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¿CÓMO TRADUCIMOS "NI UNA MÁS" AL INGLÉS? :
LATIN AMERICAN MANIFESTATION OF THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF FEMICIDE,
AND THE UNITED STATES' SUBSEQUENT INTERNAL NEGLECT

by

SUEMI MÉNDEZ

A master's thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Women's and Gender Studies in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, The City University of New York

2020

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in
Women's and Gender Studies in satisfaction of the thesis requirement for the
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Abstract

¿Cómo Traducimos "Ni Una Más" al Inglés? : Latin American Manifestation of the Phenomenology of Femicide, and the United States' Subsequent Internal Neglect

By

Suemi Méndez

Advisor: Linda Martín Alcoff

This paper aims to tackle two components in analyzing the phenomenological concept of femicide, most simply known as the killing of women because they are women through structural violence and oppression. First, it will develop its deployment within the Latin American framework as it has been adapted to function within the regional lexicon, both socially and legislatively. This assessment will serve to address the successes and failures thus far in tackling femicide as the location with the highest statistics globally. Through this foregrounding, it will lead into how this revised deployment of femicide fits into the context of Global North where it came to be publicized but failed to function at the wide scale seen in Latin America. With a focus on the United States due to its complicity in the ways the concept and action of femicide occurs within the Latin American region, a decolonial reading of the occurrences of femicide in the United States, as well as the structural tools that allow it to occur similarly to Latin America, will follow in order to determine the need for the language within its own space rather than ascribing it as a distant threat to female bodies elsewhere.

Table of Contents

Abstract	iv
Introduction	1
La Mujer y su Cuerpo en America Latina	11
Sexual Subject/Object.....	12
Maternal Subject.....	15
Labor Subject	16
Political Subject.....	20
Religious Subject	23
Commodification.....	25
Memorialized Subject	29
Border Functions	31
Femicide’s Veritable Existence in the US	37
Language other than femicide	37
The woman and her body, part ii.....	38
So, What’s Missing?	61
Conclusion	64
Works Cited	67

Introduction

The circumstances that elicit death upon the human body have evolved alongside humanity's lifespan. An effect stemming from this is the evolution of language to better comprehend the cause and effect of particular forms of death. The term *femicide* was most notably popularized in 1976 by South African sociologist Diana E. H. Russell to designate a location for the phenomenon of the female body's death brought on by that very existence and being, or as she very simply defines it, "the killing of females by males because they are females" ("Defining Femicide" 2001, 13). Her work, along with several other American feminist scholars including Jill Radford, Jane Caputi and Catherine MacKinnon, sought to bring attention to the sexist murders with distinct victims involved and, in turn, would help to build the foundation for the discourse of femicide that would proceed to grow, albeit not in the United States. Russell's work has not always looked to only centralize femicide in the American context, as it was of great importance to ensure that it be conceptualized globally, but its adaptation in the Global South has helped to solidify the weight behind the concept and the contentions it seeks to disrupt in a way that failed to catch on in much of the Global North.

Of particular note is the way in which it has been translated in the Latin American context and the influence that discourse has had on further grappling with the term femicide. Part of what has stemmed from this is debate over the word itself and how it translates into Spanish as *feminicidio*, to which several scholars have taken to re-translate it into English as *feminicide* to attribute the function of structurally oppressive layers to the killing of female bodies, including political violence, sociocultural violence, economic or financial violence, and psychological violence. Despite Russell's attempts to create strict framing of the use of femicide in her chapter "Defining Femicide and Concepts" in her second anthology with *Femicide in Global Perspective*

with the focus on sexism with little room for the function of intersectional issues, I argue that the conceptual expansions made by Latin American scholarship and activism to the definition merit its evolution as they help to better understand, not hinder, the circumstances surrounding femicide including the causes and effects that encompass it. To simply determine femicide as based on misogynistic actions that can only be enacted by men is to neglect the systems that determine the spectrum of violence female bodies are *expected* to endure and thus limits the discourse combatting those systems. With these systems having been identified in the Latin American discourse of *feminicidio* and enabling grassroots community organizing, a decolonial project is also required of the Global North in order to see effective results in the localized comprehension of femicide. That said, I do not believe it necessary to re-translate the term to feminicide but am also not dismissive of its function either as it recognizes the cultural evolution brought on by language crossing borders. I will be moving forward using the word femicide throughout, *feminicidio* if needed to address it in Spanish, but ultimately see the contention between both forms of the concept as an ongoing dialogue of its continued evolution.

While Russell struggled in expanding the discourse and knowledge production surrounding femicide in the United States despite raising the challenge simultaneously with the cultivated awareness around the verifiable circumstances and statistics of domestic violence—an issue previously dismissed completely as a non-issue or one relegated to each persons' home for individual solutions, the discussion was being expounded upon within Latin America even without an indicative word, much less a developed phenomenology, in place. The defining moment to establish this came with the endurance of the political bodies of the most prominent femicide victims within the global region: *Las Mariposas*, also known as the Mirabal Sisters, who were killed at the order of the American-selected dictator of the Dominican Republic, *El*

Jefe Rafael Trujillo. Three of the four sisters—Patria, Minerva, and María Teresa, were killed after years of harassment and torture by the dictator, predominantly towards the most politically active and educated sister Minerva, due to their vocal opposition of his political reign of terror. “On November 25, 1960, in returning from seeing their husbands in jail in Puerto Plata, they were overtaken by Trujillo’s secret agents on a lonely mountain road and strangled. Their car was then thrown off a cliff in an attempt to feign an accident,” which was the story that circulated for years despite the public knowing that with the political turmoil in place, it was impossible for it to have simply been that (Robinson 2006, 152). The men that remained in jail were released the following Monday and partook in the public mourning and outcry for the death of the women who inspired hope and change in their community. Mobilization of the community was swift, and while Trujillo had a short while to celebrate his presumed victory over Minerva, he soon met the same fate as he was assassinated on May 30, 1961 while traveling on the highway to his retreat home (Manley 2012, 93). The moniker of Mariposas served as an alias within the group the Movement of the 14th of June as Minerva and María Teresa helped to lead the plans for political protest and subsequent revolution against Trujillo’s regime; Patria’s inclusion came through her husband and eldest son’s involvement in the movement despite not taking on as active a role in the politics of the movement.

The adoption of such a pseudonym carries incredible historical weight, though, as the assassination of the Mariposas served as a true butterfly effect that reverberated throughout the globe over time, beginning with the destruction of the country’s dictator—though his own regime would take several decades more to be ousted completely—and continuing to reach the globe in the immortalization of November 25th being recognized as the International Day of Elimination of Violence Against Women when it was declared by United Nations in 1999 in

honor of their work while alive and the significance of their femicide beyond that time in 1960. For clarification, this case can be declared a femicide for Trujillo was known for his insatiable hunt for young women throughout the Dominican Republic during his rule, and after inviting the entire Mirabal family as an attempt to pursue Minerva next, she would directly rebuff him while they danced by entertaining him with a conversation where she made it very clear that she was not interested in his politics and when threatened that he would send his men and followers to subject her to his will, she asked of the possibility of subjecting them to her own ideas instead and politely requested to return to her table (Mirabal 2011, 96-100). This moment was seared into Trujillo's mind, as not only was it direct opposition to his authority as *El Jefe* of the country, but that it came from a woman meant to serve as his political pawn and sexual subject was most unacceptable; thus leading to years of investigations, arrests turned into captivity in hotels and prisons, torture while imprisoned as well as psychological torture—most notably in the form of denying Minerva the ability to obtain her law degree, and lost lives, including their own. These details have become known over time thanks to Julia Alvarez's novel *In the Time of the Butterflies* bringing widespread attention to their story after the regime was buried, albeit with particular scenarios dramatized for added effect, which have been clarified further by the then-surviving sister Dedé Mirabal in her memoir *Vivas en su Jardín* detailing the events and her work since their death.

Before the United Nations could recognize this date, though, it would become a distinguished historical moment among Latin American countries as feminist movements gave rise in the 1970s and led to the first Latin American and Caribbean Feminist Encuentro in Bogotá in 1981, “a conference of women intended to create transnational networks of activism and combat the marginalization of women across the region” (Manley 2018). Thanks to sixteen

delegates that attended on behalf of the Dominican Republic, an attempt to tackle one of the priorities set for the conference—that of condemning violence against women throughout the region brought on within the community as well as by the state—was offered by declaring November 25th as the International Day of Elimination of Violence against Women, a date that would be recognized by all the countries in attendance. The Encuentro would only be the first of many more Encuentros that would help cement the value of feminist groups in Latin America as they are still periodically meeting to discuss the culturally-influenced circumstances that lend themselves to a challenging existence as a Latina within the contexts of their states. The power of this recognition, along with a presentation by Julia Alvarez and Dedé Mirabal at the United Nations, helped to establish November 25th internationally as the start of the Sixteen Days of Activism Against Gender Violence—this period of action goes on to include December 6th, the anniversary of the Montreal Massacre and femicide of fourteen engineering students due to their vocal feminism, and ending on December 10th, International Human Rights Day (Mirabal 2011, 394-395; Thompson 2017, 6-8). This declaration would help to establish the growth around the dialectic of femicide as it would coalesce with the reality faced by the women of Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, and cement itself as functional language to ascertain a growing sociopolitical issue within the region. Recognition for the term would come in the form of it being, “situated at the nexus between gender-based violence, systemic discrimination, and exclusion from codified fundamental rights, femicide...is part of feminist efforts to categorize violence as rooted in a gender power structure as a human rights violation,...provid[ing] an analytic and legal framework for locating state accountability around ‘crimes against a women’s life and liberty’” (Fregoso and Bejarno 2010, 18).

The analysis surrounding femicide is often found to centralize in the Mexican border town of Ciudad Juárez, located within the state of Chihuahua and a sister-city to El Paso, Texas in America. Nina María Lozano succinctly traces the progress of attention given to the area for this reason by looking at it in the form of “waves”—an interesting choice given the way feminism is also thought of in waves and thus may be a very intentional choice as she explores these explicit killings of female bodies—that began in 1993 when mothers began to recognize the sequence of disappearances of their daughters with little reaction from the police or governing bodies, even after the destroyed bodies were discovered over time. Due to this, grassroots organizations began to blossom with the grieving mothers at the forefront to challenge the failures by the Mexican authorities to prod further into the circumstances of their daughters’ disappeared and mutilated abandoned bodies upon their later discovery.

The response they did receive as more groups sprung up demanding proper attention and protection be provided were key to the rise in global attention to the area as the government opted to work against the pleas. The attempts were numerous and took many forms including the falsifying and destroying of evidence; harassment and threats of arrest and death; ascribing responsibility for information and investigation on other legislative officials in a cyclical fashion to deter continued persistence; instituting appearances of assistance to certain mothers while ignoring others to create divisions within the organization; forcing “therapeutic” resources on the “hysterical” and mentally unstable mothers; victim blaming in the form of accusations of daughters living “la doble vida;” and finding impoverished or unimportant men that can be tortured to the point of playing the role of scapegoat to create a swift legislative finality to the case (Lozano 2019, 19-32). While these acts are definitive of the second wave of *femicidio* beginning in 1998, it is also at this time that scholarship and media focus on the town increases

and with that Ciudad Juárez begins to carry associations such as “ ‘the feminicidio capital of the world’ (Cevallos 2004), ‘the capital of murder women’ (Nieves 2002), and ‘the most dangerous city in the world’ (Bowden 1998)” (qtd. in Lozano 2019, xv). The most apt understanding for the influential role Ciudad Juárez would play in the dialectic surrounding femicide can be found in the words of journalist Sergio González Rodríguez:

In the past half-century, Ciudad Juárez gave birth to four cities in one: the city as a northern Mexican border town/ United States’ backyard; the city inscribed in the global economy; the city as a theater of operations for the war on drugs; and the femicide city. Extreme capitalism converges here: plutocratic, corporate, monopolistic, global, speculative, wealth-concentrating, and predatory, founded on military machinations and media control. Ciudad Juárez is the realization of planned speculation that practices on city-slums and on the people there who are considered of little value. The human cannon fodder suffer while trying to reverse the adverse situations of living in cities at constant risk or in continuous crisis, and facing community disintegration (2012, 11-12).

With the layers of contention more accessibly displayed for all willing to look there from around the globe, the grassroots organizations were able to achieve a level of success against the government in the form of the “Cotton Field” decision—based on the cases brought before the Inter-American Commission in 2002 and later to the International Court of Human Rights in 2009 regarding three of eight bodies that were found in Campo Algodonero, where the ruling gets its name from, that were pursued juridically. Through the decision made here, the Mexican government was held responsible for its failure thus far to adequately investigate the circumstances surrounding the clear acts of violence against women at play, and thus a precedent was set throughout Latin America through these cases recognizing the importance of the state to

enforce protection against human rights violations, including that of gender discrimination in the form of violence against women; therefore, a controlled system of investigations must be at play. Unfortunately, this determination served more as a bandage as the International Court of Human Rights did not have the power to enforce this decision, so Mexico played the role of reformed state by funding the creation of the Commission for the Prevention and Eradication of Violence Against Women in Ciudad Juárez under President Vicente Fox in 2004. Through this superficial establishment, they made claims of holding meetings with the mothers and grassroots organizations as well as gender-sensitivity trainings—this came to take the form of placing lavender candles in prisons to provide a more soothing environment and creating more soccer fields for men to have an alternative way to express their aggression rather than inflicting violence on female bodies; ultimately, though, it ended up being closed with the end of Fox’s presidency (Lozano 2019, 33-36).

With the progression of time leading into a new presidency and legislative body, attention to femicide waned as the general focus was subsumed by the “Drug War.” Systemic changes ensued under the image of protecting the public better from the violent acts of the cartel, but truly led to a more militarized presence on the streets of Ciudad Juárez that served as counterintuitive action against the citizens. This was due to the police’s involvement with the cartels and the drug-trafficking trade, as with that came a stark increase in the executions that occurred as noted in a quote by Professor Julian Contreras:

But if we see the number of executions from that first month [when the military campaign began, in March 2008] we saw an increase of 400 percent—four times as many executions with the presence of military! Because of this escalation of executions and massacres, the years 2008-2009 were grave years....We understood that those

[government and multinational corporations] established powers were the ones encouraging and benefitting from a supposed war against narco-trafficking....When the massacres occurred here, there were militaries nearby, so when we saw that, we asked: how is this all possible if the city was occupied? But, again, this politics of war enabled women to be afraid and not want to push forward in public spaces. In these years, the killings of women hadn't ceased. There are still many disappearances, but not much activism (qtd. in Lozano 2019, 39).

This same action simultaneously served as a deterrent for continued investigations in the area to occur as media was caught up in the cartel activity, or even unable to enter Ciudad Juárez due to the violence threatened against them. It all worked to dismantle the activist work the mothers, among other grassroots organizations simultaneously battling labor and human rights issues, had accomplished thus far as the war presented the perfect illusion for exiles and executions of organizers due to narcos rather than a continuation of the femicidal trend. For these reasons, Lozano determines this period to be the third wave, described as the “lost years;” lost in the attention given by media, researchers, and government; lost in activist work that was thwarted by the cartels and the government; lost voices with all the activists killed, exiled or forced to remain silent in hopes to resume their work later on—which is exactly what came to pass.

In 2015, a resurgence for the movement came loudly after the mayor of Ciudad Juárez at the time, Enrique Serrano Escobar, referred to the collective tale of femicides in the area as a “dark myth—a legend” (qtd in Lozano 2019, 43). This was reflective of the fact the Mexican government, as a whole, had frankly refused to admit that femicides were an ongoing epidemic within its borders despite all the social and legal work attempted and accomplished thus far. It is no surprise that such a comment was met with disdain and the uproar by grassroots organizations

was voracious as new ones formed to join alongside those from the first wave. Younger women who were not mothers became leaders as they presented themselves as the daughters of *feminicidio* having borne witness to the brutality other women around them faced as well as the struggles their mothers went through as survivors trying to seek justice for their dead daughters. Through this youth involvement, social media served as the way to combat the imposed silence traditional media brought about as well as bridging the gap with exiled activists. Alongside the youth, more local male intervention came from various fields including artists, activists from other causes, educators—such as the aforementioned Julian Contreras, and fathers who had suffered losses as well (González Rodríguez 2012, 82-84). What remains the monumental shift from previous waves compared to this current one, as it is ongoing, is the reassessment of femicide as a trend of individual attacks on female bodies to be understood as an effect of systemic oppressions brought on by a climate hosted by intersectional issues that the state feeds (Lozano 2019, 44-45). This reinvigoration was essential to the movement as well as the development of the comprehension of what femicide entails as the complication of the issue serves to better grasp the validity and gravity of the epidemic.

There will be more exploration into the site of Ciudad Juárez further in this paper but thus far, this foundation helps to establish the function of the dialectic of femicide as it is imported into the Latin American context. The interpretation of femicide Russell developed within the Global North framework was able to be witnessed and complicated further through its import into Ciudad Juárez. This was able to further expand throughout Latin America as the language served to reflect the ongoing crisis inflicted upon female bodies as statistics needed to be collected and thusly presented that the global region was the epicenter of femicide in the world, with places such as El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras at the forefront. With the

establishment of femicide as a part of the lexicon brought forth by activists into national dialogue, the governing states were obliged to respond through discourse around legislation inclusive of that. In order to understand how these legislative choices address femicide and their juridical and social efficacy, it is imperative to understand the complex nature of what it means to be a woman and female-bodied in Latin America.

La Mujer y su Cuerpo en America Latina

The patriarchal oppression of female bodies is well-recognized throughout Latin America. The use of the term *machismo* is iconic in its function to define the regional contextualization of a dominant male attitude, or hypermasculinity—which will be explored later—that dictates how progress of their family is determined, whether it be the family within their household or the family they claim to take on as a political leader. Beske allows for a more nuanced grasp of this function by contrasting *machismo* with the expectation for *marianismo* on the part of women, or the understanding of “eternal devotion to one’s spouse in the form of ‘standing by one’s man, no matter the cost,’ exercising a virtuous and motherly (yet not entirely passive) foil to the *machismo* in one’s partner....[Yet] because of these gendered associations...women are more often filling the role of ‘victim’ and men the role of ‘perpetrator’ due to differential expectations and statuses culturally attributed to their genders” (2015, 154). It is through this lens that the female body is often understood, and it is just as easily disposed when their murder is witnessed as a *machista* effect; hence, solutions such as lavender candles in prisons and soccer fields to combat male aggression are brought up as credible notions. To better explore the phenomenology of femicide, it must be understood how the female body is multiplicitous in her existence and her experiences, and thus *machismo* works to combat that through layered oppressions while simultaneously silencing them to seem reduced and removed

from their multiple existences. Ortega's development of the multiplicitous self enables a complex analysis of the woman harmed "as a self in process or in the making, the multiplicitous self is continually engaged in these negotiations [of social identities], which include sometimes having to strategically deploy certain identities in certain worlds. This ability to negotiate different identities in different contexts grants the self a flexibility that opposes the fixity of traditional conceptions of selfhood" (2016, 74). While her exploration of the self is derived from the experience of Latina scholars' lived experiences in the United States and the circumstances that elicit in-betweenness, it helps offer greater understanding for the experiences of the women in Latin America in the face of femicide as their marginalization also connotes this experience, albeit with a much different deployment. Thus, an exploration of these multiplicitous identities and the ways in which they overlap and influence each other is required in order to comprehend how these various oppressions experienced lead to such an extreme effect.

Sexual Subject/Object

This physical comprehension of the female body is the dominant factor in the occurrence of femicide as the act is enacted upon flesh determined to be female and displayed as such, whether the body is found in all its mutilation, or it remains disappeared and the acknowledgment of femicide as an existing act places the lacerations onto the missing body. What dictates the act, though, is the perception of the female body as sexual subject, even though it is being acted upon and treated as a sexual object. The reading of female body as falling into either the category of the virgin or the whore is found at every level of interaction women encounter, whether it be socially driven in how they are discussed, spoken to, and their bodies are treated; economically driven in their role as workers; or legislatively driven in the determination of whether they are owed protection or deserved violent treatment. The dialogue of sex can easily be coupled with rape if a woman expresses no interest in a man, and it is spoken

to them in a way reflective of the impunity sensed regarding the act; therefore, women can carry an expectation to be raped (Lozano 2019, 127-128). The dialogue of sex filters into the workplace as maquiladora workers in Ciudad Juárez are seen as prostitutes by neighbors due to their labor being restricted to the dark hours of the night; words they carry with them as their bosses openly speak of their female employees as sexual prey that must be devoured, especially if they are a virgin, and are thusly raped with clear evidence upon them such as their “clothes torn” and “semen on her shirt” should they otherwise run the risk of being fired if they refuse (Lozano 2019, 55-57, 59). The dialogue of sex remains a factor when the bodies are harmed through any form of sexual violence as well as femicide due to the ascribing of blame upon the victim because of how they are dressed—the skirt serves as a symbol for sex at its most socially vulgar and is often connoted as a reference to prostitution—and accusations of women disappearing due to their “doble vida” as whores; therefore, the police have little reason to pursue an investigation and will discriminate against cases involving disappeared women (Lozano 2019, 27-28). This will be further explored as it ties to their role as labor subjects as well.

The sexual subject, though, is not mutually exclusive to the biological subject of the female body. This distinction is most notable in that the function of woman in the eyes of machista aggressors ceases at pregnancy. As maquiladora workers, women can be refused employment if they are pregnant or anticipate pregnancy. They are subjected to pregnancy tests as a part of the hiring process and forced to present their pads as proof of continued menstruation in order to continue their employment. If a pregnant woman is allowed to continue working, she is not given additional care by her employers such as extra bathroom breaks or sick leave, and by the time of their third trimester, they are expected to leave—either by being fired or being

harassed to the point of quitting—in order for the employers to avoid paying their social security coverage per Mexican law (Lozano 2019, 60-61). Their pregnancy can also serve as cause for femicide to occur as found to be the motivating factor in the 2017 Emely Peguero case in the Dominican Republic. In countries where abortion is highly restricted, women are expected to carry to term, but Emely, despite her young age at 15 years old, desired to do so. Her body would be found a week after disappearing en route to a doctor's appointment; her boyfriend and his mother, a civil servant, determined as the killers with the socioeconomic disparity between Emely and her boyfriend playing a role in the determination of her death (Warren 2018). Her sexual subjectivity was removed once her pregnancy was revealed and determined to continue forward, and due to the Dominican Republic having some of the strictest abortion laws in the globe, it was replaced by her role as a vessel for the fetus—her body now an object stemming from her original sexual subjectivity. Despite her willingness to take this on, she was seen as disposable as a whole by her partner and his mother, who disapproved of her involvement as a sexual subject prior to, during, and after her pregnancy would have come to term due to her impoverished background—a reduction of her life to an object with the potential to harm or infect her family should the fetus, a subject-in-progress, be born. This involvement of another woman in the act of femicide does not disqualify it from being so given that the intent and form in which it happened—while the boyfriend attempted to induce an abortion by forcibly making her drink something unknown and in her objection, injured her and killed her in the process, the mother helped in the disposal of Emely's body after her son irresponsibly left the body under a nearby bridge by providing instructions on placing it into a suitcase and leaving it on the road far outside their town. She also was determined to keep up the front for as long as possible given her position; her son was the one to confess (Warren 2018). This objectification of the body further

removes woman's agency and allows for femicide to function as a solution to dispose of the thing that is the unnecessary female body.

Maternal Subject

The maternal subject of the female body serves of great importance within the Latin American conceptualization of femicide as it was through the attention mothers in Ciudad Juárez brought to their daughters' suffering that the discourse was able to come to fruition and pervade the social conscious. A fascinating choice that illustrates this is Lozano's decision to speak of Mothers as a pronoun as she seeks "to denote and rhetorically center the Mothers' significant role in leading the global social movement against feminicidios" (2019, xviii). The significance of maternal subjects goes beyond Ciudad Juárez, though, as throughout Latin America they are often the leaders of the organizations and movements opposing the structural functions that bolster the femicidal construct of the land. Regardless of location, the context of femicide introduces the maternal subject as a sociopolitical actor beyond the social norms they are understood to exist within Latin America. They push beyond the marianista limitations in which they are expected to contain themselves and are vocal in their mourning as well as their pursuit of justice. While traditionally they are expected to relegate their time and work to the domestic sphere, the loss of their daughter pushes them out of those confinements to actively seek justice in the public, sociopolitical sphere while maintaining their positionality as a mother. This development is emblematic of the coalitional politics Ortega expounds upon in her analysis of the multiplicitous woman as it "is about *being/belonging* or about identifications with other with whom [they] share identity markers, but it is also about *becoming* or the possibility of being transformed through [their] interactions with others" (2016, 103).

Unfortunately, in that attempt to push beyond social boundaries, the maternal subject can become a martyr as they are targeted and may themselves become a victim of torture, exile or femicide as well as an attempt to institute silence over the activity once again, on behalf of the state more so than from individual male participants (González Rodríguez 2012, 85-86). It is worth noting, though, that they are not intended to be the type of female body subjected to femicide; they are subject to it as they interrogate the activity as a secondary victim to ensure that others do not also find themselves to be targets. A case can be made that this ties back to the virgin/whore dichotomy being placed upon the female body, with the maternal figure serving as an honorable exception to the rule, should they perform marianismo. Despite this, these mothers push their role to encompass that of “organic intellectuals” as they embrace their maternal subjectivity and use it as a source of organizing and educational efforts to build a new politicized community (Lozano 2019, 23). Where they are worth distinguishing is their own expectation being crushed, as it is their daughter that should outlive them but that option has been taken from them; so they choose to rebel so that their daughter’s death is valued during their lifetime with demands for proper investigations and greater legislations so that the symptoms of grief and pain that affects them through the epidemic of femicide does not spread to other mothers.

Labor Subject

As mentioned, the traditional role of labor for the female body is intended to be relegated to the domestic sphere in which she is expected to raise and attend to the family, cook, clean, and keep a well-maintained home while the male body labors in the public sphere and is expected to be the breadwinner economically sustaining the home. For Ciudad Juárez, the introduction of maquiladoras—after the US-Mexican Braceros program caused many Mexicans to be recruited to work in the United States during World War II, only to be deported back to increase the unemployment issue that the program had intended to combat—in 1966 can be seen as a major

turning point in the understanding of the female body as labor subject. A new expectation was put forth, in that the prototypical maquiladora worker was a woman as she was seen to have the dexterity necessary for the assembly line, while few men were able to take on the roles of managers and supervisors; this would completely throw the economics of the country, not just Ciudad Juárez, on its head as many would go on to travel to the area from the other states to find work as the number of maquiladoras steadily increased in the area (Lozano 2019, 49; 57). The women were now becoming the financial breadwinners, while also expected to maintain their domestic labor as opposed to that role having been transitioned to the men—the female body as labor subject hence overwhelms their positionality as it is the greatest consumer of time with the numerous shifts taken on alongside the long travels between the home and the maquiladoras as their lack of wealth forces them to live on the outskirts in colonias (Olivera 2010, 53-54; Lozano 2019, 52). With this great shift to the neoliberal economic infrastructure, as well as the breaking of sociocultural norms through that process, yet another cause appears to incite the femicidal effect, as men are found to be challenged with the new rapid shifts in roles without the culture surrounding them transitioning as well; therefore, “it is not uncommon in this situation for men to direct their aggression against their wives and children. Men’s insecurity under these circumstances is often the cause of abandonment, divorce, and murder” (Olivera 2010, 54). Monárrez Fragoso expounds upon this further and notes how through the deployment of the female body as capital-earning labor subjects as opposed to living as domestic labor subjects dependent on another labor subject for capital, women are able to “transgress the patriarchal system;” an extreme boundary broken is met with an extreme result through femicide against those labor subjects’ bodies specifically (2010, 63). The way Lozano depicted the struggles of the maquiladora workers of Ciudad Juárez through their sexual subjectivity and objectivity, as

well as the transgression spoken of by Monárrez Fragoso, are further corroborated through the act of assuming the role of labor subject by González Rodríguez as he states,

the masculine perception that every woman is merely a sexual object results when stereotypes of the ‘pure woman’—wife and mother—are exhausted. A woman who works and has no need for masculine protection becomes the antithesis of the ‘pure woman’ fantasy. Once freed from financial dependence upon male family members—and from a very young age, even following puberty—women are identified as dirty, interested only in money, sex, and fun during her leisure time. A circle of hatred is closed and violence is unleashed: a situation that moves from the body to territory” (2012, 34).

While the maquiladora worker will be communally-shamed for her work through comparisons made to prostitutes, the sex worker is still a labor subject as well that finds herself under similar circumstances, not inherently due to the work she does taking away capital-earning opportunity from men in the way the maquiladora worker is seen, but simply for using sex as a way to earn capital rather than just servicing men as their sexual subordinate. It is important to note that this perspective is in place regardless of the fact that the woman freely chose to become a sex worker to earn capital for herself or if the woman was forced into prostitution and a victim of sex trafficking, as the fact her body is still functioning as the location of labor for the purposes of sex is ultimately still an issue within the patriarchal social construct. In Mar del Plata, Argentina, the role of the sex worker is key to understanding the ways in which femicide has played out in the country as it reveals the way structures outside of individual actors allow for it to be an epidemic. This is witnessed through how capital travels as:

women might be prostituted on the streets, in brothels, in bars, and in hotels, but regardless of whether they can have freedom or are enslaved and deprived of their

freedom, they are always under control of these networks. On the streets they have to pay the police officers who collect the money for the trafficking network either directly from the women or from their pimps. Although this does not prevent violence, those women who refuse to pay suffer even greater violence and threats of detention by the police.... The drug-trafficking circuit is also linked to prostitution. A large number of women use drugs or are drugged to keep them (selves) in that situation or are used for drug-trafficking. One modus operandi that continues to increase is the kidnapping and 'forced disappearance' of women and girls for prostitution networks.... The way the networks operate resembles the last military dictatorship. Women are kidnapped, 'disappeared,' and murdered with the complicity of their clients, police, and judicial authorities (Fontenla 2010, 116-117).

The comparative note of military dictatorship is key as it reflects similar notions presented in Ciudad Juárez, as mentioned earlier, of the democratic guise within which all these atrocities occur. The labor subject here is instituted again by patriarchal functions, much like the maquiladora workers that are selected, and while some choices may be in place by their own free will, the series of events that follow are imposed upon them; therefore, objectifying them further as is witnessed in the relation between the dictator and the citizens they rule over and oppress. Through femicide, the labor subject is forced to take on the role of object and serves as a messenger to other labor subjects of the consequences of stepping beyond the roles they are socioculturally expected to remain, including lack of justice being sought thereafter since the judicial system is a network involved in the exploit.

Political Subject

The way the maternal subject takes on the role of political subject simultaneously due to the effect of femicide has already been explored. But there are also examples of women who dare to challenge from the onset the sociocultural norms of female labor only having a place in the domestic sphere by assuming political subjectivity. Minerva Mirabal's notoriety in the eyes of El Jefe was earned due to her vocal opposition and organization efforts to overthrow his dictatorship over the Dominican Republic; his last resort was the decision to have her and her accompanying sisters assassinated to quell the overthrow efforts. More recently Marielle Franco's name continues to resonate loudly even after a year after her slaying due to the political fervor she instilled in the community members that she represented, specifically the poor, Black, gay and trans people of Brazil, at a time where conservative politics reigned and continue to do so. The same people carrying out that oppressive legislation under Jair Bolsonaro's current presidency are the ones that many people of the community also believe were behind Franco's femicide, albeit in the form of the militia, due to her position as a city councilmember that was in opposition to them down to her very being (Londoño 2019).

Similar circumstances have been observed throughout numerous occasions in Guatemala as well, particularly by scholar M. Gabriella Torres. In understanding what it means for a woman to be a political agent, she explores the 2011 Guatemalan presidential election in which several women ran for candidacy, including former First Lady Sandra Torres. The culmination of Sandra Torres' bid for candidacy was active and vocal rejection by the public due to her attempt to fight a constitutional rejection of candidacy by divorcing her husband, then-President Alvaro Colom. This choice on her part was refused, regardless of her attempts to phrase it as a selfless choice to do better for the Guatemalan public, "for most respondents Sandra's preference for political power over her wifely duties was the lowest point of 'moral depravity' that a country ten years

shy of orchestrating genocide had seen....An analysis of the public language surrounding the presidential divorce controversy shows that conjugal kinship ties shape the prevailing idea of a Guatemalan woman as a non-political subject...[and] are thus understood through cultural norms that privilege a women's marital status over a women's civic agency" (Torres 2015, 68-69).

What was witnessed and opposed publicly through these circumstances was the transgression of the boundaries set by the patriarchal structure being dictated in Guatemala once again by a female body, this time in the attempt to achieve political agency; an offense greater than the violence that fully disrupted sociocultural living due to the ability of that being more readily normalized than a woman challenging the political body as well as that very violent sphere.

La Violencia is how the lengthy civil war from 1960 until 1996 that upended Guatemalan life has come to be recognized, and is the source of the genocidal activity referenced during election. Despite an end to the historical period of *La Violencia*, violence resounds throughout the numerous communities of Guatemala continuously to this day. Historicizing the ways in which gender-based violence against women have been in place as far back as 1898, a trail is formed in how punishment on female bodies has continuously been inflicted when they act outside sociocultural norms and protection is not offered when sought out through judicial systems; the forms of punishment grow in their severity and frequency when the transition is seen through court cases of domestic violence and abuse charges shifting to cases of femicide, while impunity continues with minimal changes alongside it all (Carey and Torres 2010, 145-146; 148-150). At the height of *La Violencia*,

the display of young Ladino female guerillas in government-sponsored advertisements shows that women, because of their naivete (or lack of a 'sound, disposing mind'...), required guidance so as to not be lured by Marxist ideologies. Expanding on the pattern

established earlier in the century, these ads describe women as threats because, as teachers and caregivers, they had access to susceptible youth....Once defined as threats, through their gender, they became dispensable....[T]he military...provided moral justification for the impunity that undergirds today's femicides and murders of thousands of men (Carey and Torres 2010, 154-155).

The danger witnessed throughout these years of bloodshed is the reconstruction of the domestic sphere as a location requiring surveillance due to the potential for it to be a site of knowledge production and dissemination in opposition to the State. Political agency was seen as potentially achievable in the space it was expected to never reach; therefore, agents of that sphere who were deemed suspect were notably exterminated in order to maintain the locus of control in the favor of well-established sociocultural norms of a patriarchal state.

There is a way in which women can be afforded political subjectivity, or at least the ability to demonstrate it. Returning to Ciudad Juárez, when accusations were being directed by the grassroots organizations towards the president at the time, Vicente Fox, the establishment of the Commission for the Prevention and Eradication of Violence Against Women in Ciudad Juárez was put forth. The head of the office was Commissioner Guadalupe Morfín Otero. As discussed earlier, though, the office served as a façade for the Mexican government to appear as if attempts were being made to resolve the issue through meaningless solutions, and the appointment of a female body to be in charge, a piece of the greater play to subside the lack of acknowledgment towards femicide (Lozano 2019, 35-36). Contrary to Sandra Torres' attempt to truly achieve a political stature in which her decisions would institute change for Guatemala, Morfín Otero worked underneath Fox, who upheld the patriarchal structure of government that benefitted the continuation of femicide in Mexico during his presidency, and therefore, the

solutions offered during this time did nothing to actually deter the epidemic from flourishing. Thus, the potential for the female political subject is stifled under these circumstances from instituting true progress as her existence functions as an oppositional force against the patriarchal structure and the subjects it prefers be at the forefront of the woman's identity unless the political subject is deemed to be of service to greater patriarchal project to maintain power and control overall. Regardless of the position afforded or obtained, her role is inherently one of change.

Religious Subject

The role of the Church does not appear to be adequately observed as a participant in the structures that influence femicide, but its grasp on much of the Latin American region does pronounce it as a factor in creating the effect. Religious subjectivity is of great import in the establishment of the home on behalf of the female body, as so many of the social mores are preceded by it. In assuming labor and political subjectivity outside of the home, women are accused of being at fault for behavior that can be found detrimental to the community for shirking their labor subjectivity within the home (Olivera 2010, 54). Beske is able to tie this attitude to the religious institutions found in Belize since outside of the judiciary system, they are sites sought after to resolve social matters: "The highly influential Catholic Church, as well as the criminal justice system of the Belizean state, the two designated arenas to which IPV [Intimate Partner Violence] survivors are to turn for protection, offer little victim assistance due to gender ideology as well as perpetrators' social connections" (2015, 156). Due to this, women are forced to make choices about their religious subjectivity as they understand it as well as how they are understood to relate to it should they make any decisions that stray from the moral Christian ground that surrounds them. Even if it entails a matter that will greatly impact the continuation of their life, such as leaving an abusive home or spouse, or having an abortion after being raped, their religious subjectivity is in question; the female body is secondary in these

circumstances but she must move in ways that best honor the patriarchal structure within which the Church functions.

During the reign of General Ríos Montt in Guatemala, the use of Christian values as a method to assert military counterinsurgency was deployed as a way of convincing the public of the necessity of these actions to ensure Guatemala stayed unified and on the right track. Through weekly Sunday sermons to the public, Ríos Montt portrayed himself as a father to the nation making the best decisions for its survival and was “often invoked...as the provider of life. In the patriarchal family envisioned by the military, women were forced into a position where they depended on men for validation and the very life of their children....It situates women as existing within the family alone and assessing their role to the nation as mothers,” and the military, in turn, serves to protect these bodies as upholders of moral Christian values (Torres 2015, 61-62). Through this integration of religious invocation for political movement, the blurring of lines between the juridical and the moral served to create a greater dependence and trust in the State structure. Those who dissented and stepped outside their moral boundaries were forced to face that fathers of the state, the military leaders, who would determine whether they merited their rights as citizens or not; this was especially harmful to women, for any act of dissent would be seen as stepping beyond their role of subservient—in fact, believing that they were beyond the need for patriarchal guidance—and led to the deaths and disappearances of many (Torres 2015, 63). This example succinctly demonstrates the way in which the intersection of religious and political subjecthood for all living within the State, which stretches beyond Guatemala (i.e., the aforementioned strict abortion legislation in the Dominican Republic and the similar powers experienced in Belize), and how despite these subjectivities existing due to different factors, they

are capable of empowering each other in order to enact a sociocultural understanding in which opposition towards the State-sanctioned approach can justifiably lead to femicide.

Commodification

The commodification of the female body serves as a positionality that bridges many links together. In life, it is easy to connote the ways in which said body is commodified, but in death through femicide, it does continue to function as an understanding of the body. The maquiladora workers are sought after as labor subjects but objectified as sexual beings meant to service their higher-ups in order to maintain their labor subjectivity. The trafficked women are forced sexual objects in order for others' capital gain and their own survival. The mothers are sought after as labor subjects and religious subjects in order to maintain the patriarchal order in which they are expected to relegate themselves to without question. The woman whose life is lost due to femicide, though, undergoes so much through the lens of commodification: "The fragments of a body that once was an object of veneration represent signs of extreme cruelty....The destroyed vagina evokes the action and scrutiny of male aggression and female defenselessness...Although the bodies have been ripped apart, they are individual bodies. They are more than 'the dead women of Juárez,' as they are coded. The assassinated women have become things, but they are part of the social relations that turned them into sexually fetishized commodities" (Monárrez Fragoso 2010, 60).

In better conceptualizing this level of commodification, it is necessary to understand the level of overkill in which many of the discovered bodies have undergone. Part of what has led to the understanding of femicide as it has been defined here is due to the excessive state discovered bodies are left with the intention of being found; hence the graphic details Monárrez Fragoso goes through in order to exemplify how this is also a commodified state. The exhibition of the

destroyed female body comes with an acknowledgement of impunity as these actions “are considered natural. The women are not granted the right of citizenship but, rather, are marginalized and condemned to be victims of sexual assailants. The low value of the feminine body that does not adapt and that transgresses the border culture, the religious culture, the economic culture, becomes evident when the body is displayed in brutal décor that converts it into a sign of (in)significance (Monárrez Frago 2010, 68). The coding of the body through specific lacerations and brutal markers also transforms the body into a medium, not just for women to be oppressed to avoid transgressions, but to the enactors of femicide as well. Segato observes it to occur “in a clear call-and-response style” that is conducted via a language of violence where, once deployed, “a communication system with a violent alphabet...is very difficult to de-install and eliminate....Violence, constituted and crystallized within a communication system, is transformed into a stable language and comes to behave in the nearly automatic fashion of any language” (2010, 80-81). This conceptualization of violence as language enacted upon flesh, and specifically female flesh to meet particular means, helps to determine the persistence and perniciousness behind femicide within these communities. The body is left in an unrecognizable state, and yet it is clear that it could only have happened to a female body.

This is taken even further in the ways the female body is further made vulgar, both while living but even more grotesquely when dead:

Embodying the characteristics of the ideal of woman in the late 1950s, [Rogelia] Cruz Martínez was constituted—as Anne McClintock suggests is characteristic of colonial spaces—as an emblem of the nation through her body. As a Ladino beauty queen, and teacher representing Guatemala at the 1959 Miss Universe Pageant, Cruz Martínez was

the epitome of femininity. After Cruz Martínez was brutally murdered in 1968 (likely because of her student activism and/or a relationship with a revolutionary leader), Guatemalan newspapers emphasized that her murder was a loss to the nation because her body—the national symbol—had been violated....According to newspaper reports, Cruz Martínez’s ‘body[,][*sic*] wearing only a brassiere,’ showed signs of rape. Countless journalistic and semifictionalized accounts in the months that followed added to the sensational murder, suggesting that her body was skinned and had its breasts removed, and some proposed she was garroted to death....[Mary Jane] Treacy argues that, ‘because she entered the public arena and transgressed its rules, [Cruz Martínez][*sic*] became an image upon which vengeance was taken, witnessed, and enjoyed’—a practice that the state and its agents embraced during the civil war (Carey and Torres 2010, 153-154).

The details of Cruz Martínez’s murder reify the objectification of the female body throughout its existence. Having positioned her initially as a national emblem due to her traditional presentation as a sexual subject alongside her role as a labor subject by being a teacher—a public role that ties closely enough to the domestic sphere so as not to cause issue—her body and various subjectivities were propped as a message of achievement as well as a goal for women to strive towards. Once she propelled her political subjectivity to be just as visible though, her body was reassessed and determined to be a waste product. Initially, as her body was being read as synonymous to the nation of Guatemala, her femicide was understood as a violation against the state and public. Over time, though, her body would be restructured in the accounts detailing it to become more gruesome, more severely punished, her femininity destroyed; therefore, her body’s status as a symbol of the nation is removed as well due to her failure to maintain the expected

level of femininity in pursuit of achieving political agency. The media is therefore able to recommodify bodies as they see fit, allowing for many more stories of femicide to be suppressed, which in turn allows the State to avoid admission of the epidemic or claim fault in anything.

Interestingly enough, a group of women used their physical bodies as a way to propagate the message of femicide in a way that directly challenges the circumstances around Cruz Martínez's death: using the platform of the Miss Peru beauty pageant, In 2017, the pageant went viral due to the participants using the platform of their beauty to give statistics about the femicides occurring in their country when asked their statistics as well as having headlines and images of recent cases play during the swimsuit competition (Pérez-Rosario 2018, 279-280). Because beauty pageants function to demonstrate women as the feminine ideal within the patriarchal structure, and therefore are presented with the male gaze in mind, the contrast of images of bloody beaten dead women alongside the beautiful living women immediately creates a dichotomous relation between the experiences of the female body. While there is acknowledgment of the commodification the women are undergoing as pageant participants to exhibit beauty in its highest form, the demonstration exemplifies the fact that is not their sole function as they are women beyond the stage that are multiplicitous and despite their agency, still have the potential of being killed by the very men watching them. While this demonstration fails to fully account for the poor working women more frequently subjected to these acts of violence, not to mention the racialization omitted from the pageant that immutably play a role in many of the victims of femicide, the mobilization effort serves to challenge the systems enabling the gender-based violence.

The bodies harmed by femicide, though, have undergone yet another level of commodification in which they are attempted to be consumed as goods and products. This was

accomplished by a 2010 collaboration between the fashion brand Rodarte and the cosmetics brand MAC Cosmetics, both based out of the United States. The intention was to present a collection inspired by the desert and the sleepy appearance of the maquiladora workers, but, as will be discussed further, creates a greater distancing technique of the structural hierarchies to which both companies contribute so that those maquiladora workers are then found dead or never to be found again. As González Rodríguez viscosly points out, “In this way, MAC [and Rodarte] joins the drug traffickers, the economically and politically powerful, and the authorities that have protected them throughout the years....The marketing of makeup inspired by the drama along the US/Mexico border reflects that global culture has arrived at an incredible degree of amnesia and indifference....Global culture’s banality is a sister to those who wish to deny the problem of the murders of women in Ciudad Juárez” (2012, 94). Such commodification of the dead female bodies serves to attempt to erase them, an action that would support those in power looking to make the femicide crisis into a myth, while still benefitting from the pain their bodies left behind in what was visibly suffered on their behalf and the continued suffering of their families. For this reason, the collection was pulled before hitting shelves and a \$100,000 donation to various organizations was agreed to, but the action of repackaging the bodies for privileged living bodies still stings and reverberates in the historicizing of the epidemic (González Rodríguez 2012, 92-93).

Memorialized Subject

Not to be confused with the commodification of the female body in death, the memorialized subject is how the dead women continue to exist within their community. Through their death, the female body elicits more to political engagement in the pursuit of justice on their behalf. The politicized therefore use iconography to give continuity to the deceased as their existence is still valued as present for as long as the crime enacted against them goes

unremedied. The most recognized symbol is that of the pink crosses. Initially, the painting of pink—to represent the daughters—and black—to represent the loss—crosses on telephone poles served as a placeholder for the mothers in protest, for they could not forfeit their labor subjectivity in lieu of their political subjectivity. With the spread of their appearance, it served as a marker that the losses would not be forgotten and justice was still being pursued since they were strategically painted near government offices. The painted crosses, a symbol that demonstrates the overlap with the religious subject, gave way to erected wooden pink crosses that would stand in opposition outside government offices in their place, while painted crosses transitioned from telephone poles to rocks and concrete in locations where bodies would be found in order to warn other women (Lozano 2019, 75-80). These actions and symbols serve to prolong to communal memory of the memorialized subject while entangling them further in a religiopolitical subjecthood that they may not have sought to achieve while alive but were thrust into due to the matters of their death. The location of these crosses also serve to engage beyond the immediate State they are in through “the Mothers’ placement of the cross on the border, in no uncertain terms, indicts globalization, NAFTA, and free trade as culpable agents in relation to the *feminicidios* for the women of Ciudad Juárez” (Lozano 2019, 78).

The immediate State, however, while failing to openly acknowledge the femicide machine with the determination to end it, was forced to have a public monument erected due to the ruling of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights case. Given that the case was in relation to the “cotton field” discovery, it was set to be constructed in that location; a location that had become political ground for the mothers of the victims found there as they had already memorialized their daughters with well-maintained pink crosses over the years and utilized the public space for press conferences and protests. The monument erected in its place, though, does

not serve to retain a communal consciousness of the grotesque discovery it serves to commemorate, as it is enclosed with public deterrents such as high walls and a gate; is erroneous in naming the victims that were found there through misspellings, duplications and complete omissions; and remains an unfinished project (Lozano 2019, 71-73). Lozano also goes on to mention how unnecessarily large the monument is for the number of victims it serves to commemorate, reading this as the State sending a message for the expectation of many more femicides to occur since it is large enough to hold thousands of name plates, and those being held for the names of women who dare to be memorialized as failed subjects that were in turn punished (2019, 73-74). I further consider this monument to be an affront to those who continue to be vocal about femicide in the sense that its much bigger than the memorial site the mothers lovingly created, and such attention is what the State presumes they are seeking in the end. It is meant as a snide denial of their compliance in the structures that influence the epidemic; but in having their hand forced to create it, they were obscene in the amount of space it occupies while also leaving it unfinished for years, as it does not merit their time to complete it and truly be an accessible memorial that is acknowledged by anyone, State and citizen alike. To an extent, it is a silencing tactic that has worked in that most of the mothers' did not attend the unveiling of the monument and continue to refuse to visit the site since it does not serve their cause, and therefore, challenging the memorialization of the victims found on that land (Lozano 2019, 71).

Border Functions

This focus on Latin American development of femicide is not complete without the analysis of the border, and more importantly, the ways in which the United States has worked throughout this entire time to have control over these lines beyond just the border between itself and Mexico. As mentioned before, Trujillo's dictatorship came about due to him being hand-

selected to partake in the Dominican Republic's election in 1930 by the US government. The lead-up to this turning point in the country's history begins with the occupation of the United States in the Dominican Republic in 1916, based on an economic focus on the Panama Canal and observing nearby countries with the intent to also have control over them to ensure the investment was worthwhile. In order to successfully occupy the land, it was promoted under the guise of concern due to the volatile nature rumbling throughout much of Latin America as countries struggled with establishing a functional government with the recent string of independence granted to the former colonies; but it did not completely subdue the sentiment dwelling among the people. As the attacks from varying internal groups vying for control did stop, the Americans were not seen as welcome occupiers of the land, as their attempts to maintain the peace occasionally came at a cost—an experience known to the Mirabals through Chea, mother to Las Mariposas, when her own mother was approached by a revolutionary group for information or support but had nothing to offer. Meanwhile, a spy for the Americans had infiltrated the group and having witnessed the conversation, passed the details along to the occupying soldiers who proceeded to burn down their home for providing help to the group. Incidents such as these only fostered great bitterness towards the eight-year occupation, and the US in general (Mirabal 2011, 27-29). Political power needed to shift so an election was held, and Rafael Leónidas Trujillo Molina, or *El Jefe* as he was known, became President in 1930. Prior to this, Trujillo was a general who had spent his years training and serving under the US-trained Dominican National Guard, and through backdoor deals and use of secret police to intimidate and murder supporters of his opponents, he was able to win the election with ease, causing much of the political unease found among the public under the US occupation to shift onto him. The election served as an illusion of granting power back to the citizens of the Dominican Republic,

but due to the continued support by the US—they would not pull from the alliance until 1960, months before the sisters were assassinated—to enable the manipulative and destructive tactics *El Jefe* preferred to assert his power, his presidency transformed into a 31 year regime as dictator of the land.

The political and economic influence the US carried throughout much of Latin America was better displayed during the Cold War era as it continued to back leaders that would assume the role of dictator in their countries. This was done to ensure that communism would not spread beyond the USSR. What followed suit as the US stepped away and watched these circumstances play out from a distance were civil wars followed by debt crises that swarmed much of Latin America and the Caribbean, all of which cemented the language of violence as the norm. While many tried to escape the unlivable conditions to the beacon of hope that the US had been portended to be, attempting to enter as refugees as the Cubans had done when fleeing Fidel Castro, they were often refused. The 1980 Refugee Act sought to adjust and create ease for the influx of migrants, but before it could take effect, the Reagan administration was voted in and caused the granting of political asylum was made difficult once again, with the call for detention of all undocumented immigrants in place as well (Gonzalez 2011, 138-139). Alongside this activity, the US government saw that beneficial acts were underway in these governments that people were attempting to escape. This is most notably the case in El Salvador in 1980, when

a right-wing death squad assassinated San Salvador's archbishop Óscar Romero, a fierce critic of the Salvadoran junta, and several months later, four American Catholic nuns and lay workers were raped and killed by government soldiers... Instead of denouncing a government that would permit such atrocities, the Bush and Reagan administrations, believing that the country's oligarchy was the only reliable anti-Communist force,

rewarded that government. Washington quickly turned El Salvador into the biggest recipient of American military aid in Latin America. Seventy percent of the record \$3.7 billion the United States pumped into El Salvador from 1981 to 1989 went for weapons and war assistance. As the number of weapons in the country escalated, so did the numbers of Salvadorans fleeing the devastation those weapons caused (Gonzalez 2011, 134-135).

With the outward focus on putting an end to Communism, the US engaged as a complicit agent in the exacerbation of the language of violence in these regions while maintaining their role invisible to the American public (Gonzalez 2011, 131). The border played the role of a distancing tactic, ensuring that *those* problems were *over there* for those *other* people to resolve.

Despite the political projects proving to be a challenge in their achievement of success, the US sought to continue maintaining its influence in tact economically through its neoliberal expansion project. While not a new condition of the transnational relations at the time, there was a definitive boom in the eighties as US-owned factories took root in once-residential and native lands. With that came migrations to certain areas in the pursuit of work, as is often noted to be the case in Ciudad Juárez, but did not remain exclusive to there as these patterns were found in Peru, Ecuador, and Guatemala, among other regions. The US made itself an economic resource as it benefitted from the use of the natural and labor resources of Latin America—a long-standing tactic to reap the benefits of lower-wage labor as witnessed through the building of the Panama Canal, the Braceros program, and enlisting Puerto Ricans as US soldiers during World War II. Instead of pursuing violent interventions, they looked to promote moderate elites who promised that with neoliberal policies in place, the socioeconomic affairs of the State would shift for the better, and this proved successful in countries such as Venezuela, Peru and Bolivia where

collaborative work with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) came about. What was not expected was the way in which inequality and unemployment would continue to flourish in ways that could no longer be ignored by the public (Gill 2018, 77-78). The public would come to decide that the US interventions were not servicing their public and therefore merited the ousting of these leaders in favor of anti-neoliberal agendas that better embraced democratic participation, leading to the election of leaders such as Hugo Chávez in Venezuela, a known opponent to US foreign policy. Such elections would continue throughout Latin America in the 21st century as the countries attempted to get their own footing without the US being heavily involved in its matters now that it no longer could argue to be fighting against communism.

It did find new tactics to undermine those governments through a new focus on the Drug Wars, as mentioned previously in relation to Mexico. Observing how the US participates in this narrative, the requirement for intervention to suppress and eliminate drug trafficking from Mexico, as well as Colombia, is rooted in the rise in attention given to it alongside the War on Terror of the aughts. As a way to gain control over the border, linking the cartels to Al Qaeda in order to push them to be presented as “narco-terrorists” permitted an institute a politics of fear into all publics involved as well as ensure clearance to engage the narco-terrorists covertly. González Rodríguez clarifies this point by stating, “The objective is an imposition of an imperialist strategy: domination without direct military occupation, alternately combating risks like terrorism and radical populism....The United States *demand*ed this war from the Mexican government” (2012, 62-63). Expansion can be sought out progressively from there as much of Central America serves as passageways for drug trafficking and Colombian cartels follow behind that of Mexico’s. Much like the war on communism decades prior served to conceal a greater agenda through a simplified motive,

the problem of drug trafficking and violence cannot be reduced to a myth: the old-fashioned struggle between cops and robbers. Drug trafficking concerns the economy, politics, society, and culture....The urgency of the problem plays out between the search for democratic future, the gravitational pull of the global economy, and the weight of inertia and historic inequalities...The prodigal business of illegality is one of Latin America's greatest threats, since it sustains itself via economic and political powers that receive enormous benefits. Governments fight, or pretend to fight organized crime, but at the same time their bureaucracies and police and armed forces open themselves up to corruption. Words and deeds are at odds within this hypocritical discourse of manipulation (González Rodríguez 2012, 67-68).

At each phase of intervention, the networks that elicit the effect of femicide are at play, growing with every revision to the necessity for State-sponsored activity to hit the ground. The US looks to its involvement across the border as a revolving door while simultaneously allowing for it to be an impenetrable wall for any south of it attempting to come through due to the results of their own work.

It is through these analyses that an understanding of how the border is intended to function for the US State can be achieved, as it is irrefutably a blockade beyond its geopolitical function for immigration and exportation but also as a distancing technique from issues with a name. Uma Narayan succinctly details this further in her comparison of the dowry-murders of Indian women as they have been recognized through distant American analysis while deaths stemming from domestic violence on American land are not readily known. What the border affords is what she calls an "asymmetry of focus;" a lack of visibility, albeit not a complete disavowing, stateside of the extreme results of domestic violence compared to locations beyond

the border where femicide is witnessed and understood by the public (Narayan 1997, 89-93). In using the border to maintain both exported labor beneficial to American wealth and the issues that arose alongside it in the form of economic and political unrest, while also bolstering the focus on keeping a secure border from ills such as gang violence and war, drugs, and terrorism, it makes the result of femicide in those locations apparent to those secure and away from the elsewhere it occurs. The absence of femicide existing within the US is enhanced with the focus on the distinguishing factors occurring in Latin America, and in Narayan's case, in India, and omitting all the aspects that create similarities between those across the border and those within it; and further omitted are the factors bred by the US to influence the cycle all over.

Femicide's Veritable Existence in the US

Language other than femicide

It would be misleading to say that femicide has gone with little to no studies or information available in the Global North. However, it is understood under a superfluous amount of varying titles dependent on the area of study or medium in which it is being communicated; a hindrance to be observed in further depth momentarily. The murder of a female body is a homicide in the way that the word "man" has become synonymous to "people" with no regard for gender, even if it is a factor of note. While making appearances in recent years in dialogues within the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, femicide is more commonly referred to in documentation as "gender-related killings of women and girls" that experience homicide. In her call to bring greater focus on the topic within the realm of sociology, Shalva Weil discusses the recognition of the issue in the field as "female homicide victimization" or argued as something that simply falls under the category of genocide as "female genocide" (2016, 1129). The ties to

other -cides persist as long as the aspect of “female” is attached to it to clarify the issue of gender at play, yet it goes on to erase the functions of a nuanced understanding of what these victims have undergone due to the pre-existing factors that come attached to other words that can and are explored through the use of femicide.

Returning to Diana Russell’s usage as the one to have developed and deployed the term, she has expounded upon the definition over time as the discourse continued but most notably deeming it an act that is brought on by a patriarchal force in an effort to oppress the female body. However, Russell has also acknowledged that Rita Banerji’s evaluation of female genocide/gendercide sufficed in her analysis of femicides in India that led to the 50 Million Missing Campaign; therefore, femicide could adequately be deemed a sub-category of genocide but merited distinct acknowledgment from homicide (Russell 2012; Weil 2016, 1130). However, the decolonization the term has undergone through the analyses offered thus far by Latin American feminists activist-scholars serves to substantially inform how femicide can and should be understood in places like the US that have yet to adequately adopt the language and theory.

[The woman and her body, part ii](#)

In order to understand the function and potential of the contextualizing of femicide in the US, returning to the analysis of the multiplicitous woman in Latin America and seeing how it is applied to the woman in the US is required. To delve into the worlds where these same subjecthoods live, however, an exploration of the issues that are articulated in the US and how they bring about a femicidal effect is required. This will serve to bridge the seemingly unrelated issues and disconnected communities of women to show the ways in which such gender-based violence is indiscriminate and much more intricately connected than it is portrayed.

SESTA-FOSTA

The circumstances surrounding prostitution in the US have rapidly become a more normalized aspect of the conversation surrounding labor and legislation as decriminalization have become more present in public discourse. I look to word this cautiously because sex workers have a long history in being vocal about the need to achieve better legislation that offers them protection and autonomy; therefore it should be clear that this is not a circumstance in which they have become vocal as of late, so much as it is they are breaching the imposed silence they have been experiencing and breaking out as coordinated minority group, made of numerous other minority groups, with changes required to meet their human needs. In reviewing the meaning of SESTA-FOSTA legislation for the sex worker as a monumental piece of legislation that bolstered their voice, to a certain extent, Stern is able to detail the history of these organizations' efforts over the past century. The first point to draw from Stern's article is the comparative analysis between a 1917 policy instituted in San Francisco alongside 2018's passing of the Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act (SESTA) and the Allow States and Victims to Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act (FOSTA); both of which were advocated for and passed under the guise of protecting women and children from sex trafficking with no acknowledgment of the effects they would have on consenting sex workers. The conflation of sex work and sex trafficking with the knowledge of women and girls being the primary target locates the female body in this perspective as a helpless sexual object where sex is imposed as a punishment, regardless of the conditions or the year.

The contortion of language and what became part of common lexicon fed into the institution of the 1917 policy gaining the weight it did through

“the term [‘white slavery’]... distinguished between the ‘between the slavery of black women,’ which had been ‘abolished in America,’ and the ‘slavery of white women [that] continues in Europe,’ according to a pamphlet in 1902. Tales of virginal young white women kidnapped and sold into sexual slavery—sensationalized, and in many cases demonstrably false—were read by hundreds of thousands in England, and activists seized on public anger to demand an end to the tacit acceptance of prostitution;”

this traveled quickly and was adopted with ease in the US as the need to “‘rescue’ prostitutes from white slavery” can be found recorded in Los Angeles in 1909 (Stern 2019, 47-48). The following year, the White-Slave Traffic Act, currently recognized as the Mann Act—existing with several amendments made that distinguish it from its original iteration, was passed by Congress with a clear intent to address the issue of trafficking but enacted by the arrests of brothel madams and consensual sex workers more often than actual male patrons (Stern makes a point to identify that an agenda of targeted arrests based on race or politics did occur against certain notable men) (Stern 2019, 48). Following this trend is the climactic result in San Francisco in 1917, where a push from a Reverend to clean up the community from the vices found in the litter of brothels throughout the Upper Tenderloin and Barbary Coast red-light districts led to the establishment of a “morals squad” backed by the city and law enforcement and a mass raid caused the shuttering of nearly a hundred brothels and over a thousand of women left to the streets (Stern 2019, 44; Asbury 1933). What failed to happen afterwards was to ensure that supposed “white slaves” were truly saved, as the sex workers were forced to continue to work without the safety provided of the controlled environment of the brothel and instead becoming endangered and extorted labor subjects under male pimps and organized crime leaders and for women to continue being targets of arrests and violent assaults by clients and law enforcement

alike. What this scenario does demonstrate however is the power in a unified and accepted message behind the issue of “white slavery”—then “traffic” come 1921—alongside the image associated of the female body as a sexual object that needs to be saved (Stern 2019, 50).

Therefore, the body is interpreted as its commodified form as well as it is medium carrying a message of enslavement; a message that the consenting sex worker is fully incapable of reading for the patriarchal religiopolitical system at play is serving as guide and savior.

Discourse surrounding SESTA-FOSTA mimicked what happened in San Francisco as the lead-up to passing of both bills jointly as in both cases the sex workers organized to establish their voice in what the effects of the respective legislation would have on their livelihood, which unsurprisingly led to similar results, albeit via different safeguards being destroyed. The intent behind SESTA-FOSTA was to further address the 1996 Communication Decency Act’s (CDA) article intended to have addressed human trafficking, Section 230. The failure behind Section 230 was its vague and broad circumstances to cause the shutdown of any internet content providers that could be arguably involved in human trafficking, “essential to the analysis of a claim against a service in whether the claim treats the provider as a publisher or speaker of another’s words. If so, this law precludes such a cause of action.... ‘A party ‘can be both an interactive computer service and a content provider.’ If the party is a content provider, then the plain language of the statute offers it no protection” (Leary 2018, 563). This allowed many targeted providers, such as Backpage and Craigslist, to bypass any crackdowns in court through the protection Article 230 lent them; that is, until they were adequately challenged upon the push for SESTA-FOSTA. As was the case in the past, though, the autonomous perspective of sex workers as labor subjects who primarily utilized these platforms to create safeguards for their work—access to forums to discuss clients, ability to screen clients, control over their work and

finances—was forfeited as the bills were introduced and, in the case of FOSTA in particular, went through changes that were even opposed by the advocacy groups originally pushing for it in order to benefit tech corporations further. Originally, the focus of FOSTA was to address the link between child pornography and sex trafficking in order to tackle the use of the former on the platforms of interest in their advertising and to provide victims compensation for any related charges at the state level as well as ability to sue them at the state and federal levels. However, after objections in the House came up to achieve a new version,

“the Goodlatte Substitute FOSTA...required proof that a website intentionally facilitated prostitution. Intent requires the showing of purposeful or knowingly facilitation prostitution. As a result, the use of code language, innuendo, and ambiguity that is prevalent in these ads present similar challenges to prosecutors....[The] language is exactly like the Cox-NetChoice proposal and was proposed precisely because it did not create a private right of action. It simply repeated the language of [section] 230, which has been interpreted to mean that a website is immune from prosecution or civil action unless it is a content creator” (Leary 2018, 615).

This version would come to pass alongside SESTA, which at least afforded victims right to action federally, but it is clear where their opposition stems from and even more so the way in which sex workers are attacked once again at the legislative level.

Once in place in April of 2018, and with the buildup prior to then causing preemptive action as well by some providers, sex workers lost the security they had cultivated through the Internet. They were put out to work on the streets again, and their yells of endangerment prior to the passing of the bills resounded four months later in Ohio with the death of Donna Castleberry after she was shot by an undercover police officer. The case was followed with incredibly light

coverage, one of which included an interview with a representative of the Christian non-profit organization 1DivineLine2Health that indirectly claimed Castleberry was being trafficked due to an association and reliance on drugs, of which she had no history of either being the case (Luna 2018; Weiner 2018). The ways in which the religious and political structures look to rearrange the story surrounding the leadup to the female body in this case—reports explain that the lead up to this was that the assigned cop approached her undercover due to a warrant out for her arrest based on an existing misdemeanor charge for solicitation, and in her action of stabbing the officer, he shot her eight times in self-defense—reflect the circumstances of the sex workers a century earlier (Weiner 2018). The influence of SESTA-FOSTA on this femicide fails to be recognized beyond the inner-circles of sex workers and advocates supporting the decriminalization of their work. In doing so, these labor subjects are reduced to sexual objects once again, and as bodies functioning under the religiopolitical structure found within the US, their loss is one that goes unrecognized beyond those immediately affected. Their bodies serve as warnings to others to change their ways and become true labor subjects that contribute to the systemic structures rather than function against them; even if she truly had been a trafficked woman, the association with being influenced by drugs positions her at fault and recognizes her as sexual object needing to be saved regardless. Additionally, they are locked into silence due to the lack of media attention given to the effects SESTA-FOSTA has had on these bodies, and therefore continued instances of femicide within this group go underreported.

Abortion and Feticide

Delving deeper into the religiopolitical US structure and how that ties to the woman's subjecthoods in these regards, the fluctuation surrounding the issue and legislation of abortion provides the necessary example. The strong arguments and staunch advocates for the right to life of a fetus provide an incredible contrast to the female bodies that bear them. Despite the

establishment of *Roe v. Wade* as federal legislation that abortion is legal—alongside with *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* providing clarification on the need to ensure an undue burden was not placed upon the woman—the religiopolitical sector, driven by the guise of Christian morals and family values, continues to find ways to deter access to abortion and ultimately overturn the law. The most recent example to reach the Supreme Court level is *June Medical Services v. Gee*: coming from the state of Louisiana after a law passed in 2014 “requires doctors who perform abortions to have admitting privileges at a local hospital in case of an emergency” (McCammon 2019). It actually reflects very similarly to a case that reached the Supreme Court in 2016, *Whole Woman's Health v. Hellerstedt*, based out of Texas, where it was determined then that such requirements do place an undue burden on women and therefore was deemed unconstitutional; unfortunately, the political climate has changed so significantly in that time that it has allowed for this case to reach the Supreme Court and for the question to be raised once again. The basis for the discourse surrounding these cases is positioned as an intent to ensure the care of women should any issues arise during the procedure, but the close ties found in religiopolitical representation within the government allows for Christian values opposing abortion to validate their support, as one female State Senator mentioned their need ““to serve God before I serve man in the legislature”” when spoken to in 2014 (qtd in McCammon 2019).

Further justification lies in the recognition of the fetus as a human in existence already but developing in the womb, rather than an unborn and developing being without personhood, and it is this line of thinking that helps determine the legal period women are allowed to obtain an abortion per state. After Alabama’s strictest requirements in which the procedure is banned unless a woman’s life is at risk, the next restrictions—found in states such as Mississippi, Georgia, and Louisiana—is based on the ability to hear the heartbeat of the fetus, which can be

within the first trimester as early as six weeks and before the woman even knows that they are pregnant (“Fight Over US abortion rights” 2019). Due to additional legislation found per state that can create delays and restrictions for women to pursue an abortion, crossing state lines and driving over hundreds of miles to go elsewhere is not an uncommon circumstance for women to undergo, particularly in the more rural areas of the US (McCammon 2017). It is also the same ideology that allowed for Marshae Jones to be charged with manslaughter in 2019 after she suffered a miscarriage during a fight in which she was shot by someone else—who was said to be acting in self-defense and thus dismissed, in Alabama (Allyn 2019). The issue of fetal homicide or feticide is recognized in 38 states, and it was clear that the life of the fetus took precedence, as it often can, in this case.

Despite the separation of church and state in the US distinguishing it from the circumstances described before in certain Latin American contexts, similar restrictions brought on by a Christian value system come to affect the female body, and especially if she is pregnant. Religious subjectivity is imposed upon her with the expectation that her body fulfill its role as vessel of life, regardless of what external issues may also influence the inability to sustain it—lack of economical viability; lack of desire to provide adequate care to life; outcome of trauma-inducing gender-based violence. To seek an abortion is treated as a shameful act, and ironically one of the few moments where sexual autonomy is recognized and also imposed; therefore, it is viewed as a rejection of womanhood to those in opposition and thus necessitates punitive legislation that limits the ability to obtain abortion at the cost of being criminalized. It is here that the religiopolitical structure seeks to dominate the female body in order to determine that there is higher value in the creation of life of a fetus—with insufficient buffers of support to keep it alive afterwards—than that of the vessel that must carry and sustain it. Furthermore, there additional

expectation of the woman to assume the role of a maternal subject and prioritize it from the moment it is determined they are pregnant; yet another encumbrance upon the female body all based on expectations brought on by the patriarchal establishment on the sociopolitical plane.

Domestic Violence Breeds Intimate Partner Homicide

With greater acknowledgment being given to the issue of domestic violence since it was allowed to be recognized outside of the home in the 1970s through the work of conscious-raising women groups, the bridge to greater information about the most recognized instance of femicide, at the hands of an intimate partner, has been developed. However, the numbers continue to be problematic on a global scale for this type of femicide and has yet to reach the point in which solutions are being driven beyond the protocol established by law enforcement, which can serve to expedite the death of women rather than protect them. “A Washington Post analysis of 4,484 killings of women in 47 major U.S. cities during the past decade found that nearly half of the women who were killed — 46 percent — died at the hands of an intimate partner. In many cases, they were among the most brutal deaths, and the most telegraphed” (Zezima et al. 2018). The transition of domestic violence being identified as a domestic issue into that of a social issue sets the groundwork for the need to recognize femicide in the same vein, particularly in how it is disseminated in the news media. Their function is important as the tool that is able to propel issues into the zeitgeist and is thus a common source of analysis among academics who observe the ways domestic violence and intimate partner femicide are construed by the public. Unfortunately, what also remains an element of the tool is the function of appeal to consumers and the effect this has in how such information is disseminated and can be (mis)understood. “Journalists have participated in obscuring the dynamics of femicide” in their failure to ask beyond the information they obtain from police descriptions, where omissions occur and lead to equal blame to be understood as the cause per Campbell’s analysis of femicide and how it was

reported in Dayton, Ohio in 1980 (1992, 110). An analysis of numerous frames utilized by news media conducted by Gillespie et al. during 2002-2007 in North Carolina helps to situate the portrayal of the victim and the perpetrator as well as the role of information versus appeal further.

The concept of frames being observed are as “prepackaged social constructions that function as fully developed templates for understanding a given social phenomenon” by the general public so the influx of information they receive they are able to “easily categorize, label, and manage” all of it (Gillespie et al. 2013, 225). In reviewing hundreds of articles, they found that frames were split among articles that did define the circumstances of femicide as having stemmed from domestic violence, and those that did not. Existing research had identified five frames: (1) a focus on the behavior of the victim, to the extent of blaming them and excusing the perpetrator; “(2) normalizing the event as commonplace;” (3) the event accounts for an isolated event; (4) an indication of the circumstances surrounding the event as something outside of the norm, usually in relation to the descriptions of the victim and/or the perpetrator; and (5) perpetrators are classifiably “disordered” humans, even to the public eye (Gillespie et al. 2013, 227). Additionally, three more frames were developed through the group’s research which included: (6) perpetrators being blamed after experiencing a loss of control; (7) the minimization of the femicide in lieu of a crisis experienced by the victim and/or perpetrator—this was most notably associated with degenerative disorders and caretaker stress; and (8) the understanding of domestic violence as a broader social problem. With these frames in place, the analysis of their articulation proved that some, such as the use of the commonplace frame, were most notable and relied upon in articles that acknowledged as well as those that failed to acknowledge the role of domestic violence leading to femicide. The distinction can be clarified through the ways the

articles viewed the event as “just another homicide” versus those that observed “just another incident of domestic violence;” the former went on to obscure the ability to identify the relation between the murder to the issue of domestic violence while the latter allowed itself to be open to an interpretation that recognized the role of domestic violence but only as that of a lost cause (Gillespie et al. 2013, 237-238). Both interpretations lead to a fatalistic understanding of femicide that resounds throughout many of the frames, some of which completely skew the information due to its removal of the association to domestic violence; that is with exception to the social problem frame. What is found here is the way in which the components of the media frame—sources, language, and context—are at its most explored here. There is diversity in the use of sources stretching beyond law enforcement and immediate neighbors to also include domestic violence advocates, close relations (i.e. family and friends), and history found through court records to weave a longer story than the sudden incident. The language goes beyond the details of what has happened to include advice and contact information to readers who may find themselves on a similar trajectory in order to prevent the continuation of the epidemic it is attempting to establish. Another significant detail that is derived in these articles is the multifaceted woman depicted beyond her association to the perpetrator as an effort to retain the human life lost to a broader communal issue and leaving a communal impact rather than objectively detail a single murder. Unfortunately, the disconnect between information and appeal can be found here the most given this frame was found in only 12% of the total articles reviewed out of 226 and could be argued to fall under a particular bias that would forfeit the kind of attention that other articles applying the commonplace frame (52% spread between defined versus non-defined articles) or the isolated incident frame (17%) (Gillespie et al. 2013, 233). Further, what remained pronounced from the time of Campbell’s work in Dayton in 1980 to the

prolonged study in North Carolina in the 2000s was that despite the minimization brought on by the frames used, there was the captivating factor of a young white “ostensibly virginal” middle-class woman’s murder meriting thorough media attention over that of women of color (Campbell 1992, 110; Gillespie et al. 2013, 227). The segregation of not only the type of harm inflicted but the type of female body that is harmed committed by the media is indicative of the sole memorialization phenomenon found in the US, to be addressed shortly.

Prior to exploring the subjects found through this type of trauma, a connection should be drawn between the information shared by the media as it has just been established, and the portrayal of the events as told by surviving male perpetrators. Through data and analysis derived from the Violent Men Study conducted in Scotland, while not in the US, is able to help create connections to what information gets disseminated to the public and how appeal is derived from such. Similar to how violence was identified as a language communicated upon the female body in Ciudad Juárez, violence was identified here “as ‘strategies’, as purposeful, reactive and proactive tactics designed to mitigate their responsibility for violent behaviour” (Cavanagh et al. 2001, 700). Violence was not solely based on the physical enactment upon harmed bodies but continued in the tactical language used to describe it on behalf of the perpetrators afterwards. When confronted with it and asked for their accounts, culpability was not found within them immediately as they approached it through the following four tactics:

- *Denial*: Not a complete refute of culpability, denial was presented in the form of behavior that was not as violent as what would be considered “real” violence against men and therefore they were considerably “non-violent” since they did not hurt others.
- *Blame*: Absolving of culpability by relaying it to other people or outside circumstances.

This would often take the form of landing upon the women themselves for provoking the

outrage through some failure in their performance as a woman. Through blame, normalization of domestic violence ensues.

- *Minimization*: Deeming the act with a level of “unseriousness” due to the vulnerable nature of their female partner meaning that they would inherently suffer harm at any slight act of aggression directed towards them and therefore it was nothing compared to the harm inflicted upon established acts of violence like those found in war. Language like “batterer” and “abuser” were unacceptable, but “just” or “wee” along with “incident” and “fight” insinuated the severity of the violence as well as a gender-neutral understanding of culpability in which the woman was also complicit (Cavanagh et al. 2001, 705-706).
- *Reduced Competence*: Guilt is derived from ineptitude brought on by a known external cause such as alcohol or an unusual temper. The blame was conflated with the cause and acknowledgment that should that factor be removed, then the violence would no longer happen; or, in the case of a temper, that the experience of a loss of control was so extreme that it was a detached form of themselves, so a maintenance of their control would keep everything in check.

Once fault could be adequately accorded based on their level of acceptance, the men would proceed to apologize, but this was also executed in manners that served a strategic means. To apologize requires a “splitting of the self, ‘into a blameworthy part and a part that stands back and sympathises with the blame giving and by implication is worthy of being brought back into the fold’” (Cavanagh et al. 2001, 708). The latter self therefore engages in a performance through the apology that enables results such as: managing the power dynamic in taking control of their culpability and the extent in which it is associated to him; bringing

about acceptance in the form of disconnecting events within the relationship to determine violence as an outlier rather than their norm; limiting dialogue after apologizing in order to prevent confrontation regarding deeper issues inciting violence such as jealousy or codependence; and forgiving and forgetting is the norm in ensuring a functional relationship (Cavanagh et al. 2001, 707-709).

This discourse of self is key as it indicates an attempt by male perpetrators to distinguish multiplicity within themselves in order to achieve advantageous results out of the relationship while multiplicity within their female victims is usually the cause of their harm and thus the expectation is for a static self that best satiates their male partner. This does not fall into the concept of the multiplicitous being as it has been derived by Ortega, though, for the female body described before in Latin America is a being with layers that exist as a simultaneous self, all her experiences in tact to develop those senses, rather than the disconnected form the male perpetrators are attempting to ascertain by valuing certain experiences to preserve control. What is lost is the understanding that “the multiplicitous self is located at a point from which she is able to see the various worlds she inhabits through her multiple imaging, and she might be able to evaluate one world by way of her understanding of other worlds....Thus the multiplicitous self as being-between-worlds has the possibility of developing a critical attitude precisely at the points where her different worlds overlap and intersect” (Ortega 2016, 135). In their attempt to separate and perform different versions and identities, the perpetrators lose the development of their multiplicitous self as their power assertion ultimately does not require it of them as their performance does not necessitate a lived experience.

Furthermore, the men and the news media reflect similar ideologies in how they choose to represent women in their accounts by reducing her to a singular subject that is often associated with the proprietary value ascribed to them. The parallels can clearly be drawn between the frames that discredit the connection between domestic violence leading up to femicide and the accounts of male perpetrators down to the reiterated language of “normalizing,” “minimizing,” “blaming” external circumstances or “loss of control” or “disordered” competency or the victim herself; it goes on to reflect the power behind media establishing the frame of domestic violence as a broader issue due to these existing parallels between personal and social accounts and how the information contained within them becomes disseminated communally at the micro and macro levels.

The reduction of the female body is left to her role as a sexual subject, complicit in her engagement with her partner as viewed by the news media, or object, as she is viewed as proprietary by her partner and thus granting him the power to exterminate her when she objects to her role, and that of labor subject in her ability to be a supportive partner regardless of the needs imposed upon her and to uphold their domestic sphere accordingly. It is in asserting their autonomy as a multiplicitous subject that the perpetrators feel they are trying to shirk the norms they have cultivated and therefore just punishment is merited to retain the limited sphere within which the female body is allowed to exist. This is seen in how the articles that utilize the social problem frame note multifaceted descriptions for the victim beyond her relation to her partner but her communal role and the subjects associated with that, whether they be maternal, political, or an autonomously sexual subject. Brutality is statistically present in US femicides, but the female bodies that undergo that experience may not always undergo the commodification found in Latin America. Due to the domestic nature

of these incidents, the broader message of violence is not communicated to others in the same way, and this is especially the case depending on the type of female body upon which excessive violence is inflicted—if it is not a young, white, affluent body that would have been deemed sexually exceptional, it is not a body that merits necessary protection beforehand nor extensive communication after the fact.

Masculinities, Rape Culture, and Mass Shootings

Lastly, I would like to observe the function of group formations surrounding the concept of masculinities and how this further programs the social approach to femicide without calling it out as such in the US. Masculinities further the breaks found within the domestic violence perpetrator that attempts to segment and compartmentalize himself as it is the influence that dictates the fractured approach to his violence as the inability for solely one masculinity to exist enables engagement with the various styles of performance to also do so in a disjointed manner. While patriarchy does loom above it all as the structure that enables the gendered inequalities that position men as dominant and women as submissive, masculinities serve as the activities, performances, and discourses deployed by men to assert the narratives that assert the value and need of the patriarchal structure (Morris and Ratajczak 2019, 1983; Lawson 2020, 415-416). Various masculinities that have been understood and analyzed include hegemonic masculinity, where “the practices that men and others use to position themselves in relation to the ‘most honored way of being a man,’ or the current masculine ideal; hyper or hostile masculinity, the exaggeration of certain qualities although most notably in violent and sexist qualities; and hybrid masculinity, a much more aware performance of their role in patriarchy and therefore they look to “conceal their gender privilege” (Morris and Ratajczak 2019, 1988, 1994). The functions of the qualities of control, power, dominance, and entitlement determine the masculinity approach

taken by men when engaging with women, as well as with each other; thus providing the basis for the violence regularly expressed and expected in their language and actions (Lawson 2020, 417). These qualities are significant due to their transcendence among the various masculinities because they are the commonalities ever present that determine how men approach the social relations that surround them; this is noted in Morris and Ratajczak's work when it is noted how the application of both hegemonic and hostile masculinity is understood in both athletic and military groups, and this social expectation of men involved in these roles allow for understanding how violence is expressed, but more insidiously, how it is overlooked or forgiven (2019, 1986, 1988). Before delving deeper into femicide itself, an assessment of the function of rape culture in the US is merited alongside the very athletic context within which these masculinities are upheld. A study of rape culture offers two important assessments needed before examining femicide in its relation to masculinities: it is currently portended to be the worst circumstance that the female body can experience in the spectrum of violence in America, and that is determined due to the fact that it is a phenomenon already grounded in the US with organizational and legislative efforts in place.

The public discourse surrounding rape culture it often positions it as the subject of a woman's greatest fear in the US due to its prevalence throughout all facets of American life, but is thoroughly cemented within the college experience due to the approach often taken when it reaches a high-profile status due to the involvement of male athletes. While difficult to nail down concrete statistics due to the high number of underreporting of sexual assault crimes overall, from the information available, various studies and analyses have helped to identify the role of masculinities in the seemingly high rate of violence against women brought on by male athletes at the collegiate level and beyond with insufficient conviction rates to match in cases where the

assault is apparent. In MacGregor's analysis of elite male athletes and the hyper-focus that comes with cases of sexual violence against them, she identifies that such language and activity flourishes among members within "power and performance sports," most notably football and basketball (2018, 47-48). The indication of these traits inherent to masculinity as qualities essential to the sports themselves immediately set the understanding of the expectations of the athletic members engaging in them, and as elite athletes, it is an expectation they are intended to exceed. Because of the recognition of these memberships as power and performance sports, it also expresses how role of masculinity is not something approached individually but through collective engagement and growth as it determines entry as an athletic member, sustains their membership, and enables their accolades to be achieved. It also privileges them to be forgiven as it is widely understood that their nature is to engage aggressively as an athlete and as a man, therefore the consequences of those actions should not be punished as severely, for they are not just the masculine ideal, but supersede it in their elite status.

Entry to this role establishes a lot of what is to follow in the sequence of events that occur within the sexually violent act towards women. These are not exclusive to athletic programs, as MacGregor points out the similarity to stories that come out of fraternities as well, but nonetheless entail the following: (1) "insular nature;" (2) "high rates of sexual violence against women;" (3) "gender uniformity;" (4) "regular group activities;" (5) "celebration of heterosexual masculinity;" (6) "demeaning of those outside of the group;" (7) "sexualizing of women;" (8) "pressure to conform;" (9) "pledges of secrecy and loyalty;" (10) "hazing rituals;" (11) "erasure of one's individual identity for the identity earned as a part of the group" (2018, 50). These aspects are later described within the application of a "total institution" construct where it is apparent that achieving membership also entails greater disconnect from the larger social groups

within which the elite athlete may be a part of in order for their role as athlete to be central to their identity and their livelihood, and therefore, the production of that masculinity must exude in actions that enable that disconnect such as violent language towards determined enemies and violent acts upon female bodies (MacGregor 2018, 56-58).

The female body as it is understood in this overall analysis offered by MacGregor, and those it bridges within it, as an object through and through. From its use as a reward during the recruitment process, to the way it is violently implicated in the language used against rivals or to challenge the masculinity of other members, to the violence inflicted upon it directly during sexual encounters in which the notion of consent is blurred due to the entitlement to the female body as well competitive nature that can come with rape as she is “sexually passed between men like a beer or a cigarette;” she is always a sexual object that only adds value to her athletic assailant within his group as a commodified subject (MacGregor 2018, 57). If an attempt to seek repercussions for his actions within a court of law occurs, his hegemonic masculinity protects his hypermasculine performances with power displayed through his dynamic-shifting influences (university administrators, coaches, donors with interest in sports programs) as well as the value placed more highly on his skill as an athlete to the general public than that of a woman who is understood to have been a sexual object in that moment, and nothing more; therefore, *she* is nothing more.

The repeated examples of impunity bestowed upon athletic assailants demonstrates to the public that as elite members, they are entitled to the female body more so than the woman is entitled to not experience violence, and thus, the masculine ideal can aggressively pursue a sexual object with little-to-no risk to their social role. This was emphatically indicated during *People v. Turner* where the judge was open in his compassion for the assailant of Chanel Miller

as a promising swimmer and therefore did not want to sentence him to more than six months so that his future was not wholly damaged. However, this particular case did shift the dynamic of the US with relation to rape as the illusion of hegemonic masculinity was not applicable to the assailant, and that his performance as well as that of the sentencing judge were acts of hypermasculinity so damaging that it necessitated a cultural and legislative shift to better support survivors like Chanel Miller from physical as well as linguistic, intellectual, and judicial acts of violence. Nonetheless, it continues to be upheld as a case in which impunity was influenced by the role of masculinities from the start of the assault to the aftermath of the case and sentencing itself.

Serving as a self-determined foil to the hegemonic masculinity applied to elite male athletes is the virtually-founded group known as “involuntary celibates” or “incels.” Morris and Ratajczek succinctly summarize the group and their performance of masculinity as follows:

Incels protest their position in the masculine hierarchy and oppose hegemonic symbols (e.g., “chads”). Yet, instead of crafting a gender-egalitarian response, incels redefine their claims to power through masculinity. These men still define themselves in terms of their ability to gain sexual possession of women as traditional hegemonic codes maintain, but express frustration toward women and dominant men for not allowing them this access. They not only respond with violent rhetoric and actions toward women in general but also see themselves as intellectually superior to other men and women. Indeed, the discourse of incels and other misogynistic men’s groups online is not one of subordination and pity, but one of superiority and power (2019, 1997).

The incels occupy an interesting space in the discourse of masculinity due to their opposition to men who are deemed the masculine ideal, but still carry the expectations associated with that

particular ideal in relation to their position and relationality towards women. This in turn brings about discourse that can initially reflect hybrid masculinity when the notion of the *nice guy* is applied and there is a covert gender dynamics applicable in how the athlete's reputation of sexual exploits and violence assert their own better treatment and respect for women—this is done in order to gain access to their own sexual relations. However, what the incels have become reputed for is the extremity they have developed in their sector of the “Manosphere”—the loose collection of groups revolving around common shared interests in men's rights in society with strong development found online—and the ease with which violence against women is deployed in their verbal interactions, and more worrisome, in their performance as mass shooters in recent years (McCulloch et al. 2019, 443; Papadamou et al. 2020, 1). Because they still recognize themselves as members that hold power but are forced into an uncontrollable situation where they are such outcasts that they scientifically could not be deemed attractive and therefore do not have access to that value capital that is the female body, they look to engage in aggressive dialogue to express their hostile masculinity among other members safely within their echo chamber. However, when one of them goes on to commit a mass killing where they admit their status as an incel and their intention themselves after slaying women—either actual targets or representatives they encounter, they proceed to be revered among the community for ascending to the utmost demonstration of masculine power and entitlement, adding to the overall fantasy collectively constructed (Murray 2016, 737, 740-741). Such was the outcome of the mass killing in the University of California–Santa Barbara campus on May 23, 2014 in which six people were killed and 14 other injured. The self-proclaimed incel that perpetrated this violence had a traceable history denoting his growing misogynistic fantasies of torture, both online and off, with an entire manifesto detailing it completely; and once it culminated into his grand act of violence

in which he also killed himself, he was, and continues to be, lauded within the community as a martyr/saint (in an ironic-yet-fully-embraced-manner) and the pinnacle of masculinity for the incel community (Beauchamp 2019). Arguably, his actions led to a significant growth in the community when positioned alongside the analysis Papadamou et al. provided as they noted the spike in interest and access to incel-related content on YouTube and Reddit in 2016 (2020, 5). Lastly, it speaks to the “strong overlap between toxic masculinity and public mass shootings...[where] in at least 22 mass shootings since 2011—more than a third of the public attacks over the past eight years [till the time of this publication]—the perpetrators had a history of domestic violence, specifically targeted women, or had stalked and harassed women,” with the growth of the group matching these figures and notorious members being some of the most recognized culprits in this period of time (Follman 2019).

The issue of mass killings, with a focus on school shootings in the US, does demonstrate issues of impunity against hypermasculinity in its own way as well. This is due to the lack of legislation that has not been put in place to address the threats within the echo chambers that may not necessarily reach the intended victims, but serve as a crumb among many more leading to tragic action that leaves people, and most intentionally, women dead. The language in the federal anti-threat statute as derived from the case *Virginia v. Black* has maintained such vagueness and has been approach by the Supreme Court with such trepidation to infringe upon First Amendment freedom of speech rights that it has failed to address the issue of “true threats” head on, and thus, allowed for such grand acts of violence to occur at a rising pace. The FBI has even recognized that the threats found in these spaces are what they have identified as “legacy tokens” that set to be deliberately discovered after their violent acts occur and instances of “leakage” when the incel’s fantasies or intentions are divulged preemptively (Casey 2019, 76-77). To have

that information alongside the analysis of rapid growth since 2016 cross-platform activity beyond dedicated forums and more mainstream platforms such as YouTube as found in Papadamou et al.'s study, shows the lack of precedent being placed on these male aggressors with a very vocal potential of inciting greater loss, with pride at their contribution to femicide.

Before closing on this topic, I would like to make clear how the role of hypermasculinity is present in these two groups that seemingly function at opposite ends of the male ideal spectrum. To do this, one more group will be loosely addressed, and that is the military—another group that is often tied to the performance of hegemonic masculinity in particular. The notion of war is one that arises among both the athletes and the incels, albeit in very different deployments; with athletes, it is geared to their performance among each other in competition while with incels, it is targeted towards women specifically. The way in which the masculine ideal that is expected to face the most direct violence head-on is associated with others masculine groups to attempt to position them on a similar platform albeit within alternative realms speaks to the inherent role of violence and the influences that support it—power, control, domination, and entitlement—within masculinity overall. For athletes, this is associated with a sentiment MacGregor calls the “win at all costs” environment, which levies their bodies with the greatest value they can offer, and thus it must be guarded from any infractions they may engage in for the sake of the victories and all the financial gain and prestige accompanied with it (2018, 59-60; 65). For the incels, their membership in related forums allows them to feed, rather than deconstruct, collective anger and resentment, allowing them to maintain their masculine presence by demonstrating that over their vulnerability and therefore, they forego feelings of sadness, disappointment, and most importantly, shame (Morris and Ratajczak 1997). The function of shame and blame has been repeated throughout as they are driving external social forces that

emphasize the weight of the patriarchal social structure in the way each are applied upon the bodies living beneath it. It is important for the male body to forego the sentiment of shame and blame while the female body must carry them both so that the men can thrive. “The emotion of shame is the primary or ultimate cause of all violence, whether toward others or toward themselves” (qtd. in MacGregor 2018, 62) For this reason, violence must be inflicted upon the female body as she has not fulfilled her role during the performance of masculinity endured, and thus, her abuse and death can go on as understood, or worse, as legislation continues to underserve and diminish the necessary protections for female bodies as they do for the male perpetrators, their death is therefore justified. Despite these qualities, it is fully anticipated that rational comprehension is assumed of the men as a way to grant impunity over that of the women who are able to challenge the fantastical assertions posed against them (Casey 2019, 97-98).

So, What’s Missing?

Throughout these issues presented, the various female subjects explored in Latin America have taken form in the US. However, some continue to go barely recognizable to the same extent, and it is here that the key to identifying the epidemic of femicide in the US lies, and the decolonial framework established in Latin America is able to take shape within this new context. Where understanding for that unfolds is through the feature piece written for The Washington Post Magazine based in CrimeCon in June 2019.

The story primarily follows a man who attends Oxygen Network’s CrimeCon—a convention based around the pop culture phenomenon of the true-crime genre—who looks to use it as a platform and basis of networking in hopes of getting continued trajectory towards a solution to the death of his sister, one of the victims of the Colonial Parkway Murders by an unknown serial killer in the late 1980s. It is within the true-crime phenomenon itself that the

missing elements of the femicide phenomenology in the US reveal itself. So heavy is the commodification of these female bodies, and heavier still is that of their killers, that there is little room for them to be recognized as memorialized subjects. Adding to the complexity here is the fact that

CrimeCon guests — like true-crime fans generally — are demographically similar to the victims most featured in true-crime shows and books: 80 percent female, according to organizers, and largely white. The CrimeCon line was dominated by white women: white women in large, laughing groups, white women tugging a husband or boyfriend by the hand, white women in “Stressed, Blessed and True Crime Obsessed” or “Talk Murder to Me” or “It’s Always the Husband” T-shirts” (Peterson 2019).

Not only is it important to note the demographic here, but the response speaks even louder in this quote and throughout the journalist’s observations in the article as it notes the level of detachment that these murders undergo in order to be relegated a fascinating market for profit. However, due to no other proper channels in place to grow the awareness of malicious acts of violence such as that experienced by Cathy Thomas and her girlfriend Rebecca Dowski, her brother Bill Thomas finds himself leaning into the growth surrounding true-crime as a viable platform for justice that is yet to be fulfilled by State bodies. What often comes of this approach, though, is that the quality of entertainment comes first in this genre regardless of the medium it takes—television, podcast, or book; which is why the format immediately shirks the tales of so many more victims of marginalized communities because they do not fall within the prototypical victim guidelines set by the masters of said-medium. The result is the voracious engagement found among fans that can see themselves in the victim’s shoes, but never deeply enough to

consider the possibility of being a victim themselves; just enough to wear their shoes on a t-shirt if it makes for an apparent reference to the story of their murder, not even the murder itself.

While it differs from the consumable products Rodarte and Mac Cosmetics were looking to put forth with their collection given the amount of distance between the actual occurrences they were using as their source material and what their end product would be, the commoditization of the women whose murders are made known through the true-crime genre is akin to the fashion industry in that their popularity comes in seasons. Through the retellings, the murders become fractured incidents that are detached from their narrative they come to be understood by audiences given the lens being adjusted specifically to ensure it is a consumable product that can turn a profit until the next femicide of interest. Another person present at this CrimeCon with the intent of drumming up attention for the sake of progress in their sibling's death was Amanda Shirley; while there for her brother DJ's potential slaying—his death was ruled a suicide but circumstances led to doubt but not enough to merit an investigation but had recently filed for wrongful-death—her final moment in the article speaks to exactly this issue: “On top of that [filing], she believed that adding a new chapter would keep the public, and media outlets, interested in the case. ‘People want to see progress is being made,’ she said. She sounded resigned to her role: keeping DJ alive not as a person anymore, but as a sort of narrative element. ‘If they don’t see progress,’ she told me, ‘they just fall back off the story’” (Peterson 2019). What this instance comes to represent is how positioning this motion publicly for the community being built around the case can only serve to keep but a certain level of engagement before the community falls apart right away. The growth here is superficial because it is influenced by the capitalist means behind the true-crime genre and the individualistic presentation of death via murder even in the case of masse or serial killings. Despite these stories potentially being

influenced by many of the aforementioned issues the female body faces, the ultimate motive of true-crime is not to motivate the masses into political uprising for the circumstances that bred femicide in each case, whether it was due to domestic violence, issues surrounding abortion or birth, sex work (even though that is the least told story in this group), or targeted aggression by a man looking for vengeance on any female proxy body; it is simply to entertain and earn dollars in the form of merchandise, more content, and CrimeCon tickets. Therefore, the building of community around the crime itself does not occur as organically as it is seen in Latin America, and therefore, it is difficult to reach the place of the memorialized subject for these women because the politicization of their death and the challenging of the institutions and systems that enacted it is barely existent. This is what the lack of language culminates into and serves to position the strong emphasis on the need for femicide to enter the American lexicon.

Conclusion

“Terry Threadgold suggests that language is precisely where our impressions are formed and that the path to a different understanding of society...must begin with the words we use to talk about it” (MacGregor 2018, 65). As simply phrased and proposed as this statement is as the center to this project, the evolution and adaptation of essential language for the sake of deploying change requires a thorough dissection of the lexicon in existence and what bridges can be formed with what is omitted. Thankfully the deployment of femicide as witnessed in Latin America serves as the necessary foundation to comprehend it elsewhere. The tangible efforts executed throughout this region even before having the theoretical framework of *feminicidio* to elaborate the epidemic being faced by women demonstrates the grassroots organizational efforts when their value is sufficiently recognized despite the patriarchal structure telling them not to care. It is through this activism as well as the scholarly work that followed that the multiplicitous woman

can be explored in her numerous existences, including beyond her stripped lifespan as a memorialized subject. The struggle is ongoing, and the structural issues still have deep roots that require elaborate solutions before the femicidal effect can be eliminated, but the efforts are apparent given the sociopolitical transformations.

However, because of the knowledge production surrounding femicide based out of the region, it has allowed for distanced comprehension in various parts of the Global North like the US while instituting a greater culture of silence than those exposed and explored in the Global South. “Not only is power deeply embedded in the words we use, power is embedded in the words that we do not use; there is power in silence.... If violence is not named or is not allowed to be named, then its very existence is contested and women's experiences reduced to ‘unreality’” (Cavanagh et al. 2001, 702-703). By recognizing the conditions that challenge the survival of the female body as they are currently understood in the US, and then adopting the teleological exploration of femicide as expressed within the decolonial framework of Latin America, the silence has been challenged once again. Rather than witnessing the “border-crossing” effects Narayan speaks of, where such information is Othered, edited, and reframed to keep as a distant phenomenon, the overlaps determined here can help with establishing the decolonial framework currently at play (1997, 100-104). While Russell’s work set the groundwork for the knowledge production surrounding the word femicide itself, the lack of acknowledgment for the intersecting structures in service of the greater patriarchal project enabled the femicidal epidemic to persist with no broader recognition.

Unfortunately, many more aspects continue to be omitted even here, with little address given to the racialization of femicide—Black and Indigenous women have continuously and constantly suffered the most in both regions (Russell “Femicide by Gunfire” 2001, 35).

Additionally, the harsher regard for trans women's lives—both in how often they have physical violence imposed upon them and the violence that stems from the social construction surrounding the initial trauma—was also unfortunately neglected here. However, what I do hope is that from this project the theoretical framework of femicide can be better understood as a means to enter the cultural zeitgeist to thusly elaborate upon those very aspects given their need for adept analysis to institute proper protections. Additionally, a new coalitional politics can unfold among women as they seek to world-travel—or undergo the necessary epistemic shift in order to tap into their survival and resistance, as proposed by Lugones, as a means to make this epidemic just as real in the US as it is in Latin America (Ortega 2016, 88). Lastly, it will ensure that the translation of *Ni Una Más* into English into Not One Woman More will be understood, chanted, and demanded of the State

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