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Coding Impunity: A feminicidal violence approach towards *feminicidios* in Estado de México during 2000s from the perspective of victims' relatives.

verfasst von / submitted by

Génesis Salas Cruz

angestrebter akademischer Grad / in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
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Ao. Univ.-Prof. Dr. Martina Kaller

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Abstract

Since 2000, gender-based murders of women in Estado de México, a federal entity in the central region of Mexico, began to be systematically documented. These crimes, conceptualized as feminicides, that initially became known in the border city of Ciudad Juárez in the 1990s, reached other parts of the country. The impacts of this phenomenon in Estado de México are analyzed in this thesis from the perspective of the victims' families. And from the approach to feminicidal violence, which covers the structural conditions prior to the murder, the set of misogynistic forms of mistreatment and violence against women, institutional violence and state impunity. The institutionalized impunity surrounding the crimes has prevented justice from being granted in memory of the victims, whose lives were violently taken, and for their families. And it has favored the perpetrators, most of whom remain unidentified. Elements of the social construction of gender, intersectionality, patriarchal discourses and myths around the phenomenon are also analyzed in this work. As well as an innovative spatial turn approach is developed to explore the geography of violence, which reveals that it is exacerbated in certain areas of the state. To address the phenomenon and its complexity, a qualitative content analysis was conducted through testimonies of victims' relatives obtained from primary sources despite their limited availability. The results are visualized using coding and geocoding techniques. A life free of violence for women, memory, truth and justice is advocated/concluded in this work.

Zusammenfassung

Seit dem Jahr 2000 wurden im Estado de México, einem Bundesstaat in der Zentralregion Mexikos Femizide, systematisch dokumentiert. Diese Verbrechen, die in den 1990er Jahren in der Grenzstadt Ciudad Juárez bekannt wurden, erreichten andere Teile des Landes. Die Auswirkungen dieses Phänomens im Bundesstaat Estado de México werden in dieser Arbeit aus der Sicht der Familien der Opfer analysiert. Feminizide, haben mit den strukturellen Bedingungen vor dem Mord zu tun: frauenfeindliche Formen von Misshandlung und Gewalt gegen Frauen, institutionelle Gewalt und lasche bis nicht vorhandene behördliche Strafverfolgung Diese institutionalisierte Straflosigkeit im Zusammenhang mit Verbrechen hat verhindert, dass Gerechtigkeit in Erinnerung an die Opfer, deren Leben gewaltsam genommen wurde, und für ihre Familien gewährt wird. Die Täter bleiben in den meisten Fällen unbekannt. In dieser Arbeit werden auch Elemente der sozialen Konstruktion von Geschlecht, Intersektionalität, patriarchale Diskurse und Mythen rund um das Phänomen analysiert. Darüber verhilft der spatial turn, die Geographie femizidaler Gewalt zu untersuchen. Es zeigen sich maßgebliche Unterschiede, je nach verschiedenen Gebieten im Staat. Um das Phänomen und seine Komplexität anzugehen, wurde eine qualitative Inhaltsanalyse anhand von Aussagen von Angehörigen von Opfern durchgeführt, die trotz ihrer begrenzten Verfügbarkeit aus Primärquellen stammen. Die Ergebnisse werden mithilfe von Codierungs- und Geokodierungstechniken visualisiert. Die Autorin bekennt sich zu einem Leben ohne Gewalt für Frauen, versucht die Erinnerung zu stärken und stellt sich auf die Seite der Gerechtigkeit.

Resumen

Desde el año 2000, los asesinatos de mujeres por motivos de género en el Estado de México, una entidad federativa de la región centro de México empezaron a ser documentados sistemáticamente. Estos crímenes conceptualizados como feminicidios que inicialmente se dieron a conocer en la ciudad fronteriza de Ciudad Juárez en los 1990s alcanzaron otros lugares del país. Los impactos de este fenómeno en Estado de México son analizados en esta tesis desde la perspectiva de los familiares de las víctimas. Y desde el abordaje de la violencia feminicida, que abarca las condiciones estructurales previas al asesinato, el conjunto de formas misóginas de maltrato y violencia hacia las mujeres, la violencia institucional y la impunidad del estado. La impunidad institucionalizada que rodea a los crímenes ha impedido que se otorgue justicia en memoria de las víctimas, cuyas vidas fueron arrebatadas violentamente, y para sus familias. Y ha favorecido a los perpetradores, quienes en su mayoría permanecen sin ser identificados. Elementos de construcción social del género, interseccionalidad, discursos patriarcales y mitos al rededor del fenómeno son también analizados en este trabajo. De igual forma, un enfoque innovador de spatial turn es desarrollado para explorar la geografía de la violencia, la cual revela que ésta se agudiza en ciertas zonas del estado. Para abordar el fenómeno y su complejidad, se condujo un análisis de contenido cualitativo a través de testimonios de familiares de víctimas obtenidos de fuentes primarias a pesar de su limitada disponibilidad. Los resultados se visualizan utilizando técnicas de codificación y geo-codificación. Una vida libre de violencia para las mujeres, memoria, verdad y justicia es lo que se aboga y concluye en este trabajo.

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“Por la vida y la libertad de las mujeres.”

(Lagarde y de los Ríos 2004, 32).

Motivation for the research topic

The reason to write this thesis on feminicides is rooted in the outrage over violence and extreme violence against women in Mexico and as an act of solidarity with those who seek justice before a state that has been unable to guarantee the human rights of girls and women, beginning with the most basic one: the right to life.

My engagement to the subject dates back to 2012, while collaborating as a volunteer in the coordination of the annual report on the state of human rights of Amnesty International in my hometown Monterrey. There, I had the opportunity to hear some of the testimonies of relatives of forced disappeared, as well as victims of gender violence. It was at that moment that I began to become aware of the levels of violence and extreme gender-based violence in the country. The outrage intensified when I got to know about cases of state violence and torture such as the case of Ernestina Ascencio Rosario and Atenco among many others.

That same year, while doing peaceful activism in the streets about a campaign in defense of abortion rights, whilst holding a banner with fellow female activists claiming '*My body, my rights*', some municipal police officers approached us and derogatorily shouted '*Mujeres tenían que ser*' (a sexist phrase to discredit women). Those words and those acts by the authority would reinforce my commitment to activism and the defense of women's rights among other causes.

Finally, a relatively recent event that caught my attention and sparked my interest in doing research on the subject was a peaceful women's strike on March 9, 2020, in which women across the country were urged not to go to work or to university, not to use any means of transportation, not to take the streets among other things to raise awareness of women disappearances and femicide in the country.

Based on this, this work seeks to contribute to the analysis of femicide in one of the entities of the central region of the country: Estado de México.

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List of abbreviations

AVGM	Alerta de Violencia de Género contra las Mujeres
CEIICH	Centro de Investigaciones Interdisciplinarias en Ciencias y Humanidades
CIESAS	Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social
Coneval	Consejo Nacional de Evaluación de la Política de Desarrollo Social
Edomex	Estado de México
FGJEM	Fiscalía General de Justicia del Estado de México
FLACSO	Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales
GS	Global Studies
INEGI	Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática
INMUJERES	Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres México
LGAVLV	Ley General de Acceso de las Mujeres a una Vida Libre de Violencia
Mexico	Federal Republic of the United Mexican States
MP	Ministerio Público
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NE	Northeast zone
OCNF	Observatorio Ciudadano Nacional del Femicidio
PGJEM	Procuraduría General de Justicia del Estado de México
PS	Peace Studies
R.Q.	Research Question
SCJN	Suprema Corte de Justicia de la Nación
SE	Southeast zone
SIG	Sistema de Indicadores de Género
T-MEC	Tratado Comercial entre México, Estados Unidos y Canadá
UAM-X	Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana Unidad Xochimilco
UNAM	Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
USA	United States of America
USMCA	United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement
U.S.	United States
ZMVM	Zona Metropolitana del Valle de México

1. Introduction

“Mucha gente cree que el feminicidio es de Ciudad Juárez,
es parte de su identidad, es sólo Ciudad Juárez...
era necesario primero, que se entendiera que no sólo pasa en Juárez.
Otra, que no todos los feminicidios son idénticos...
nosotras ya sabíamos que había diversos antecedentes,
diversas maneras de culminar el proceso de violencia
en una muerte violenta.”
*Inaugural speech by Marcela Lagarde at the
Foro Reflexiones Actuales sobre Feminicidio,
CEIICH UNAM, August 22, 2019
(doc I, 27:58-30:22).*

These words leave one thoughtful and provide an outlook on the scope and complexity of the situation of violence against women and feminicides in Mexico. What happens in a country that allows feminicides to continue happening and to spread to other entities in it? Those crimes that were initially documented in Ciudad Juárez in 1993 became a reality in other states in the country as well. How can this be scientifically explained in cities other than Ciudad Juárez? And why is it so difficult to grant justice or even serve it at all? Those were my initial questions when trying to broach the subject. And although they are valuable questions, they require extensive field experience and specialization in the subject to be able to approach possible hypotheses since many of them continue to be of academic and interdisciplinary debate. I hope further lines of research can be developed.

Therefore, I decided to focus this research work on the study of one of the key elements to understand feminicides: feminicidal violence, with an emphasis on the institutional violence that relatives of the victims face in their search for justice in the case study of Estado de México, in order to analyze what Lucía Melgar calls *institucionalización de la impunidad*¹ towards feminicides in the context of this state. To do this, a content analysis will be conducted based on testimonies of relatives of victims of feminicides in Estado de México between 2005-2018 throughout their process of seeking justice before state authorities in an effort to find and code patterns of abuse of authority and obstructions to justice in order to build a framework of impunity. The testimonies are obtained from primary sources through books, a documentary, and a forum. Further details are addressed in the methodological section.

In this sense, it is intended to contribute to the analysis of the phenomenon in one of the states with the highest rates of feminicides in Mexico, even higher than those of Ciudad Juárez².

¹ "The recurrent incapacity or corruption of police officers and officials, the multiplication of official instances lacking the powers to carry out their tasks, as well as the lack of punishment for negligent officials or those suspected of complicity" (Melgar, ¿Ni "un poquito de justicia"? El feminicidio en Ciudad Juárez y la Sentencia del caso "Campo algodnero" 2011, 75)

² See (Ibid., 89)

This serves to diversify the field of research and join efforts in understanding the crimes in this state.

Thus, this work may contribute to some approaches towards feminicides in a region still as little studied as the central part of Mexico, with a focus on Estado de México and its context.

In doing so, the theoretical part of this work offers an overview of the state of the art on feminicides in Mexico in general and Estado de México in particular. This aims to show the different approaches that have been developed regarding the study of feminicides throughout the years by analyzing criminal, sociological, anthropological and cultural contexts.

Subsequently, a conceptual framework is provided to address and understand feminicides from femicide and its forms to feminicidal violence and the new findings. The juridical advances in the matter are examined as well, such as the *Alerta de Violencia de Género contra las Mujeres*³ (Gender Violence Alert) and the *Ley General de Acceso de las Mujeres a una Vida Libre de Violencia*⁴ (General Law of Women's Access to a Life Free from Violence). They are also analyzed from a peace and conflict studies perspective, through Galtung's direct-structural-cultural triangle. And some feminist insights on this regard are also introduced.

Additionally, an analysis of the socio-economic context of Estado de México is provided to identify the elements present in the feminicides. Some factors including a patriarchal system, the disposable bodies notion and the intersectionality of women are discussed. The section also locates feminicides in the state based on their level of occurrence in various municipalities such as Ecatepec, Nezahualcóyotl and Tlalnepantla among others.

To close this chapter, approaches on the concept of impunity are analyzed to frame the institutional violence that the relatives of the victims face when they seek justice before state authorities and institutions like the Ministerio Público (Public Ministry), the Policía Judicial (Judicial Police), Peritos (Judicial Experts) and the Fiscalía Especial de Feminicidios (Special Prosecutor's Office for feminicides).

³ AVGM, is a mechanism for the protection of the human rights of women contemplated within the LGAVLV and currently declared in thirteen states of the Federal Republic of the Mexican United States (Mexico): 1. Estado de México (2015), 2. Morelos (2015), 3. Michoacán (2016), 4. Chiapas (2016), 5. Nuevo León (2016), 6. Veracruz (2016), 7. Sinaloa (2017), 8. Colima (2017), 9. San Luis Potosí (2017), 10. Guerrero (2017), 11. Quintana Roo (2017), 12. Nayarit (2017), 13. Veracruz (2017). For more information, see the website (Gobierno de México): <https://www.gob.mx/inmujeres/acciones-y-programas/alerta-de-violencia-de-genero-contra-las-mujeres-80739> (Accessed on 28.01.2021)

⁴ LGAVLV, approved by the Mexican Senate on December 15, 2006. For more information, see the website (Cámara de Diputados): https://www.gob.mx/cms/uploads/attachment/file/209278/Ley_General_de_Acceso_de_las_Mujeres_a_una_Vida_Libre_de_Violencia.pdf (Accessed on 28.01.2021)

These frames are analyzed from two approaches, the first one on “*the suffering of the ‘other’*” claimed by Julia E. Monárrez Fragoso (2010, 185) and the second one on the “*institutionalization of impunity*” by Lucía Melgar (2011, 75), previously mentioned. This positions the theoretical basis for the analysis of the results.

The third section unveils the questions that guide this research as well as the methods and tools to be used to obtain the results. A qualitative content analysis and coding are applied to find, and code patterns of institutional violence committed by state authorities based on the testimonies of the victims’ relatives to build a framework of impunity that exemplifies the institutionalization of it in Estado de México. This methodology aims to bring possible answers to the main questions guiding this research: How do the patterns of institutional violence in Estado de México manifest themselves, according to the perspective of the victims’ families during their search for justice? And how have the families of the victims experienced the impacts of femicide and state impunity geographically in the 2000s? Complementary questions and objectives are developed in the methodology part.

The fourth section shows the analysis of 17 testimonies of victims’ relatives obtained from primary sources and subsequently interpreted. Accordingly, the following primary sources were analyzed: four testimonial books⁵, a documentary called *Día de Muertas*⁶, and the *Foro Reflexiones Actuales sobre Femicidio*⁷. The decision to use these primary sources in digital format instead of obtaining the information via fieldwork came due to the traffic restrictions caused by the current situation of the global COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, it is demonstrated that it is possible to obtain reliable information for this research through the use of digital primary sources as they provide the testimonies needed for the analysis.

The fifth section presents a summary of the results. They are visualized in a framework of patterns of impunity elaborated by my own. In this, the institutional and structural violence involved in the impacts of femicides and the processes of seeking justice can be identified.

Lastly, the sixth section closes with conclusions on the results, the complexity of the field, the impacts of femicides in family members and the institutionalization of impunity around the crimes, as well as final reflections on the need for truth, justice and memory towards the victims in respecting the lives and rights of women in the country and Estado de México.

⁵ Three of the four testimonial books were purchased electronically, since they are not of free access, thus respecting in this way the right of access to authorized editions.

⁶ The documentary was released in 2018 by Voces de la Ausencia, a digital platform created in 2008 to visualize femicides in Mexico. The documentary is held in Spanish. To access the documentary, see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hDzdbxNNeVE> (Accessed on 4.11.2020)

⁷ The forum was organized by the CEIICH - UNAM and the UNODC and held from August 22-23, 2019 in Mexico City. For more information see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=binVQNwIO2Q> (Accessed on 22.10.2020)

2. Theory

“Quiero justicia.
Saber quién lo hizo, por qué lo hizo.
Porque mi hija no se merecía esa muerte.”
*Testimonial of a mother after her daughter's feminicide
by strangulation means in the municipality of
Nezahualcóyotl, Estado de México, in 2018.*
(doc III, 5:36-5:44)

The objective of the theory section is to identify the current state of the art regarding feminicides in Mexico by showing the various interdisciplinary approaches that have been developed by scholars working in the study of the phenomenon from a national level to address the specific case study of Estado de México. This will allow us to go from a national overview of perspectives in the field to specific regional approaches and show the diversity of academic contributions on the field.

The second part focuses on the development of a conceptual framework with the key elements to understand feminicides. Going through the gender violence that frames feminicides, the definition and application of the term – *feminicidio* - in the Mexican context and the *feminicidal violence* that precedes it. This last concept will be under scrutiny in this work as the core theoretical basis to frame impunity, understand the institutionalization of impunity – *institucionalización de la impunidad* - that surrounds feminicides and the *institutional violence* faced by women and, for this study, the families of the victims in their search for justice. This will be later analyzed in chapter four on the analysis of testimonies and the results.

The third part of this section shows the contextualization of the phenomenon in Estado de Mexico through the impacts of patriarchy, intersectionality, and the normalization of violence against women and against their bodies.

The fourth part introduces the concept of structural violence by Galtung to frame feminicides from a peace and conflict studies perspective with some feminist views.

To conclude, the fifth part of this section frames the concept of *impunity* to identify, in the results part, the failures of the state towards guaranteeing respect for women's lives and their human rights in Estado de México. This analysis is conducted from two approaches: "the suffering of the 'other'" by Julia Monárrez Fragoso and the "institutionalization of impunity" by Lucía Melgar.

The chapter closes with conclusions about the discussions held in this section on the theoretical and conceptual approaches towards the phenomenon.

2.1. Theoretical approaches towards feminicides in Mexico

The understanding of feminicides in Mexico are rooted in the original conceptualization of the term femicide referring to the “misogynous killing of women by men” (Radford and Russell 1992, 3) with the addition of the negligence of the authorities and the incapacity of the state to guarantee respect for women’s lives and their human rights (Lagarde y de los Ríos 2010). Further details will be elaborated in the conceptual framework below.

In the case of Mexico, these crimes against girls and women began attracting attention in Ciudad Juárez more than twenty-five years ago when the first cases began to be documented in 1993. They developed in a context of borderlands between the USA and Mexico, the role of the *maquiladoras*, the surroundings of *segundo estado*, neoliberal politics and social, economic, and political violence under patriarchal power (Fregoso and Bejarano 2010)⁸.

Despite the protests and demands for justice, mainly from the victims’ relatives but also from organizations, human rights agencies⁹ and social and women’s movements, the feminicides have continued and no satisfactory response from the authorities has been given. Instead, the families of the victims have been treated unjustly, with paternalism, lack of professionalism, negligence and violence (Lagarde y de los Ríos 2010).

According to Mercedes Olivera, the high rates of feminicides in Mexico since the 1990s held in direct relation to the expansion of neoliberalism and the failure of it in the country. They are also an expression of the country’s current crises of governability, internal security, and respect for human rights, since those feminicides that were once linked to particular regions, such as Ciudad Juárez, have become a pathology that has spread throughout Mexico (Olivera 2010). To get an idea of the scope of the above, just from 2014 to 2017, there were around 8,904 registered cases nationally (OCNF 2018, 215).

In an effort to comprehend the phenomenon, different approaches have been developed over the years to address and study the feminicides. Starting with the background of Ciudad Juárez, there have been hypotheses based on criminology as to whether the assailants are serial killers or whether the criminals are part of a system of power and communication based on belonging to fraternities that exercise forms of totalitarian control over women’s bodies and territories (Segato 2005).

⁸ For a broader understanding of feminicides in Ciudad Juárez, Magdalena Ziegler's thesis work can be consulted: Ziegler, Magdalena. *Mapping violence: A spatial approach towards the feminicides at Ciudad Juárez during the 1990s from the perspective of family members*. Vienna: University of Vienna, 2019.

⁹ Mexico has received more than fifty recommendations from international human rights agencies and rapporteurs of several mechanisms such as the United Nations, Amnesty International, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, the European Parliament, the Spain Congress and the U.S. Congress (Lagarde y de los Ríos 2010, xii)

In this communication system referred to by Segato, feminicides seen as femi-genocide are messages sent by a subject in a clear call-and-response style to communicate with those who “know” the code and speak the language, even when they are not taking part directly in the enunciative action (Segato 2010, 80-81).

There are also sociological and border analyses that examine the crimes in the context of the border zone and the impacts of the NAFTA¹⁰ and the *maquilas* in Ciudad Juárez as well as the economic status, class and power of the female victims and the perpetrators in a context of uneven development and poverty (Washington Valdez 2005).

In a similar vein, Julia Monárrez Fragoso states that these sexual murders are the product of a dominant culture and patriarchal structures towards the invasion of the women’s body and the politics of gender imbalance and social vulnerability of women (Monárrez Fragoso 2000).

Additionally, anthropological perspectives have been developed in an attempt to address the spread of the phenomenon throughout the country. In this regard, Marcela Lagarde argues that society itself produces feminicides and feminicidal violence. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze what type of society it is and what type of relationships exist there in kinship, in work, in politics, in rights, what relationships exist between women and men, between institutions and women and girls (CEIICH-UNAM 2019, 1:01-1:04). Furthermore, she claims that feminicide “occurs when the historical conditions generate social practices that allow for violent attempts against the integrity, health, liberties, and lives of girls and women” (Lagarde y de los Ríos 2010, xvi). And that is engendered in the structural inequality between women and men and the androcentrism that surrounds the problem along with the social silence, indifference and state impunity (Lagarde y de los Ríos 2008).

Finally, Lucía Melgar states that feminicides, particularly in Juárez, are a case of gender violence and "official misogyny" in a context of the militarization of Mexico and in the context of a globalization that favors violence against women (Melgar 2011, 70).

This applies in addition to the generalized normalization of extreme violence and the institutionalization of impunity. Thus, these crimes can be seen as "state crimes", due to the action or omission of the state (Melgar 2011, 71).

In this context, 2003 was a fundamental year for the legal classification of these types of crimes at the national level. It was the year that the Comisión Especial para Conocer y Dar Seguimiento a las Investigaciones Relacionadas con los Feminicidios en la República Mexicana y a la Procuración de Justicia Vinculada was created (Lagarde y de los Ríos 2010, xvi).

¹⁰ Currently called the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) and T-MEC in Spanish. It has been ratified and come into effect on July 1st, 2020 to replace the former NAFTA, which had gone into effect in 1994.

This represented a great judicial, conceptual and political achievement because it was through the work in the Commission that the transition of the concept of homicide to feminicide was possible, as well as the expansion of the study of such events throughout the country (ibidem, xvi).

Since 2003, Marcela Lagarde, who chaired the Special Commission to Make Known and Monitor Feminicides in Mexico has reported that the girls and women murdered in Mexico had different ages, from girls to older women. They belonged to all socioeconomic strata, although the majority were poor or marginal. Mostly illiterate women, with little schooling. Their occupations varied but most were hard-working girls and women. And their bodies have been found in public and private spaces (Lagarde y de los Ríos 2010, xviii-xix).

a. Approaches towards feminicides in Estado de México: why focus on it

In this context, the case study of Estado de Mexico represents one of great concern. This entity - the most populated one in the country with more than 16, 992, 418 inhabitants¹¹ - has become one of the states with the highest numbers of murdered women for their gender condition nationwide. According to the OCNF¹² (2018) report *Informe Implementación del Tipo Penal de Feminicidio en México: Desafíos para acreditar las razones de género 2014-2017* developed based on the official data provided by the Attorney General of Estado de México (PGJEM), from 2005 to 2014, 933 cases were registered as intentional homicides. From 2014 to 2017, they rose to 1420, of these only 17% are investigated as feminicides by the authorities and 40% remain in impunity (OCNF 2018, 92-93).

In the same period, from 2014 to 2017, in the entire state of Chihuahua not only in Ciudad Juárez, there were 581 registered cases¹³, almost three times less (OCNF 2018, 59). For this reason, Jana Vasil'eva et al. claim that in Mexico, while the focus of public attention continues to centralize in Ciudad Juárez, the Estado de México shows alarming numbers of feminicides without creating the same public outrage domestically or internationally. For them, the events in Ciudad Juárez revealed this type of violence, but it is not the exception, rather it represents only one example of what can happen in a country in which misogyny and structural discrimination against women represent a persistent circumstance (Vasil'eva, et al. 2016).

¹¹ Official statistics of the National Institute of Statistics and Geography of Mexico (INEGI) for the Population and Housing Census 2020. See: <https://inegi.org.mx/programas/ccpv/2020/> (Accessed on 30.01.2021)

¹² The National Citizen Observatory of Feminicide (OCNF) is a citizen organization that monitors cases of feminicide in Mexico and documents the lack of prosecution and administration of justice for victims of feminicidal violence. See (OCNF): <https://www.observatoriofemicidiomexico.org/> (Accessed on 30.01.2021)

¹³ To see the complete statistics by each state of the Mexican Republic, see: (OCNF, *Informe Implementación del Tipo Penal de Feminicidio en México: Desafíos para acreditar las razones de género 2014-2017* 2018)

In Estado de Mexico, the situation of feminicides began to be systematically documented in various spaces since 2000 (Gutiérrez Contreras, et al. 2012). And research lines since then show that violence in this state is not focused. Women are murdered in the south and north, on the limits with Michoacán or Mexico City, in industrialized and prosperous municipalities or in rural ones, in small and large ones. However, there are municipalities where the numbers of feminicides rise considerably, especially in the eastern zone such as Ecatepec, Nezahualcóyotl, Tlalnepantla, Chimalhuacán and Naucalpan (Padgett 2011). And most of the victims are concentrated in the age range of 16 to 40 years. Almost all of them are inserted in the informal economy. Most are poor women with little schooling (Arteaga Botello and Valdés Figueroa 2010). Further analysis will be shown in the context section.

One of the main approaches that has been used to study the phenomenon in the case of Estado de México, has been from a sociocultural perspective. Arteaga and Valdés argue that the conditions that can produce feminicides in Estado de México show the complexity of the social networks that are behind these events. They point out that there is no enemy external to society that encourages the murder of women, but rather it is the conditions and social contexts themselves that cause it (Arteaga Botello and Valdés Figueroa 2010).

On the other hand, Javier Juárez Rodríguez argues that the systematic feminicides in Estado de Mexico are not simple examples of violence, but part of a collective misogynistic culture supported by a social imaginary that allows and justifies these state crimes. For him, they are hate crimes and murders with a double component (gender/social) that seek silence as an accomplice within total impunity and with a greater impact on poor women (Juárez Rodríguez 2016).

A juridical approach is developed by Alma Rosa Sánchez Olvera, who argues that the feminicides in Estado de Mexico are an example of the persistent violation of women's rights and their limited recognition as citizens with rights as a means of the state to limit and obscure the construction of autonomy, empowerment, and citizenship of women, thus hindering their full citizenship (Sánchez Olvera 2009).

Hence, focusing this research work in Estado de Mexico turns out to be interesting, but also necessary to expand the research lines to this region and attempt to comprehend the events. Since although the state is not a border zone, the entity presents certain elements similar to those in Ciudad Juarez, such as industrial development and inequality, as well as the passage of migrants to the north and high rates of violence and impunity, but also its own singularities.

2.2. Conceptual framework on feminicides

Approaching the study of feminicides requires starting by acknowledging that in Mexico "all women experience forms of gender violence in the course of their lives, and many also experience class, racial, religious, judicial, legal, and political or cultural violence" (Lagarde y de los Ríos 2010, xix) linked to forms of oppression that violate the human rights of girls and women and benefit from a political subordination of gender (Ibidem).

Taking these arguments as the point of departure of this section, the following concepts are discussed to frame the violence surrounding the notion of feminicides.

2.2.1. Gender Violence

Gender violence has been addressed by Marcela Lagarde as *"misogynist violence against women for being women situated in relationships marked by gender inequality: oppression, exclusion, subordination, discrimination, exploitation, and marginalization. Women are victims of threats, assaults, mistreatment, injuries, and misogynist harm. The violence may be physical, psychological, sexual, economic, and property-related, and the modalities of gender violence may be in the family, workspace, or school; in the community; in institutions; and via feminicide"* (Lagarde y de los Ríos 2010, xxii). Furthermore, this type of violence is carried out within a community and occurs in public and private areas (Estrada 2018). With the goal—whether conscious or not—to preserve male supremacy (Radford and Russell 1992, 14).

a. Gender relations of power

Therefore, it is important to mention the gender relations of power that are implicated in the construction of gender violence from a gender perspective. According to Raewyn Connell, there exists a type of dominant masculinity that exerts hegemony on other, subordinated, masculinities and all femininities (Connell 2000). In this sense, violence is implicated in the shaping of hegemonic masculinity and, at the same time, it is a tool for the subjugation of others (Confortini 2010, 14).

Based on these arguments, there are also queer experiences worth studying, which for reasons of scope limitation cannot be covered in this work. Likewise, as Magdalena Ziegler highlights in her thesis work *Mapping violence: A spatial approach towards the feminicides at Ciudad Juárez during the 1990s from the perspective of family members*: by emphasizing the fate of women in feminicides, it is not sought to make nor to reinforce a binary distinction of gender between man and woman, but rather to *"investigate the social constructedness of the category woman and how violence is one of the dimensions which considerably shapes gender categories"* (Ziegler 2019, 4).

2.2.2. Femicide

The concept of feminicide is rooted in the original conceptualization of *femicide*¹⁴ as an analytical category developed by Diana Russell and Jill Radford in 1992 in their book *Femicide: The Politics of Woman Killing* to refer to “*the death of women at the hands of men for the simple fact of being a woman*”, thus avoiding the gender neutrality that the category of homicide implies (Radford and Russell 1992, 24). They frame this “misogynous killing of women by men” within the concept of *sexual violence* formulated by Liz Kelly (ibidem, 3).

Kelly’s concept on sexual violence relates to “any physical, visual, verbal or sexual act” experienced by a woman or girl “as a threat, invasion, or assault, that has the effect of hurting or degrading her and/or takes away her ability to control intimate contact” (Kelly 1988, 41). This concept is valuable because it allows us to see the connections between its various forms and the “*continuum of sexual violence*” executed by males such as rape, sexual harassment, pornography, and physical abuse of women and children among others, and relate them as all connected rather than discrete or disconnected issues (Kelly 1988, 97).

Like rape or other form of sexual violence, most murders of women by men are not the product of some inexplicable anomaly or aberration. As stated by Radford and Russell, they are *femicides*, the most extreme form of sexist terrorism, motivated by hatred, contempt, pleasure, or a sense of ownership of women (Radford and Russell 1992, 15).

a. Continuum of antifemale terror

Based on Kelly’s *continuum of sexual violence*, Russell suggests analyzing femicides from a *continuum of antifemale terror*, where femicide is on the extreme end of it.

This continuum includes a wide range of verbal and physical abuse, such as “rape, torture, sexual slavery (particularly in prostitution), incestuous and extrafamilial child sexual abuse, physical and emotional battery, sexual harassment, genital mutilation, unnecessary gynecological operations, forced heterosexuality, forced sterilization, forced motherhood (by criminalizing contraception and abortion), psychosurgery, denial of food to women in some cultures, cosmetic surgery, and other mutilations in the name of beautification. Whenever these forms of terrorism result in death, they become femicides” (Radford and Russell 1992, 15).

¹⁴ The term was first used in 1801 in the book *A Satirical View of London at the Commencement of Nineteenth Century*, to refer to the “murder of a woman” (Huertas and Jiménez 2016, 111). Then, in 1974 Carol Orlock began to write an ontology on Femicide that was never published but that reached the mind of Diana Russell, the main precursor of it. In 1976 Russell publicly used the concept of femicide for the first time in her testimony of a misogynistic homicide at the Crimes Against Women Court in Brussels. Later, in 1985 Mary Anne Warren used the term in her book *Gendercide: The Implications of Sex Selection*. Finally, in 1992 Russell and Radford raise the term as an analytical category in *Femicide: The Politics of Woman Killing* (Valencia and Nateras 2019).

This contribution is essential to comprehend that femicide culminates in the death of a woman, but can be preceded by various forms of violence that might induce it. This idea is similarly developed by Lagarde in her conceptualization of feminicidal violence discussed later.

Additionally, Russell identifies different forms of femicide, for instance, racist femicide, homophobic femicide (lesbicide), marital femicide, femicide committed outside the home by a stranger, serial femicide, mass femicide, and any situation in which women are permitted to die as a result of misogynous attitudes or social practices (Radford and Russell 1992). Likewise, Monárrez develops further forms of femicide in the Mexican context to be discussed below.

In this way, Russell and Radford show that sexual violence and femicide are central to the power relations of patriarchy and that any challenge to this violence constitute a profound challenge to patriarchy itself, thus working against femicide is fundamentally political work (Radford and Russell 1992, 353).

b. From femicide to *feminicidio*

Based on Russell's concept of femicide, the Mexican feminist anthropologist Marcela Lagarde takes the term as an analytical category and translates it into Spanish as *feminicidio*. To highlight that in addition to being a hate crime against women and one of the extreme forms of gender violence that culminates in the murder of girls and women, there are elements that allow crimes of this type to extend over time: the fracture of the rule of law and the institutional collapse that favors impunity (Lagarde y de los Ríos 2004, 2010). In other words, it occurs when the state does not offer guarantees and does not create conditions of security for women (Huertas and Jiménez 2016, 65) and the authorities who are ommissive, negligent, or acting in collusion with the assailants perpetrate institutional violence against women by blocking their access to justice and the state is incapable to prevent and eradicate the violence that causes it (Lagarde y de los Ríos 2010, xxiii). Because of this, Lagarde considers feminicide a state crime – *crimen de Estado* - and assures that it occurs in conditions of war and peace (Lagarde y de los Ríos 2004, 9). For this reason, in this research work the crimes are addressed as *feminicidios* to also analyze the institutional collapse favoring impunity in the context of Estado de Mexico.

Accordingly, feminist theoretical and political thinkers from Latin America use *feminicidio* to represent women's murders in non-war settings and highlight the relevance of the concept because what makes it so distinctive is that it makes visible forms of violence that are rooted in a gender power structure (Fregoso and Bejarano 2010).

Therefore, the concept of *feminicidio* comes to be of great need to analyze the gender differences in the experience of violence, because as Fregoso and Bejarano state:

“Unlike most cases of murders, men are not killed because they are men or as a result of their vulnerability as members of a subordinate gender; nor are men subjected to gender-specific forms of degradation and violation, such as rape and sexual torture, prior to their murder” (Fregoso and Bejarano 2010, 7). Thus, *feminicidio* as an alternative analytic concept is fundamental for the understanding of the crimes in Mexico.

c. Forms of femicide

Likewise, Julia Monárrez Fragoso (2006, 44) has distinguished diverse forms of femicide in the Mexican context:

a. *Intimate femicide*: the assassinations of women committed by men with whom the victim had or in the past had an intimate, familial, household, or other similar sort of relationship (Carcedo and Sagot 2002).

This form of femicide is subdivided into child femicide and familial femicide. Child femicide: the assassinations of girls by men in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust, or power because of their role as adults in relation to a minor child. Familial femicide: the assassination of one or more members of a family, committed by a man, based on familial relationship between the victim or victims and the victimizer (Carmona López, Gómez Caballero and Castro Rodríguez 2010, 158).

b. *Systematic sexual femicide*: the assassination of women who are kidnapped, tortured, and raped (Carmona López, Gómez Caballero and Castro Rodríguez 2010, 158).

These are subdivided into organized and unorganized systematic sexual femicide. Organized systematic sexual femicide: the assassins may act as an organized network of people involved in sexual feminicides. Unorganized systematic sexual femicide: accompanied, though not always, by kidnapping, torture, rape, and the disposal of the body. They may be men who are unknown to the victims or family members of the victims. The victims are left in lonely places, public spaces, or inside their home (Ibidem).

c. *Femicide of stigmatized occupations*: assassination of women within their particular occupation. Those working in bars/nightclubs as dancers, servers, and in prostitution (Ibid.).

d. Diagram on the forms of feminicide

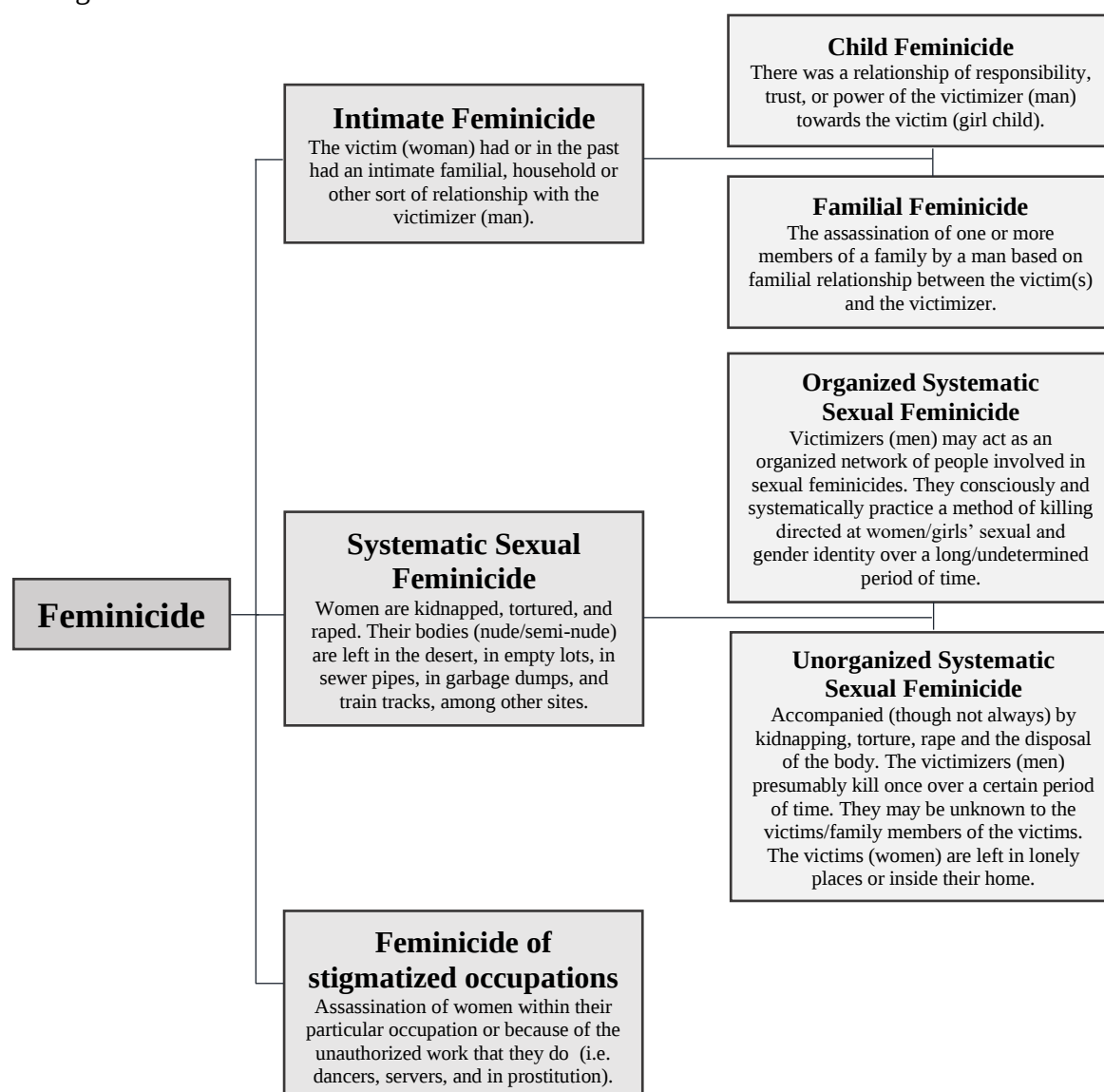


Figure 1. Created by the author based on the forms of feminicide developed by Julia Monárrez Fragoso (2006, 44) and using the explanations of Carcedo and Sagot (2002), and Carmona, Gómez and Castro (2010, 158) discussed in the previous section.

In this sense, this research work focuses mainly on intimate feminicide due to most of the primary sources obtained for this paper present characteristics of this form. However, it should be mentioned that all forms of feminicide are manifested in Estado de Mexico, although with different levels of incurrence as will be discussed later in the contextualization part.

Lastly, although murdered women are referred to as victims in this work, it is not intended to relate the term to any sense of passivity towards women. But to understand how gender norms, inequalities and power relationships (class, sexual, and racial) increase women's vulnerability to violence (Fregoso and Bejarano 2010).

2.2.3. Feminicidal Violence

“Creamos la Ley General, como la gran disposición jurídica para ir desmontando las condiciones sociales, jurídico, políticas, etc., que conducen al feminicidio. Nosotras no hicimos solo una política de castigo... nosotras creamos una transformación institucional.”

Marcela Lagarde at the Foro Reflexiones Actuales sobre Feminicidio, CEIICH UNAM, August 22, 2019 (doc I, 1:02:18-1:03:08).

a. Ley General de Acceso de las Mujeres a una Vida Libre de Violencia (LGAMVLV) and Alerta de Violencia de Género contra las Mujeres (AVGM)

In an effort to translate the discussed forms of violence against women and femicide to the legal field, the Special Commission to Make Known and Monitor Femicides in Mexico and Efforts to Secure Justice in Such Cases¹⁵, presided over by Marcela Lagarde, created in 2006 the General Law of Women's Access to a Life Free from Violence (LGAMVLV), based on solid research and reports on the situation of violence against women and femicide in the country (Sánchez Olvera 2009).

According to Sánchez Olvera, this law (passed in 2007) is the first one in Ibero-America that, from the perspective of gender and women's human rights, develops the different modalities of violence: in the family, in the community, at work, teaching, institutional and *feminicide*. This establishes the basis to prevent, attend, punish and eradicate gender violence (Ibid., 54).

For this purpose, the law provides in its Article 22 of Chapter V a legal mechanism called Alerta de Violencia de Género contra las Mujeres (AVGM) which is “*the whole set of emergency government actions to confront and eradicate feminicidal violence in a given local and regional area, whether by individuals or the community itself*” (Ley General de Acceso de las Mujeres a una Vida Libre de Violencia 2007, 6)¹⁶. Each federal entity of Mexico can call for this alert if they present the characteristics indicated in the law regarding gender violence against women. Currently, thirteen of the thirty-two entities of the country have declared it¹⁷.

In the case of Estado de Mexico, the Gender Alert was declared on July 31, 2015 in 11 municipalities of the 125 in the state, as they are the municipalities with the highest rates of feminicidal violence, being above the national average (Valencia and Nateras 2019, 67).

¹⁵ Introduced in p. 8 as a historical national political achievement regarding femicides.

¹⁶ Despite the LGAMVLV and the AVGM, violence against women and femicides have not ceased, since as Lucía Melgar claims, “what has to be done is not done” (by state authorities) (CEIICH-UNAM 2019, 44:08)

¹⁷ To see the whole list of states under Gender Alert. See: <https://www.gob.mx/inmujeres/acciones-y-programas/alerta-de-violencia-de-genero-contra-las-mujeres-80739> (Accessed on 28.01.2021)

b. Conceptualization

“Una de las características principales de la violencia feminicida es que tiene una correlación con la impunidad... con la impunidad del estado, pero también con la impunidad social.”
Feminist lawyer Andrea Medina at the Foro Reflexiones Actuales sobre Feminicidio, CEIICH UNAM, August 23, 2019 (doc I, 1:51:44-1:52:29).

One of the key contributions embodied in the LGAMVLV (Article 21, V) is the concept of feminicidal violence – *violencia feminicida* – elaborated and defined by Marcela Lagarde as:

“the extreme form of gender violence against women, the result of the violation of their human rights in the public and private spheres; it is made up of the whole set of misogynistic forms of conduct-mistreatment and physical, psychological, sexual, educational, economic, property-related, family, community, institutional violence- that entail social impunity and impunity by the state, and, on placing women at risk and in a defenceless position, may culminate in homicide or attempted homicide- that is, in femicide and in other forms of violent death of girls and women, specially death due to accidents and suicide and preventable deaths stemming from lack of security, neglect, and exclusion from development and democracy” (Lagarde y de los Ríos 2010, xxiv).

This conceptual and juridical contribution is very valuable because it not only names a whole set of misogynistic forms of conduct-mistreatment and violence against women committed in the public and private spheres that may culminate in femicide, but also includes three key elements to understand the phenomenon in the Mexican context such as the institutional violence, social impunity, and impunity by the state. This adds a sociological component and makes visible the responsibility of the state and its institutions towards feminicides and other forms of violent deaths of girls and women. These elements will be discussed in the following section.

Therefore, for the purpose of this work, the concept of feminicidal violence comes to be of key relevance since it is intended to address the analysis of feminicidios in Estado de México, focusing in the impacts of state impunity and institutional violence towards the victims and their relatives with consciousness of the social factor, all framed in this form of violence.

According to Lagarde, feminicidal violence finds fertile ground in social asymmetries and is acute under conditions of “extreme marginalization and social, judicial and political exclusion” (Lagarde y de los Ríos 2006, 22). Likewise, she states that gender-based violence that precedes feminicidal violence articulated with the violence inherent in classism, racism, and age and ethnic discrimination, as well as any sectarianism, is a constant reality for women of all ages, socioeconomic groups, regions, and parts of Mexico but it is worse where there is less social development of women and minimal or non-existent citizenship for women (Lagarde y de los Ríos 2010, 20).

c. Social impunity, impunity by the state and institutional violence

“Hay una enorme tolerancia social a la violencia contra las mujeres y las niñas. La sociedad es culpable también. Es culpable el victimario, sí, pero la sociedad que es su nicho de vida donde es incentivado a violentar, a maltratar, a despreciar a las mujeres es culpable. Y es culpable el Estado... porque es tolerante a la violencia contra las mujeres y niñas. Tres órdenes de culpabilidad: la persona que quita la vida violentamente, y luego la sociedad que lo incuba y el Estado que reproduce ese orden patriarcal.”
*Marcela Lagarde at the Hemicycle on Femicide
FLACSO Ecuador, October 24, 2015
(doc II, 31:17-32:23).*

The concept of feminicidal violence provides an integral and comprehensive perspective towards the phenomenon by including three elements present in the Mexican context that favor the culmination of femicide: social impunity, impunity by the state, and institutional violence.

Social impunity

Marcela Lagarde raises social impunity as a key element of feminicidal violence. She claims that in many cases, the different forms of gender-based violence are tolerated by society besides the state; at other times, citizens live feminicidal violence with powerlessness because there are few channels available for the enforcement of rights (Lagarde y de los Ríos 2010, xxi).

Lagarde further argues that social impunity is framed within the structural conditions of the social organization of gender produced by patriarchal and hierarchical practices and the women's exclusion from power structures or their exposure to oppressive powers which results from the acceptance and tolerance among misogynist men and from the social silences that prevail about those who commit crimes and are not punished (Ibidem).

Impunity by the state

This alludes to the crisis of the justice system that allows the reproduction of all forms of violence against women and girls, without consequences (Melgar 2018, 295) and stems from the inaction, insufficiency, or complicity of state institutions with gender inequality that contributes to feminicidal violence (Lagarde y de los Ríos 2010, xxi).

Institutional violence

These acts committed by the state constitutes institutional gender-based violence by omission, negligence, or complicity of the authorities with the assailants and results from the acceptance of inequalities, discrimination, and violence as normal which reinforces the permanence of state structures that perpetuate gender inequality and do not recognize or guarantee the rights of women (Lagarde y de los Ríos 2010, xxi). In such a climate, states Lagarde: “there is a clear absence of democratic rule of law in relation to women” (Ibid.).

d. Overview of the conceptual framework towards feminicides

To summarize the conceptual framework used and discussed throughout this section towards the study of *feminicidio*, an overview of such as well as the forms of violence involved in each of the concepts are provided in the following table to show their correlational dynamics.

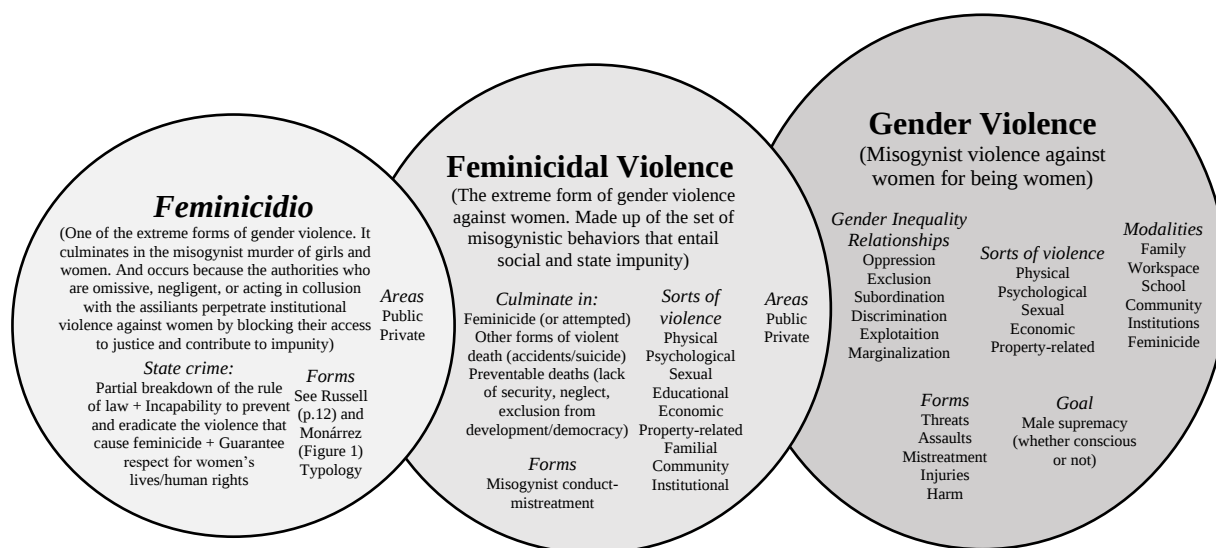


Figure 2. Created by the author based on the conceptual explanations towards feminicide presented by Lagarde (2010) in *Terrorizing Women. Feminicides in the Américas* (xxii-xxiv).

2.3.Framing feminicides in Estado de México

“En ese estado se puede asesinar
una mujer al amparo de la impunidad.”
*María de la Luz Estrada Mendoza, coordinator of the
National Citizen Observatory of Femicide
(OCNF) cited in Padgett (2011, 14).*

The situation of feminicides in Estado de México began to be systematically documented in various spaces since 2000 (Gutiérrez Contreras, et al. 2012). Among the first results of these efforts is the report *Violencia Femicida en 10 Entidades de la República Mexicana* (Lagarde y de los Ríos 2006), published by the Chamber of Deputies. According to this report, in the period 2000-2003 a total of 1,288 girls and women were murdered in the state, placing it at the top of the country's registered case rates (Gutiérrez Contreras, et al. 2012, 71). Another instance that has provided relevant information on the matter is the National Citizen Observatory of Femicide (OCNF) that in one of its more recent reports informs that from 2005 to 2014, 933 cases have been registered as intentional homicides. While from 2014 to 2017, they rose to 1420. Nonetheless, only 17% of these cases are investigated as feminicides by the authorities and 40% remain in impunity¹⁸ (OCNF 2018, 92-93).

Additionally, Arteaga and Valdés, who are some of the scholars studying the field in the state, have identified that most of the victims are concentrated in the age range of 16 to 40 years. Almost all of them are inserted in the informal economy, working in diverse occupations. Mostly poor women with little schooling and living in areas of recent urbanization or in the process of urban consolidation, especially on the outskirts of municipal capitals. Besides a socio-spatial proximity between the victim and the victimizer in most cases, there is not necessarily an implication of a familial relationship (Arteaga and Valdés 2010, 16-18). Moreover, Padgett claims that violence in the state is not focused. Women are murdered in the south or north, in industrialized municipalities or in rural ones. Nonetheless, there are municipalities where the numbers of feminicides increase, especially in the eastern zone such as Ecatepec, Nezahualcóyotl, Tlalnepantla, Chimalhuacán and Naucalpan (Padgett 2011).

For a theoretical analysis on feminicides in the state, this section is developed as follows: i) a general context of Estado de Mexico (social, demographic, economic, political), ii) a sociodemographic description of the victims (age, place of origin, occupations, victim/victimizer relationship), iii) the forms of femicide registered in the state and the acts of violence that they entail, iv) a socio-spatial approach to the crimes in Estado de México through GS insights and v) peace studies perspectives, and vi) the impunity notion.

¹⁸ It should be noted that the report was built based on the official data that the PGJEM provided to the OCNF.

2.3.1. General context of the state

Estado de México is located in the central zone of the Federal Republic of the United Mexican States (Mexico), borders to the north with the states of Querétaro and Hidalgo, to the south with Guerrero and Morelos, to the east with Puebla and Tlaxcala and to the west with Guerrero and Michoacán, as well as Mexico City, which it surrounds to the north, east and west. The territorial extension of it is 22,499.95 square kilometers, a number that represents 1.09% of the country's total and occupies 25th place in territorial extension with respect to the other states. It has 125 municipalities that, due to their geographic and demographic characteristics, are grouped into 16 regions; its capital corresponds to the municipality of Toluca and its most populated city to the municipality of Ecatepec (Gutiérrez Contreras, et al. 2012, 65).

According to the official statistics of the National Institute of Statistics and Geography of Mexico (INEGI) for the Population and Housing Census 2020, the entity is the most populated one in the country with over 16, 992, 418 inhabitants, that is, 13.5% of the total population of the country. Of this figure, 48.6% corresponds to the male population and 51.4% to the female population. And a population density 12 times higher than the national average, with an estimate of 760 inhabitants per square kilometer¹⁹ (INEGI 2021).

A few years ago, the most relevant economic activity in Estado de México was agriculture, however, due to the enormous growth of Mexico City and the increase of urban population, which by 2008 was already 10,682,330, this activity has been displaced by the industrial and the construction sector. The development, in recent years, of the industrial zones surrounding the state capital - driven by government decentralization policies - has been another determining factor in this urban growth (Gutiérrez Contreras, et al. 2012, 66).

Regarding poverty levels, the analysis carried out by the National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy (Coneval) in its Report on Multidimensional Poverty in Mexico²⁰ (2018) indicates that, 42.7% of the population of the state lived in conditions of multidimensional poverty, that is, 7.54 million people were not guaranteed at least one of their rights for social development besides insufficient income to satisfy needs (Coneval 2018).

Concerning the living conditions of women, the SIG²¹ in its latest report (2015) indicates that the majority of them are concentrated in urban areas (86.2%), 2.6% speak an indigenous language; their average schooling was 9.3 years and the educational gap, that is, the percentage of women over 15 years old who did not complete secondary school, was 32.3%; and women aged 15 and over with active economic participation were 44.2% by 2020 (SIG 2015).

¹⁹ To see the entire census, access: <https://inegi.org.mx/programas/ccpv/2020/> (Accessed on 30.01.2021)

²⁰ See: https://www.coneval.org.mx/Medicion/MP/Paginas/AE_pobreza_2018.aspx (Accessed on 13.02.2021)

²¹ Gender Indicator System: <http://estadistica.inmujeres.gob.mx/formas/fichas.php?pag=2> (Access 13.02.2021)

2.3.2. Sociodemographic characterization of the victims

According to Arteaga and Valdés, the murder of women (in Estado de México, Juárez and in most of the country) responds to the substantial change in the forms of construction as subjects of women, situated in a scenario of generalized social crisis that favors in almost all places an "outraged machismo" (Arteaga Botello and Valdés Figueroa 2010, 16).

Similarly, Zermeño argues that the issue of the increase in intentional homicides of women or feminicides is a social disease and not just criminalistic: the death of women would represent the denial of their subjectivity with the meaning to affirm a deteriorated subjectivity (Zermeño 2006). In other words, killing a woman precisely because of her womanhood is a way of denying her subjectivity, at the same time as a mechanism of affirmation of masculine subjectivity and – *feminicidio* - is the ultimate expression of violence, whose objective is to question the emerging social order that heralds the continuous decline of the traditional position of dominance and power of men over women (Arteaga Botello and Valdés Figueroa 2010, 6).

Therefore, feminicide should not be understood as an isolated and closed event in itself but should be analyzed in the context of social networks and in the increasingly deep process of construction of a female subjectivity (a construction of itself) (Ibidem, 7).

a. Denial of women's subjectivity: myths surrounding *feminicidios*

This female subjectivity is denied by the objectification of women when they are viewed solely as a body employed for male sexual gratification, becoming less than a woman, less than human. They become an object that can be disposed of or easily replaced. This in the trivialization of feminicide is often justified by the claim that the women concerned are in some way to blame for their deaths (Radford and Russell 1992, 5).

Likewise, in feminicide the actions of women and girls are scrutinized and often pathologized too, and they are ultimately held responsible for the violence and abuse towards them within a patriarchal system seeking to maintain the patriarchal status quo (Ibidem, 6). This mythology of *woman blaming* and *disposability* that surrounds feminicide is perpetuated also through narratives such as that of 'public women' (Agnew 2015) identified by Melissa Wright in Ciudad Juárez that might be worth analyzing in Estado de México as well.

Melissa Wright addresses the narrative of public women that surrounded the feminicides in Ciudad Juárez in the context of maquiladoras and NAFTA, and explains that *public women* relates to the myth of female labourers being perceived as those who transgress conventional Mexican gender norms and spaces (Wright 2006). Those who work outside of the home and spend work and/or leisure time in areas that are typically deemed male spaces (Wright 1999).

Nonetheless, in Estado de México, Arteaga and Valdés identified that female labourers working in the manufacturing sector were the lowest segment of victims in the state, but almost all of the murdered women were found in the informal economy, working as waitresses, domestic workers, cooks in small establishments, or employees in self-service stores. Still others were housewives and part-time hostesses, sex worker, as well as employed in bars and canteens (Arteaga Botello and Valdés Figueroa 2010, 17). Which shows that Wright's claim about the culturally internalized 'public women' narrative in Ciudad Juárez is manifested in this state as well.

These myths surrounding feminicides reinforce patriarchal narratives that blame women for their own violent deaths and foster the idea of women's bodies being disposable. Leaving aside the guarantee of the human rights of girls and women by promoting stereotypes and favoring the perpetrators under patriarchal ideas.

b. Patriarchal social discourse

This cultural thought is further analyzed by Alicia Gaspar de Alba (2010) in her book *Making a Killing. Femicide, Free Trade and La Frontera*, where she examines the patriarchal social discourse of Mexican culture. She proposes to read this discourse within the context of the 'Tres Marías Syndrome', which constructs women's gender and sexuality according to three biblical archetypes- "virgins, mothers, and whores" (Gaspar de Alba and Guzmán 2010, 81).

She states that these archetypes manifested in such a patriarchal discourse "outlines a code of ethics and behaviours that Mexican patriarchy prescribes for all of its women"²² (Ibid).

c. The Tres Marías Syndrome

Gaspar develops further by describing the archetypes: "Mary—the mother—who lives for her children and family, who always forgives, who nurtures, cares for, and protects, who does it all, who gives birth to the future, who has sex only to procreate and who is abject and abnegated. Mary—the virgin—who is meek and obedient, who does not run off with her boyfriend, who waits until her wedding night to have sex, who dresses and behaves decently, who lives with her parents until someone asks for her hand in marriage, who has no knowledge of sex, not even with herself, who does not call attention, who is innocent. Mary—the prostitute—who has sex for pleasure, who sells sex, who takes birth control, who corrupts men, who shames her family, who does not care what people say, who goes out with whomever, who is loose and easy, who deserves what she gets" (Gaspar de Alba and Guzmán 2010, 81-82).

²² It might be of great interest for further research works to study the effects of colonization/evangelization in Mexico regarding the construction of gender and forms of oppression towards violence against women. As well as a pre-colonial analysis in this regard.

Thus, the only ones permitted to enact their desires are men; women's sexuality has to be scrutinized, proscribed, protected, or punished at all times in a patriarchy (Ibidem., 83).

In this context, as Jane Caputi explains in *The Age of Sex Crime*, is the "archetypal projection of the patriarchal bad woman", like the medieval witch, who must be punished with torture, rape, and ritual destruction of the female body (Caputi 1987, 95).

This patriarchal sociocultural discourse finds support in what Marcela Lagarde frames as the patriarchal sexism based on androcentrism and misogyny in which social and political institutions (i.e. governments, religious institutions, etc.) seek to regulate female sexuality and decide her duties and prohibitions, constructing taboos, and even making hierarchies among women (Lagarde y de los Ríos 1997, 15-17).

The foregoing endorses the fundamental feminist claim that sexual crimes are the expressions of a deep, patriarchal and violent symbolic structure that organizes women acts and not the work of mentally ill or individual deviants (Segato 2016, 38).

d. Women's bodies as a means of control

This patriarchal system, states Fragoso, is executed through the use of force in all social spheres. Therefore, violent men—a product of this system—believe that they have every right over women's bodies. There may also be the threat of social extermination through intimidation, torture, disappearance and murder (Monárrez Fragoso 2000, 91). She argues that violent men make use of the patriarchal right to invade the bodies of women and minors (Ibidem).

As Magdalena Ziegler addresses in her research work about the crimes in Ciudad Juárez, one of the dimensions of feminicide is the violent territorial contestation that it entails (Ziegler 2019, 13).

In this sense, Rita Segato states that as an attempt for sovereign power, the author of these crimes is a subject who values profit above all and seeks control of territory through the use of women's bodies to make clear that a place has landlords (Segato 2010, 81-82).

In this quest for sovereign power the victim is expropriated of control over her body-space through the use and abuse of her body directed to annihilate her will and assemble it by the will of the aggressor (Segato 2016).

From this criminalistic perspective, the female body signifies territory where the woman's body is annexed as part of a territorial conquest, therefore Segato refers to these crimes as crimes of *segundo estado*, a parallel state in which these rituals cement the unity of secret societies and totalitarian regimes that benefit from the abuses of political power (Segato 2010, 83;86).

This *second state* that Segato describes controls and shapes social life under the mantle of the law and seems to act in a network and tentacular articulation with subjects inserted in the official administration at various levels (Segato 2016, 43-44)²³.

In this vein, Mercedes Olivera claims that those women who have been assassinated, have been killed because someone has granted himself the right to consume and dispose of them (Olivera 2010, 65), as discussed in the patriarchal system section.

Therefore, the terror executed via feminicide is a means for controlling women socially in which the power of the state over the social body is always present (Olivera 2010, 64).

In this sense, the bodies of the victims in Estado de México were found in different places, the OCNF (2018) reported that from 2014 to 2017, of the 243 cases investigated as feminicides, in 75 cases the women's bodies were found on the public highway, in 90 cases at their home; in 57 cases in vacant lots, in 10 cases in public places, in 4 cases in other places and in 7 cases in unspecified places (OCNF 2018, 93)²⁴.

Thus, one can see that in most cases the bodies of the victims are found in public spaces.

It has been also remarked by the OCNF in other reports that the level of violence executed on the bodies of the victims increase when they are found in public places (through acts of mutilation, torture, putrefaction, nudity, burns or severed body parts) (OCNF 2009).

To abandon the bodies of the victims in this way reflects the transgression of these spaces by the murderers and sends a threatening message to the community that generates an effect of fear (Gutiérrez Contreras, et al. 2012). While they foster an environment of deep and chronic insecurity during a continuous period of impunity and complicity (Monárrez Fragoso 2000).

e. Intersectionality in the victims

Addressing the victims requires to consider the intersectional²⁵ factors that converge and affect women differently and that are acute in those who are racialized and marginalized.

As reported by Lagarde, girls and women murdered in Mexico had different ages and belonged to all social classes and socioeconomic strata. Nonetheless, the majority of them were poor or marginal with little schooling or illiterate (Lagarde y de los Ríos 2010, xviii).

²³ It might be interesting to develop further this research contribution towards some acts of state impunity regarding feminicide from a correlational perspective.

²⁴ It should be noted that the report was built based on the official data that the PGJEM provided to the OCNF. And that in the same period of time 1,420 cases were registered as intentional homicides, but only 243 were investigated as feminicide (OCNF 2018, 93). Thus, taking Melgar's words: "the lack of systematic classification in the official statistics should also be considered" (Melgar 2011, 89).

²⁵ To know more about *intersectionality* coined by (Crenshaw), see: Crenshaw, Kimberlé. 1991. Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color. *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6, 1241-299. (Accessed on 17.02.2021)

Therefore, it is important to reflect on Berlanga's claim that "they are not simply women, as if we could speak of a homogeneous female subject on whom feminicidal violence falls" (Berlanga Gayón 2014, 39). The intersectionality of gender, ethnicity and class, affirms Melgar, links feminicidal violence and violence against all vulnerable "others", disposable for patriarchy and for modern and globalized capitalism (Melgar 2018, 295-296).

In this sense, Mariana Berlanga claims that in Latin American countries, the lives of dark, poor, migrant, and working women are perceived as lives that do not count and, therefore, their deaths as not deserved to be mourned (Berlanga Gayón 2014). This is linked to the fact that in these societies, traversed by a process of colonization and repeated genocides, the value of lives has historically been differentiated, or better said, hierarchical (Ibidem, 43).

Therefore, she claims femicide to be the consequence of sexism, racism, and another series of exclusions that occur in Latin America, as an effect of coloniality and the "patriarchal culture" of these societies that derive from very specific material situations: poverty, marginalization, exploitation, lack of education, etc., which help increase the vulnerability of certain women (Ibid., 45).

This intersectional susceptibility seems to be also present in the victims of Estado de México, where the connection between gender, age, ethnicity, and class are also present. As it is shown in the following section, it aims to describe the victims of femicide from 2005-2017.

According to the information revealed by the OCNF (2018) in its report *Informe Implementación del Tipo Penal de Femicidio en México: Desafíos para acreditar las razones de género 2014-2017*, the government of Estado de México reported a total of 933 intentional homicides of women from 2005-2014. Most of the women were between 21-30 years old (273 cases), followed by women between 11-20 years old (203 cases) and 31-40 years (185 cases) (OCNF 2018, 92).

Regarding the occupation of the victims, it indicates that 291 women were housewives, 382 had some profession, 121 were students, 36 had other activities and in 103 cases their situation is unknown. As for the origin of the victims, it is unknown in most cases (Ibidem).

While from 2014-2017 the Attorney General of Estado de México (FGJEM), reported a total of 1,420 intentional homicides of women, of which only 243 cases are investigated as feminicides²⁶, that is, only 17%. And the age range of the victims were: 0-10 years old (5 cases);

²⁶ The OCNF claims that despite the AVGM's recommendations, having a Femicide Investigation Protocol and a ruling from the SCJN, feminicides continue to rise in the state and there are few investigations for the crime, that is, 83% of the cases are investigated as 'intentional homicides' and not as 'feminicides' (OCNF 2018, 94)

11-20 years old (45 cases); 21-30 years old (63 cases); 31-40 years old (50 cases); 41-50 years old (23 cases), 51-60 years old (8 cases); 60 years or more (4 cases) and in 10 cases the age of the victims of femicide is unknown (Ibidem, 93)²⁷.

Thus, the age range of 21-30 years old had the highest incidence as it was from 2005 to 2014. Followed by the age range of 11-20/31-40 years old and other identified age ranges, affecting a wide age range of women but acute in those from teenage years to 40 years old.

As Arteaga and Valdés also noted in their research, it is a wide age range that includes women in one of their most socially and sexually active stages (Arteaga Botello and Valdés Figueroa 2010, 16).

One of the observations made in the OCNF report is that the origin of the victims remains unknown in most cases. In this regard, Gutierrez et al. affirm that knowing the place of origin of the murdered women constitutes a highly relevant element since this is one of the aspects where other vulnerability factors intersect (Gutiérrez Contreras, et al. 2012).

In this sense, it is not a minor fact that Estado de México is one of the most important transit places for migrants in the country, especially known is the *Lechería* railway junction (Gutiérrez Contreras, et al. 2012, 73)— and that according to the report *Cuarto Informe sobre la Situación de los Derechos Humanos de los Migrantes en Tránsito por México*, constitutes the third entity in which there are more acts of violence against migrants, mostly from Central America (Belén 2008). So further lines of research in this regard would be needed.

2.3.3. Forms of feminicide in the state

Mercedes Olivera has argued that many of the feminicides are carried out by unknown assailants, others occur in public security actions but in the majority of cases, however, women are murdered by someone known to them or related through work, family, or romantic involvement (Olivera 2010). Therefore, this part aims to depict the forms of feminicides committed in the state, the violent acts in which they are carried out, and the victim/victimizer relationships.

According to Levi, murderous violence is a way in which the perpetrator denies the subjectivity of the other (victim), objectifying her/his to reaffirm his/her own (Levi 1989). In this understanding, Arteaga and Valdés considered it convenient to analyze what is being denied and what is being affirmed in each feminicide, especially when making the woman's body an object of anger and resentment (Arteaga Botello and Valdés Figueroa 2010).

²⁷ It should be noted that the report was built based on the official data that the PGJEM provided to the OCNF.

Based on their research findings in Estado de Mexico, they concluded that not all feminicides are the same; and established a typology²⁸ of murders of women based on this process of denial-affirmation-objectification (Ibidem, 19).

a. Different acts of violence

The types of violence they identified in the cases of feminicides they inquired were:

Possession. The perpetrator manipulates and inflicts pain on the female body, before causing death. Not necessarily implicating rape, but the disarticulation of the victim's possibilities of resistance and the inscription of meanings of power on her body. The murder is committed individually by bands, gangs, crews, or groups of peers, against women whom they know formally or who live in the neighborhoods or neighborhoods where they meet (Arteaga Botello and Valdés Figueroa 2010, 19-20).

Passional. The perpetrator seeks to nullify the sentimental subjectivity recognized in the victim. In many cases, the misogynistic hatred is unleashed when women assume their independence and decision-making capacity in a partnership relationship. And the murderer feels urged to prove his manly existence (Ibidem, 19).

Intrafamily. The victim is killed after a long process of abuse and harassment by her partner/expartner. The threat falls on women, and sometimes on their children too (Ibidem, 20).

Sexual exploitation. Derived from the conditions of oppression and trade of sex workers in places like bars, canteens, brothels, and *table dance* (Ibid)²⁹.

Therefore, it is necessary to look again at the cases reported by the OCNF to identify the acts of violence committed in the feminicides in the state. From 2005-2014, of the 933 cases registered as intentional homicides, 261 died from gunshot wounds, 231 from strangulation, 193 from head or thoracic trauma, 57 from suffocation (asphyxia), 52 from injuries stab, 2 by submersion, 1 run over, 1 poisoned, and in the other cases is unknown (OCNF 2018, 92).

Likewise, regarding the types of relationships between victim and victimizer, the OCNF (2018) reports that, of the 933 from 2005-2014, in 395 cases there was a relationship between victim and victimizer. Of these, in 148 there was a conjugal or concubine relationship; in 83 a kinship relationship (parents, brothers, uncles, children, etc.); in 80 there was a friendship relationship or they knew each other; and, in 84 they had a de facto relationship or courtship (OCNF 2018, 92).

²⁸ The typology was elaborated by Arteaga and Valdés based on their analysis of 121 preliminary inquiries obtained from ministerial records of the Attorney General's Office of Estado de Mexico (PGJM) from 2005-2007 to which they were given access.

²⁹ It should be noted that this proposed typology does not imply that the types of violence indicated cannot intersect.

While from 2014-2017, of the 243 cases investigated as feminicide, in 78 there was a partnership relationship; in 23 a familial relationship; in 12 the victimizer was known to the victim; in 10 there was no type of relationship, in 3 the perpetrator was a stranger, and in 116 cases the authority did not specify the type of relationship with the victim (OCNF 2018, 93)³⁰.

Based on this data provided by the Attorney General's Office of Estado de Mexico (PGJEM) to the National Citizen Observatory of Feminicide (OCNF) and exposed in the aforementioned report *Informe Implementación del Tipo Penal de Feminicidio en México: Desafíos para acreditar las razones de género 2014-2017* (OCNF 2018), one can see that almost half of the registered cases of feminicides from 2005-2014 and from 2014-2017 in Estado de Mexico might be related to some forms of intimate feminicides.

Nonetheless, in the cases where the perpetrator was a stranger, in the ones where the perpetrator remains unknown, in those where the type of relationship with the victim is not specified, and the rest of cases where there was no type of relationship between victim and victimizer it is necessary to inquire further and clarify whether they might relate to other types of feminicides such as systematic sexual feminicides (whether organized or unorganized) or due to stigmatized occupations³¹, explained previously in the forms of feminicide section based on the typology developed by Julia Monárrez Fragoso.

2.3.4. Spatiality and GS insights towards the feminicides in Estado de México

This part is aimed to explore the spatial dimension of feminicides in Estado de México to address the socio-spatial relationship between victim and victimizer and the effects of globalization and urbanization in relation to these spaces, then, a localization of the zones in which feminicides are intensified is conducted as well as a geo-statistical analysis. In so doing, the spatial turn and portals of globalization, key concepts in global studies will be introduced.

a. A socio-spatial perspective towards the crimes

Taking as a reference concept the spatial turn developed by Matthias Middell and Katja Naumann (2010) in *Global history and the spatial turn: from the impact of area studies to the study of critical junctures of globalization*, two notions of this are convenient to be emphasized in this section.

³⁰ It should be noted that the report was built based on the official data that the PGJEM provided to the OCNF.

³¹ Like it was shown by Arteaga and Valdés in their analysis of 121 preliminary inquiries [obtained from ministerial records of the Attorney General's Office of Estado de Mexico (PGJM)] from 2005 to 2007. They identified within their typology of violence for feminicides (explained in the previous page) that in 7% of the preliminary inquiries, the death derived from sexual exploitation, from the conditions of oppression and trade of sex workers who were found in various places such as bars, canteens, brothels, etc. (Arteaga Botello and Valdés Figueroa 2010, 20)

On the one hand, as they highlight, the fact that the world is becoming closely interconnected through several ways, for instance by means of information technology or conflicts over natural resources, while these same factors also favor the emergence of a spatial disconnection where some people are socially excluded from these interconnectedness processes (Middell and Naumann 2010, 154-155).

On the other hand, the conception of dialectic flows (i.e. migration, capital, ideas, etc.) and the attempts to control them by different forms of territorialization (i.e. nation-state, regions, supranational structures and so on) and the idea that spatial territories are and have been frameworks for competition at any given time, beyond the traditional notion of space as a container category (i.e. nation-state) (Ibidem, 155).

In this sense, it is fundamental to address a spatial approach to the crimes in Estado de México to understand the socio-spatial relationship that has been identified by several scholars with respect to the geographical spaces where the bodies of the victims are found in relation to their areas of residence. Furthermore, some effects of the spatial turn can be identified in Estado de México as relevant features in the crimes such as the impacts of interconnectedness, processes of urbanization and domestic migration as will be discussed below.

Nelson Arteaga, a professor of sociology at the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO) and Jimena Valdés, a scholar at the Center for Research and Higher Studies in Social Anthropology (CIESAS) are some of the scholars who have studied the feminicides in the state from a sociological and spatial perspective and claim that it is the conditions and social contexts themselves that cause the death of women, not an enemy external to society (Arteaga Botello and Valdés Figueroa 2010).

They conducted an analysis of 121 preliminary inquiries obtained from ministerial records of the Attorney General's Office of Estado de Mexico (PGJM) from 2005 to 2007 to which they were given access³² and identified social, economic, and cultural entanglements behind the feminicides. Thus, the following section shows their socio-spatial findings.

Based on the reading of the 121 ministerial inquiries, Arteaga and Valdés found that a large part of the victims lived in areas of recent urbanization or in the process of urban consolidation, especially on the outskirts of municipal capitals (Arteaga and Valdés 2010, 17).

³² They highlight their methodological limitations by noting that the inquiries reviewed are those that the authorities of the Attorney General's Office of Estado de México (PGJEM) considered in the category of "intentional homicide against women." Which implies a bias: of more than 1000 inquiries where the death of a woman is reported, only 105 cases in 2006 and 135 in 2007 were estimated as "intentional homicides against women". And for logistical reasons only 121 could be reviewed (Arteaga Botello and Valdés Figueroa 2010, 9).

Many of these areas are characterized by the fracture of social relations of a neighbourhood character. Also, most of the murdered women lived in small dwellings and in crowded conditions. Furthermore, the working conditions of the people with whom they lived (parents, brothers, sisters, romantic partners) are not very different from those they lived with. Even the low educational levels of the victims and of the people around them are very similar: most with primary education or, at most, secondary education, many of the times incomplete (49% of the cases), only 3% of victims had a bachelor's degree; and 10% of the victims had technical or high school studies (Arteaga Botello and Valdés Figueroa 2010, 17).

Likewise, they identified that when information about the perpetrators has been obtained, it is found that they share the same contexts of labor insertion and habitat of the women who murder, in addition to not exceeding their educational conditions by much. And highlight that in most cases the victim and the perpetrator share the same space (neighbourhood, suburb, district) or, at least, there is not a very marked spatial distance (Ibidem, 18).

Therefore, Arteaga and Valdés affirm that there was a socio-spatial proximity between victim-victimizer, although this does not necessarily imply a sentimental or friendship relationship. They argue that feminicides are not merely the result of an isolated individual or collective action, but rather respond to the context of the social networks that sustain them (Ibid).

They claim in this vein that feminicides respond to processes of social disaffiliation in the spheres of life of victims and perpetrators, processes that hinder the reconfigurations of women and men subjectivity and the breakdown of the hegemonic model of femininity and masculinity (Arteaga Botello and Valdés Figueroa 2010, 5).

Arteaga and Valdés findings could be broader analyzed, also considering the socioeconomic conditions of women in the state as well as the processes of industrialization and urbanization in the entity. As discussed previously in the general context section. Where it was shown that according to the (2015) report of the SIG³³, the majority of women in the state are concentrated in urban areas (86.2%), their average schooling is 9.3 years and the educational gap (the percentage of women over 15 years old who did not complete secondary school) was 32.3%; and the active economic participation of women aged 15 and over was 44.2% by 2020 (SIG 2015). Thus, vulnerability factors that intersect and impact women differently.

³³ Gender Indicator System, see: <http://estadistica.inmujeres.gob.mx/formas/fichas.php?pag=2> (Accessed on 13.02.2021)

While the transition from agriculture to the industrial sector in the last years played a role too. In this sense, Gutiérrez et al. claim that the enormous growth of Mexico City (capital of Mexico and neighbouring entity of Estado de México) and the large number of urban population in the state are in relation to this sector as the most relevant economic activity in the entity. Another determining factor in this urban growth is the governmental decentralization policies that have increased the development of the industrial zones surrounding the state capital (Gutiérrez Contreras, et al. 2012, 66).

Additionally, the authors note migration as another factor in the urbanization growth. They state that before the 1960s, Estado de México was characterized by migration flows of expulsion, mainly towards the conurbation (metropolitan) areas; at present these flows are of attraction and the proximity to Mexico City has being also a factor of influence, which is reflected in an overpopulation in some municipalities of the state. Nonetheless, in rural areas migration of its members is still characterized to the urban areas of the country and to the USA (Gutiérrez Contreras, et al. 2012, 65-66).

These arguments lead one to question the impacts of globalization through the analysis of another key concept in global studies, framed within the spatial turn perspective, which is portals of globalization.

b. Portals of globalization: Mexico City as a global neighbor

Portals of globalization is a concept referring to “those places where flows and regulation come together”, places that are centres of world trade or global communication (whether ports, cities, international trade, immigrant experience, and so forth) and through which transcultural encounters happen in dealing with processes of global connectedness (Middell and Naumann 2010, 162).

In the case study of Estado de México, one might argue that these portals of globalization allowing the transfer of transcultural flows can be exemplified in the neighbouring geographical situation of Estado de Mexico to the capital of the country: Mexico City, which functions as a place of transcultural encounters and global connectedness. Thus, it might be of great relevance, especially when addressing factors of interconnectedness, urbanization, domestic migration, and social entanglements as elements present in Estado de México.

As claimed by Gutiérrez et al., the enormous growth of Mexico City, the neighborhood situation between both states, the attraction flows towards the urban areas of the state, and the large number of urban population in Estado de México have positioned the industrial sector as the most relevant economic activity in Estado de México, in addition to the influence in the overpopulation in some municipalities of the state (Gutiérrez Contreras, et al. 2012, 65-66).

In this vein of urbanization growth in the state and interconnectedness, it is important to identify the zones in Estado de México where feminicides have a higher incidence to identify the socio-spatial entanglements that they entail, as shown below.

c. Georeferenced spatial behavior of feminicidal violence

The National Citizen Observatory of Femicide claims that despite the fact that in 2010 the juridical classification of femicide did not exist in Estado de México, from 2005-2010, 54% of the intentional homicides with femicide characteristics were concentrated spatially in the municipalities of Ecatepec, Nezahualcóyotl, Tlalnepantla, Toluca, Chimalhuacán, Naucalpan, Tultitlán, Ixtapaluca, Valle de Chalco and Cuautitlán³⁴ (OCNF 2018, 91).

Likewise, the National Institute of Women (Inmujeres) published a report in 2012 on the geopolitics of feminicidal violence in Mexico, which shows the municipalities of the country with the highest rates of intentional homicides of women from 1985 to 2010. The report was elaborated by the *Comisión Especial para Femicidios, Cámara de Diputados, LXI Legislatura* (Special Commission for Femicides, Chamber of Deputies, LXI Legislature), *Inmujeres* and *ONU Mujeres* (UN Women) based on statistics from the *Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática* (National Institute of Statistic and Geography): vital mortality statistics, 1985-2010. Thus, it is convenient to show them to identify the geographical areas with the highest rate of feminicidal violence in Estado de México. As indicated below³⁵.

³⁴ The percentage is in relation to 771 cases registered as ‘intentional homicides of women’ by the PGJEM during that period of time and it was provided at the requests of the OCNF.

³⁵ For the purpose of this work, feminicides are studied from the year 2005 onwards due to the time frames of the testimonies that could be obtained for this research and to be examined later in the analysis of the results, therefore the municipalities from that year on are shown in bold format in the tables.

Mexico: main municipalities according to number of female deaths with presumption of homicide that occurred, by year: 1985, 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010.												
1985			1990		1995		2000		2005		2010	
No.	Municipality	Toll	Municipality	Toll	Municipality	Toll	Municipality	Toll	Municipality	Toll	Municipality	Toll
1	Naucalpan MEX	158	Naucalpan MEX	73	Naucalpan MEX	70	Toluca MEX	41	Ecatepec MEX	49	Juárez CHH	389
2	Cuauhtémoc DF	88	Toluca MEX	67	Toluca MEX	50	Naucalpan MEX	35	Toluca MEX	47	Tijuana BC	89
3	Ecatepec MEX	41	Ecatepec MEX	41	Juárez CHH	49	Ecatepec MEX	34	Naucalpan MEX	32	Chihuahua CHH	84
4	Guadalajara JAL	35	Nezahualcóyotl MEX	40	Nezahualcóyotl MEX	37	Juárez CHH	31	Juárez CHH	31	Culiacán SIN	39
5	Nezahualcóyotl MEX	26	Puebla PUE	28	Ecatepec MEX	31	Gustavo Madero DF	26	Gustavo Madero DF	22	Ecatepec MEX	35
6	Puebla PUE	26	Gustavo Madero DF	28	Guadalajara JAL	29	Iztapalapa DF	25	Cuauhtémoc DF	21	Monterrey NL	32
7	Acapulco GRO	18	Cuauhtémoc DF	24	Puebla PUE	26	Guadalajara JAL	21	Nezahualcóyotl MEX	20	Torreón COA	32
8	Toluca MEX	18	Guadalajara JAL	23	Iztapalapa DF	25	Acapulco GRO	20	Tlalnepantla MEX	20	Acapulco GRO	30
9	Querétaro QUE	18	Texcoco MEX	23	Tlalnepantla MEX	21	Culiacán SIN	20	Iztapalapa DF	19	Nezahualcóyotl MEX	28
10	Miguel Hidalgo DF	17	Cuautitlán Izcalli MEX	21	Acapulco GRO	21	Tlalnepantla MEX	20	Mexicali BC	17	Tepic Nayarit	28
11	Cuautitlán Izcalli MEX	16	Tlalnepantla MEX	19	Gustavo Madero DF	18	San Luis Potosí SLP	19	Ixtapaluca MEX	16	Iztapalapa DF	25
12	Culiacán SIN	16	Miguel Hidalgo DF	19	Cuautitlán Izcalli MEX	15	Cuauhtémoc DF	15	Tijuana BC	15	Durango DGO	25
13	Chalco MEX	15	Venustiano Carranza DF	19	Atizapán MEX	15	Puebla PUE	15	Nuevo Laredo TMP	14	Gómez Palacio DGO	20
14	San Luis Potosí SLP	15	Culiacán SIN	15	Tuxtla Gutiérrez CHP	15	Nezahualcóyotl MEX	14	Valle de Chalco MEX	13	Benito Juárez Q.R.	20
15	Tlalnepantla MEX	12	Chimalhuacán MEX	15	Mexicali BC	13	Tijuana BC	13	Chihuahua CHH	13	Tampico TMP	19
16	Morelia MCH	12	Tijuana BC	14	Tijuana BC	12	Nuevo Laredo TMP	13	Chimalhuacán MEX	13	Venustiano C. DF	18
17	Chihuahua CHH	10	Tultitlán MEX	13	Chimalhuacán MEX	12	Querétaro QUE	13	Guadalajara JAL	12	Gustavo Madero DF	17
18	Chilpancingo GRO	10	Coyoacán DF	10	Morelia MCH	12	Reynosa TMP	12	Puebla PUE	12	Guadalajara JAL	17
19	Aguascalientes AGS	9	Morelia MCH	10	Benito Juárez DF	12	Venustiano Carranza DF	11	Durango DGO	12	Puebla PUE	17
20	Benito Juárez DF	9	Paz, La MEX	9	Nicolás Romero MEX	11	León GTO	10	Acapulco GRO	11	Mazatlán SIN	16

Figure 3. Created by the author based on the data provided by Inmujeres et. al. in their report: *Violencia feminicida en México. Características, tendencias y nuevas expresiones en las entidades federativas, 1985-2010* (Inmujeres, ONU Mujeres and LXI Legislatura, Cámara de Diputados 2012, 49).

One can see from the table that feminicide does not occur homogeneously in the national territory, and that there are great variations at the level of federal entities (Inmujeres, ONU Mujeres and LXI Legislatura, Cámara de Diputados 2012, 47).

Nonetheless, in all the years considered in the report, municipalities of Estado de México are continuously present, standing out the ones with constant high rates such as Naucalpan, Ecatepec, Nezahualcóyotl, Toluca, Tlalnepantla, Cuautitlán Izcalli and Chimalhuacán; to a lesser extent: Ixtapaluca, Valle de Chalco, Texcoco, Nicolás Romero, Chalco, Tultitlán, Atizapán and La Paz. Concerning the year 2005 and 2010, all of them, with the exception of Toluca (the state capital), are located in the northeast (NE) and southeast (SE) part of Estado de México, bordering Mexico City in the east, north and west.

Therefore, it is claimed in the report that feminicide is not a generalized phenomenon in the country, but rather occurs locally in some municipalities. Which is even more unacceptable that no progress has been made in its eradication and that it has even been regressed (Inmujeres, ONU Mujeres and LXI Legislatura, Cámara de Diputados 2012, 47).

In addition, the number of female deaths with presumption of homicide that occurred in *homes* and on *public roads* are also provided in the report. As it is shown in the following.

Mexico: main municipalities according to number of female deaths presumed to be homicide that occurred in the <i>home</i> per year: 1985, 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010.												
1985			1990		1995		2000		2005		2010	
No.	Municipality	Toll	Municipality	Toll	Municipality	Toll	Municipality	Toll	Municipality	Toll	Municipality	Toll
1	Cuauhtémoc DF	49	Naucalpan MEX	19	Naucalpan MEX	20	Naucalpan MEX	24	Toluca MEX	29	<i>Juárez CHH</i>	125
2	Naucalpan MEX	28	Gustavo A. Madero DF	13	Guadalajara JAL	15	Ecatepec MEX	18	Ecatepec MEX	26	Tijuana BC	21
3	Nezahualcóyotl MEX	7	Ecatepec MEX	13	Nezahualcóyotl MEX	13	Toluca MEX	15	Naucalpan MEX	19	Chihuahua CHH	15
4	Chilpancingo GRO	6	Toluca MEX	11	Iztapalapa DF	11	Iztapalapa DF	15	Cuauhtémoc DF	12	Ecatepec MEX	11
5	Ahome Sinaloa	5	Chimalhuacán MEX	11	Toluca MEX	11	Gustavo A. Madero DF	12	Tlalnepantla MEX	10	Iztapalapa DF	11
6	Acapulco GRO	4	Puebla PUE	10	Ecatepec MEX	10	Acapulco GRO	11	Nezahualcóyotl MEX	9	Tampico TAM	9
7	Ayutla GRO	4	Cuauhtémoc DF	8	Benito Juárez DF	9	<i>Juárez CHH</i>	11	Iztapalapa DF	9	Nezahualcóyotl MEX	8
8	Benito Juárez DF	4	Nezahualcóyotl MEX	7	Gustavo A. Madero DF	7	Tlalnepantla MEX	9	Coacalco MEX	9	Puebla PUE	8
9	Guadalajara JAL	4	Guadalajara JAL	7	Acapulco GRO	7	Reynosa TAM	8	Chimalhuacán MEX	9	Acapulco GRO	7
10	Miguel Hidalgo DF	4	Coyoacán DF	7	Tultitlán MEX	7	Nezahualcóyotl MEX	7	Gustavo Madero DF	8	Mexicali BC	6
11	Reynosa TAM	4	Miguel Hidalgo DF	7	Cuauhtémoc DF	6	Puebla PUE	6	Ixtapaluca MEX	8	Benito Juárez DF	6
12	San Cristóbal CHP	4	Texcoco MEX	6	Nicolás Romero MEX	6	Nuevo Laredo TAM	6	Atizapán MEX	7	VenustianoCarranzaDF6	
13	Apatzingán MCH	3	Tlalnepantla MEX	5	Tlalnepantla MEX	5	Querétaro QRO	6	Metepec MEX	7	León GTO	6
14	Culiacán Sinaloa	3	Venustiano Carranza DF	5	Cuautitlán Izcalli MEX	5	Atizapán MEX	5	Nicolás RomeroMEX	7	San Luis Potosí SLP	6
15	Durango DUR	3	León GTO	5	Morelia MCH	5	Cuautitlán Izcalli MEX	5	Tultitlán MEX	7	Culiacán SIN	5
16	Ecatepec MEX	3	Tijuana BC	4	Cuautitlán MEX	5	Guadalajara JAL	5	Acapulco GRO	6	Gustavo Madero DF	5
17	Francisco Mena PUE	3	Tultitlán MEX	4	<i>Juárez CHH</i>	5	León GTO	5	Mexicali BC	6	Nuevo Laredo TAM	5
18	Lázaro Cárdenas MCH	3	Álvaro Obregón DF	4	Huachuinango PUE	5	Venustiano Carranza DF	4	Cuautitlán MEX	6	Torreón COA	5
19	Matamoros TAM	3	Tlalpan DF	4	Matamoros TAM	4	San Cristobal CHP	4	Durango DUR	6	Othon P. Blanco QR	5
20	Mérida YUC	3	Aculco MEX	4	San Cristobal CHP	4	Torreón COA	4	Monterrey NL	6	Naucalpan MEX	4

Figure 4. Created by the author based on the data provided by Inmujeres et. al. in their report: *Violencia feminicida en México. Características, tendencias y nuevas expresiones en las entidades federativas, 1985-2010* (Inmujeres, ONU Mujeres and LXI Legislatura, Cámara de Diputados 2012, 54).

One can see from the table that the municipalities of Estado de México by year 2005 and 2010 with the highest rates of female deaths with presumption of homicide occurred in *homes* are constantly: Naucalpan, Ecatepec, Nezahualcóyotl, Toluca, Tlalnepantla, and Chimalhuacán. To a lesser extent: Ixtapaluca, Nicolás Romero, Tultitlán and Atizapán. Additionally, new municipalities are registered such as Cuautitlán, Coacalco, and Metepec. Here the georeferenced zones keep constant too, the municipalities with the highest rates concentrated in the southeast zone (SE), Coacalco and Cuautitlán in the northeast zone (NE), and Toluca and Metepec in the center zone (C).

Regarding the number of female deaths with presumption of homicide on *public roads*.

Mexico: main municipalities according to the number of female deaths with presumption of homicide that occurred on <i>public roads</i> , by year: 1985, 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010.												
1985			1990		1995		2000		2005		2010	
No.	Municipality	Toll	Municipality	Toll	Municipality	Toll	Municipality	Toll	Municipality	Toll	Municipality	Toll
1	Naucalpan MEX	88	Naucalpan MEX	41	Naucalpan MEX	42	San Luis Potosí SLP	16	Ecatepec MEX	17	Juárez CHH	198
2	Ecatepec MEX	15	Toluca MEX	29	Juárez CHH	30	Juárez CHH	12	Gustavo Madero DF	9	Chihuahua CHH	53
3	Nezahualcóyotl MEX	15	Ecatepec MEX	22	Puebla PUE	14	Gustavo Madero DF	9	Toluca MEX	9	Tijuana BC	45
4	Puebla PUE	13	Nezahualcóyotl MEX	21	Nezahualcóyotl MEX	13	Culiacán SIN	9	Nezahualcóyotl MEX	8	Culiacán SIN	30
5	Chalco MEX	11	Cuautitlán Izcalli MEX	17	Gustavo Madero DF	11	Ecatepec MEX	7	Piedad, La MCH	8	Monterrey NL	22
6	Querétaro QUE	11	Puebla PUE	14	Iztapalapa DF	11	Toluca MEX	7	Juárez CHH	7	Tepic NAY	18
7	Miguel Hidalgo DF	10	Texcoco MEX	14	Toluca MEX	10	Naucalpan MEX	7	Nuevo Laredo TMP	7	Ecatepec MEX	17
8	Acapulco GRO	9	Tlalnepantla MEX	10	Tlalnepantla MEX	10	Querétaro QUE	7	Naucalpan MEX	6	Torreón COA	17
9	Guadalajara JAL	9	Gustavo Madero DF	10	Atizapán MEX	9	Guadalajara JAL	6	Valle de Chalco MEX	6	Nezahualcóyotl MEX	15
10	Morelia MCH	8	Venustiano Carranza DF	9	Guadalajara JAL	8	Tecámac MEX	6	Tlalnepantla MEX	6	Acapulco GRO	14
11	Aguascalientes AGS	7	Tultitlán MEX	8	Tlalpan DF	7	Iztapalapa DF	5	Cuauhtémoc DF	5	Gómez Palacio DGO	12
12	San Luis Potosí SLP	7	Miguel Hidalgo DF	6	Ecatepec MEX	6	Nezahualcóyotl MEX	5	Iztapalapa DF	5	Durango DGO	12
13	Culiacán SIN	6	Cuauhtémoc DF	6	Chimalhuacán MEX	5	Miguel Hidalgo DF	5	Acapulco GRO	5	Mazatlán SIN	12
14	José Azueta GRO	6	Morelia MCH	6	Venustiano Carranza DF	5	Tlalnepantla MEX	5	Puebla PUE	5	Iztapalapa DF	11
15	Texcoco MEX	6	Guadalajara JAL	6	Texcoco MEX	5	Acapulco GRO	4	Tlalpan DF	5	Gustavo Madero DF	8
16	Acámbaro GTO	5	Nicolás Romero MEX	5	Miguel Hidalgo DF	5	Cuauhtémoc DF	4	Paz, La MEX	5	Miguel Hidalgo DF	8
17	Juárez CHH	5	Atizapán MEX	5	Cuautitlán Izcalli MEX	4	Venustiano Carranza DF	4	Ixtapaluca MEX	5	Venustiano Carranza DF	8
18	León GTO	5	San Martín Itunyoso OAX	5	Morelia MCH	4	Cuautitlán Izcalli MEX	4	Reynosa TMP	5	San Fernando TMP	7
19	Pachuca HGO	4	Chicoloapan MEX	4	Nicolás Romero MEX	4	Martínez de la Torre VER	4	Matamoros TMP	4	Ahome SIN	7
20	Torreón COA	4	Lema MEX	4	Coyoacán DF	4	Chalco MEX	3	Miguel Hidalgo DF	4	Naucalpan MEX	6

Figure 5. Created by the author based on the data provided by Inmujeres et. al. in their report: *Violencia feminicida en México. Características, tendencias y nuevas expresiones en las entidades federativas, 1985-2010* (Inmujeres, ONU Mujeres and LXI Legislatura, Cámara de Diputados 2012, 54)

One can see from the table that the municipalities of Estado de México by year 2005 and 2010 with the highest rates of female deaths with presumption of homicide occurred on *public roads* are Ecatepec, Toluca, Nezahualcóyotl, Naucalpan, Valle de Chalco, Tlalnepantla, La Paz and Ixtapaluca which are once again concentrated in the northeast (NE) and southeast (SE) zones of Estado de México, and bordering Mexico City in the east, north and west.

Based on the georeferencing previously discussed, one might say that the spatial behavior of feminicidal violence in Estado de Mexico is mainly concentrated in the urban municipalities in the NE and SE of the state, bordering Mexico City to the east, north and west.

In addition to the above, Juárez Rodríguez points out two sites georeferenced in the eastern zone of the state where some of the feminicides have culminated. They are the Ecatepec-Tecámac corridor; and the Río de los Remedios, which crosses the municipalities of Naucalpan, Tlalnepantla, Ecatepec and Nezahualcóyotl in Estado de México and the demarcations of Gustavo A. Madero and Azcapotzalco in Mexico City (Juárez Rodríguez 2016).

The author claims that the Ecatepec-Tecámac corridor has become a new focus of forced disappearances of women and girls, many of them culminating in feminicides. While the *Río de los Remedios* has been consolidated in another strategic space regarding feminicides in Estado de México as he states that in October 2014, after a sewage drainage and cleaning process, various skeletal remains of women were found at the alleged location (Juárez Rodríguez 2016, 770).

2.4.Feminicides from the perspective of peace and conflict studies

To offer a final broader theoretical approach towards the scales of the phenomenon, the conditions of violence experienced by women in Estado de México will be analyzed in this part within the framework of peace and conflict studies to show the dimensions of violence manifested in feminicides. One needs thus to conceptualize violence to comprehend the above.

a. The Direct-Structural-Cultural Triangle

Johan Galtung has conceptualized violence as any avoidable insult to basic human needs that hurt and harm body, mind and spirit of human beings (Galtung and Fischer 2013). And has claimed that it is “present when human beings are being influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realizations are below their potential realizations” (Galtung 1969, 168).

In this vein, the author has proposed a typology of violence. As discussed below.

Direct violence

In this form, there is a sender (subject) who directs physical or psychological violence to the body or the mind of a receiver (object) (Galtung 1969). It implies an intentional act committed by a subject that can be any person. While the object of violence who has been hurt or threatened can be a human being, an actor (individual or collective), be it a group or nation (Galtung and Fischer 2013).

As Magdalena Ziegler has stated in her work *Mapping violence: A spatial approach towards the feminicides at Ciudad Juárez during the 1990s from the perspective of family members*, this form of violence involved in feminicides can be visible through the acts of torture, kidnapping and murder to name a few (Ziegler 2019, 20). While regarding the receivers of this violence (as discussed previously in the characterization of the victims and intersectionality parts) are mainly young women who are likely to be racialized and poor or marginal (although not exclusively). Whereas the sender committing the acts of violence most of the time remains unknown (Ziegler 2019, 21).

Structural violence

On the other hand, when there is no such subject (person) but a structure causing harm and basic human needs deficits one can see a form of indirect violence (Galtung and Fischer 2013). This type of un-intended violence comes from the social structure itself, between humans and societies in the world (Galtung 1996, 2). For instance, through repression and exploitation in the realms of politics and economics (Ibidem). In both types of violence (direct and structural) individuals may be for instance manipulated, hurt, or killed but while in the first case the person conducting the violence can be traced in the second case the violence is built into the structure (Galtung 1969, 170-171).

In this case, the *state impunity* and *institutional violence* claimed by Marcela Lagarde as elements surrounding feminicides (Lagarde y de los Ríos 2010, xxi), become a structural form of violence committed to the victims while evidencing the incapability of the state to avoid and eliminate any kind of violent death of women.

Additionally, there is also indirect violence in feminicides through the exploitative character of the economic structures as claimed by Magdalena Ziegler for the context of Ciudad Juárez and the role of the maquiladoras (Ziegler 2019, 23). That in the case study of Estado de México one could argue that this exploitative character of economic structures is reflected through the rise of the industrial sector as the main economic activity in the state, the neighboring situation to Mexico City as a global actor of interconnectedness (portal of globalization) and its impacts on the urban growth of Estado de México in correlation to the geopolitical and spatial behavior of feminicidal violence in the state, especially in the municipalities of the eastern zone such as Ecatepec and Nezahualcóyotl.

Cultural violence

There is a third type of violence behind all of this that functions to legitimize direct and structural violence (Galtung 1996). In accordance with Galtung, this form of violence can use those aspects of culture related to the symbolic sphere of human existence and exemplified in (religion, ideology [nationalism], language [sexist writing], art, science and so forth) to justify or validate the latter two types of violence (Galtung and Fischer 2013) and it can change the morality of an act or not permit to see the violent act or at least not as violent (Ibidem, 39).

The cultural violence implicated in feminicides in Estado de México can be exemplified (nationally/locally) in the *patriarchal social discourse of Mexican culture* proposed by Gaspar de Alba and discussed in the *Tres Marías Syndrome* part.

The syndrome relates to the social construction of women's gender and sexuality according to three biblical archetypes that the Mexican patriarchy expects its women to follow as ethical behavior. It is mainly based on patriarchal ideas of women as abnegated and obedient, and those who do not adhere to such behaviors are judged as easy or loose (Gaspar de Alba and Guzmán 2010, 81-82). Although in this regard, one should consider Galtung's suggestion on the convenience to name the specific aspects of certain cultures when addressing cultural violence to avoid stereotypes (Galtung 1990). Therefore, it is some aspects of religion, ideology and sexist language in such patriarchal social discourse of Mexican culture that intersect and ply symbolic violence towards women, becoming socially normalized and not seen as violent.

In this sense, Catia Cecilia Confortini offers a feminist insight to peace and conflict studies regarding the need to understand gender as a social construct that embodies power relations, rather than a synonym for sex. She claims that the production and reproduction of violence at all levels is related to the gendered categories that shape social life, including gendered language (Confortini 2006, 335). Thus, violence or peace can be constituted also through language, and that violence is involved in such gendered constructions and reproductions, particularly of hegemonic masculinity (Ibidem, 336).

Applying this feminist contribution to the case study of feminicides in Estado de México, one might start by claiming that these gendered categories shaping social life mainly affect women, especially young and racialized. While the construction and reproduction of an hegemonic masculinity can be reflected in the perpetrators who profit from such power relations to commit acts of extreme violence and murder towards the victims.

Lastly, some feminists argue in regards to cultural violence, about the public/private dichotomy involved in gender-based violence and the political burden that it entails. In this regard, Nikolas Rose states that any public/private division as an ideology is false because the private realm is not natural but a construction within a particular set of beliefs (Rose 1987). The author claims that it is the state itself that constructs the boundaries and limits of privacy, thus legitimizing the extent to which it can intervene into certain places or relations, while obscuring the issue that privacy is often the right of men to dominate women and children (Ibidem, 66).

This argument can be exemplified in the response of certain state authorities in Estado de México regarding their performance in the prosecution of cases of feminicide: *"Qué puede hacer la autoridad cuando un marido golpea a la esposa dentro de un domicilio, donde no hay siquiera oportunidad de denunciar"* (Gutiérrez Contreras, et al. 2012, 79). This shows a presence of private/public mythology, patriarchal narratives and gender relations of power surrounding direct, structural and cultural violence towards women that can end in feminicide.

2.5. Addressing impunity towards feminicides

After analyzing the levels of violence immersed in feminicidal violence as well as the diagnosis of the phenomenon in Estado de México, this part seeks to conclude the theoretical part of this work by discussing a key factor that surrounds feminicides, *impunity* as an ordeal that the relatives of the victims face in their seek for justice before state authorities. Therefore, the approach of *the suffering of the other* by Julia Monárrez Fragoso and the concept of *institutionalization of impunity* by Lucia Melgar will be addressed.

According to Melgar, justice in Mexico has largely been “a minefield for those who lack power, relationships or influence; for those who do not know the law and its intricacies, and for those who do not have money. Far from being blind to social, gender, ethnic and class differences, justice in Mexico is blind and deaf to human pain, complaints, demands and demands for rights that are often enshrined in exemplary laws but rarely are fulfilled” (Saucedo and Melgar 2020, 5).

a. The *suffering of the other* approach

In this vein, Julia Monárrez Fragoso has claimed that family members see themselves as the excluded group, as the other. While hegemonic groups view themselves as the distinguished, the eminent. These perceptions are results of human relations based on a class-based and gender-discriminating society where the lack of economic means and the understanding of social staging play a role in their experiences when seeking justice in the public sphere (Monárrez Fragoso 2010, 185-186).

Therefore, Monárrez addresses the pain and grief experiences of victims’ relatives within this form of denunciation and claims that they arise from a privilege that remains hidden and unnoticed, and that constitutes an abuse of power exercised in the sphere of social institutions (Monárrez Fragoso 2010, 186). She claims that it is the pain suffered by the victims’ families that functions as cultural capital for the institution. Pain that obtains value as symbolic capital benefiting domination and legitimation because the social and economic conditions that have produced it remain unexamined and are executed in the interests of power by hegemonic entities against justice-seeking groups (Ibidem, 187-188).

In this sense, Monárrez concludes by stating that “activism, political consciousness and the enjoyment of justice have to do with money, health, education and privileged social relations; all these components form part of the symbolic capital which victims’ families lack” (Monárrez Fragoso 2010, 195). Therefore, when speaking of justice regarding femicide, the author claims that the primary reparation is justice for the victims and the victims’ families (Monárrez Fragoso 2017). This point will be expanded in the final conclusions of this work.

b. Institutionalization of impunity

“No se habla de la violencia institucional, no se habla de la violencia del Estado,
no se habla de todo esto que se debía hablar antes,
porque en Juárez, Atenco, Estado de México,
se usó violencia estatal, no es nada más falta de voluntad política,
es violencia institucional y es una política de muerte contra las mujeres.”
Lucia Melgar at the Foro Reflexiones Actuales sobre Femicidio,
CEIICH UNAM, August 23, 2019
(doc I, 45:32-45:58).

These words support the elements stated in Marcela Lagarde's definition of feminicidal violence, in which the *state impunity*, the *institutional violence* and the *social impunity* surrounding femicide are related as key factors involved in this type of violence³⁶.

In this sense, Lucia Melgar argues that the tolerance to extreme violence and the degree of impunity suffered in Mexico are also reflected in the persistent impunity around the crimes -femicides- that were once denied and trivialized in Juárez and presently expanded to other regions (Melgar 2011, 67). She claims that the systematic denial of justice to women, living and dead, are from this perspective, antecedents and an integral part of the crisis of the “rule of law” and the primacy of injustice in the country (Ibidem, 68). And that this form of extreme violence precedes a process of normalization of the barbarism against women and girls in which the criminalization of the victims, the denial of justice and the policy of simulation were interwoven (Ibid, 73).

Additionally, the author has identified, during her long years studying the phenomenon, some acts committed by state institutions and authorities when dealing with cases of femicides, which she has conceptualized as *institucionalización de la impunidad*.

Melgar defines institutionalization of impunity as “the recurrent incapacity or corruption of police officers and officials, the multiplication of official instances lacking the powers to carry out their tasks, as well as the lack of punishment for negligent officials or those suspected of complicity” (Melgar 2011, 75) and that despite international recommendations, this institutionalized impunity has led the government to apply also a simulation policy (Ibidem).

These acts committed by the state through its institutions or actors intersect with the institutional violence executed to the victims and their families seeking justice. As already discussed in the conceptual framework, *institutional violence* is referred to as the acts committed by the state by omission, negligence, or complicity of the authorities with the assailants (Lagarde y de los Ríos 2010).

Thus, the objectives of this work are focused on these aspects.

³⁶ See the section: ‘*Social impunity, impunity by the state and institutional violence*’ of this work for a broader conceptualization.

3. Methodology

“El trato fue malo, las autoridades siempre hacen eso.
De hecho, yo si tenía miedo de ir a preguntar
porque no sabe uno con que se va a encontrar.
Son muy agresivos, muy déspotas.
Ellos no volvieron a comunicarse conmigo
a pesar de que me interrogaron y les di mis datos...
no me volvieron a localizar...pero no importa yo sigo aquí
y hasta que se logre la justicia.”

*Testimonial of an aunt about her experience dealing with authorities
in the municipality of Nezahualcóyotl, Estado de México,
regarding the femicide of her 4-year-old niece in 2017.
(doc IV, 0:20-4:00).*

This part is aimed to address the methods that will be used in this work to analyze the testimonies of the victims' families. It is worth mentioning that obtaining primary sources for this research was a great challenge, since they are very limited, particularly in regard to Estado de México, where the subject still could be furtherly developed. Thus, the testimonial sources reached were obtained from the very few testimonial books and documentaries available.

For this purpose, the objectives and research questions that guide this work will be initially mentioned, subsequently the data selection process will be discussed, then the qualitative method of content analysis will be approached and finally, the coding technique and the program to be used for it will be explained.

3.1.Objectives and research questions

As noted in the previous part, the *state impunity* and the *institutional violence* surrounding feminicides are (inter alia) constant variables in the phenomenon that obstruct the right to justice sought by the families of the victims.

In this sense, the general objective of this work is to identify and name the obstacles that the victims' families have experienced in their search for justice before state authorities. This, in an effort to code patterns of abuse of authority and institutional violence that allow to build a framework of state impunity that exemplifies the institutionalization of it in Estado de México, as well as to approach the impacts of such (femicidal) violence in the families of the victims.

Therefore, the questions guiding this work are the following:

RQ.1. What are the patterns of institutional violence manifested in Estado de México, according to the perspective of the victims' families during their search for justice?

RQ.2. How do these patterns manifest themselves and affect the granting of justice?

RQ.3. What institutions are involved in these patterns playing a role in state impunity?

RQ.4. How have the families of the victims experienced the impacts of femicide and state impunity geographically in Estado de México during the 2000s?

3.2. Data collection

To reach possible answers to the questions, a process of data collection was conducted. It is worth mentioning that before starting the writing of this work I had the intention of conducting a short field study personally in Estado de México and reaching local feminist civil associations such as Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir, Red Nacional de Refugios and even the Observatorio Ciudadano Nacional del Femicidio itself, to contemplate the possibility that they could facilitate my contact with relatives of the victims and know their experiences personally to subsequently translate it into this work. Nonetheless, eventually I considered that it was not the most appropriate alternative.

In the first place, due to the sanitary restrictions globally imposed due to the COVID-19 pandemic situation since March 2020 that continues to date, it would not be a responsible decision on my part. Finally, I considered that due to the limited time of one semester for the completion of this thesis, the budget necessary to conduct a field study and my still beginner experience in conducting direct interviews might be a limitation.

I decided to obtain the data from primary sources digitally. Which demonstrated that it is possible to obtain reliable information for this research also through the use of electronic sources as they provided valuable data for the analysis. Although obtaining it was a great challenge due to the few accessible. The data selected for analysis in this work was based on 17 testimonies of victims' relatives obtained from 4 testimonial books³⁷, a documentary called *Día de Muertas*³⁸, and the academic forum *Reflexiones Actuales sobre Femicidio*³⁹.

The four books used to obtain the seventeen testimonies were: *Violencia contra las mujeres en el Estado de México* by Juan Carlos Gutiérrez Contreras (2012); *Las Muertas del Estado. Femicidios durante la administración mexiquense de Enrique Peña Nieto* by Humberto Padgett and Eduardo Loza (2014); *Violencia de Género y Femicidio en el Estado de México. La percepción y las acciones de las organizaciones de la sociedad civil* by Jana Vasil'eva, Helena Centmayer, Oscar Del Valle Dávila and Lucia Gabriel (2016); and *La fosa de agua: Desapariciones y femicidios en el río de los Remedios* by Lydiette Carrión (2018).

³⁷ The books were purchased electronically, since they are not of free access, thus respecting the right of access to authorized editions. Padgett and Loza's book as well as Carrión's are journalistic works. While that of Vasil'eva et. al is a scientific one. All of them providing valuable data.

³⁸ To access it, see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hDzdbxNNeVE> (Accessed on 4.11.2020)

³⁹ To access it, see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=binVQNwIO2Q> (Accessed on 22.10.2020)

Likewise, the documentary *Día de Muertas* is a virtual work developed in five chapters and released in 2018 by Voces de la Ausencia, a digital platform created in 2008 to visualize feminicides in Mexico. It is held in Spanish with direct testimonies from victims' families. Thus, they represent a highly trustworthy source in which essential information is transmitted.

Lastly, the academic forum *Reflexiones Actuales sobre Feminicidio* was organized by the CEIICH-UNAM and the UNODC in Mexico City and developed in seven discussion tables over two days from August 22-23, 2019 and was attended by students, academics, feminist lawyers, and representatives of feminist civil associations working on feminicidal violence in Mexico. It was consulted virtually in four digital archives of the CEIICH. It facilitated a general approach on progress and setbacks on the research field nationally and locally.

3.3. Content Analysis

As previously stated, testimonial books and documentaries are the main sources of analysis of this research work. And in order to process the relevant information needed for responding to the research questions, the method of qualitative content analysis will be applied.

The qualitative content analysis is a method of scientific inquiry for examining, classifying, evaluating, and studying recorded communication sources in an objective and systematic way. Such sources range from television programs, newspapers columns, texts, books, photographs to the Internet for instance (Lac 2016).

Thus, since the primary sources to be used in this work are in digital format through books and electronic files and some testimonies will be transcribed in text format by the author, this method is considered the appropriate one for conducting the analysis of written material. The development of a coding frame will be needed to extract the relevant information for interpreting and evaluating the content reliably. Hence, one needs to start by defining what a code means to then address the coding process.

a. Coding

According to Saldana, a code is mostly a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, essence-capturing or evocative attribute for a segment of language-based or visual data, which can consist of interview transcripts, journals, documents, video and so forth (Saldana 2016). He states that the coding process can be exemplified in two cycles. During the first cycle the portion of data to be coded can range from a single word to a full sentence or an entire page of text or stream of moving images. While in the second cycle, the portions coded can be the exact same units, longer texts or even a reconfiguration of the codes (Ibidem, 3).

The author further states that the types of codes can vary, having for instance the *descriptive code*, which summarizes the primary topic of the excerpt or transcript (Saldana 2016, 3). For the purpose of this work, an example of such a code would be:

Transcript	Descriptive Code
“Hubo acoso por parte de los MP’s hacia mi hermana. La primera vez que fuimos a dar nuestra entrevista...uno de ellos incluso me interrumpió y me dice: ‘-oye, pero ¿tienes novio?’. Y fue como: ‘- yo no vengo a hablarte de mi vida, vengo a hablarte de algo que para mí ha sido lo peor’.”	Harassment

Figure 6. Created by the author to illustrate a descriptive coding.

Here one can see an example of a *descriptive code* applied to data from a testimonial excerpt in which the victim’s relative describes her experience before a state authority.

Saldana also states that coding can be used for *patterns*. In other words, to identify repetitive patterns of action and consistencies in human affairs documented in the data. Which will enable to organize and group similarly coded data into categories because they share some characteristics that could lead to the beginning of a pattern (Saldana 2016, 5;8).

In this sense, the main objective of this work is to identify and name the patterns of *institutional violence* and *state impunity* faced by the families of the victims of femicide when seeking justice before state authorities in Estado de México. The inductive coding process comes to be of great relevance to categorize the patterns.

For this, the following sample is developed as a coding system tool for data collection.

Victim	Municipality	Year of murder	State Instance	Family member	Time (Page)	Testimonial Citation [Family Experience]
43-year-old (1)	Tlalnepantla (NE)	2013	Ministerio Público/ Public Ministry	Daughters	3:37-4:17 (for documentary) Or p. 146 (for testimonial book)	“Hubo <i>acoso</i> por parte de los MP’s hacia mi hermana. La primera vez que fuimos a dar nuestra entrevista de lo que nosotras teníamos conocimiento...uno de ellos incluso me interrumpió y me dice: ‘- oye, pero ¿tienes novio?’. Y fue como: ‘- yo no vengo a hablarte de mi vida, vengo a hablarte de algo que para mí ha sido lo peor’...Él por ejemplo te está preguntando, y te dice: ‘-no, pero eso no es relevante’.” [Harassment + Omissions]

Figure 7. Created by the author as a sample for data coding

The first column shows an outline of the victim and the testimonial number, e.g. (1). The second column indicates the municipality in which the crime was committed to be able to geocode the feminicide and reference it spatially (as discussed in the socio-spatiality part), which is indicated in the sample as northeast zone (NE). The third column illustrates the year of the murder. The fourth column reveals the state instance in which acts of institutional violence or state impunity were executed. The fifth column displays the victim's family member who dealt with the state authority and experienced such violence. The sixth column manifests the time duration (for the documentary) or page number (for the books) of the testimony of the family member. The seventh column exhibits the testimonial citation of the victim's family member and in parentheses the type of institutional violent act experienced, in other words, the *descriptive code*. Which will allow us to identify and name the *patterns* of institutional violence.

In order to identify and name the patterns of state impunity and institutional violence, the data will be interpreted through the use of the NVivo program to build a framework of patterns of impunity. In addition to match the georeferencing of feminicidal violence discussed in the 'georeferenced spatial behaviour of feminicides' part of this work with the geocoding to be conducted in the testimonial analysis based on the seventeen testimonies. Thus, although it was not possible to speak in person with the relatives, their recorded testimonies were valued.

b. Geo-coding

Once the coding for patterns has been conducted to identify patterns of institutional violence and build a framework that exemplifies the institutionalization of impunity towards feminicides, a geo-coding process will proceed to geo-reference feminicides in Edomex. According to Owusu et. al., geocoding is a process which essentially translates text-based information about locations (address, zip code, cities or even countries) into geographic coordinates. The spatial dataset is incorporated in geographic information systems (GIS) where geocoded data can collectively be used for mapping, visualization, and spatial analysis of events (Owusu, et al. 2017, 41-42). In this sense, a visualization and spatial analysis of feminicides in the entity is desired through geocoding processes. For this, the GoogleMaps server will be used.

The geocoding process attempts to determine the location of the input address (which can be a street level, neighbourhood level, name of localities, cities, or countries) over the range of addresses in the reference dataset. Additionally, the reference dataset used for the geocoding process determines the technique used in matching the spatial information into geographic coordinates (Owusu, et al. 2017, 45). In this vein, the reference dataset is indicated in the sample for data coding with the city name and its geographic zone in the state, e.g. Tlalnepantla (NE).

4. Data Analysis

“Nos truncan la investigación
y me dijeron que estaba desaparecida la carpeta,
que no había nada que seguir porque pues
no había nadie a quien perseguir.
Cambiaban de comandantes,
cambiaban de ministeriales...
Y nos trataban mal...nos trataban de decir que
pues sin dinero no había. Que con qué se les podía pagar...fue discriminación.”
*Testimonial of a sister about her experience dealing with authorities
in the municipality of Nezahualcóyotl, Estado de México,
regarding the femicide of her sister in 2013.*
(doc VI, 1:49-2:29).

This part is aimed to analyze the testimonies of the relatives of the victims of feminicides in Estado de México. The analysis is structured in four parts. First, a framework of patterns of institutional violence committed towards the families of the victims will be elaborated. This is based on the experiences of the relatives about the acts of violence that they have faced before state authorities during their search for justice. Second, the specific state institutions in which such acts have been committed will be displayed. The third part relates how the families of the victims experience the impacts of feminicides and the state impunity surrounding. The fourth part shows the geographical zones in which feminicides are accentuated in Estado de México based on the analysis of the primary sources collected for this work. A geopolitical visualization is developed for this purpose. All in an effort to answer the research questions of this work.

4.1. What are the patterns of institutional violence manifested in Estado de México?

The institutional violence immersed in feminicidal violence, in addition to affecting the victim, is also manifested in specific acts of violence and abuse of authority towards the relatives of the victims of femicide when they approach a state authority to demand justice.

As reflected in one of the testimonies of the victims' relatives about her experience in dealing with the Government Palace authorities: “They told me that they had already solved the case, they interrogated me in an office. The treatment towards me was bad. The authorities always do that. In fact, I was afraid to go ask because one does not know what is going to be found. They are very aggressive, very despotic” (doc IV, 0:12-0:36).

In order to name the acts of institutional violence faced by the relatives of the victims, an analysis of the testimonial sources was conducted through descriptive coding processes via NVivo, which allowed to identify the various patterns of institutional violence committed against the victim's families by multiple state institutions. The coding results are shown in the following framework and will be extended subsequently.

a. Framework of patterns of institutional violence towards victims' relatives

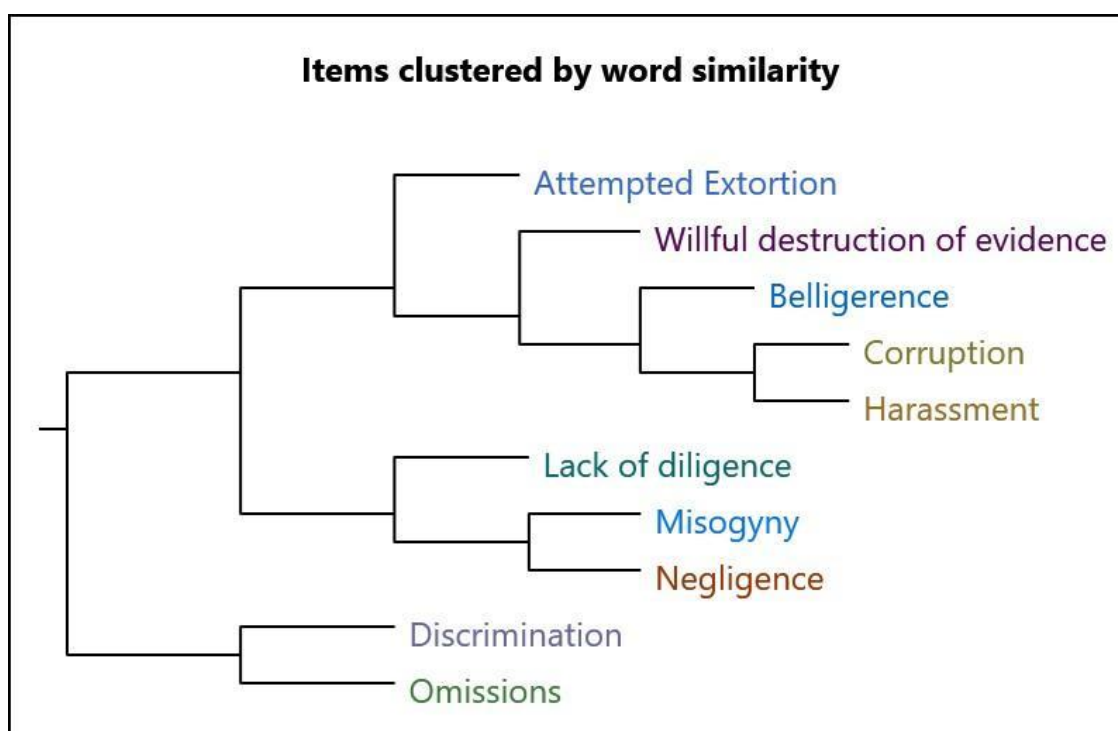


Figure 8. Created by the author via NVivo on patterns of institutional violence towards relatives of victims of femicide in Estado de México based on testimonial coding processes.

The analysis of the testimonials revealed ten patterns of acts of institutional violence committed against the relatives of the victims of femicide when dealing with state authorities to demand justice. The names of the categories were elaborated by the author based on the interpretation of the testimonial transcripts by using descriptive codes to group the relatives' experiences. The items do not follow any hierarchical order and can intersect. Moreover, it does not mean that they are the only acts of institutional violence experienced by victims' relatives, but rather those that were identified in the testimonies through the limited primary sources obtained for this work. Nonetheless, through this framework of patterns, one can get an outlook of the ordeal experienced by the victims' relatives and some of the branches of state impunity.

4.2. How do these patterns manifest themselves and affect the granting of justice?

The patterns of institutional violence identified in the testimonies are manifested through various acts of abuse of power by state authorities towards the victims' relatives that demonstrate the institutionalization of state impunity and the obstruction of justice.

a. Lack of diligence

One of the persistent acts expressed by the relatives of the victims is the lack of attention, care, steady, and energetic efforts expected of the authority to trace evidence and follow up on the cases. As noted in the testimony of a mother regarding her experience before authorities of the Public Ministry of Cuautitlán Izcalli on the femicide of her 23-year-old daughter.

The mother points out that she did not receive any information or updates from the Public Ministry regarding the status of the case for months, and that the agent in charge of the case always had doubts about how to proceed: “Son meses los que pasan y no pasa nada, me traen vuelta y vuelta y no me dicen nada, la Ministerio Público siempre tenía dudas, yo incluso le decía ‘bueno licenciada, yo me ofrezco, si usted tiene alguna duda yo le acerco lo que usted necesite para, pues, que usted salga de sus dudas, ¿qué necesita?’, yo le decía ¿no?, me ponía a sus órdenes” (doc VIII, p.116). Additionally, she claims that authorities of the Attorney General’s Office did not receive her either when she was seeking for information on the matter: “El señor procurador, subprocurador no me recibía tampoco, yo quería saber” (doc VIII, p.116).

This slowness on the part of the authorities is also reflected in the lack of agility and efficiency when following the cases, as another mother experienced before the Prosecutor's Office about the femicide of her twenty-year-old daughter in Nezahualcóyotl: “Es que ellos (Fiscalía) me dijeron - ‘lo tenemos que agarrar, pero pues esto va con calma, porque tenemos muchos casos, muchas carpetas’” (doc III, 1:50-1:57).

The lack of diligence manifest itself also in the lack of follow-up on the cases, as an aunt experienced before the Government Palace authorities regarding the femicide case of her four-year-old niece in Nezahualcóyotl: “Ellos no volvieron a comunicarse conmigo a pesar de que me interrogaron y les di mis datos, no me volvieron a localizar” (doc IV, 3:20-3:23).

Another form of lack of diligence is manifested when the authority only activates and retakes the follow-up of the case because there is a legal order issued in between, as shown in the testimonials of two daughters regarding their experience before the Prosecutor's Office when seeking justice for the femicide of their forty-year-old mother in Tlalnepantla. They claim that the authorities of the Prosecutor’s Office only contacted them and followed up on the case because the two of them filed a legal injunction against such institution: “Se metió el amparo en contra de las negligencias que había en la Fiscalía y ahí fue cuando la fiscal se volvió a poner en contacto con nosotras, pero ya nada más precisamente por el amparo. Porque eso les afecta, pero no, o sea, de plano si uno no va y se planta o no estás como preguntando se estanca ahí el caso” (doc V, 5:11-5:43).

Finally, another form of lack of diligence is manifested when the authority makes no effort to find evidence, thus delaying the case or even demanding the family to be the ones who bring evidence, when the obligation falls on the authority. As experienced by a mother before agents of the Public Ministry regarding the case of femicide of her fourteen-year-old daughter in Tecámac. She claims that authorities demanded evidence from her: “Necesitamos pruebas” (doc X, p.69). This shows a lack of constancy and energetic efforts on the part of the authorities.

b. Negligence

The lack of diligence of the authorities lead to or intersect with acts of negligence within the institutions in charge of the cases when their agents fail in the proper care and expected fulfilment of their function. These acts were manifested in various ways in the testimonies.

One of the forms identified is when the authority considers a case resolved and closes the investigation report without granting justice. As shown in the testimonial experience of an aunt before authorities of the Government Palace regarding the femicide of her four-year-old niece. The aunt states that in such institution she was told that they had already solved the case and that therefore the record was already closed, that the family had already claimed the body, but justice had not been served, as they did not tell her if the perpetrator was already captured: “‘Calcetitas Rojas’ en Palacio era un tema que ya estaba cerrado. Que ya había aparecido la familia. Que ya habían reclamado el cuerpo. Pero no se había hecho justicia. O al menos ellos no decían si había detenidos en ese caso, nada, nada” (doc IV, 3:25-3:43).

Another act of negligence detected in the testimonies is the disappearance of investigation records by institutional authorities. As shared by one sister regarding her experience before Public Ministry authorities when demanding information on the inquiry status of the case of the femicide of her twenty-six-year-old sister murdered in Nezahualcóyotl. She claims that the authorities told her that the investigation folder was missing. That there was nothing to pursue because there was no record and no one to pursue. In addition to sending her to various state offices without granting results: “Nos truncaron la investigación y me dijeron que estaba desaparecida la carpeta. Que no había nada que seguir porque, pues no había nadie a quién perseguir. Y de un lado nos traían a otro, de Barrientos a Neza” (doc VI, 1:49-2:05). Therefore, she assures that there was no progress in the investigation and that there was never a concrete inquiry record on her sister's case, nor was there a specific agent in charge of the case: “Cambiaban de comandantes. Cambiaban de ministeriales. Se empezaba todo a regresar desde el principio. Entonces nunca hubo como una investigación concreta” (doc VI, 2:06-2:19).

This rotation of officials and not constant agents handling the cases is also mentioned by other family members in their experiences, as shared by the two daughters regarding their mother's investigation record. Which passed through the hands of five different agents of the Public Ministry removed for administrative offenses: “La carpeta de investigación de mi mamá pasó como por 5 MP's en el Estado de México, en Barrientos. Porque uno, por negligencias, otro no estaba, otro creo falleció. Al primero que nos quitaron fue porque nos pidió dinero, por el acoso con mi hermana” (doc V, 4:26-4:48).

This in addition to the indifference of some agents when pursuing disappearances, as some authorities of the Public Ministry suggested to a mother, when they told her to look for her daughter herself, because they could not do anything: “¿Sabe qué, señora? Si quiere encontrar a su hija búsquela usted, porque nosotros no podemos hacer nada” (doc XIX, p.2491). Or when some of them suggested to another mother that they were not willing to do anything because they did not want to investigate in certain places, referring to the Río de los Remedios: “No queremos destapar una coladera por la que nos podamos caer” (doc X, p.33).

Another manifestation of negligence is exposed in the testimony of a mother about failures in key procedures regarding the removal of bodies from the crime scene. She claims that the diligence of the removal of the body of her daughter by the municipal police in Chimalhuacán, one of the most relevant procedures for evidence collection in the investigation of a murder, took a maximum time of fifteen minutes (doc XIX, p.595).

Lastly, an aggravated form of negligence identified in one of the testimonies is when an authority in charge of sentencing the perpetrator does not condemn him with the corresponding penalty for the legal classification of femicide, despite the evidence (doc VII, p.179).

c. Omissions

One branch of negligence constantly mentioned by various relatives of victims is the omissions committed by the authorities. These acts are manifested in diverse forms.

Some agents omit fundamental statements that the victims' relatives declare in their interviews since they consider them irrelevant to the investigation. Demonstrating an arbitrary performance regarding the collection of testimonies and leaving unmentioned, thus unregistered key elements in the investigation file. In this sense, two daughters shared in the documentary their experience before authorities of the Public Ministry in the Barrientos neighborhood, in the municipality of Tlalnepantla. They state that during their interview the agent failed to record some of their statements and they felt that in the end he wrote what he wanted: “Él por ejemplo te está preguntando y te dice -‘no, pero eso no es relevante’. O sea, como que te ponían en tu entrevista lo que ellos querían” (doc V, 4:13-4:25).

Other omissions relate to core protocol acts not performed by officers when collecting evidence at the crime scene as expressed by a mother regarding her experience before Expert agents of the PGJEM in Cuautitlán Izcalli. She claims that the experts made several omissions when recording the site. For instance, key objects as a cable and rope found at the crime scene were not recorded in the file. Additionally, they did not photograph the crime scene. Neither they took fingerprints (doc VIII, p.115). These acts skew the understanding of the crime and delay the delivery of justice.

A similar experience was faced by another relative before the same PGJEM authorities. The relative testifies that the PGJEM did not collect expert evidence at the scene of the murder. Furthermore, the scientific evidence found in the body of the victim through the autopsy was not properly processed (doc VII, p.179).

Other authorities issue final deliberations in the file without acknowledging the omissions committed at the crime scene and in the evidence found in the bodies of the victims as shared by a mother about the feminicide of her twenty-nine-year-old daughter in Chimalhuacán. She claims that Public Ministry agents ruled that the victim had hanged herself and omitted details in the victim's body (doc XIX, p.602).

d. Willful destruction of evidence

A particular act identified in one of the testimonies was the willful act of certain authorities to destroy evidence that incriminates any of their officers in the crime. As the lawyer of the mother of the twenty-nine-year-old victim murdered in Chimalhuacán testifies regarding the destruction of evidence by agents of the Prosecutor's Office in favor of one of their officers: “La fiscalía intervino dolosamente en la destrucción de pruebas a favor de uno de sus policías” (doc XIX, p.694). The agent involved was a police officer on duty and married to the victim, who despite being protected by the willful acts of the aforementioned authority, after years of trial by the victim's family he was sentenced as the perpetrator for the crime of intimate feminicide.

e. Belligerence

The testimonies also reveal manifestations of aggressive attitudes and ruthless treatment that some of the victims' relatives have experienced. As expressed by an aunt in the documentary regarding her experience when dealing with authorities of the Government Palace in Estado de México, she claims that the treatment that the authorities had towards her was bad, that they were aggressive and despotic which made her afraid to ask about advances in the investigation record on the feminicide of her four-year-old niece: “En Palacio me dijeron que ya habían resuelto el caso, me interrogaron en una oficina. El trato fue malo. Las autoridades siempre hacen eso. De hecho, yo si tenía miedo de ir a preguntar porque no sabe uno con que se va a encontrar. Son muy agresivos, muy déspotas” (doc IV, 0:12-0:36).

Other experiences show a truculent atmosphere within the institutions also projected towards the victims' families. As two daughters commented about their experience in the Public Ministry of Barrientos in Tlalnepantla, who when attending their interview witnessed how investigative policemen were playing roughly with Public Ministry officials inside the institution and they were shouting curses at each other in front of the victim's daughters:

“Llegas y están jugando los policías de investigación con el MP. Se están diciendo de groserías enfrente de ti” (doc V, 4:06-4:25).

f. Discrimination

Belligerence within the institutions is also accentuated by acts of discrimination against relatives of victims. This discrimination is perceived by family members of the victims based on socioeconomic stratification. As expressed in the documentary by a sister who testifies that when she and her mother went to request reports on her sister's femicide before Public Ministry authorities, they were treated despotically and they were hinted that the investigation of the case was not progressing because there was no money involved, which the sister perceived as discrimination: “Cuando mi mamá y yo íbamos allá a pedir informes, nos trataban mal. Nos trataban de decir que pues sin dinero no había. Que con qué se les podía pagar. Entonces pues simplemente fue déspota. Fue discriminación” (doc VI, 2:20-2:34). This also shows an attempted corruption behavior by the authorities to be developed in the later pattern.

This attitude coming from institutional officers causes the relatives of the victims to feel discriminated against by the authorities and even badly because of their socioeconomic situation. This makes the structural violence behind social inequalities invisible as well as justifying the lack of professional ethics of the officers who carry out such acts.

This can be seen in the perception of the same sister witness who shares that this discrimination from the authorities has been a very strong experience for her because her entire family is humble and they do not have the money that certain officials have required from her (without any justification), thus she claims that the authorities in charge of the follow up of her sister's femicide case have closed all the doors to her and her family for economic grounds: “Si es algo muy fuerte, porque pues como te digo, sin dinero desgraciadamente no hemos podido hacer nada, nada. Toda mi familia es humilde, no tenemos ese dinero. Y por eso nos han cerrado todas las puertas, todas” (doc VI, 3:22-3:50).

g. Corruption

As introduced above, some officers, in addition to treating relatives of victims with belligerence and discrimination, manifest acts of corruption by performing their duties in a dishonest and illegal manner, particularly requiring money from the victim's relatives to carry out their official functions.

In this sense, the aforementioned sister states that she experienced acts of corruption by officials of the Public Ministry in Barrientos, who asked her for money to work on following up on her sister's case file, insinuating to her that if she gave them money the same officer who asked for the amount would look for the perpetrator personally.

Faced with the sister's refusal to such a request, the officer asked her: "So you do not intend to solve anything about your sister's case?" And the sister replied: "Yes, but I do not have money. And why am I going to give that money to you?" To which the officer replied: "Because I am your new commander": "Este tipo 'n' me dice: 'Vamos a ser claros: ¿cuánto tiene para arreglarnos? Y es más yo lo busco'. Y yo le dije: 'Es que no le voy a dar nada'. Y me dijo: 'A, o sea, ¿usted no piensa resolver nada de su hermana?' Y le dije: 'Sí, pero yo no tengo dinero. Y a usted, ¿por qué le voy a dar?'. 'Porque soy su nuevo comandante', me dice" (doc VI, 2:35-2:56).

These words show the abuse of authority committed by the officer and the corrupt and unofficial behavior when requesting money to carry out functions that officially and legally correspond to him to carry out. The sister later points out that, having not given money, agents of the Public Ministry disappeared her sister's investigation record for a month and a half: "Entonces fue ahí cuando desaparecieron la carpeta más o menos un mes y medio. Y me dijeron: 'Es que no hay carpeta'" (doc VI, 2:59-3:05).

Another expression of acts of corruption identified in the testimonies was experienced by a mother before authorities of the Public Ministry in Chimalhuacán. The mother states that the officers did not allow her to expand on her statement of fact during her interview until three months after the femicide of her daughter, and she was able to do so only because she paid to have it taken: "A mí no me permitieron ampliar mi declaración hasta el 30 de septiembre, tres meses después del feminicidio de mi hija, y pude hacerla porque pagué para que me la tomaran" (doc XIX, p.638).

The mother further states that in that same institution she also had to pay a secretary to provide her with copies of the preliminary investigation of his daughter's file: "Otra vez, tuve que pagar a una secretaria otros mil pesos para que me dieran copias de la averiguación previa. Únicamente eran seis hojas escritas" (doc XIX, p.650).

These acts of corruption spread among various officials of the Public Ministry in different positions. The testimony of a mother regarding her experience before said institution in the municipality of Chimalhuacán refers to it. She shares that when she went to the Ministry to recognize the body of her daughter, she had to pay officials from the Public Ministry to attend to her and her son. Additionally, she had to pay the medical examiner there to issue her daughter's death certificate. Likewise, she also had to pay the officer who gave her the body of her daughter and even the funeral director:

“Fuimos al Ministerio Público a eso de las siete de la noche. Mi hijo pasó a la plancha, él reconoció a su hermana. Nos acompañó el señor de la funeraria; nos explicó que debíamos darle dinero al personal, a los funcionarios. Si no pagábamos, no nos iban a atender. El mismo señor de la funeraria le dio dinero al agente del Ministerio Público; le pagó al médico legista para que extendiera el certificado de defunción, también a la persona que nos entregó el cuerpo de mi hija” (doc XIX, p.1821;1825). Three different positions within the Public Ministry involved in these acts causing damage to the victim's family. The mother then argues that they ran out of money for these acts by the authority: “Casi nos quedamos sin nada, y todavía le teníamos que pagar a él (funerario)” (doc XIX, p.1825). Thus, a property damage is also caused.

Another institution identified in the testimonies conducting these type of acts towards relatives of victims was the Judicial Police. In this vein, a mother shares her experience dealing with judicial police officers and argues that she asked the police to help her in the investigation of her daughter's femicide, but they asked her for money for all their operating expenses: for credit cell phone, gasoline and even food. Another time she had to pay them to accompany her in the search for evidence: “Yo pedía de favor a los judiciales que me ayudaran. Uno me decía: ‘no tengo crédito’, el otro ‘no tengo gasolina’, uno más: ‘no tengo coche’. Debí darles dos mil pesos a los policías judiciales para que fueran conmigo. Y otros quinientos pesos para la gasolina y para los tacos y quinientos pesos más para el crédito de sus teléfonos celulares, que para hablarle al comandante y enviara apoyo” (doc XIX, p.2496;2500;2504).

A similar experience was faced by another mother in Tlalnepantla, before the same authorities. An agent of the judicial police asked her five thousand pesos so that the commander of the case would send dogs to sniff for evidence. She also states that in order for the judicial police to work on the investigation of his daughter's femicide, she had to pay for gasoline for the officers' patrols every day and pay them meals at expensive restaurants. This, because the officials demanded these costs from her and her husband: “Deme cinco mil pesos para que el comandante mande los perros a olfatear. Todos los días pagábamos gasolina para sus carros. Pagábamos comidas y no aceptaban tacos: pedían sentarse en restaurantes y las cuentas salían por dos mil pesos” (doc XIX, p.3190).

Her husband was also affected by these acts of corruption and states that they agreed because it was the requirement that the judicial police officers demanded to work on the case of her daughter and they did so with the hope that they would help them recover her daughter. Nonetheless, they state that due to these acts, the family went into debt to get the money and even their family savings that they had saved for years to expand their house ran out:

“Entonces mi esposo decía: ‘Qué hago, si son los que nos asignaron y tenemos que trabajar. Con tal de que nos ayuden a recuperar a mi hija’. Nos endeudamos hasta donde no. Llegamos a gastar quince mil pesos en un día. Se fueron los ahorros de cien mil pesos que usaríamos para ampliar y remodelar la casa” (doc XIX, p. 3194;3198).

These testimonies account for acts of abuse of authority materialized in corruption facts by the judicial police officers towards the parents of the victim. It also shows the lack of professional ethics of the officers who take advantage of the pain and desire for justice of the families to request this type of act for individual benefit of the officers involved.

Thus, increasing the harm already done to the family with additional burdens of patrimonial and psychological damage.

h. Attempted Extortion

An additional branch to the acts of corruption conducted by some officers of the judicial police are the extortion attempts towards the families of the victims.

In this sense, one of the mothers testified that one of the judicial police officers tried to extort her by asking for ten thousand pesos so as not to reveal the intimate affairs of the victim's parents (as a couple). According to a mother, one of the judicial police officers in charge of the investigation of her daughter's feminicide, having information on the family's situation, ruined the few emotional ties that remained between the parents as a couple, using various techniques to create jealousy between the two parents and causing them to blame each other for their daughter's feminicide: “Los judiciales se encargaron de echarnos a perder lo que nos quedaba; utilizaron la estrategia de crear celos entre nosotros. Un judicial intentó extorsionarme con diez mil pesos para no revelar asuntos de nuestra relación (como pareja). Durante un tiempo pendimos de un hilo. Nos culpábamos entre nosotras” (doc XIX, p. 3251;3254).

i. Harassment

Another pattern identified in the testimonies of relatives of victims was the harassment they experienced in some of the institutions in charge of feminicides, all of them women.

As expressed by two sisters about their experience dealing with officials of the Public Ministry in Barrientos, Tlalnepantla. They stated that when they first went to the Ministry to attend their interview about their mother's feminicide, one of the officers stopped recording their statements and asked them both if they had a boyfriend. Subsequently, there was harassment towards one of the sisters during the multiple occasions in which they went to the institution to follow up on the case:

“Hubo acoso por parte de los MP’s hacia mi hermana. Incluso la primera vez que fuimos a dar nuestra entrevista de lo que nosotras teníamos conocimiento de que había pasado ese día, uno de ellos incluso me interrumpió y me dice: ‘oye, pero ¿tienes novio?’. Y fue como: ‘yo no vengo a hablarte de mi vida, vengo a hablarte de algo que para mí ha sido lo peor’. Incluso con mi hermana también lo mismo” (doc V, 3:37-4:05).

j. Misogyny

The last pattern identified in the testimonials was misogyny, manifested in aversion and prejudice against women and particularly through the exaltation of the myth of victim blaming.

k. Victim blaming

In this regard, eight mothers testified to having received misogynistic comments against their daughters, placing the blame on the victim and justifying the perpetrator’s actions.

The first mother experienced this before authorities of the Public Ministry in Cuautitlán Izcalli. She went to report the disappearance prior to the crime of her 23-year-old daughter, and the authorities told her comments such as: "she must have gone with the boyfriend" and "but what did your daughter do to him?" (doc XVII, p.114).

Another mother claims to have faced similar comments in the same institution but in the Chimalhuacán office. When she came to report the disappearance prior to the crime of her 19-year-old daughter, the officers told her: "Do you not know if your daughter went off with a man?" and "She for sure went off with her boyfriend" (doc XIX, p. 1817;1837).

A third testimonial in this regard relates to the fact that the officers do not mobilize immediately after reporting the victim's disappearance. On the one hand, because they first place the blame on the victim to subsequently impose misogynistic prejudices on her to discredit her, despite the victim being a minor. As a mother experienced before the Public Ministry in Ecatepec when she reported the disappearance prior to the crime of her 13-year-old daughter, the officers hinted that her daughter surely went off with the boyfriend to have a few beers in Acapulco and that she would return in three days: “De seguro se fue con el novio a tomar unas chelas a Acapulco y regresa en tres días” (doc X, p.160).

It is interesting to analyze these statements of the authorities that suggest to the mother not to worry since her daughter would return in three days because officially the officers wait 72 hours after the report to consider it valid as a disappearance, as the mother claims.

This comes to be very convenient for the authorities by suggesting to the mother to wait three days to then start the search because administratively they are allowed, but on the other they omit the affectation of this measure towards the victim and her family by losing fundamental time in the search.

Another form of misogynistic acts by the authorities identified in the testimonials relates to the fact of the victim being judged prejudicially by how she dresses or expresses herself.

In this vein, a mother shares that when she went to the Public Ministry in Tecámac to report the disappearance prior to the feminicide of her 14-year-old daughter. When the officers saw a photograph of the victim, they suggested to the mother that her daughter was "emo" and that her daughter was depressed, relating this arbitrary judgment with her disappearance and blaming the victim. They subsequently asked the mother why her daughter wore her hair that way and why she wore that type of pants: "Es muy de emo. ¿Su hija no estará deprimida? ¿Por qué lleva el pelo así, los pantalones así?" (doc X, p.81).

A fifth testimony shows the experience of a mother in the same aforementioned institution at the same place. She stated that when reporting the disappearance of her 14-year-old daughter, the officers told her that her daughter "did not take care of herself" and "did not make herself respected": "No se cuidó, no se dio a respetar" (doc X, p.22). And that she should wait, that perhaps, then her daughter would return: "Uy, señora, déjela, a lo mejor luego regresa" (doc X, p.18).

The prejudices and victim blaming myth on the part of the authorities reach such a degree of sexism towards the victim that it is reflected in the comments towards the victims' relatives. As officials from the Public Ministry suggested to a mother that she should not worry about the disappearance of her daughter because she was going to return soon and "even with a prize", inferring that she would return pregnant: "De qué se preocupan, va a regresar pronto. ¡Hasta con premio!" (doc X, p.49).

The last two testimonies analyzed develop in the same sense. Misogynistic comments based on victim blaming and cultural expressions explained in the theoretical part of this work on what Gaspar de Alba calls "The Three Marys Syndrome" in social patriarchal discourse:

The experienced of a mother before Public Ministry authorities in Tecámac who, when reporting the disappearance of her 18-year-old daughter, the officers told her: "Do you know that your daughter has sexual relations with her boyfriend?", and made comments such as "It seems that your daughter has come to smoke marijuana "and" If your daughter were so good, we would have to look for her in the churches" (doc X, p.122). Or the experience of an aunt in Ecatepec when reporting the disappearance of her 13-year-old niece: "For the agents, the main line of investigation was the usual one: the victim left on her own accord" (doc X, p.167).

These comments are not only absolutely disrespectful and derogatory to the human dignity of girls and women, they also hide the structural misogynistic violence and patriarchal discourse towards women and lack of gender perspective of the officers in the institutions.

Lastly, the testimonies of the victims' relatives were analyzed to perceive the degree of occurrence of such patterns of institutional violence already discussed. As shown below.

4.2.1. Degree of occurrence of patterns of institutional violence towards victims' relatives

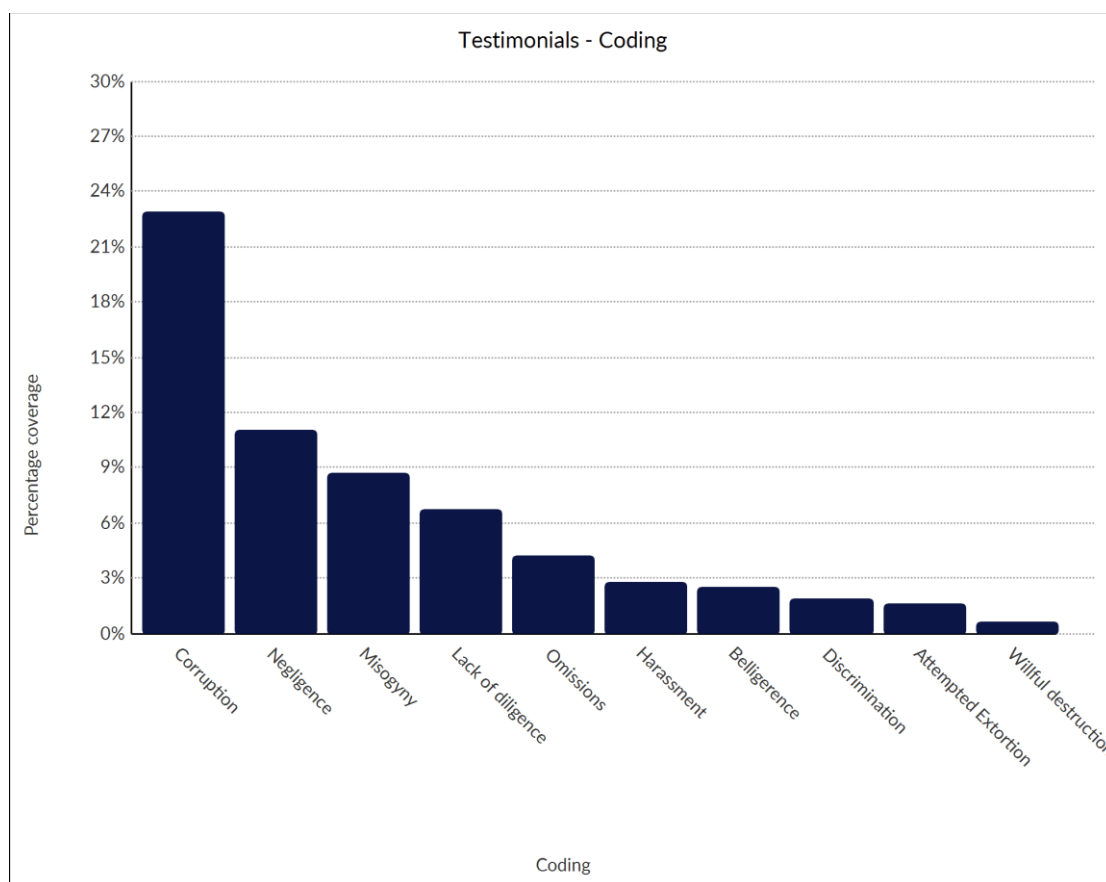


Figure 9. Created by the author via NVivo on the occurrence of patterns of institutional violence towards relatives of victims of femicide in Estado de México based on the testimonials used in this work for coding processes.

The graph shows the patterns of institutional violence by degree of occurrence manifested in the testimonies of the victims' relatives used for this work. The percentages were systematically elaborated by NVivo based on the number of excerpts analyzed and the number of clustered words covered that were related to the patterns. The rest of the percentages not shown in the graph are related to clustered words associated to other types of sentiments identified in the extracts, such as the emotional impacts of femicide on families, so they were not concerned for the construction of this graph focused only in patterns of institutional violence by the authorities towards family members. But they will be addressed later.

One can see in the graph that the pattern with the highest degree of occurrence mentioned in the testimonies is related to acts of corruption followed by the negligence and misogyny patterns. Consecutively, the patterns of lack of diligence, omissions, harassment, belligerence, discrimination, attempted extortion, and willful destruction of evidence.

4.3. What institutions are involved in these patterns playing a role in state impunity?

The institutional actors involved in the various acts of institutional violence directed against the families of the victims are multiple. As previously discussed in the analysis of the patterns, the institutions identified in the testimonies of the family members were the following:

- a. Institutional actors involved in institutional violence patterns towards victims' relatives

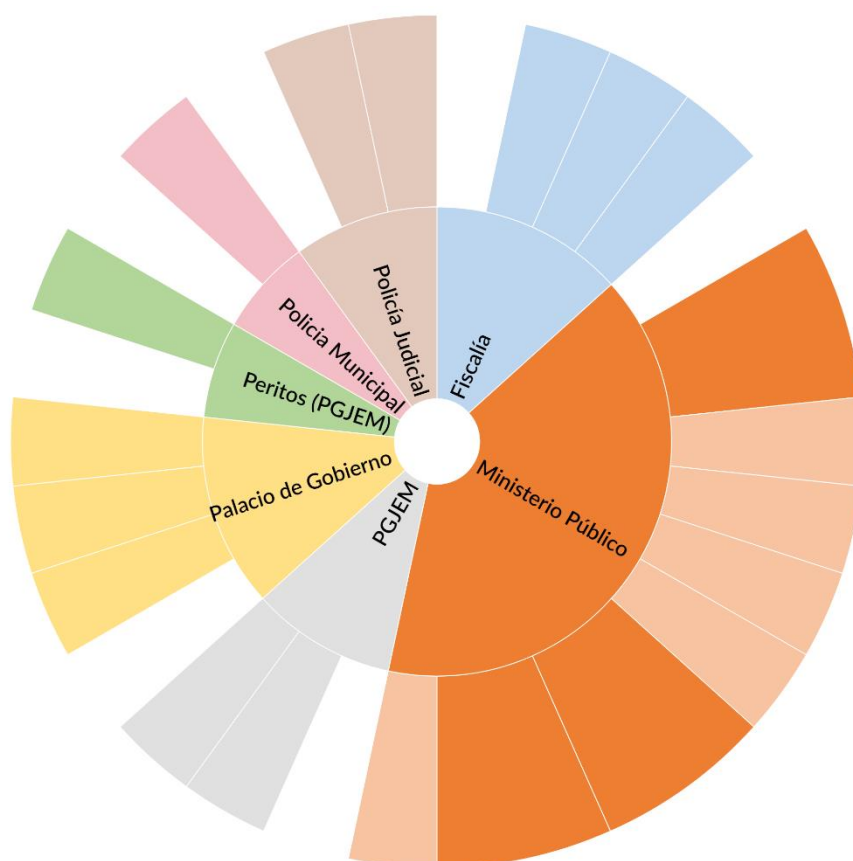


Figure 10. Created by the author via NVivo on the institutional actors involved in institutional violence patterns towards victims' relatives in Estado de México.

One can see that the institution with the highest mention in the testimonies regarding acts of institutional violence is the Public Ministry (Ministerio Público), shown in orange. Followed by the Prosecutor's Office (Fiscalía), highlighted in blue. Subsequently, the Government Palace (Palacio de Gobierno), displayed in yellow. The Judicial Police (Policía Judicial), indicated in brown. The Attorney General's Office of Estado de México (PGJEM), presented in gray. The experts within that same institution (Peritos), exhibited in green. And lastly, the Municipal Police (Policía Municipal), manifested in pink.

The graph was elaborated in NVivo based on the patterns created and their respective clustered words covered with a focus on the places where such acts were committed. It does not mean that they are the only institutions involved in violent acts against victims' relatives in Estado de México, but rather those that were identified in the testimonies used in this work.

Likewise, the types of patterns present in each of the aforementioned institutions were analyzed respectively, based on the acts manifested in the testimonies of the victims' relatives.

Patterns identified in the Public Ministry (Ministerio Público)



Figure 11. Created by the author via NVivo on the patterns of institutional violence towards victims' relatives within the Public Ministry in Estado de México.

The graph shows the patterns of institutional violence towards relatives of victims identified in the testimonies and the most incurred patterns are highlighted in greater color.

Patterns identified in the Prosecutor's Office (Fiscalía)

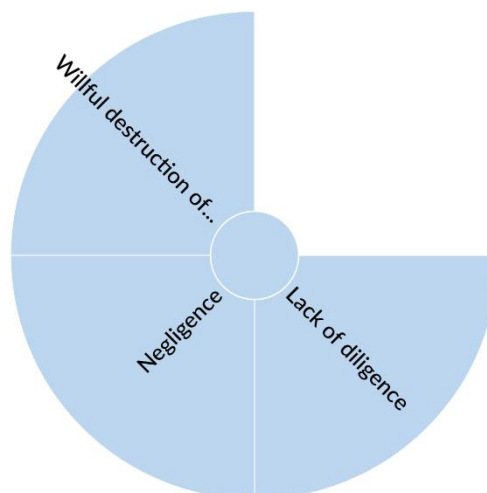


Figure 12. Created by the author via NVivo on the patterns of institutional violence towards victims' relatives within the Prosecutor's Office in Estado de México.

The graph shows the patterns of institutional violence towards victims' relatives identified in the Prosecutor's Office based on the experiences of the relatives.

Patterns identified in the Government Palace (Palacio de Gobierno)

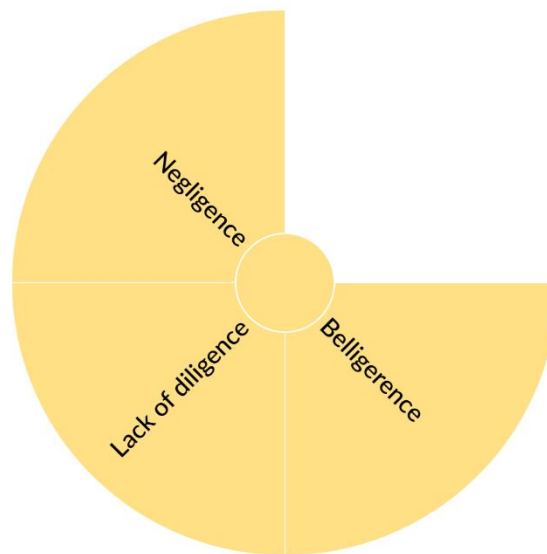


Figure 13. Created by the author via NVivo on the patterns of institutional violence towards victims' relatives within the Government Palace in Estado de México.

The graph shows the patterns of institutional violence towards victims' relatives identified in the Government Palace based on the testimonies of the relatives.

Patterns identified in the Judicial Police (Policía Judicial)

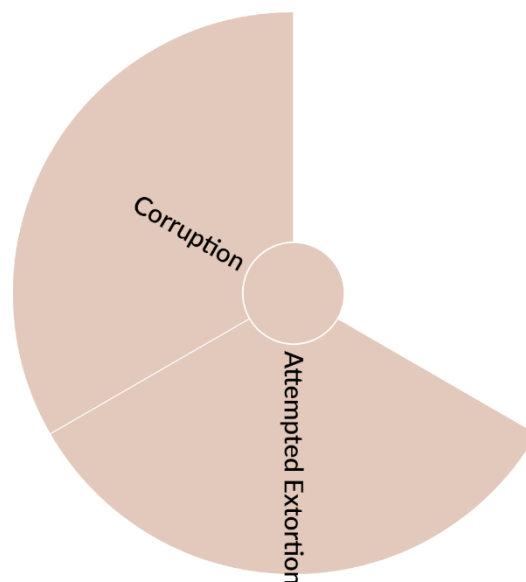


Figure 14. Created by the author via NVivo on the patterns of institutional violence towards victims' relatives within the Judicial Police in Estado de México.

The graph shows the patterns of institutional violence towards victims' relatives identified in the Judicial Police based on the testimonies of the relatives.

Patterns identified in the Attorney General's Office of Estado de México (PGJEM)

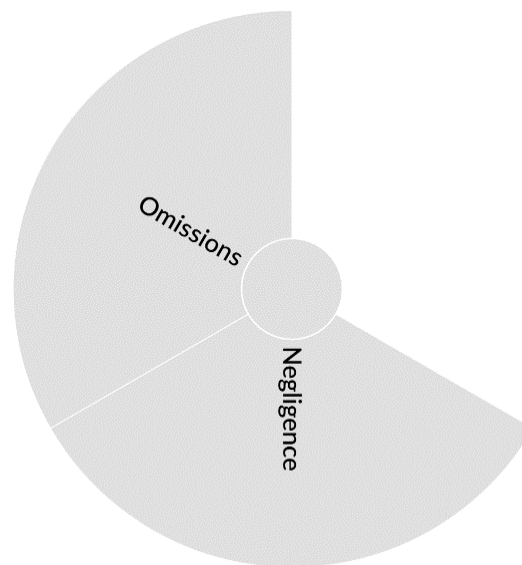


Figure 15. Created by the author via NVivo on the patterns of institutional violence towards victims' relatives within the Attorney General's Office of Estado de México.

The graph shows the patterns of institutional violence towards victims' relatives identified in the PGJEM based on the testimonies of the relatives.

Patterns conducted by Experts (Peritos) of the Attorney General's Office of Estado de México (PGJEM)

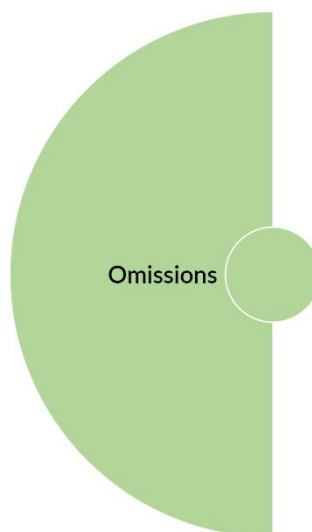


Figure 16. Created by the author via NVivo on the patterns of institutional violence towards victims' relatives by Experts in the Attorney General's Office of Estado de México.

The graph shows the only pattern of institutional violence towards victims' relatives identified in the testimonies conducted by experts of the PGJEM.

Patterns identified in the Municipal Police (Policía Municipal)

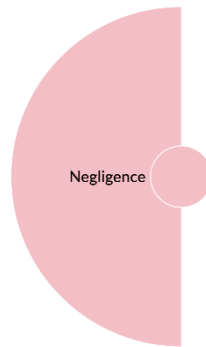


Figure 17. Created by the author via NVivo on the patterns of institutional violence towards victims' relatives within the Municipal Police in Estado de México.

The graph shows the only pattern of institutional violence towards victims' relatives identified in the testimonies conducted by officers of the Municipal Police.

As already visualized, the graphs show the patterns of institutional violence identified in each of the institutions mentioned by the victims' families in their testimonies.

One can see that the patterns are not manifested in the same way in all the institutions, but that they vary in some, and are accentuated in others. Likewise, it is worth mentioning that patterns can intersect with each other within the institutions, that is to say, certain acts committed by officials within an institution can present more than one pattern in a single act. As exemplified in the testimony of two sisters about their experience before Public Ministry authorities on the feminicides of her mother, they testified with the following: " They were cursing each other in front of us. He (MP official) was interviewing me and said: 'no, but that is not relevant'. My mother's investigation folder went through about 5 different MPs in Barrientos. One of them, due to negligence, another because he asked us for money and another because of the harassment with my sister" (doc V, 4:06-4:48). Acts of belligerence, omissions, negligence, corruption and harassment can be identified in this one single experience.

Nonetheless, the graphs are limited to the acts experienced in said institutions by the victims' relatives analyzed in this work. They do not represent a generalization of all acts of impunity, institutional violence and experiences of family members. But the specific experiences examined in this work. Therefore, the experiences of other family members in Estado de México may vary or coincide with these pattern analysis.

Nor is it intended to argue in this work that all institutions with femicide coverage commit said patterns, but rather to point out the actions of certain officers within said institutions. Thus, as institutions in charge of these officers, they should take into account their officers' acts to make changes and guarantee justice to the victims' families.

4.4. How have the families of the victims experienced the impacts of femicide and state impunity in the 2000s?

The experiences of the families of the victims manifested in the testimonies also allowed to identify how the families experienced the femicide of the victims, the impacts they have on them and the sentiments on the phenomenon in addition to the subsequent ordeal they have faced before state authorities in their search for justice. In this sense, the excerpts analyzed allowed coding these experiences as shown in the following table.

a. Impacts of femicide and state impunity on the families of the victims

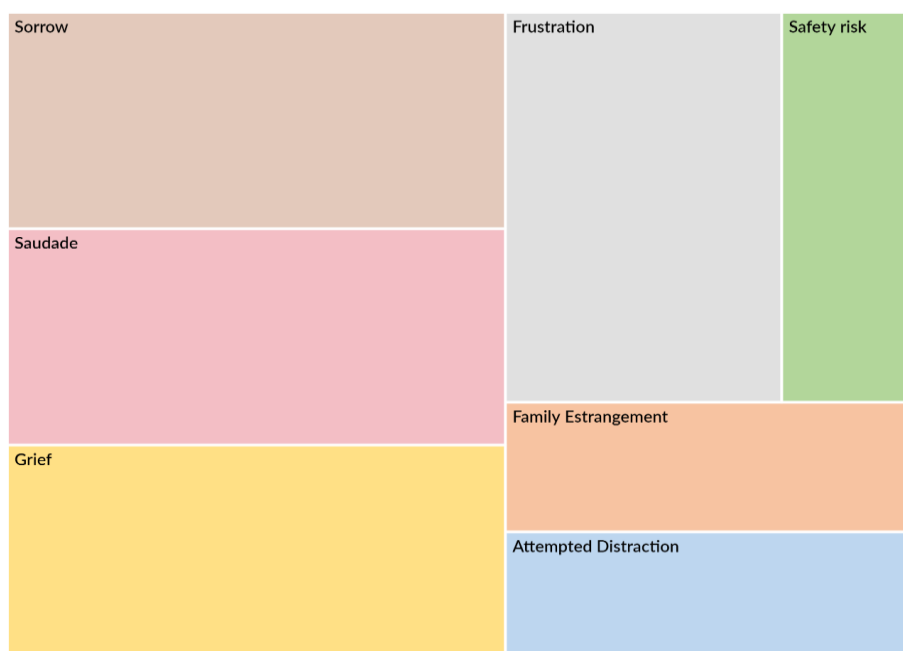


Figure 18. Created by the author via NVivo on the impacts of femicide and state impunity on the families of the victims in Estado de México.

The table shows the emotional impacts of femicide on the families of the victims, based on the testimonials used in this work. It does not represent a generalization or exclusivity of impacts, but the specific ones identified in the testimonies through the author's interpretation.

Grief and sorrow

The sentiments expressed in all the testimonials are associated with expressions from grief and sorrow, to manifestations of distress, suffering and sadness in the relatives of the victims.

As expressed by an aunt regarding the femicide of her four-year-old niece. The life of the relatives is no longer the same. They can no longer continue in the same way, because as she expressed "sometimes you do not feel like doing anything": "Es muy difícil. De repente me dicen: 'es que tienes que trabajar, tienes que continuar con tu vida'. Ya no es lo mismo. Ya no se puede seguir igual, porque pues de repente no dan ganas de hacer nada" (doc IV, 1:29-1:55).

Saudade

Another expression present in all the testimonial experiences is the feeling of *saudade*. Term that was taken by the author of the Portuguese language to refer to an emotional state of nostalgic and melancholic longing for a loved one who is absent.

This sentiment can be witnessed in the experience of a mother about the feminicide of her twenty-eight-year-old daughter in Nezahualcóyotl. She testifies that she misses her daughter very much and that, yet she is grateful that she has not fallen into depression despite the loss: “Le he dado gracias a Dios de que no me ha dado depresión. Luego me pongo a llorar. Extraño mucho a mi hija. Mucho.” (doc III, 2:42-2:52).

Another mother shared her experience about the feminicide of her sixteen-year-old daughter in Tultitlán. And expressed that her life has changed a lot since the loss of her. That her daughter is missing from the whole family. That they miss her for the love she gave them. In the mother’s words: “now she is far from us, in heaven”: “Nos ha cambiado bastante (la vida). Nos hace falta, porque ella nos apapachaba, nos abrazaba. Ahora la tenemos lejos, en el cielo.” (doc XIX, p.2618;2622).

Attempted Distraction

Some family members have tried to cope with the loss through activities that distract them at times of grief. As expressed by a mother who stated that after the feminicide of her twenty-year-old daughter in Nezahualcóyotl, she dedicated herself to work, because it is what distracts her every day and because of the victim's son, her grandson, who is now under her guardianship: “Me dediqué a trabajar. Porque pues la vida sigue y el niño, pues ya lo tenía en la escuela y ya. Sí, mi vida es trabajar, es lo que me distrae.” (doc III, 1:33-1:45).

The impacts of feminicide not only affect the parents of the victims but also their children and the entire family as expressed by a mother about the feminicide of her nineteen-year-old daughter in Chimalhuacán. The mother shares that during the first months after the feminicide of her daughter, her granddaughter used to wake up at night crying and asking for her mother. Therefore, the grandmother decided to hide the photographs, clothes and anything that reminded her of her daughter, to distract her granddaughter. The mother assures that they suffered very much as parents, but seeing that her granddaughter suffered more, she tried to overcome it to raise her granddaughter:

“Al principio mi nieta se despertaba en la noche, llorando, y preguntaba por su mamá. Escondimos sus fotografías y sus cosas; guardamos su ropa, sus zapatos, sus peluches, cualquier cosa que se la recordara. Sufrí bastante, pero veía que la niña sufría más. Hice a un lado mi dolor, traté de superarlo para que no lo resintiera.” (doc XIX, p. 1833).

Family Estrangement

The impacts of femicide on some families of the victims have manifested in family estrangement. In this sense, a mother shared her experience in this regard and expressed that after the femicide of her six-year-old daughter in Tlalnepantla, the whole family is emotionally unwell and that her family members moved away from each other. In the other children of her, siblings of the victim, remained a wound. They have claimed to her that by focusing only on the femicide of her sister, they felt that she did not attend to them: “Todos estamos emocionalmente mal, porque no hemos sacado todo esto de una manera humana. La familia se alejó. En los hijos queda huella. Me han dicho: ‘por atender esto no me atendiste a mí’.” (doc XIX, p. 3258;3265).

Safety risk

Other experiences demonstrate that some relatives of the victims have faced risks to their integrity and personal safety after filing their complaint for the femicide of the victims. In this sense, an aunt shared that after filing the complaint for the femicide of her niece, things have happened to her that threaten her integrity and she has risked many others in seeking justice. That some people have tried to carry her in cars and others have chased her in the streets: “Me he arriesgado a muchas cosas. A partir de ese momento me han pasado muchas cosas...Me han intentado llevar en carros, me han perseguido.” (doc IV, 3:45-3:53;2:33-2:40).

Due to these attacks, the authority provided her with protection measures, but she claims that they have not supported her with anything else, not even with psychological assistance: “Apoyo, pues ninguno. Si me han apoyado (Palacio) con medidas de protección, porque varia gente me ha agredido. Pero hasta ahí.” (doc IV, 2:20-2:32).

Despite these risks to her safety, the aunt states that she does not care what she has had to go through in her search for justice, because she remains firm until justice is achieved for her niece: “Pero no importa, yo sigo aquí y hasta que se logre la justicia.” (doc IV, 3:55-4:00).

Frustration

A final sentiment manifested in the testimonies is related to expressions of frustration by the victims' families at not receiving justice from authorities. As manifested in the statements of a mother: "It is not fair not to know what happened to my daughter" (doc III, 2:52-3:12).

All of them demand a common claim: justice. “Quiero justicia. Saber quién lo hizo, por qué lo hizo. Porque mi hija no se merecía esa muerte.” (doc III, 5:36-5:44).

“Siempre hemos tratado de que se haga justicia; ese pedir y pedir y exigir justicia es para que otras mujeres no mueran. Independientemente de lo que hagamos mi hija nunca volverá, pero quiero que el hombre que la mató no mate a otra mujer.” (doc XIX, p.190).

4.5. How have the families of the victims experienced femicide geographically in Estado de México during the 2000s?

The femicidal violence in Estado de México is not manifested homogeneously throughout the state, but is accentuated in urban areas, particularly in municipalities in the eastern zone of the entity, bordering Mexico City. This is concluded based on the testimonies of the families of the victims analyzed in this work. And shown below.

Municipalities of Estado de México where the feminicides analyzed in this work occurred

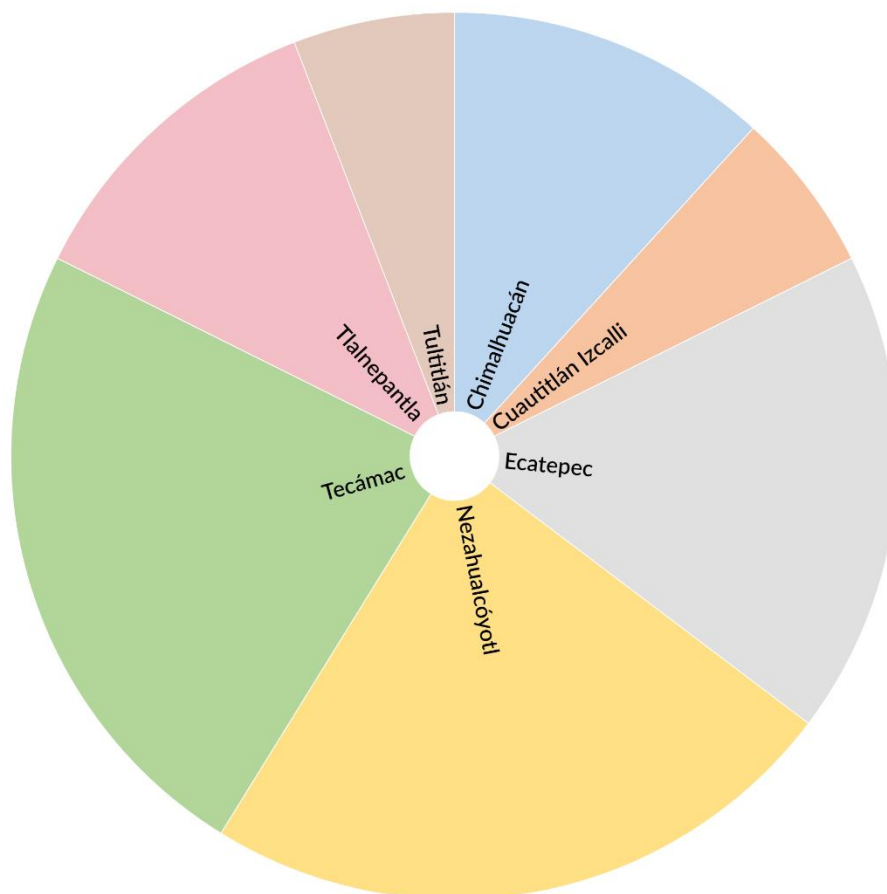


Figure 19. Created by the author via NVivo on the municipalities of Estado de México where the feminicides analyzed in this work occurred based on the victims' relatives testimonies.

It can be seen in the graph that the municipality where most of the feminicides occurred was Nezahualcóyotl, shown in yellow. Four of the seventeen cases of femicide analyzed in this work occurred in this entity. The second municipality was Tecámac (green), mentioned in four testimonials. The third was Ecatepec (gray), referred in three testimonies. The fourth was Tlalhepantla (pink), present in two testimonies. The fifth was Chimalhuacán (blue), named in two testimonies. The sixth was Cuautitlán (orange), displayed in one testimony. The seventh was Tultitlán (brown), indicated in one testimony. They do not represent exclusive municipalities of femicidal violence, but those manifested in the seventeen testimonials.

a. Geopolitical representation of the feminicides in Estado de México

In order to geographically locate the feminicides analyzed in the seventeen testimonials of victims' relatives obtained in this work, the following maps were elaborated.

Geopolitical map of Estado de México

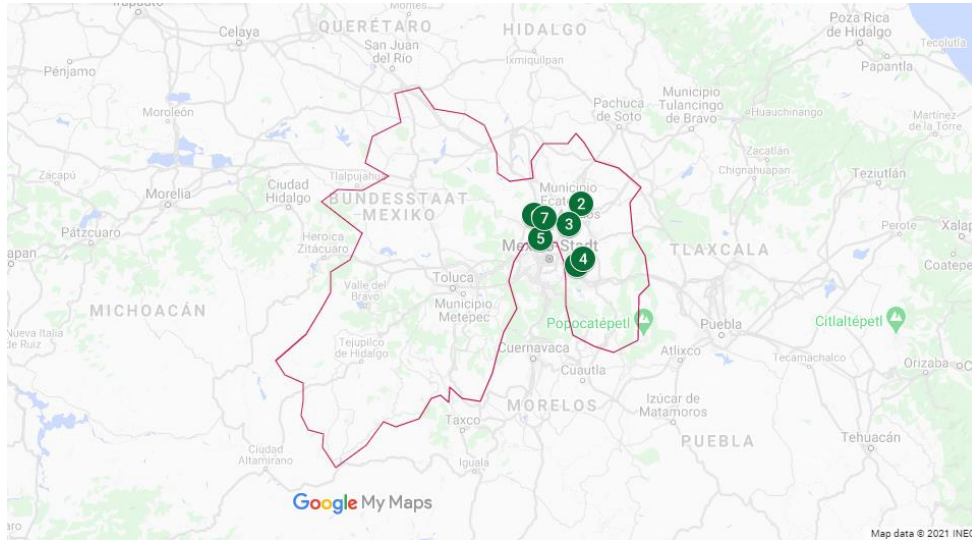


Figure 20. Created by the author via Google Maps on the geopolitical map of Estado de México and the localization of the feminicides analyzed in this work.

One can see on the map the geographic limits of Estado de México outlined in purple and the municipalities where the feminicides occurred in numbered green circles. All located in the eastern part of the state. Bordering the north and south eastern areas of Mexico City.

Geopolitical map of Estado de México by regional zones

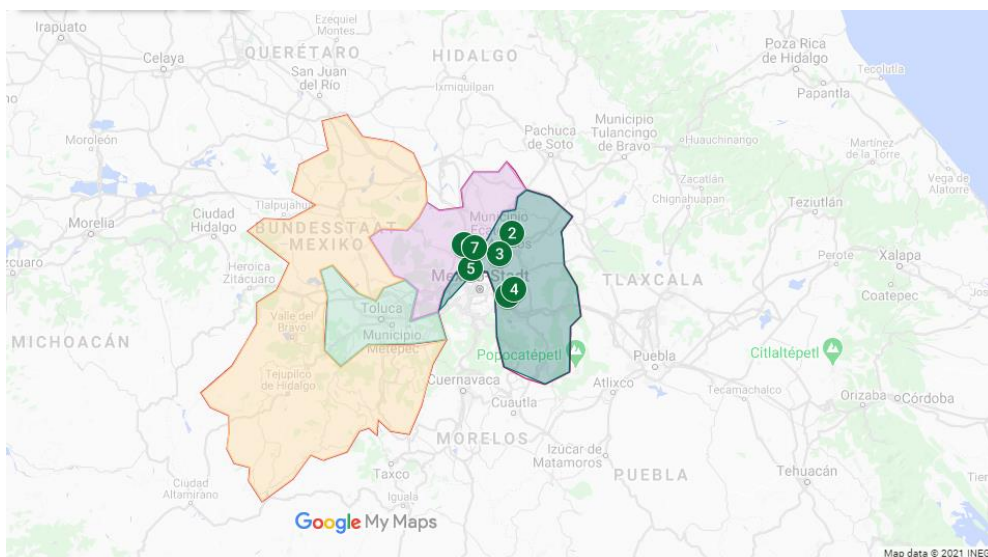


Figure 21. Created by the author via Google Maps on the geopolitical map of Estado de México by regional zones and the localization of the feminicides analyzed in this work.

The map shows the regional division of the state. In orange the western zone, in green the central zone, in purple the metropolitan zone: ZMVM Poniente and in blue the eastern zone.

Geopolitical map of Estado de México by metropolitan areas

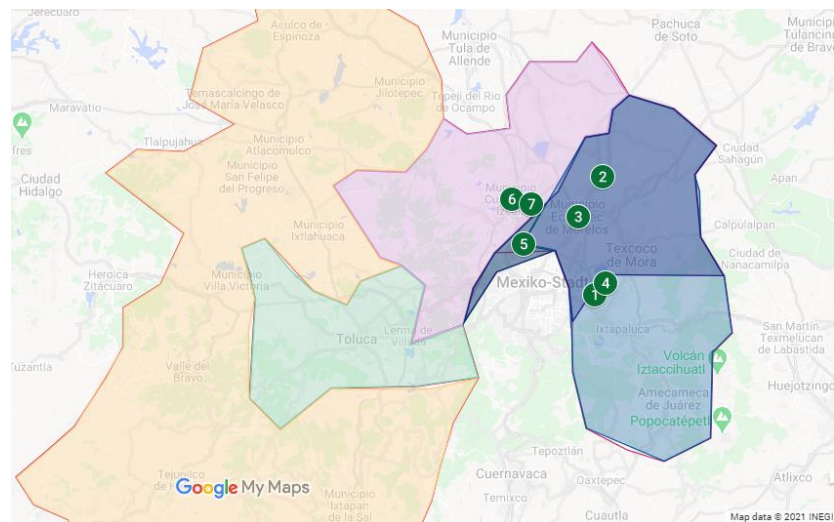


Figure 22. Created by the author via Google Maps on the geopolitical map of Estado de México by metropolitan areas and the localization of the feminicides analyzed in this work.

One can see in this map the previous division by regional zones manifested in metropolitan areas of the state. The western zone (orange) represents the rural zone of Estado de México which consists of 53 municipalities. The central zone (green) represents the ZMVT - Metropolitan Area of Valle de Toluca with 13 municipalities. The ‘poniente’ zone (purple) represents the ZMVM Poniente – Metropolitan Area of Valle de México Poniente with 25 municipalities. Lastly, the eastern zone (blue) represents the ZMVM Oriente – Metropolitan Area of Valle de México Oriente with 34 municipalities.

Therefore, one can see that the feminicides analyzed in this work do not occur in rural or central areas of the state, but in municipalities of the eastern zone, particularly in the ones of the ZMVM Poniente/Oriente in the Valley of Mexico.

Geopolitical map of the eastern zone of Estado de México

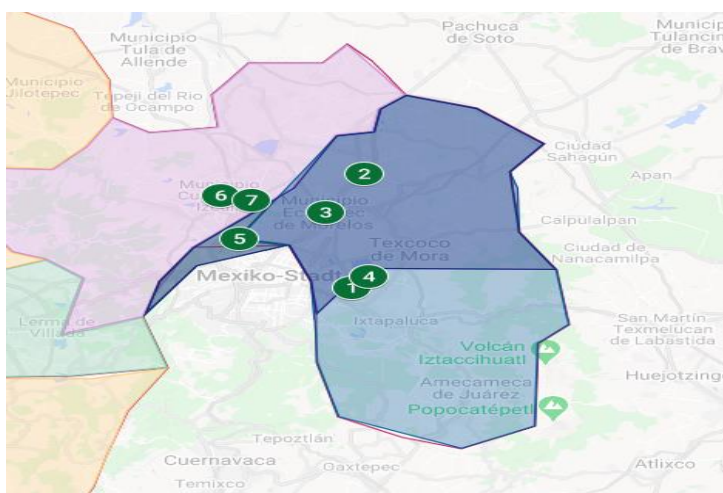


Figure 23. Created by the author via Google Maps on the geopolitical map of the eastern zone of Estado de México with localization of the feminicides analyzed in this work.

The figure displays the northeast zone- NE (blue/purple) and southeast zone- SE (light blue) of Estado de México. Therefore, it can be seen that all of the feminicides analyzed in this work occurred in the eastern zone of the state (ZMVM Poniente/Oriente), and most of them in the northeast area (NE).

Geopolitical map of the municipalities in Estado de México with occurrence of feminicides

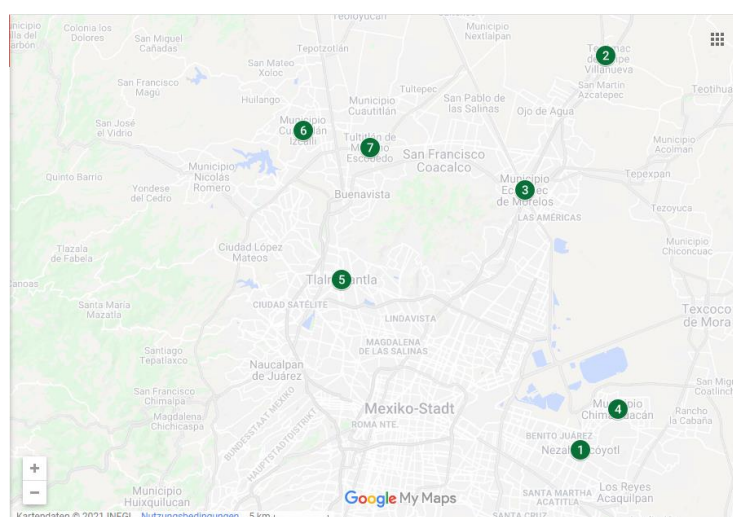


Figure 24. Created by the author via Google Maps on the municipalities in Estado de México with occurrence of feminicide based on the testimonials analyzed in this work.

The map shows the location of the municipalities where the feminicides analyzed in this work occurred. The townships are numbered in green circles in chronological order based on the number of feminicides that occurred in each of them, out of the seventeen cases analyzed in this work through the victims' relatives testimonies. In that sense, their location is as follows.

Circle Number	Municipality	Registered testimonials
1	Nezahualcóyotl	4
2	Tecámac	4
3	Ecatepec	3
4	Chimalhuacán	2
5	Tlalnepantla	2
6	Cuautitlán Izcalli	1
7	Tultitlán	1

Figure 25. Created by the author for geographical localization analysis on the municipalities of the feminicides mentioned in the seventeen testimonies analyzed in this work.

One can conclude that they are located in the eastern part of Estado de México, in the two urban areas of the Valley of Mexico (ZMVM Poniente/Oriente) and bordering the NE and SE of Mexico City. Nonetheless, the geopolitical analysis in this section does not represent a generalization or exclusivity of the geographic occurrence of feminicides in Estado de México. But rather the specific municipalities that were mentioned in the testimonies of relatives of the victims that were obtained for this work. Therefore, its scope is limited for analytical purposes of this paper based on the sources reached. A broad perspective on other municipalities in Estado de México with occurrence of feminicide was discussed in the theoretical part of this work in the section on georeferenced spatial behavior of feminicidal violence.

5. Results

“Daría mi vida hasta encontrarte.
Y eso es justo lo que vamos a hacer: encontrar.
La respuesta que sea siempre va a ser: hasta encontrarte y justicia.
Saber qué pasó, cómo pasó y cuándo pasó.”
*Statement of a mother on the femicide of her 18-year-old daughter
in the municipality of Tecámac, Estado de México in 2014.*
(Carrión 2018, p.153).

This section shows the results of the data analysis in an attempt to relate them to the theoretical literature of this work.

First, the analysis of the data has shown that there are certain patterns related to *institutional violence* towards the victims and their relatives when seeking justice. Such violence therefore constitutes an expression of *feminicidal violence*, as conceptualized by Marcela Lagarde. These patterns are carried out in state institutions by representatives of the state, institutional authorities and state officials, thus ending in *state impunity*, an element also elaborated by Lagarde within the feminicidal violence conception.

Second, the analysis of the testimonies of the victims' relatives revealed that such patterns that the relatives have experienced are manifested in various forms of corruption, negligence, misogyny, lack of diligence, omissions, harassment, belligerence, discrimination, attempted extortion and willful destruction of evidence. This has been carried out by various state authorities, starting with officials of the Public Ministry, as the first institution to which relatives turn up to file the complaint, but also officials of the Judicial and Municipal Police, and agents of the Prosecutor's Office and the Attorney General's Office of Estado de México.

Third, the empirical findings of this work elaborated through the framework of patterns and its relationship with the concepts of institutional violence and state impunity, and therefore with feminicidal violence, exemplifies in a certain way the *modus operandi* of the *institutionalization of impunity* towards femicide that Lucía Melgar has argued which shows the corruption and negligence of state officials within state instances when carrying out their tasks to the detriment of family members of the victims and protected by lack of punishment.

Fourth, through the experiences of the victims' families, one can notice the abuse of power of the state institutions exercised towards the relatives, taking advantage of their few economic means, and benefiting from their pain and grief to commit such acts which exemplifies Julia Monárrez Fragoso's argument on *the suffering of the other*.

Such suffering can also be perceived in the impacts of feminicide on the victims' relatives, manifested in grief and sorrow sentiments, and sometimes in family estrangement and risks to the safety and integrity of the families after filing the feminicide complaint in addition to their experiences on the inadequate investigation of the cases.

For all the above, feminicides are experienced as *state crimes* by the victims' families and thus conceptualized by Lagarde.

The findings also revealed the misogyny and machismo (sexism) in the officials of state institutions, through the replication of the myths of *victim blaming* and *public women* by discrediting and putting the blame on the victims and later on their families for their fates, excusing the perpetrator and justifying his violence towards the victim. These elements prove the arguments of Melissa Wright on these two myths being culturally internalized and blaming the victims for their own violent deaths for have been developing in public space or by arguing that they asked for it.

Which also reveals the omnipresence of the patriarchal social discourse argued by Gaspar de Alba. Through which one can observe that there are certain elements in Mexican culture built on the basis of religious archetypes expanded in the collective imagination about the patriarchal notions of "good" or "bad" women. In this sense, one can see the manifestation of the Tres-Mariás-Syndrome conceptualized by Gaspar, and exemplified in official statements towards the victims' families such as:

"If your daughter were so good, we would have to look for her in the churches."

"It seems that your daughter has smoked marijuana."

"Do you know that your daughter has sexual relations with her boyfriend?"

(doc X, p.122).

Hence, revealing said syndrome and patriarchal social discourse, as well as placing the blame on the victim and their families, where the beneficiary remains to be the perpetrator, sheltered from culture and the patriarchal system.

On the other hand, the bodies of the female victims found in public or private spaces (which in most of the cases in this work related to intimate feminicides, but not exclusively), show notions of control and sovereignty that the perpetrator believes to have on the victim. Which exemplifies Rita Segato's argument about the female body as a means of control by making use of what she calls the *pedagogy of cruelty*.

On the other hand, one can see that the majority of the victims were found in contexts of poverty or marginalization. Which shows the intersectional susceptibility to which women are exposed, and particularly exacerbated in feminicide.

The above also exemplifies Rosa-Linda Frago's argument about the *racialized woman* and the myth of the *disposable bodies* around her as the main affected subjects of femicide within the power structures through which an unequal classification of women is constructed. (See part two). This needs to be considered with the link that it has with the colonization processes in the continent as argued by Mariana Berlanga. That in the case of Mexico, it is also manifested in low levels of education, employment and healthcare that increase the vulnerability of women.

Furthermore, the feminicides analyzed in this work exemplify the typologies of violence developed by Galtung, directed towards women—the visible *direct violence* committed against the victim, which culminates in the femicide.

Second, the *structural violence* manifested through political and economic oppression of women and the state impunity and institutional violence that surround femicide.

Third, the *cultural violence* that surrounds the previous ones and that manifests itself in a patriarchal system that imposes power based on a socialization of gender. Through the exacerbation of a hegemonic masculinity. That, as previously discussed, is manifested by various means such as the Tres-Marías-Syndrome, the myths of public women, victim blaming, disposable bodies, racialization of women, misogynistic discourses, symbolic and language violence, among others. All are invisible forms of violence.

The culmination of all the aforementioned elements, can be seen in the argument stated by Ana Lau Jaiven (academic at UAM-X) in the *Foro Reflexiones Actuales Sobre Femicidio*:

“El sistema y la cultura crean en conjunto esos feminicidios, debido a que la misoginia se convierte en corrupción, encubrimiento e impunidad en el caso de los asesinatos de mujeres. Hay que subrayar que el gobierno federal y las entidades que lo conforman se han convertido en cómplices de lo que sucede ya que no han dado resultados y culpan a las víctimas de lo que pasa, recurren a frases discriminatorias y groseras donde hacen hincapié de que por haber salido de sus hogares o tratado mal al homicida las mujeres son vejadas, falsean las causas que provocan los feminicidios y niegan sus consecuencias.” (doc I, 29:50-30:42).

This statement summarizes the arguments developed so far, on the one hand it starts relating the feminicides with culture and the patriarchal system and highlights that misogyny turns into corruption, cover-up, and impunity. Which was discussed in the discussions on the Tres-Marías-Syndrome and patriarchal social discourse and furtherly exemplified in the findings of through the framework of patterns of institutional violence and state impunity.

Jaiven further develops that the federal government and federal entities have become accomplices of femicide crimes as they have not yielded results and on the contrary blame the victims for their own deaths, resort to discriminatory and rude phrases to emphasize that what happened to them was because they were out of their homes or because they mistreated the murder. They humiliate women. It relates also to structural and cultural violence behind femicide and violence against women.

Lastly, she states that the authorities falsify the causes of feminicides and deny their consequences. This was also addressed in the findings through the patterns of institutional violence in acts such as willful destruction of evidence, omissions, negligence, corruption and so forth while exemplifying the institutionalization of impunity argued by Melgar.

Thus, one could embrace the feminist proposal of Alma Sánchez on the need to guarantee the exercise of full citizenship for women. She argues that in Estado de México the possibility of women being considered subjects of law is still an unattainable project, which can be seen in the growth of feminicides in the entity in the last two decades (Sánchez Olvera 2009).

Additionally, she argues that feminicides in Mexico are due to four factors: patriarchal culture, impunity, stigmatization of the victims by the authorities and institutional violence (Sánchez Olvera 2009, 52). All of them are already discussed in this work.

And as Sánchez Olvera claims:

“On femicide in Estado de México, very few have raised their voices to remember that they were Mexican, with the right to live undisturbed, to be protected by the law.” (Sánchez Olvera 2009, 53).

Finally, the geopolitical maps elaborated in this paper allow to support the arguments of some scholars such as Padgett that argue that femicidal violence in the state is not focalized but as demonstrated in this work concentrated in the eastern part of Estado de México, particularly in the municipalities neighboring Mexico City.

Which leads us to consider the concepts of spatial turn and portals of globalization in the field of Global Studies and developed in the text by Middell and Naumann. As one can see that globalization processes have also reached Estado de Mexico through neoliberal policies and global interconnectedness through the neighboring geographic location of Estado de México to Mexico City which could be considered a portal of globalization, being a global city and the capital of Mexico influencing in the growth and urbanization of Estado de Mexico.

As seen in the findings all the feminicides analyzed presented a geographical concentration of violence in the municipalities bordering Mexico City in the northeast and south east. Particularly in the areas of the Valle de México (ZMVM Poniente/Oriente).

The testimonies on the experiences of the victims' families were very enriching in revealing the acts of negligence, corruption, misogyny, institutional violence and so forth that state authorities have conducted towards the victims and their families and that the latter have faced during their process of seeking justice before a state system that favors impunity.

It also demonstrated the scope of a socio-cultural problem that, although exacerbated in certain states in the country, by affecting a single individual and a single woman, becomes a national problem and should be addressed as such without indifference or discredit, socially and institutionally.

On the other hand, the feeling of insecurity in women when making use of public and even private spaces could also be perceived in the testimonies of the victims' relatives.

As stated by one of the daughters of a victim of feminicide in Tlalnepantla:

“Para nada estamos seguras, nadie. Ni siquiera una niña, a cualquier edad te pasa. Nadie está exento. Nosotras creíamos que a lo mejor no pasaba, porque si no toca a tu familia el feminicidio, tú crees que no está pasando. Pero no es así.”⁴⁰ (doc V, 5:55-6:18).

“No sabes si ahorita sales, en la noche, a cualquier hora y los hombres por machismo, porque creen que pueden matar y porque saben que la ley no hace nada, lo hacen. Sin miedo a que haya represalias. Sin miedo a que haya justicia para las mujeres.”⁴¹ (doc V, 6:21-6:40).

These are powerful words that reflect the pain of the families of the victims, but also the sentiments of women collectively that the author shares and embraces analytically as well.

⁴⁰ Author's translation into English: “We are not sure at all, none. Not even a girl, at any age it happens to you. No one is exempt. We believed that maybe it was not happening, because if feminicide does not touch your family, you think it is not happening. But it is not like that.”

⁴¹ Author's translation into English: “You do not know if you go out right now, at night, at any time and the men out of machismo, because they think they can kill and because they know that the law does nothing, they do it. Without fear of retaliation. Without fear of justice for women.”

6. Conclusions

“Tenemos que cambiar, pero global, nosotros. Todos.

Porque esto en vez de parar está creciendo.”

*Statement of a daughter after the femicide of her mother
in the municipality of Tlalnepantla, Estado de México in 2013.
(doc V, 6:42-6:50).*

The violence and impunity surrounding the feminicides in Estado de México and nationally, show the failure of the state by being incapable of guaranteeing the fundamental human right of women to life and the lack of progress in promoting gender equality.

The feminicidal violence framed within gender violence in the state shows that women are still struggling to be considered people with rights, and citizens in the country.

Likewise, femicide and other forms of violence that are exercised by the state against women, frame the constant struggle in the country toward women's rights and particularly to live a life free of violence.

Meanwhile, the institutions and state authorities instead of seeking and serving justice in many cases act as accomplices of the perpetrators by attacking the dignity, safety, and rights of women.

Therefore, in this acclaimed democratic country, the transition to justice, on the first place towards the victims' families, but also through the eradication of violence and violence against women should be a priority. Nonetheless, as shown in this work through the testimonials of victims' relatives, there is still a long way to achieve it, which also calls into question the rule of law in the state.

In this sense, the absence of violence and therefore positive peace, requires not only the end of direct violence but also the absence of structural and cultural violence, as conceptualized by Galtung. That in the realm of this analysis on femicide it would be reflected in the end of all forms of violence against women by the perpetrator(s), but also by the absence of all forms of violence against women by the state, culture and society.

It was demonstrated that the impacts of femicide reach not only the victims, but also their whole families.

The spatial turn and portals of globalization concepts favored addressing the scope of the phenomenon by framing the spatial behavior of feminicidal violence in Estado de México where the eastern part of it comes to be the most affected one by the violence.

On the other hand, being feminicide an expression of gender violence that “arises and is formed in a society that teaches violence as the only option for an acceptable masculinity”, as stated by Lagarde (doc I, 1:04:07-1:05:02), one could argue about the need for new forms of masculinity, non-patriarchal masculinities. As well as the essentiality of teaching from feminist insights. And perspectives of gender (s) and diversity.

Finally, this work was elaborated based on the limited testimonies from relatives of victims that could be reached. Nonetheless, there are many experiences of relatives that have not been recorded and that would be enriching for further perspectives through untold stories about feminicidal violence.

This, in efforts to address feminicides from the perspectives of memory, truth, and justice that the victims and their families mainly deserve as well as society, to begin to transition to a culture of peace and full respect of women and gender equality.

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Appendix

Qualitative Data Collection

Document I. Foro Reflexiones Actuales sobre Feminicidio (CEIICH-UNAM)⁴².

Panel	Speaker	Time	Citation
Feminicidio. Pasado, presente y nuevos desafíos (22.08.2019)	Marcela Lagarde y de los Ríos	27:58-30:22	“Mucha gente cree que el feminicidio es de Ciudad Juárez, es parte de su identidad, es sólo Ciudad Juárez...era necesario primero, que se entendiera que no sólo pasa en Juárez. Otra, que no todos los feminicidios son idénticos...nosotras ya sabíamos que había diversos antecedentes, diversas maneras de culminar el proceso de violencia en una muerte violenta.”
		1:02:18-1:03:08	“Creamos la Ley General, como la gran disposición jurídica para ir desmontando las condiciones sociales, jurídico, políticas, etc., que conducen al feminicidio. Nosotras no hicimos solo una política de castigo...nosotras creamos una transformación institucional.”
		1:04:07-1:05:02	“Entonces mi definición plantea que el feminicidio surge formado por la sociedad que festeja la violencia a los hombres, enseña a los hombres a ser violentos y la violencia como única opción de una masculinidad aceptable y entonces pues tenemos que eliminar eso. Tenemos que eliminar esa formación de género en violencia que reciben los hombres en nuestro país. Los niños y las niñas también, no puede ser.”
Mesa 5. Narrativa de la violencia: entre pasado futuro. Ni un paso atrás (23.08.2019)	Ana Lau Jaiven	29:50-30:42	“El sistema y la cultura crean en conjunto esos feminicidios, debido a que la misoginia se convierte en corrupción, encubrimiento e impunidad en el caso de los asesinatos de mujeres. Hay que subrayar que el gobierno federal y las entidades que lo conforman se han convertido en cómplices de lo que sucede ya que no han dado resultados y culpan a las víctimas de lo que pasa, recurren a frases discriminatorias y groseras donde hacen hincapié de que por haber salido de sus hogares o tratado mal al homicida las mujeres son vejadas, falsean las causas que provocan los feminicidios y niegan sus consecuencias.”
Mesa 5. Narrativa de la violencia: entre pasado futuro. Ni un paso atrás (23.08.2019)	Lucía Melgar	45:32-45:58	“No se habla de la violencia institucional, no se habla de la violencia del Estado, no se habla de todo esto que se debía hablar antes, porque en Juárez, Atenco, Estado de México, se usó violencia estatal, no es nada más falta de voluntad política, es violencia institucional y es una política de muerte contra las mujeres.”
Mesa 6. Feminicidio. Casos, justicia y derecho (23.08.2019)	Andrea Medina	1:51:44-1:52:29	“Una de las características principales de la violencia feminicida es que tiene una correlación con la impunidad...con la impunidad del estado, pero también con la impunidad social.”

⁴² To see the digital archives, visit: CEIICH-UNAM. Foro Reflexiones Actuales sobre Feminicidio. Mesa 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=binVQNwIO2Q> (Accessed 22.10.2020) Duration: 5:03:45 h. + Mesa 5 and 6: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=08JtQ73JCZU> (Accessed 27.10.2020) Duration: 3:39:11 h.

Document II. Conversatorio Marcela Lagarde: Femicidio (FLACSO Ecuador)⁴³.

Panel	Speaker	Time	Citation
Femicidio (24.10.2015)	Marcela Lagarde y de los Ríos	31:17-32:23	“Hay una enorme tolerancia social a la violencia contra las mujeres y las niñas. La sociedad es culpable también. Es culpable el victimario, sí, pero la sociedad que es su nicho de vida donde es incentivado a violentar, a maltratar, a despreciar a las mujeres es culpable. Y es culpable el Estado...porque es tolerante a la violencia contra las mujeres y niñas. Tres órdenes de culpabilidad: la persona que quita la vida violentamente y luego la sociedad que lo incuba y el Estado que reproduce ese orden patriarcal.”

Document III. Documentary: Día de Muertos. *Primer Capítulo* (Voces de la Ausencia)⁴⁴.

Victim	Municipality	Year of murder	State Instance	Family member	Time	Testimonial Citation [Family Experience]
20-year-old (1)	Nezahualcóyotl (SE)	2018	Fiscalía/ Prosecutor's Office	Mother	1:33-1:45	“Me dediqué a trabajar. Porque pues la vida sigue y el niño, pues ya lo tenía en la escuela y ya. Sí, mi vida es trabajar, es lo que me distrae.” [Impact of femicide on the family]
					1:50-1:57	“Es que ellos (Fiscalía) me dijeron: - ‘lo tenemos que agarrar, pero pues esto va con calma, porque tenemos muchos casos, muchas carpetas’.” [Lack of diligence]
28-year-old (2)	Nezahualcóyotl (SE)	2018	-	Mother	2:42-3:12	“Le he dado gracias a Dios de que no me ha dado depresión. Luego me pongo a llorar. Extraño mucho a mi hija. Mucho...Y no se vale...el no saber qué fue lo que le pasó.” [Impact of femicide on the family]
					5:36-5:44	“Quiero justicia. Saber quién lo hizo, por qué lo hizo. Porque mi hija no se merecía esa muerte.” [Family claim]

⁴³ To see the digital archive, visit: FLACSO Ecuador. Conversatorio Marcela Lagarde: Femicidio. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f3jsrOQYVKE> (Accessed 18.01.2021) Duration: 1:17:06 h.

⁴⁴ To see the digital archive, visit: Voces de la Ausencia. Documental Día de Muertos. Primer Capítulo. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hDzdbxNNeVE&t=5s> (Accessed 6.03.2021) Duration: 7:04 min.

Document IV. Documentary: Día de Muertas. *Segundo Capítulo* (Voces de la Ausencia)⁴⁵.

Victim	Municipality	Year of murder	State Instance	Family member	Time	Testimonial Citation [Family Experience]
4-year-old (3)	Nezahualcóyotl (SE)	2017	Palacio de Gobierno/ Government Palace	Aunt	0:12-0:36	“En Palacio me dijeron que ya habían resuelto el caso...me interrogaron en una oficina. El trato fue malo. Las autoridades siempre hacen eso De hecho yo si tenía miedo de ir a preguntar porque no sabe uno con que se va a encontrar. Son muy agresivos, muy déspotas.” [Negligence + Belligerence]
					1:29-1:55	“Es muy difícil. De repente me dicen: - ‘no, es que tienes que trabajar, tienes que continuar con tu vida’. Ya no es lo mismo. Ya no se puede seguir igual...porque pues de repente no dan ganas de hacer nada.” [Impact of femicide on the family]
					2:20-2:40	“Apoyo, pues ninguno. Si me han apoyado (Palacio) con medidas de protección, porque varia gente me ha agredido. Pero hasta ahí. Me han intentado llevar en carros, me han perseguido.” [Family risks when reporting]
					3:02-3:23	“Si yo hubiera ido sola no me hubieran atendido, tal vez. Casi estoy segura. Porque ellos (Palacio) no volvieron a comunicarse conmigo a pesar de que me interrogaron y les di mis datos...no me volvieron a localizar.” [Lack of diligence]
					3:25-3:43	“‘Calceñas Rojas’ en Palacio era un tema que ya estaba cerrado. Que ya había aparecido la familia. Que ya habían reclamado el cuerpo. Pero no se había hecho justicia. O al menos ellos no decían si había detenidos en ese caso, nada, nada.” [Negligence]
					3:44-4:00	“Me he arriesgado a muchas cosas. A partir de ese momento me han pasado muchas cosas. Pero no importa, yo sigo aquí y hasta que se logre la justicia.” [Family risks + Family claim]

⁴⁵ To see the digital archive, visit: Voces de la Ausencia. Documental Día de Muertas. Segundo Capítulo. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r2hbg4C9rI0> (Accessed 6.03.2021) Duration: 8:33 min.

Document V. Documentary: Día de Muertos. *Tercer Capítulo* (Voces de la Ausencia)⁴⁶.

Victim	Municipality	Year of murder	State Instance	Family member	Time	Testimonial Citation [Family Experience]
43-year-old (4)	Tlalnepantla (NE)	2013	Ministerio Público/ Public Ministry + Fiscalía/ Prosecutor's Office	Daughters	3:37-4:05	“Hubo acoso por parte de los MP's hacia mi hermana. Incluso la primera vez que fuimos a dar nuestra entrevista de lo que nosotras teníamos conocimiento de que había pasado ese día, uno de ellos incluso me interrumpió y me dice: - 'oye, pero ¿tienes novio?'. Y fue como: - 'yo no vengo a hablarte de mi vida, vengo a hablarte de algo que para mí ha sido lo peor'...Incluso con mi hermana también lo mismo.” [Harassment]
					4:06-4:25	“Llegas y están jugando los policías de investigación con el MP. Se están diciendo de groserías enfrente de ti. Él por ejemplo te está preguntando y te dice: - 'no, pero eso no es relevante'. O sea, como que te ponían en tu entrevista lo que ellos querían.” [Omissions + Belligerence]
					4:26-4:48	“La carpeta de investigación de mi mamá pasó como por 5 MP's en el Estado de México, en Barrientos. Porque uno, por negligencias, otro no estaba, otro creo falleció. Al primero que nos quitaron fue porque nos pidió dinero, por el acoso con mi hermana.” [Negligence/Corruption/Harassment]
					5:11-5:43	“Se metió el amparo en contra de las negligencias que había en la Fiscalía y ahí fue cuando la fiscal se volvió a poner en contacto con nosotras, pero ya nada más precisamente por el amparo. Porque eso les afecta...pero no, o sea, de plano si uno no va y se planta o no estás como preguntando...se estanca ahí el caso.” [Lack of diligence]
					5:49-5:54	“No solamente te asesinan a tu mamá, no, fue a toda la familia en conjunto.” [Impact of femicide on the family]
					5:55-6:18	“Para nada estamos seguras, nadie. Ni siquiera una niña, a cualquier edad te pasa. Nadie está exento. Nosotras creíamos que a lo mejor no pasaba, porque si no toca a tu familia el feminicidio, tú crees que no está pasando. Pero no es así.” [Family claim]
					6:21-6:40	“No sabes si ahorita sales, en la noche, a cualquier hora y los hombres por machismo, porque creen que pueden matar y porque saben que la ley no hace nada, lo hacen. Sin miedo a que haya represalias. Sin miedo a que haya justicia para las mujeres.” [Family claim]
					6:42-6:50	“Tenemos que cambiar, pero global, nosotros. Todos. Porque esto en vez de parar está creciendo.” [Family claim]

⁴⁶ To see the digital archive, visit: Voces de la Ausencia. Documental Día de Muertos. Tercer Capítulo. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n3_5ebSCdZk (Accessed 6.03.2021) Duration: 7:07 min.

Document VI. Documentary: Día de Muertos. *Cuarto Capítulo* (Voces de la Ausencia)⁴⁷.

Victim	Municipality	Year of murder	State Instance	Family member	Time	Testimonial Citation [Family Experience]
26-year-old (5)	Nezahualcóyotl (SE)	2013	Ministerio Público/ Public Ministry	Sister	1:49-2:05	“Nos truncan la investigación y me dijeron que estaba desaparecida la carpeta. Que no había nada que seguir porque, pues no había nadie a quién perseguir. Y de un lado nos traían a otro, de Barrios a Neza.” [Negligence]
					2:06-2:19	“Cambian de comandantes. Cambian de ministeriales. Se empezaba todo a regresar desde el principio. Entonces nunca hubo como una investigación concreta.” [Negligence]
					2:20-2:34	“Cuando mi mamá y yo íbamos allá a pedir informes, nos trataban mal. Nos trataban de decir que pues sin dinero no había. Que con qué se les podía pagar. Entonces pues simplemente fue déspota. Fue discriminación.” [Belligerence + Corruption + Discrimination]
					2:35-3:05	“Este tipo ‘n’ me dice: - ‘Vamos a ser claros: ¿cuánto tiene para arreglarnos? Y es más yo lo busco’. Y yo le dije: - ‘Es que no le voy a dar nada’. Y me dijo: - ‘A, o sea, ¿usted no piensa resolver nada de su hermana?’. Y le dije: - ‘Si, pero yo no tengo dinero. Y a usted, ¿por qué le voy a dar?’. - ‘Porque soy su nuevo comandante’, me dice. Entonces fue ahí cuando desaparecieron la carpeta más o menos un mes y medio. Y me dijeron: - ‘Es que no hay carpeta’.” [Corruption + Negligence]
					3:22-3:50	“Si es algo muy fuerte, porque pues como te digo, sin dinero. Desgraciadamente no hemos podido hacer nada, nada... Toda mi familia es humilde, no tenemos ese dinero. Y por eso nos han cerrado todas las puertas, todas.” [Corruption + Discrimination]

⁴⁷ To see the digital archive, visit: Voces de la Ausencia. Documental Día de Muertos. Cuarto Capítulo. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3CVmRekwL8Q&t=6s> (Accessed 6.03.2021) Duration 9:06 min.

Document VII. Testimonial book: *Violencia de Género y Feminicidio en el Estado de México.*

Victim	Municipality	Year of murder	State Instance	Family member	Page	Testimonial Citation [Family Experience]
14-year-old (6)	Ecatepec (NE)	2012	Ministerio Público/ Public Ministry + PGJEM/ Attorney General's Office	-	p.179	The victim denounces the aggressor before the MP for rape. The authorities demand money from the victim's family to act on the matter. Subsequently, they find the aggressor and offer him to remove the complaint in exchange for a cash amount. The victim is raped a second time by two assailants and stoned to death (feminicide). The PGJEM did not collect expert evidence at the scene of the murder. The scientific evidence found in the body of the victim through the autopsy was not properly processed. The PGJEM did not condemn the perpetrators with the penalty indicated for the category of feminicide, despite the evidence. [Corruption/Omissions/Negligence]

Document VIII. Testimonial book: *Violencia contra las mujeres en el Estado de México.*

Victim	Municipality	Year of murder	State Instance	Family member	Page	Testimonial Citation [Family Experience]
23-year-old (7)	Cuautitlán Izcalli (NE)	2004	Ministerio Público/ Public Ministry + Peritos de la PGJEM/ Experts from the Attorney General's Office.	Mother	p.114	Even before the victim's feminicide, the victim and her mother, when reporting domestic violence, faced comments from the authorities such as: “se ha de haber ido con el novio” and “bueno, ¿pero qué le hizo su hija?”. [Misogyny]
					p.115	The following omissions were committed by the experts: 1) key objects such as cable and rope found at the crime scene were not recorded 2) they did not photograph the crime scene 3) they did not take fingerprints, etc. [Omissions]
					p.116	“Son meses los que pasan y no pasa nada, me traen vuelta y vuelta y no me dicen nada, la Ministerio Público siempre tenía dudas, yo incluso le decía ‘bueno licenciada, yo me ofrezco, si usted tiene alguna duda yo le acerco lo que usted necesite para, pues, para que usted salga de sus dudas, ¿qué necesita?’, yo le decía ¿no?, me ponía a sus órdenes...no, me traía vueltas y vueltas, entonces el señor procurador, subprocurador no me recibía tampoco, yo quería saber...” [Lack of diligence]

Document XIX. Testimonial book: *Las muertas del Estado. Feminicidios durante la administración mexiquense de Enrique Peña Nieto.*

Victim	Municipality	Year of murder	State Instance	Family member	Page	Testimonial Citation [Family Experience]
29-year-old (8)	Chimalhuacán (SE)	2010	Ministerio Público/ Public Ministry + Policía Municipal/ Municipal Police + Fiscalía/ Prosecutor's Office	Mother	p.190	“Siempre hemos tratado de que se haga justicia; ese pedir y pedir y exigir justicia es simple y sencillamente para que otras mujeres no mueran. Independientemente de lo que hagamos mi hija nunca volverá, pero quiero que el hombre que la mató no mate a otra mujer.” [Family claim]
					p.595	The diligence of the removal of the body by the municipal police, the most important procedure in the investigation of a murder, took a maximum time of fifteen minutes. [Negligence]
					p.602	Public Ministry agents ruled that the victim had hanged herself and omitted details in the victim's body. [Omissions]
					p.634 p.638 48	“—¿Todas esas pruebas no las hizo el MP? ¿Ninguna? —No. —¿Dónde se radicó la averiguación previa? — En Chimalhuacán, con sus compañeros de trabajo. A mí no me permitieron ampliar mi declaración hasta el 30 de septiembre, tres meses después del feminicidio de mi hija, y pude hacerla porque pagué para que me la tomaran. —¿Y a quién le pagó por ampliar su declaración? —Al agente del Ministerio Público “n”. [Omissions/Negligence/Corruption]
					p.646 p.650	“Le pagué mil pesos. Obviamente no se los entregué a él en la mano, sino a un intermediario. A partir de entonces pude declarar de nuevo, antes simplemente me decían que no había avances de ningún tipo. Antes de pagar, la ampliación estaba prevista para diciembre, y cuando lo hice pasé inmediatamente. Yo llevaba mi testimonio por escrito; di dos billetes de quinientos pesos que ese funcionario metió dentro de un libro. —¿Qué otras situaciones de corrupción debió pasar usted? — Otra vez, tuve que pagar a una secretaria otros mil pesos para que me dieran copias de la averiguación previa. Únicamente eran seis hojas escritas.” [Corruption + Lack of diligence + Negligence]
					p.694	“La fiscalía intervino dolosamente en la destrucción de pruebas a favor de uno de sus policías.” (Family lawyer by the OCNF) [Willful destruction of evidence]
19-year-old (9)	Chimalhuacán (SE)	2005	Ministerio Público/ Public Ministry	Mother	p.1817 p.1837	“Intenté levantar una denuncia por desaparición, pero no me hicieron caso: que seguro se había ido con el novio...En el Ministerio Público, cuando fui, lo primero que me dijo un policía fue: “¿No sabe si su hija más bien se fue con un hombre?” [Negligence + Misogyny]

⁴⁸ The page numbers are shown as they appear in the digital book version, in the physical version they may vary.

Victim	Municipality	Year of murder	State Instance	Family member	Page	Testimonial Citation [Family Experience]
					p.1821 p.1825	"Fuimos al Ministerio Público a eso de las siete de la noche. Mi hijo pasó a la plancha, él reconoció a su hermana. Nos acompañó el señor de la funeraria; nos explicó que debíamos darle dinero al personal, a los funcionarios. Si no pagábamos, no nos iban a atender. El mismo señor de la funeraria le dio dinero al agente del Ministerio Público; le pagó al médico legista para que extendiera el certificado de defunción, también a la persona que nos entregó el cuerpo de mi hija. Casi nos quedamos sin nada, y todavía le teníamos que pagar a él." [Corruption]
					p.1833	"Al principio mi nieta se despertaba en la noche, llorando, y preguntaba por su mamá. Escondimos sus fotografías y sus cosas; guardamos su ropa, sus zapatos, sus peluches, cualquier cosa que se la recordara. Sufrí bastante, pero veía que la niña sufría más. Hice a un lado mi dolor, traté de superarlo para que no lo resintiera." [Impact of femicide on the Family]
16-year-old (10)	Tultitlán (NE)	2011	Ministerio Público/ Public Ministry + Policía Judicial/ Judicial Police	Mother	p.2491	"—¿Sabe qué, señora? Si quiere encontrar a su hija búsquela usted, porque nosotros no podemos hacer nada." [Negligence]
					p.2496 p.2500 p.2504	"Yo pedía de favor a los judiciales que me ayudaran. Uno me decía: 'no tengo crédito', el otro 'no tengo gasolina', uno más: 'no tengo coche'... Debí darles dos mil pesos a los policías judiciales para que fueran conmigo". Y otros quinientos pesos para la gasolina y para los tacos y quinientos pesos más para el crédito de sus teléfonos celulares, que para hablarle al comandante y enviara apoyo." [Corruption]
					p.2618 p.2622	"Nos ha cambiado bastante (la vida). Nos hace falta, porque ella nos apapachaba, nos abrazaba...Ahora la tenemos lejos, en el cielo." [Impact of femicide on the family]
6-year-old (11)	Tlalnepantla (NE)	2006	Policía Judicial/ Judicial Police	Mother	p.3190 p.3194 p.3198	"—Deme cinco mil pesos para que el comandante mande los perros a olfatear...Todos los días pagábamos gasolina para sus carros. Pagábamos comidas y no aceptaban tacos: pedían sentarse en restaurantes y las cuentas salían por dos mil pesos...Entonces mi esposo decía: 'Qué hago, si son los que nos asignaron y tenemos que trabajar. Con tal de que nos ayuden a recuperar a mi hija...'. Nos endeudamos hasta donde no. Llegamos a gastar quince mil pesos en un día. Se fueron los ahorros de cien mil pesos que usaríamos para ampliar y remodelar la casa." [Corruption + Negligence]

Victim	Municipality	Year of murder	State Instance	Family member	Page	Testimonial Citation [Family Experience]
					p.3251 p.3254	” Los judiciales se encargaron de echarnos a perder lo que nos quedaba; utilizaron la estrategia de crear celos entre nosotros...un judicial intentó extorsionarme con diez mil pesos para no revelar asuntos de nuestra relación (como pareja). Durante un tiempo pendimos de un hilito. Nos culpábamos entre nosotros.” [Attempted Extortion]
					p.3258 p.3265	“Todos estamos emocionalmente mal, porque no hemos sacado todo esto de una manera humana. La familia se alejó...En los hijos queda huella. Me han dicho: ‘por atender esto no me atendiste a mí’.” [Impact of femicide on the family]

Document X. Testimonial book: *La fosa de agua: Desapariciones y feminicidios en el río de los Remedios*.

Victim	Municipality	Year of murder	State Instance	Family member	Page	Testimonial Citation [Family Experience]
14-year-old (12)	Tecámac (NE)	2012	Ministerio Público/ Public Ministry	Mother	p.18	“Uy, señora, déjala, a lo mejor luego regresa.” [Misogyny]
					p.22	“No se cuidó, no se dio a respetar.” [Misogyny]
					p.33	“No queremos destapar una coladera por la que nos podamos caer.” (regarding disappearances in the Río de los Remedios). [Negligence]
					p.69	“Necesitamos pruebas”, (MP’s agents said to the mother). [Lack of diligence]
16-year-old (13)	Tecámac (NE)	2012	Ministerio Público/ Public Ministry	Mother	p.49	“—De qué se preocupan, va a regresar pronto. ¡Hasta con premio!” [Misogyny]
14-year-old (14)	Tecámac (NE)	2012	Ministerio Público/ Public Ministry	Mother	p.81	“—Es muy de emo. (said the agent when seeing the photographs of the victim)...¿Su hija no estará deprimida? ¿Por qué lleva el pelo así, los pantalones así?” [Misogyny]
18-year-old (15)	Tecámac (NE)	2014	Ministerio Público/ Public Ministry	Mother	p.122	“—Señora, ¿sabe que su hija tiene relaciones sexuales con su novio? —Señora, es que parece ser que su hija ha llegado a fumar marihuana. —Si su hija fuera tan buena, la tendríamos que buscar en las iglesias.” [Misogyny]
					p.153	“Daría mi vida hasta encontrarte. Y eso es justo lo que vamos a hacer: encontrar. La respuesta que sea siempre va a ser: hasta encontrarte y justicia. Saber qué pasó, cómo pasó y cuándo pasó.” [Family claim]
13-year-old (16)	Ecatepec (NE)	2012	Ministerio Público/ Public Ministry	Mother	p.160	“De seguro se fue con el novio a tomar unas chelas a Acapulco y regresa en tres días”, (The MP’s agents alleged that, despite being a minor, the complaint would only be valid until 72 hours after the disappearance and insinuated that the daughter did not appear to be 13 years old; that she, on the contrary, looked older). [Misogyny + Negligence]
13-year-old (17)	Ecatepec (NE)	2013	Ministerio Público/ Public Ministry	Aunt	p.167	“For the agents, the main line of investigation was the usual one: The victim left on her own accord.” [Misogyny + Negligence]