.