FEMICIDE IN MEXICO: A COMPARATIVE DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF STATE AND NON-STATE ACTORS

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ABSTRACT

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A transnational feminist perspective was used to construct a comparative critical discourse analysis of the three main actors involved with the effort to combat femicide in Juárez, Mexico since the early 1990s. The discourse analysis is utilized as a means of attempting to understand the similarities and the differences between the Mexican state, Mexican grassroots activist groups, and the United Nations Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), with regard to their beliefs concerning the causalities of and solutions for combating femicide in Ciudad Juárez specifically and Mexico in general. Using documentation provided by CEDAW, we examined the language used by activist groups in their appeals to this United Nations committee, juxtaposed with the response on the part of the Mexican government to the committee's allegations. The findings of the comparative discourse analysis revealed that activist groups, the government, and the United Nations had focused most of their attention on only one of the main root causes of femicide and failed to address the entire causality of gender-related violence in Mexico, leading to inadequate policy and action, resulting in the continuation of femicide in Mexico today.

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Introduction

Ciudad Juárez in Northern Mexico has become synonymous with intense violence and corruption. With over 500 women murdered and thousands more missing since 1993, this city has long been a symbol of police brutality, drug trafficking, and gender-related violence (Luévano, 2008). Scholars, journalists, and state officials have asked the question, "Who is murdering the women of Juárez?" (Holling, 2014). Serial killers, corrupt police officers, drug traffickers, organ traffickers, satanic cults, bus drivers, maquiladora managers, and rich men hunting women for sport have all been named as the cause behind the women's disappearances and murders (Weissman, 2005). Research and investigation into who specifically is killing these women has shed a spotlight on a corrupt police force and provided a better understanding of drug trafficking violence, revealing how patriarchy, economic globalization, and state corruption have created a class of women vulnerable to gender-related violence along the U.S.-Mexican Border (Otero, 2009; Weissman, 2005; Wright, 2006).

Often scrutinized by investigators and scholars is the timing of the mass murders, beginning in 1993. It was during this time period that the passage of NAFTA, the 1994 neoliberal trade economic agreement, created jobs for Mexican workers, especially young women, within the border town of Juárez. Within the newly created maquiladora factories, women in Mexico were exploited for cheap labor and were often subject to sexual harassment by their supervisors (Abell, 1999; Weissman, 2005). The investigations of violence soon focused on the female workers' daily travel to the factories, which often included multiple bus rides, alone, far from the

protection of family and their familiar communities and into the city and surrounding areas of Juárez (Abell, 1999; Weisman, 2005; Wright, 2001). This rise of maquiladora factory work along the border of Mexico in combination with the United States border policies and Mexico's own war on drugs contributed to a dramatic increase in gender-related crime in Juárez (Grillo, 2013; Morales & Bejarano, 2009). The vast number of female murder victims in Juárez over a relatively short period of time earned the attention of grassroots activists—and later a network of international activists—and the word *femicide* entered the discussion about the city of Juárez.

Femicide, according to Marcela Lagarde Y De Los Rios, is "gender-based violence that is both public and private, implicating both the state (directly or indirectly) and individual perpetrators (private or state actors); it thus encompasses systematic, widespread, and everyday interpersonal violence" (Holling, 2014, p. 315). The review of scholarly literature included in this thesis provides evidence that the violence in Juárez meets each component of Lagarde's definition of femicide. Furthermore, around 2012, crime and specifically the murder of women began to decrease in Juárez, leading some government and non-government organizations to believe that femicide was subsiding in Mexico (United Nations, 2012; Valencia, 2015). However, recent reports indicate that women are still being murdered at a rapid rate in the State of Mexico (EDOMEX), a state located in the center of Mexico (Castillo, 2015; Lakhani, 2015), and the femicide of Juárez has shifted away from the spotlight but remains unresolved. According to the National Observatory on Femicide, 1,258 women have gone missing in the State of Mexico and 448 have been murdered (Lakhani, 2015).

For the purpose of this thesis, it is important to include an explanation as to *why* femicide is still occurring in Mexico: specifically, what factors scholars and investigators agree are contributing to Mexico's femicide. This will then allow for an examination of the strategies proposed to address these factors, and specifically to examine *what* is missing or inconsistent between strategies proposed by different actors integral to Mexico's femicide.

This thesis identifies the three actors integral to the issue of femicide as the Mexican government, a network led by grassroots activists, and the United Nations. Each presents it own distinct discourse as to how and why femicide is happening. First, the Mexican government is identified in this discussion as a main actor. The definition of femicide contains an inclusion of an implicated state, either directly or indirectly, and investigations later described in this thesis make it evident that the Mexican government was implicated as negligent with respect to femicide in Juárez and later throughout Mexico. In addition to negligence, the Mexican government has and continues to be held as the agent responsible for change by the United Nations (United Nations, 2005). Mexico has accepted, by treaty, responsibility for this role. The second actor is a network led by grassroots activists demanding justice for the victims of femicide. It was the activists who began the fight for justice for the victims, and it is due to their continued efforts that femicide remains on the international agenda of the United Nations today. According to Lagarde's definition, femicide is "widespread" (Holling, 2014, p. 315), and although the sheer number of victims in Juárez should have commanded attention without advocacy groups demanding justice for victims, it was only after activists gave voice to

the victims of Juárez that there was a shift in perception of the crimes from individual murders (often with a blame-the-victim response) to femicide. The third actor is the United Nations: specifically, the Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the committee of the same name that ensures that CEDAW's agreed-upon objectives are implemented by participating nation states. Throughout this thesis, the acronym CEDAW will refer to this committee. The CEDAW became an actor as a result of the appeals brought forth by the grassroots activist network.

For the purpose of this thesis, the activist network consists of the following groups: (1) Casa Amiga, (2) Equality Now, (3) the Mexican Commission for the Defense and Protection of Human Rights or *Comisón Mexicana de Defensa y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos A.C.* (CMDPDH), (4) *Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir,* (5) Justice for our Daughters or *Justicia para Nuestras Hijas*, (6) Center for Women's Human Rights or *Centro de Derechos de las Mujeres* (CEDEHM), and (7) Mukira A.C. The rationale for including these particular activists will be explained later in this thesis, but for now it is important to state that by effectively collaborating, these activist groups appealed to the CEDAW, providing international support and attention to the issue of femicide in Mexico.

The dialogue analyzed for this thesis between the activists and CEDAW began in 2002, with a letter authored by Casa Amiga and Equality Now, appealing to the CEDAW on the issue of femicide in Mexico. Mexico responded to the CEDAW with a report, and the continuous reporting process is currently active. Article 18 of the treaty, ratified by

Mexico in 2002 (United Nations, 2005), allows individuals, in this case the above-mentioned network of activists, to appeal or report to the CEDAW against their state. Because the CEDAW found the appeal against Mexico credible the nation state of Mexico must report to CEDAW on progress made with respect to femicide, in order to remain in compliance with the treaty (United Nations, 2005).

The aim of this project is to conduct a comparative critical discourse analysis on the communication between the official state government of Mexico and the activist network described above through the platform of the United Nation's Convention of the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), with respect to the issue of femicide in Mexico. Through this discourse analysis, this thesis aims to answer the following research questions: How does the Mexican state and the network of grassroots activists compare in their framing of the ongoing femicide in Juárez? How do their positions compare to the recent analysis and recommendations from the CEDAW on Mexico's handling of femicide? A discourse analysis comparing the language each actor used to represent their perspectives on addressing femicide, this research highlights which causalities and proposed solutions are jointly emphasized or agreed upon, as well as areas where there are differing priorities.

The discussion of femicide begins in in Juárez, a transnational space, where the cultures and economies of differing nation states, Mexico and primarily the United States, collide at the border. Within and expanding from this border, femicide, a gender-related crime committed only against females, continues, and for this reason a transnational femicide perspective was applied to this analysis.

A transnational feminist framework examines how neoliberal global capitalism contributes to inequality and patriarchy (Morales & Bejarano, 2009). This framework applies feminist ideals to the cross-border flow of goods, people, and capital, examining these concepts through the lens of globalization (Sudbury, 2005). In a roundtable on transnational feminism, Maylei Blackwell stated that it can be seen as "an alternative set of origin stories and the complicated ways diverse people are situated or constructed by the nation" (Blackwell, Briggs, & Chiu, 2015, p. 4). Historically, Western feminism does not apply feminist theory to women living in third-world border areas affected by neoliberalism, thus calling for the deeper framework that can be found in transnational feminisms (Herr, 2014). Western feminism often promotes the belief that all women have similar goals and interests, failing to recognize the impact that race, locations, and socio-economic status have on women's perspectives and feminist practice (Herr, 2014).

With Juárez being a key city for cross-border trade and crime, it is important that femicide be viewed through this lens, in order to understand how this location creates an atmosphere that promotes gender-related violence. This framework states that neoliberal policies represent "a form of contemporary conquest that routinizes sexual and gendered violence in everyday activities at transnational locations" (Morales & Bejarano, 2009, p. 421). The North American Free Trade Act (NAFTA), was a 1993 agreement between Canada, the United States, and Mexico to minimize cross-border trade restrictions. Soon after, Juárez became a hotspot for outsourcing factory labor, with new jobs bringing in thousands of locals and immigrants (Cañas, Coronado, Filmer, & Saucedo, 2013). Neoliberal policies helped to create an environment where women were susceptible to all

the different forms of gendered violence found in Mexico. The transnational feminist perspective provides a framework into which further analysis of this violence can be completed.

Literature Review

"Femicide," a term that has been in existence for nearly two centuries, was popularized by Diana Russell in the 1970s (Carey & Torres, 2010). Russell defines femicide as "the killing of females by males because they are females" (Russell & Harmes, 2001, p. 3). Russell asserted that because words such as "homicide" and "manslaughter" were masculine, they would not appropriately identify the killing of women solely because they are female (Rusell & Harmes, 2011). Russell's definition is intentionally broad and allows for scholars and writers to apply this term to any sort of violence against women, whether state or personal, resulting in death. Marcela Lagarde Y De Los Rios, in the preface of *Terrorizing Women: Feminicide in the Américas,* defines femicide (or her preferred term, "feminicide") as "genocide against women, and it occurs when the historical conditions generate social practices that allow for violent attempts against the integrity, health, liberties, and lives of girls and women" (Fregoso & Bejarano, 2010, p. 14). Lagarde wanted to create a definition of femicide that would more appropriately apply to the women being murdered in Latin America. As previously stated, included in Lagarde's definition is "gender-based violence that is both public and private, implicating both the state (directly or indirectly) and individual perpetrators (private or state actors); it thus encompasses systematic, widespread, and everyday interpersonal violence" (Holling, 2014, p. 315). This definition of femicide, or feminicide, was used for this project, as it not only corresponds with what is happening in Juárez and other cities in Mexico, but is also appropriate when examining this incident from a transnational feminist perspective.

Activism and the State

As previously stated, Casa Amiga, Equality Now, the Mexican Commission for the Defense and Protection of Human Rights or *Comisón Mexicana de Defensa y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos A.C.* (CMDPDH), *Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir,* Justice for Our Daughters or *Justicia para Nuestras Hijas*, Center for Women's Human Rights or *Centro de Derechos de las Mujeres* (CEDEHM), and Mukira A.C. represent the activist bodies behind the documents analyzed for this thesis. Each of these organizations was chosen as they were all instrumental in their appeals to the CEDAW to investigate femicide in Mexico. Together, these activist groups successfully petitioned the United Nations to address the Mexican state's incompetence in handling the femicide in Juárez and Mexico in general.

Anti-femicide grassroots activism began in Ciudad Juárez in the early 1990s. Although there were many grassroots groups responsive to victims in Juárez, Casa Amiga —recognized by scholars as one of the earliest and most effective support groups— became an umbrella group for many smaller grassroots efforts. Grassroots activist Esther Chávez Cano spearheaded a petition to the CEDAW in 2002. In 1999, Esther Chávez Cano founded Casa Amiga, a local organization in Juárez to provide psychological, medical, and legal support to the victims of sexual violence and their families. Before founding Casa Amiga, Cano's grassroots efforts included gathering newspaper articles and clippings to begin a database for victims of femicide (Rodriguez, 2007; Staudt & Méndez, 2015). Cano wanted to bring attention to the multiple cases of gendered violence she believed were being ignored by officials. Cano's organization unified groups

such as Justice for Our Daughters (*Justicia para Nuestras Hijas)* and Our Daughters Return Home (*Nuestras Hijas de Regreso a Casa*), groups that were formed to recover the bodies of murdered daughters and seek justice for the victims (Leal, 2008). Other grassroots activist groups, formed in reaction to the violence against women, included *Voces Sin Eco* (Voices without Echo), formed in 1998, responsible for the famous pink crosses placed on telephone polls as protest and remembrance for the victims (Staudt & Mendez, 2015). Family members of six female murder victims formed this group to seek justice by keeping femicide in the headlines of Juárez (Rodriguez, 2007). But it was Cano who in 1994 created the *Coordina en Pro de los Derechos de las Mujeres* (CPDM), which acted as an umbrella organization to these groups, providing a unified voice against femicide.

A transnational feminist framework requires that grassroots activist groups and ground resistance be examined "in their historical specificity by paying attention to intersections of gender, race, class, ethnicity, and nation pertaining to their locations" (Herr, 2014, p. 5) Local activist groups and third-world women's resistance tend to not specifically focus on gender equality but rather attempt to make gradual changes by improving living standards for families and the community (Herr, 2014). The testimonies that victims provided to Casa Amiga must be respected, as these testimonies do not conform to any preconceived definitions of feminism or Western agendas, but rather are in the context of their true social condition. Casa Amiga did not begin with an agenda of equality, but rather with the basic goals of sheltering victims and providing aid to families victimized by domestic violence and abuse in Mexico. Though Cano died in

2009, her organization continues to shelter victims of abuse and domestic violence, while offering workshops on child abuse, gender equality, and domestic violence (Casa Amiga, 2009).

Although these grassroots organizations mobilized pubic outcry about the incompetence of the government and local authorities, they were met with criticism, as the government continued to claim that femicide was a myth, and that the violence was the fault of the victims who chose to go to dangerous places and dress in promiscuous ways (Gaspar & Guzmán, 2010). In the words of Gaspar and Guzmán, “The Mexican government’s new line, after years of inept investigations and covert maneuvers to derail progress on any of the cases, is that femicides are nothing but an invention of some crazy feminists and the attention-grabbing mothers of a few dead prostitutes” (2010, p. 2).

Not only was the Mexican government disrespectful to victims and their families, but it also responded throughout the years with ineffective measures and impunity for perpetrators. For example, in 1996, the Chihuahua state government eventually responded by creating the Special Unit for Sex Crimes against the Family and the Special Prosecutor for the Investigation of Women’s Homicides, Disappeared, and Attention to Victims. However, this program did not receive enough funding or resources to make a significant or lasting impact (Staudt & Mendez, 2015). More typical was the attitude of then governor Francisco Barrio, who stated that the killings of women in Juárez “were within the range of what was to be expected in a city like Juárez” (Leal, 2008, p. 32).

In October 2002, Casa Amiga teamed up with Equality Now and the CMDPDH, to submit a request to the United Nation’s CEDAW demanding justice for the victims of

femicide in Mexico, specifically Juárez (Equality Now, 2010). Founded in 1992, Equality Now's mission is to "achieve legal and systemic change that addresses violence and discrimination against women and girls around the world" (Equality Now, 2016). For example, Equality Now reported the specific case of Minerva Torres Albeldaño, an 18-year-old femicide victim whose remains were found in 2003. Sadly, the Mexican prosecutor's office had failed to identify Torres for two years, and neglected to ask the family for a DNA sample after the discovery of the young woman's body. Equality Now used this case as an example of negligence, noting that 35% of all Mexican public officials involved in homicide cases from 1993-2005 were implicated (by the Mexican government's Special Prosecutor's Office 2006 report) as being guilty of mishandling homicide investigations; however, no official has been held accountable (Equality Now, 2007). In 2006, Equality Now began a Women's Action campaign calling for Mexican authorities to investigate and prosecute the state's mishandling of cases related to femicide in Ciudad Juárez (Equality Now, 2007). To provide additional support to the U.N. appeal, Casa Amiga and Equality Now were also joined in 2003 by the CMDPDH, a Mexican NGO advocacy group that provides grants that help litigate cases involving human rights violations (CMDPDH, *n.d.*). The CMDPDH, a member of the campaign known as "Stop the Impunity: No More Murders of Women," submitted a shadow report to the CEDAW in 2002 (Equality Now, 2002).

It was due to the work of activists that the massive amount of gender-related violence in Juárez gained international attention. The United Nation's investigation of femicide in Juárez began in 2003, headed by the CEDAW (United Nations, 2005). In a

2005 report, the investigators confirmed that not only was femicide occurring in Juárez, but that it was a nationwide problem. It advocated respect for victims' families and backed human rights recommendations made by experts and witnesses. The report held the government of Mexico responsible for the unacceptable rates of gender-related violence, stating that the government was not only negligent in protecting women from violence, but was also complicit. The accusations of the 2005 CEDAW report led to the Mexican government creating the General Law on Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence (GLWALFV) in 2007. This law made multiple recommendations for the states of Mexico to create gender equality and to combat gender-related violence (GLWALFV, 2007). In 2011, Mexico submitted its 7th and 8th reports to the CEDAW, which provided an even more detailed account of what the state has done to combat gender violence, and the government's planned actions for solving gender inequality in Mexico. These actions on the part of the government included legislation, social reforms and services, and promises to incorporate a gender perspective into the training and education of officials working with women (United Nations, 2011).

In response to the Mexican governments 7th and 8th reports, two separate shadow reports were written by activist groups to the CEDAW, attempting to explain the reality of the situation in Juárez and point out where the government has been ineffective or dishonest in its reporting. The first report was conducted by the CMDPDH (which worked with Casa Amiga and Equality Now on the 2003 appeal to the CEDAW) and *Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir* (CDD). CDD is a nonprofit organization that promotes sexual and reproductive rights of women in Mexico. The Catholic feminist

organization, established in 1994, conducts campaigns, provides education and training, helps women who are seeking abortions, and helps victims of femicide (*Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir*, 2014). The second shadow report was conducted by Justice for Our Daughters or *Justicia para Nuestras Hijas*, Center for Women's Human Rights or *Centro de Derechos de las Mujeres* (CEDEHM), and Mukira A.C.

Justice for Our Daughters was formed in 2002 in the state of Chihuahua. Founded by the mothers of the victims of femicide in Juárez, this organization provides a unique and ground-level perspective crucial to understanding the reality of gender-related violence and the Mexican government's lack of respect for the victims' families and due diligence for justice (Justice for Our Daughters, *n.d.*). The organization brings together the families of missing and murdered women in Juárez, while attempting to maintain records of these murders. They also coordinate with other non-governmental organizations and international human rights bodies to appeal to the government of Mexico and demand that victims be found, perpetrators be punished, and authorities be held responsible (Justice for Our Daughters, *n.d.*). The CEDEHM was formed in 2005 by Lucha Castro. The organization provides legal assistance to families and victims of femicide, torture, kidnapping, domestic violence, and human trafficking. Castro also works as a lawyer for Justice for Our Daughters (PBI Mexico, 2012). Finally, Mukira A.C. is a non-profit organization that aims to improve the quality of life for women and girls in Mexico through research, promoting a gendered perspective, and improving women's access to the justice system. It also assists non-governmental organizations with implementing effective gender programs and helped Justice for Our Daughters and the

CEDEHM construct this report to the CEDAW (Mukira, *n.d.*). Although there is a great deal of work to be done in order to minimize gender-related violence and femicide in Mexico, activist groups were responsible for gaining international attention to the issue, resulting in the government being forced into action.

The following subtitles, representing the areas examined for the purpose of this literature review, are recognized by researchers of femicide as relevant contributors to femicide in Mexico. These subtitles, or categories, are supported by data examined in this discourse analysis. It is important to examine what scholarly sources and journalistic reports said about the causes of femicide, and to compare these findings to the discourse between the activists, the CEDAW, and the Mexican government. By accomplishing this, this thesis attempts to demonstrate gaps in prior research, thereby helping to identify missing links between scholarly research and the reality of what is being done in Juárez to prevent femicide.

Neoliberal Reforms

A transnational feminist framework recognizes that capitalist forms of production are no longer limited to boundaries and borders, and neither are the hegemonies and patriarchal structures that are associated with transnational neoliberal policies (Herr, 2014). Neoliberal reforms and policies refer to the changes brought about by the reformation of the world economy. Institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund created a system in which smaller nation states are increasingly in debt to these world lenders and thus become dependent on larger nation states and transnational corporations (Armaline & Glasberg, 2009). Because of the false

promises of the “free market,” nation states typically sacrifice human rights for the working class in order to address the needs of powerful shareholders (Armaline & Glasberg, 2009, p. 436). This destructive economic system is exemplified by Mexico’s maquiladora workers and the human rights abuses they face.

The majority of women targeted in the femicide in Juárez were working-class maquiladora workers (Holling, 2014). A maquiladora is a factory that typically produces outsourced goods for the global market (Morales & Bejarano, 2009). With the passing of NAFTA in 1993, these factories became the driving force of cross-border trade (Cañas et al., 2013). In 2008, more than half the population of Juárez worked in the maquiladoras, an estimated 22,500 workers, mostly women younger than 30 (Leal, 2008). These factories not only attracted locals from Juárez, but also motivated thousands of others to migrate from other parts of Mexico (Luévano, 2008). Neoliberal reforms in Mexico, such as the privatizing of agricultural land, led to higher percentages of extreme poverty in Mexico’s rural communities (Kelly, 2001). The government felt that the marketable growth of the agricultural industry would minimize rates of poverty for Mexicans in rural areas, and therefore discontinued state spending and subsidies in these communities (Kelly, 2001). Women left rural homes and villages in pursuit of economic independence and the freedom promised by the wage labor of the maquiladoras (Livingston, 2004). These women were typically poor, young, separated from their families, and often knew no one in Juárez. They generally lived in the outskirts of Juárez in shantytowns, and relied on long bus trips to get to and from work (Livingston, 2004). There are multiple examples of the maquiladora factory managers’ disregard for the safety of these young

women traveling alone. For example, women's schedules would be changed at the last minute, resulting in women having no transportation home—or being forced to travel home later at night than anticipated (Luévano, 2008). A worker arriving late to the factory would find herself locked out as punishment, forcing her to travel home at an unanticipated time. (Luévano, 2008). The maquiladoras neglected their responsibility for an environment that made women easy targets for violence against them, and there is evidence that these women were then preyed upon by serial killers, drug traffickers, and unknown assailants (Weissman, 2005). Sometimes the bodies of these women were dropped off in the busy streets, a message from the killers to the state and the community that they could get away with anything without being caught (Livingston, 2004). The long perilous journey to work and the lack of social networks these workers had is an important factor in distinguishing what is the cause of femicide in Juárez. However, the devastating and violent effect maquiladora work had on these women was not contained to outside the factory.

Inside the maquiladoras, women were subjected to a highly patriarchal and inhumane work environment. The factories typically only hired young female workers because employers assumed that they were docile and better at doing long and tedious work (Livingston, 2004). These women generally received little pay, sometimes as low as 80 cents an hour (Abell, 1999; Robinson, 2005). Employers also refused to hire pregnant women due to the fact that Mexico forced the factories to provide paid maternity leave (Abell, 1999; Smith, 2013). Women who were employed in the maquiladora factories were forced to take humiliating pregnancy and menstruation tests, sometimes in the

presence of others, to prove that they were not lying (Abell, 1999). If found to be pregnant, they would be fired immediately. Men, on the other hand, were given three times as much training as the women workers and were much more likely to be in positions of management (Robinson, 2005). If women tried to gain access to unions, they were blacklisted by managers and would no longer be hired by any factory (Robinson, 2005). Not only did these factories place women in immovable positions with low wages, but the women working at the maquiladoras were also subject to constant sexual harassment. They were required to dress scantily and were consistently harassed by managers and supervisors (Weissman, 2005).

By reducing women to simply a form of machinery, whose only value was the small amount of pesos they earned each day, the factories created women who were perceived as disposable (Taylor, 2010). With the creation of a vulnerable population the maquiladoras have contributed immensely to femicide in Juárez. The women were not only placed in dangerous locations for work and living, but were forced into a position of low economic and social status that portrayed them as easily replaceable. Transnational feminists continue to focus today on neoliberal policies and the detrimental impact of global capitalism on women, understanding that women exploited by these policies are exploited not only by corporations but also by their nation-states. The nation-state is complicit in allowing these working conditions, either implicitly or explicitly (Herr, 2014). The state is responsible for implementing human rights instruments for its people, but as illustrated by Armaline and Glasberg, the nation state often places business elites and shareholders as a higher priority than their lower-economic class civilians (Armaline

& Glasberg, 2009). This is exemplified by the human rights violations of the women working in maquiladora factories, and the lack of regulation to which these factories are subject. The patriarchal nation state not only impacts women in the way it handles macroeconomics, but also in the way it approaches crime.

Organized Crime and the War on Drugs

Organized crime and Mexico's policies to address it directly correspond with the gender-related violence seen in Juárez. After the Columbian drug cartels, led by Pablo Escobar, lost their power in the 1990s, Mexican drug cartels began to dominate the illicit drug trade (Campbell & Hansen, 2014). Corresponding with the massive unemployment of men caused by NAFTA and the increased migration of Mexicans into the United States, Mexican drug cartels began to flourish in border cities like Juárez. In order to address the violence and corruption caused by the billion-dollar illicit drug trade, President Calderón waged Mexico's war on drugs immediately after his inauguration in 2006. Towards the end of his presidency, Juárez was deemed the deadliest city in the world, with seven homicides occurring each day (Hill, 2010). Homicide rates in Mexico went from 10,452 in 2006 to 27,213 in 2011 due to Calderón's aggressive stance against drug cartels and the militarization of Mexico's police forces (Flannery, 2013). Instead of attacking the root causes of the rise of drug cartels, such as the extreme poverty and neoliberal policies, Calderón used his military and police forces to take out major cartel leaders. This use of force not only failed to eliminate drug trafficking organizations, but created a void in power, which led to multiple cartel violence in places like Juárez (Flannery, 2013).

Examining this issue from a transnational feminist perspective requires not only an understanding of the cross-border consequences of the illegal drug trade, but also how this issue directly impacts women. Cartel-related violence attributed to one-third of the overall violence toward women in Juárez (Otero, 2008). Control for the drug business and the wealth it produced led to gang killings in Juárez, as expected, and also contributed to the "mysterious" death of over 400 women in less than a decade (Hill, 2010). Women in Juárez, murdered by drug cartels for revenge killings, are often caught in the crossfire of rival gang firefights (Hill, 2010). However, it is important to look at the larger picture of Mexico's drug policy, to understand how it relates to femicide. Calderón, with his war on drugs, created a militarized environment, which demonstrated by the U.S./Mexico border, promoted gender-related violence. In their 2012 Concluding Observations, the CEDAW pleas with the government of Mexico to revise its tactics in fighting organized crime due to the fact that a militarized environment, combined with complete impunity, has led to rape and other forms of violence against women by military and law enforcement officials (United Nations, 2012). It is important to realize that both the organized crime syndicates and the government opposing them contribute to gender-related violence, and both are to be held responsible.

Organized criminals are not only responsible for trafficking drugs, but also people. Human trafficking is Mexico's third most profitable illicit business, after drugs and arms trafficking (Rietig, 2015). The International Organization for Migration in Mexico reported that 80% of human trafficking victims in Mexico are women, ranging in age from babies to seniors (Rietig, 2015). The high rates of human trafficking in Mexico

are addressed by the CEDAW frequently in their recommendations to the government of Mexico. In the CEDAW's 2012 Concluding Observations to Mexico's 7th and 8th Reports, CEDAW states that they are concerned

> at the lack of uniformity in criminalizing trafficking at the state level. It notes with concern that the Office of the Special Prosecutor for Crimes of Violence against Women and Trafficking in Persons (FEVIMTRA) does not have the mandate to follow up on complaints of trafficking in persons when the offence is committed by organized criminal groups. (United Nations, 2012, p. 6)

Addressing human trafficking is essential for minimizing gender-related violence in Mexico. Finally, trafficking in all forms (drugs, sex, organs) continues to add to gender-related violence in Mexico, but it is the impact of the efforts of the government, acting with force, corruption, and impunity to address this organized crime that also contributed to violence against women in this state.

Domestic Violence and State Corruption

As described above, the border of Juárez had been transformed by NAFTA and drug policies. With women as the breadwinners of the home, employed by the maquiladoras, men in a patriarchal society viewed this role reversal as not only a threat to their masculinity, but also as an attack on the traditional roles of the family in Mexico (Olivera & Furio, 2006). In 2003, the National Institute of Women reported that on average five men kill their intimate partner each day in Mexico (Orozco, Nievar, & Middlemiss, 2012). In 2005, over 40% of households in Juárez were headed by women (Olivera & Furio, 2006). However, there is a debate among scholars as to whether domestic violence is caused by this role reversal or if it is simply a result of low-economic living conditions and the stresses associated with poverty (Weissman, 2005).

Juárez has already been described as a city in chaos, devastated from illicit crime and globalization-related poverty. Michelle Garcia (2011), in her article *Machos y Putas: Masking Mexico's Violence*, asks the reader to look away from what she calls "sexy" narco violence. Garcia explains that in Mexico, much of the attention of the media is on male-on-male violence that portrays women as on the sideline or as victims. However, the media leave out the rampant domestic and sexual violence that occurs in Mexico every year. On average, over 1,000 women are killed each year in Mexico, and a majority of those murders are related to domestic violence (Garcia, 2011). In the year 2000, domestic violence in Juárez increased 30%, based on data collected in 1999, and has been increasing ever since, making Juárez the leading city for domestic violence in Mexico (Weissman, 2005).

Domestic violence was not officially addressed as a problem by the patriarchal Mexican state until the late 1990s. In 1994, Mexico took part in the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence Against Women. This convention defined violence against women as "any act or conduct, based on gender, which causes death or physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, whether in the public or private sphere" (Wagner, 2003, p. 356). This convention required that signing countries would be required to adopt these policies and definitions into legislation. Both the 1996 and 1998 follow-up reports conducted by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights commended Mexico for dramatically changing legislation in many states and adopting new policies that correlate with guidelines established in the convention (Wagner, 2003). Unfortunately, these policies were only an

attempt by Mexico to appear responsive. Sonia M. Frias, in her article *Resisting Patriarchy within the State: Advocacy and Family Violence in Mexico*, argues that the legislation made to reduce violence against women actually focuses on the preservation of the family, making domestic violence more of a civil offense than criminal. She states, "Both the law's contents and interpretation (by both public employees and victims) preserve and reinforce patriarchal structures, and under the guise of serving the best interests of the family, in fact reaffirm gender inequality" (Frias, 2010, p. 549).

Cases of domestic violence continue to go unresolved, and the courts and law enforcement agencies of Mexico more often than not continue to look the other way when it is brought to their attention (Leal, 2008). Such is the case of Rubí Escobedo. Seventeen-year-old Rubí was brutally murdered by her husband Sergio Barraza in 2009, who then confessed to the killing and led police to her dismembered body. Barraza was released because the court did not see enough evidence to convict him (Staudt and Méndez, 2015). Rubí's mother, Marisela, actively protested the court decision with the support of the community and the attention of the local press. Marisela even confronted the governor of Chihuahua, telling him he should be ashamed. In 2010, Marisela was gunned down outside the governor's palace, and because the video was caught on palace videotape the world could see the streets outside the palace, an area that was normally covered with police and security guards, had been cleared prior to Marisela's death (Staudt & Méndez, 2015). This injustice demonstrates the role of the state in femicide. Not only did they fail to bring the perpetrator to justice, but they were also actively involved with gendered violence.

To understand why government officials and police cannot or will not address femicide one must understand the history of law enforcement in Mexico. Police have had a paramilitary role in Mexico since the 1900s (LaRose & Maddan, 2009). With Mexico going through revolution and political changes, the role of the police often included conflict with rather than the protection of its citizens. They were often closely tied to Mexico's revolutionaries and formed intricate relationships with communities instead of remaining loyal to government bodies, laws, and the protection of citizens victimized by crime (LaRose & Maddan, 2009). This mentality was carried into the late twentieth century as police corruption involved organized crime, specifically due to narcotics (LaRose & Maddan, 2009). Cartel drug profits entered into the billions in the early 2000s (Kellner & Pipitone, 2010), and police became imbedded with the cartel business. By the time Mexican President Calderon took office in 2006, police were so imbedded with cartels that in the first four years of his presidency, 1.2 million police officers were removed from duty due to their criminal ties (Morris, 2012). Social activist Javier Sicilia stated, "I don't know where the state ends and organized crime begins" (Morris, 2012, p. 29). There are numerous examples of state corruption in Mexico. In 2008, Operacion Limpieza conducted by the federal government, led to the arrest of the head of Mexican Interpol, directors of federal police, and members of the Attorney Generals Office for working with the Beltran Cartel (Morris, 2012). In 2009, the Federal government arrested thirty-eight public officials in Michoacán for working with La Familia Cartel (Morris, 2012). There is a clear relationship between powerful drug cartels and government officials, leading to a state that is unable or unwilling to prosecute and punish those who

commit acts of gendered violence. In the state of Chihuahua, where Juárez is located, from 2009 to 2010 over 5,000 cartel-related deaths occurred but only 212 people have been found guilty (Morris, 2012).

Authorities have been accused of botching investigations, including falsifying forensic reports, cover-ups, and planting evidence (Osborn, 2004). For example, in 1994 police arrested a man named Abdel Latif Sharif and identified him as the serial killer behind the mass murder and disappearances of women in Juárez. While Sharif was in jail the murders continued, and so the police then accused a gang known as The Rebels for continuing Sharif's murders for profit although there was no evidence supporting any connection between Sharif and the gang (Osborn, 2004). Police have also accused groups of maquiladora shuttle drivers of being the killers, however the drivers stated that they were beat by police until they confessed and only confessed to save their own lives (Osborn, 2004). Arrests without sufficient evidence, disregard for the information provided by victims' families and to victims' families, and coerced confessions were among the evidence later detailed in Teresa Rodriguez's journalistic account, *The Daughters of Juárez,* that demonstrated examples of police corruption, incompetence, and general lack of concern for the victims by the state. Grewal and Kaplan claim that one of the most important aspects of transnational feminism is examining the "scattered hegemonies" that exists throughout a globalized world; however, it is also important to examine the patriarchal hegemonies that can be found within the nation state (Grewal & Kaplan, 1994, p. 17). There are many different forms of patriarchal dominance and masculine exertions of power that are found in society, including transnational spaces

like the Mexico-U.S. border, nation state boundaries, and in the home. The women in Juárez face gendered violence, not only from the government of Mexico, but also from the police and their partners at home.

Methods

Methodology

Critical discourse analysis deals "primarily with the discourse dimensions of power and abuse and the injustice and inequality that results from it" (Dijk, 1993, p. 252). This type of analysis is necessary for understanding the relationship between the power and abuse behind the government's activity and activists' mission to address injustice and inequality. How each actor represents their perspective through written language plays a critical role in the development and continuation of femicide. This thesis will examine the exact written language authored in ten documents by the actors, who include the factors they believe relevant to the discussion of addressing femicide. The facts and opinions each actor expresses as pertinent reveal priorities and biases. This thesis will focus on the connection, or lack of thereof, between the actors' discourse as this comparison helps clarify where policy change will be more or less likely implemented or effective. Meyer describes the collection process as "a matter of carrying out the first analyses, finding indications for particular concepts into categories and, on the basis of these results, collecting further data" (Wodak & Meyer, 2001, p. 24).

For clarity, Meyer's collection process will be utilized. The actors' statements from ten documents that constituted a continuous discourse, through the platform of the CEDAW on the subject of femicide in Mexico, will be categorized. The categories, described in detail later in the methodology section of this thesis, are derived from the actors' language and are consistent with research relative to femicide. As previously discussed, it was the letter spearheaded by Casa Amiga that sparked the CEDAW's

official inquiry, and this thesis uses this letter to the CEDAW as the starting point of an official source of discourse. With the CEDAW's involvement the Mexican government was compelled, by treaty, to respond.

Samples

A brief description of the ten documents examined in this thesis are listed below:

Activist discourse.

1) The 2002 Letter by Casa Amiga and Equality Now to the CEDAW

This letter, authored by the non-governmental organizations above, was the primary catalyst for the CEDAW's investigation and the resulting reports on femicide in Mexico, according to the CEDAW's 2005 report (United Nations, 2005). In this brief two-page letter, the activists ask the CEDAW to begin an inquiry into the abduction, rape and murder of the women in Juárez and they include a copy of the documentary *Senorita Extraviada* that provides first hand testimony related to police misconduct and complicity. The Optional Protocol allows individuals to appeal to the UN (CEDAW) against their nation state (in this case, Mexico) if said individuals believe human rights are being violated (United Nations, 2005). This letter represents a grassroots activist perspective and promoted the discourse examined in this thesis.

2) The 2003 Letter by Casa Amiga, Equality Now, and the Mexican Commission for the Defense and Promotion of Human Rights (CMDPDH) to the CEDAW

This second letter written by the activists listed above included case evidence with data derived from the 2003 Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. The letter states its objective to update the CEDAW on newly discovered murders of women in Juárez, as well as to express the increased frustration with Mexican authorities with

respect to femicide. The report conducted by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights was attached. The Commission, heavily involved with the fight against femicide in Mexico, filed a lawsuit against Mexico for the murders of three women that were found in a cotton field (López, 2012). The report explains their findings as to why femicide is occurring, who is responsible, and what actions need to be taken to address femicide.

3) The 2012 Report: Femicide and Impunity in Mexico submitted by Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir (CDD) and Comisión Mexicana de Defensa y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos (CMDPDH) to CEDAW

This dense report, while only 18 pages, is packed with statistics and an effort to communicate its strongly worded message that Mexico continues to fail to address femicide. The perspective of the activists adds a new advocacy voice to the discourse, but the CEDAW remains the stable platform. These non-governmental agencies monitor human rights violations and their report provides discourse on the shortcomings of state policies that were implemented as a result of CEDAW's investigation and recommendations.

4) The 2012 Shadow Report to the CEDAW by Justice for our Daughters, Center for Women's Human Rights, and Mukira A.C.

This report provides additional activist perspectives, with input from one of the most well known grassroots activist groups. In a reader-friendly fashion, this report repeats the consistent message from activists that the government of Mexico has not been effective or respectful to the human rights of women. It includes an explanation of the CEDAW's expectations and the activists' interpretation of the lack of progress on the part of Mexico.

United Nations discourse.

5) The 2005 CEDAW Report on Mexico

This report is the result of a two-year investigation conducted by the CEDAW and is in response to the activists' letters listed above. The investigation included a visit to Juárez as well as access to data provided by activists and the state of Mexico, and supports the activists' claim that the human rights of women in Juárez are being violated, and that the Mexican government needs to respond with action to address the violence and discrimination to be in compliance with the CEDAW. This report is divided into two parts: CEDAW's recommendations and the government's response (see below).

6) The 2006 CEDAW Concluding Observations on Mexico's 6th Report

CEDAW responded to Mexico's 2006 report and notes three positive aspects as well as thirty-six concerns and recommendations for Mexico with respect to femicide in Juárez. The CEDAW's platform regarding human rights, specific to women, is used to analyze Mexico's progress.

7) 2012 CEDAW Concluding Observations on Mexico's 7th and 8th Combined Reports

Similar to the CEDAW's 2006 concluding comments, this report is the CEDAW's response to Mexico's 7th and 8th reports. The CEDAW again acknowledges Mexico's progress, specifically its ratification of the Constitutional Reform on Human Rights in 2011 and the adoption of the General Law on Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence, but again lists thirty-six areas of concern and recommendations that were not addressed in Mexico's actions. The CEDAW reiterates the need for Mexico to address

discrimination and gender-related violence against Mexico in practice and policy, and to ensure mechanisms of accountability across all branches of government.

Mexican government discourse.

8) The 2005 Response from the Government of Mexico to CEDAW

The government of Mexico enters the discourse with this report. In compliance with article 18 of the CEDAW this report provides the Mexican government's perspective and allows for discourse analysis through the platform of the CEDAW. As will be discussed later, the Mexican government acknowledges femicide, agrees to work to be in compliance and improve the human rights of women in Mexico, specifically Juárez, and offers its own perspective on causality.

9) The 2006 6th Periodic Report Submitted to CEDAW by Mexico

This report is in compliance with the treaty (CEDAW) in which Mexico, as a participating member, will provide CEDAW with progress reports in the issue in inquiry. It again provides the government's perspective on gender-related violence, noting additional programs and policies recently implemented.

10) The 2011 Combined 7th and 8th Periodic Reports to CEDAW by Mexico

This report, again in compliance with article 18 of CEDAW, consists of the Mexican government's assessment of their progress on addressing femicide. This progress includes actions such as monitoring budgets for policies that promote gender equality, supporting gender awareness programs, and providing women with better access to justice. This document provides the most comprehensive list of Mexico's actions for

dealing with femicide and provides an in-depth look at Mexico's beliefs on what contributes to femicide and what Mexico believes constitutes possible solutions.

Procedure

As previously stated, the purpose of this discourse analysis was to compare and contrast the voice of the activist to the voice of the government. To do so, this process required the categorization of the language of these two actors, and also the language used by the third actor, the CEDAW, which acted as the intermediary platform.

The process or procedure was as follows:

First, the ten documents of discourse were read thoroughly to obtain a general understanding of the content each author chose to include or omit when discussing femicide. Specifically, what did each author choose to emphasize as relevant to the cause and resolution of femicide.

Next, after each document of the sample was read thoroughly, common themes used by the authors were identified and grouped into categories. For example, a statement describing an incident in which the police fail to respond to a family begging for an investigation about the disappearance of a daughter would be grouped in the same category as a statement describing the police ignoring pertinent evidence, as both examples suggest police misconduct. Once all the statements were grouped using commonalities of the authors' language, the groups were then titled. Using the example above about statements involving police misconduct, and adding other related examples of action by the state officials, the heading *State Corruption, Incompetence, and Impunity*

emerged. Not every sentence contained significant information. For example, stating the time and place of a murder was omitted from the study due to its insignificance.

Categories

After reading each document, every statement included in each document was numbered. This was necessary for the purpose of data compilation. Then, each statement was categorized for the purpose of comparison. The categories are as follows:

1) Neoliberal Reforms: Statements included in this category were those connecting femicide to reforms associated with NAFTA, specifically the maquiladora factories and surrounding border towns. This category includes the dangers women faced going to and from the factories, gender-related violence and discrimination faced inside the factories - such as sexual harassment and mandatory pregnancy testing, and the overall poverty and destruction of infrastructure caused by the massive migration to Juárez for factory work.

2) State Corruption, Incompetency, and Impunity: Statements connecting femicide to officials or state policy that is negligent or complicit with respect to violence against women fell into this category. This includes botched investigations, delays in administering justice, disrespectful and sexist behavior towards victims families, torturing for confessions, unwillingness to work with civil society organizations, and overall incompetency in addressing and solving gender-related violence. A recent example would be the militarization of the police to combat organized crime, creating a violent space where sexual abuse towards women by law enforcement officials is commonplace.

3) Domestic Violence: Statements relating to domestic and interfamilial violence fall within this category.

4) Individual and Organized Crime: These statements refer to drug, human, and organ trafficking as it connects with femicide. This category also includes prostitution, pornography, sexual predators, and serial killers. Murders that have not been specifically linked to domestic violence, attributed to government officials, or maquiladora work are categorized within this more general crime as a result of an unknown individual.

5) Social Fabric: Statements that relate to the lack of basic human needs in society, including healthcare, education, and employment, but are not gender-specific.

6) Cultural and Institutional Patriarchy: One could make the argument that this category could be viewed as an umbrella or underlying cause for all the categories listed above. Because all of the above could be categorized under this section, this category includes general statements that explicitly contain phrases such as "cultural patriarchy", "gender perspective", "addressing discrimination", and "stereotypes of women". This category also includes healthcare, education, and wage inequality if the statement is specific to women and not gender-neutral.

For the pragmatic purpose of tallying, each category was assigned a color and each statement in the text was then highlighted as such. For example, any statement in the category under State Corruption, Incompetence, and Impunity was highlighted blue. Once the statements in the documents were color-coded, every statement for each particular category was counted and tallied. With these numbers, the percentage of statements within a document that fell under each category could be determined. These

percentages identify the factors the actors attribute to be relevant to the discussion of addressing femicide. For example, within the first letter in this discourse 82% of the statements were categorized under the heading State Corruption, Incompetency, and Impunity. Finally, some statements fell into more than one category and were tallied as such. For example, a statement describing police misconduct that goes on to add that these actions are due to a "societal context of structural discrimination against women" (Justice for our Daughters, 2012, p. 3) would be tallied as .5 under State Corruption, Incompetence, and Impunity and .5 under Cultural and Institutional Patriarchy.

Results

Grassroots Activist Discourse

> In his report to the Commission on Human Rights following his visit to Mexico in May 2001, the U.N. Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers, Param Cumaraswamy, stated that the murders of women in Ciudad Juárez "remain a matter of grave concern," and that it is clear to him that "these murders were inefficiently and incompetently investigated, if there were any investigations at all.” (p. 1)

This quote, taken from a 2002 letter authored by activists, is an example of the activists’ emphasis on State Corruption, Incompetency, and Impunity. It is worth noting that Casa Amiga, which is renowned for its work with victims of domestic violence, has focused this letter on the action of the police rather than the action of the perpetrators, making no mention of domestic violence. The percentages of statements by category in the sample document examined are reported in Table 1 below.

Table 1

2002 Casa Amiga and Equality Now Letter to CEDAW

Categories	Percentage of Statements in Document Examined
State Corruption, Incompetency, and Impunity	82%
Domestic Violence	0%
Individual and Organized Crime	5%
Social Fabric	0%
Cultural and Institutional Patriarchy	8%
Neoliberal Reforms	5%

Again, there is overwhelming emphasis on the actions of the state.

> . . . we are writing to update you on recent events in Ciudad Juárez, including newly discovered murders, continuing impunity or perpetrators, threats to those demanding justice for women, increasing frustration with authorities for lack of due diligence in failing to investigate and pursue these crimes properly, and an emerging pattern of irregularities and disturbing incidents that suggest the possibility of official complicity in the continuing violence against women that prevails in Juárez. (p.1)

Cultural and institutional patriarchy are acknowledged both in the quote above and in other statements, such as the one stating that "considerable public and official attention have focused on these murders, while insufficient attention has been focused on the discrimination that underlines these crimes , , ," (p.6). The content analysis showing the percentages of statements by category in the sample document examined is reported in Table 2 below.

Table 2

2003 Casa Amiga, Equality Now, and CMDPDH Letter To CEDAW

Categories	Percentage of Statements in Document Examined
Neoliberal Reforms	.02%
State Corruption, Incompetency, and Impunity	80%
Domestic Violence	1%
Individual and Organized Crime	18%
Social Fabric	0%
Cultural and Institutional Patriarchy	.04%

Even after span of almost ten years, the activists' emphasis on State Corruption, Incompetency, and Impunity remains static. As stated in the *2012 CMDPDH and CDD Shadow Report to CEDAW* (the content of which is analyzed in Table 3 below):

> Nevertheless, a large majority of cases involving violence against women continue[s] to go without a formal investigation, judgment and sanctions by the justice system, both at the federal and the local level. Among other reasons, there are not specialized mechanisms to integrate and conduct investigations with efficiency and transparency as well as the absence and disregard for special protocols to investigation cases of femicide. (p.6)

Table 3

2012 CMDPDH and CDD Shadow Report to CEDAW

Categories	Percentage of Statements in Document Examined
Neoliberal Reforms	0%
State Corruption, Incompetency, and Impunity	90%
Domestic Violence	2%
Individual and Organized Crime	2%
Social Fabric	1%
Cultural and Institutional Patriarchy	5%

In *Justice for Our Daughters and Center for Women's Rights Shadow Report to CEDAW*, the activists bring up a new issue that falls under the State Corruption, Incompetence and Impunity category. They accuse the government of not addressing the .

> . . . failed security policy characterized by military and police occupation of the region, and increased violence, rape and murder. In implementing the policy, the state did not provide effective mechanisms for the prevention and investigation of violations of women's human rights . . . (p.3)

This report (the content of which is analyzed in Table 4 below) also includes a greater emphasis on domestic violence, as illustrated by the sentence, "The State Attorneys should instruct their public ministries to issue protective measures immediately and without delay when a women reports that she is at risk or claims to be a victim of domestic violence" (p. 23).

Table 4

Justice for Our Daughters and Center for Women's Rights Shadow Report to CEDAW

Categories	Percentage of Statements in Document Examined
Neoliberal Reforms	0%
State Corruption, Incompetency, and Impunity	55%
Domestic Violence	12%
Individual and Organized Crime	3%
Social Fabric	0%
Cultural and Institutional Patriarchy	30%

United Nations CEDAW Discourse

Consistent with the results in the previous section, dealing with activist groups, this first report by the CEDAW focuses on the aspect of State Corruption, Incompetency, and Impunity, as revealed by the content analysis reported in Table 5 below. The report urges the government to

> punish the officials who, by action or omission, have allowed the killings of women to reach such proportions in the border region, paying special attention to those who have tortured detainees to obtain false confessions, have been accomplices or accessories to the murders or have handled the case negligently and irresponsibly. (p. 37)

Table 5

2005 CEDAW Report on Mexico

Categories	Percentage of Statements in Document Examined
Neoliberal Reforms	4%
State Corruption, Incompetency, and Impunity	77%
Domestic Violence	2%
Individual and Organized Crime	5%
Social Fabric	1%
Cultural and Institutional Patriarchy	10%

In their following report, the CEDAW began to shift its focus to Cultural and Institutional Patriarchy (revealed by the content analysis reported in Table 6 below), as illustrated by the statement that

> The Committee remains concerned about the pervasiveness of patriarchal attitudes which impede the enjoyment by women of their human rights and constitute a root cause of violence against women. The Committee expresses concern about the general environment of discrimination and insecurity that prevails in communities. (p .4)

Table 6

2006 CEDAW Concluding Comments on Mexico's 6th Report

Categories	Percentage of Statements in Document Examined
Neoliberal Reforms	8%
State Corruption, Incompetency, and Impunity	20%
Domestic Violence	0%
Individual and Organized Crime	15%
Social Fabric	0%
Cultural and Institutional Patriarchy	57%

The CEDAW continued its emphasis on Cultural and Institutional Patriarchy, as it recommended public policies and reforms to promote gender equality (revealed by the content analysis reported in Table 7 below), as illustrated by their request that the government "[e]nsure that the political parties comply with their obligation to allocate 2% of the public funding received to the promotion of women's political leadership, especially of indigenous women at the municipal level" (p. 7).

Table 7

2012 Concluding Observations on Mexico's 7th and 8th Reports

Categories	Percentage of Statements in Document Examined
Neoliberal Reforms	0.3%
State Corruption, Incompetency, and Impunity	33%
Domestic Violence	0.7%
Individual and Organized Crime	9%
Social Fabric	0%
Cultural and Institutional Patriarchy	57%

Mexican Government Discourse

The Mexican government entered into this discourse focusing primarily on the accusations of the activists and CEDAW, which related primarily to State Corruption, Incompetency, and Impunity category. The language of the government was distinctly patriarchal, as illustrated by this representative passage:

> Even though the Government is offering various support services for the families of the victims, not all the mothers of the murdered women take advantage of them, especially . . . those who have chosen not to establish any sort of relation with the Government but have turned instead to civil society organization[s]. (p. 63)

This represents the kind of blame-the-victim language and hostility toward civil society organizations that the CEDAW and activists groups criticized in their early reports. The content analysis of this document is reported in Table 8 below.

Table 8

2005 Mexican Response to CEDAW

Categories	Percentage of Statements in Document Examined
Neoliberal Reforms	8%
State Corruption, Incompetency, and Impunity	54%
Domestic Violence	6%
Individual and Organized Crime	7%
Social Fabric	3%
Cultural and Institutional Patriarchy	21%

In *2006 Mexico's 6th Report to CEDAW*, it is evident that the Mexican government has shifted the focus from its own failings and corruption to more systemic and structural causes of gender inequality and discrimination. Discussing one of their programs, the government stated, "This evaluation is required to report on resources provided to beneficiaries and should include a specific section on the impact and outcomes of programmes to promote welfare, equity, and equality, and non-discrimination against women" (p. 9). The detailed content analysis of this document is reported in Table 9 below.

Table 9

Mexico's 2006 6th Report to CEDAW

Categories	Percentage of Statements in Document Examined
Neoliberal Reforms	0.2%
State Corruption, Incompetency, and Impunity	9%
Domestic Violence	8%
Individual and Organized Crime	4%
Social Fabric	18%
Cultural and Institutional Patriarchy	61%

The government's focus on Cultural and Institutional Patriarchy is exemplified further in the final document of this discourse analysis, as illustrated by this representative passage (the complete content analysis of which is reported in Table 10 below):

> In response to the Committee's recommendations to the Mexican State, this report emphasizes issues such as legislation harmonization, the eradication of all forms of violence against women, women's participation in decision-making, the eradication of poverty, access to health services, especially for sexual and reproductive health, and incorporation and mainstreaming of the gender perspective in plans and programmes. (p. 12)

Table 10

Mexico's 2011 Combined 7th and 8th Reports to CEDAW

Categories	Percentage of Statements in Document Examined
Neoliberal Reforms	0.2%
State Corruption, Incompetency, and Impunity	10%
Domestic Violence	2%
Individual and Organized Crime	10.2%
Social Fabric	8%
Cultural and Institutional Patriarchy	70%

A content analysis of the documents covered in this discourse analysis, representing the positions of all three actors, is presented in Table 11 below. This side-by-side comparison makes it easy to see how the activists' were primarily concerned with State Corruption, Incompetency, and Impunity, while the content of the Mexican government's reports were skewed heavily in terms of Cultural and Institutional Patriarchy. Interestingly, CEDAW's content was roughly evenly divided between the two.

Table 11

Overall Percentages of Categories

	Activists	Mexican Government	CEDAW
Neoliberal Reforms	1%	3%	4%
State Corruption, Incompetency, and Impunity	77%	24%	43%
Domestic Violence	4%	5%	1%
Individual & Organized Crime	7%	7%	10%
Social Fabric	.25%	10%	.33%
Cultural and Institutional Patriarchy	11%	51%	41%

Discussion

This analysis examined the communication between the three main actors—activists, the government, and the United Nation's CEDAW—in an attempt to provide insight into their ideological discrepancies and commonalities. Starting with the letter by Casa Amiga and Equality Now in 2002, each of the actors produced statements relating to the categories previously described (Neoliberal Reforms, State Corruption, etc.) but with vastly different emphasis and perspective.

The Activists

Throughout the discourse, the focus of the activists fell within the category of State Corruption, Incompetency, and Impunity. The dialogue began with the activists focused on the Mexican government's failure to address gender-related violence in Juárez. Claiming that the government blamed the victims and failed to conduct proper investigations, possibly complicit in the murders, over 80% of activists' statements pointed to the government of Mexico—specifically, its police—as negligent, at the very least, with regard to addressing femicide. The grassroots advocates highlighted the initial experiences of the victims and their families, in terms of their encounters with the police, by attaching a reference to the film documentary *Señorita Extraviada* to their letter (Equality Now, 2003). The documentary included interviews with women and families affected by femicide, providing the CEDAW with the testimonies similar to what the grassroots activists consistently heard from victims, and added the authentic voice of the victims facing police negligence, incompetence, or complicity to the dialogue. In the first letter from Equality Now and Casa Amiga to the CEDAW, the maquiladora workers were

briefly included as victims of femicide, but the activists made no mention of the factories or corporations as responsible for or relevant to femicide. It is also noteworthy that Casa Amiga, renowned for spotlighting domestic violence, made no mention of domestic violence in this first letter (Equality Now, 2002). Instead, by focusing on the manner in which *any* form of gender-related violence had been treated by the police and the government of Mexico, the activists kept their focus on the failure of the government to address femicide and the need for the CEDAW to step into the arena. Finally, fewer than 10% of the statements referred to the patriarchal culture of Mexico in general. Instead, the activists kept their message specific, focusing on the inaction of the officials with regard to protecting the victims, rather than speculating on ways in which the culture created a lack of concern for the victims.

To provide further evidence, the activists of Casa Amiga and Equality Now teamed up with the Mexican Commission for the Defense and Promotion of Human Rights, to write a second letter to the CEDAW in 2003 (Equality Now, 2003). As shown by the content analysis reported in the previous chapter, this document also focused on the corrupt and incompetent nature of the Mexican government and law enforcement officials. Eighty percent of the statements in this document fell within the category of State Corruption, Incompetency, and Impunity. This document mentioned 13 individual cases of femicide, describing different murders. More importantly, the document described the impunity of the perpetrators of those murders. Similar to the first letter written by Casa Amiga, domestic violence was barely mentioned. Again, it is unlikely that the omission of explicit statements about domestic violence was an oversight. More

likely, this represents a deliberate choice of language focused on the failed justice system for women victimized by any kind of violence. There was, however, one significant change from the first letter, an increase in the number of statements relating to the category of Individual and Organized Crime. The activists expressed concern about the increasing number of women victimized by trafficking or killings that appeared to be serial in nature. The activities also expressed a concern for the lack of attention to femicide, in light of officials shifting the blame to scapegoated suspects, instead of conducting proper investigations. Overall, the activists remained consistently focused on the government's failure to adequately address the issue of femicide.

The activists' letters resulted in the investigation of femicide in Mexico, followed by letters and reports between the government of Mexico and the CEDAW. In 2012, the activists *Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir* and *Comisión Mexicana de Defensa y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos (CMDPDH)* conducted a shadow report to the CEDAW. As stated above, the CMDPDH helped Casa Amiga and Equality Now appeal to the CEDAW in 2003, with that report focusing almost exclusively on State Corruption, Incompetency, and Impunity. In response to the previous CEDAW and Mexican government reports (to be discussed below, in the section after the next), the activists' 2012 report stated that not only had the Mexican government failed to address gender-related violence, but also that the violence toward women had increased substantially. They also stated the government had failed with regard to its promises to uphold laws and implement programs designed to address the problem of femicide. The activists clearly wanted to refocus the CEDAW's attention on the culpability of the government, a focus

from which the two other actors had moved away. The activists' 2012 report also reflected the CEDAW's concern about the impact on women of Mexico's war on drugs . Other topics, such as neoliberal reforms and domestic violence were given minimal treatment or completely omitted from the report, with 90% of the content focused on the various failings of the Mexican government.

A second 2012 shadow report to the CEDAW—conducted by Justice for Our Daughters, the Center for Women's Human Rights, and Mukira A.C.—echoed the CMDPDH's report and focused a majority of its content (55%) on the state (Justice for Our Daughters, 2012). Unlike the other activists' reports, however, almost one-third of this report focused on the issue of women's human rights and over 10% of the report addressed the issue of domestic violence. Finally, although little was said about the impact of the militarized war on drugs as it relates to femicide, the report raised the issue at certain points stating, for example, that "masculine armed presence without controls of accountability raised the vulnerability of women and harassment" (Justice for Our Daughters, 2012, p. 15). As was the case with the other grassroots activists' reports examined in this study, references to neoliberalism and maquiladora factories were virtually non-existent in this document.

The message from the activists was clear: the issue of State Corruption, Incompetency, and Impunity is inherently linked to femicide in both in terms of causality and consideration of solutions. The activists were underscoring the necessity of including this point, in the larger context that what victims were seeking was justice and basic human rights.

The United Nations: CEDAW

The pleas of the activists did not fall on deaf ears, as the CEDAW responded with a full-blown investigation into the violations of women's human rights occurring in Juárez and throughout Mexico. It is important to note that Mexico ratified the CEDAW's Optional Protocol in 2002. This meant that if the CEDAW receives reliable evidence of Mexico violating the regulations established by the Convention, the CEDAW could conduct a full investigation, followed by a report (United Nations, 2005). However, the investigators could only enter the accused nation state with the consent of the country's government. Mexico granted the CEDAW this privilege, and in 2003 an investigation was conducted followed by the 2005 UN report. This report specifically stated that the accusations in the two letters by Casa Amiga and Equality Now were not only accurate but were the main reason for the CEDAW's investigation into Mexico's alleged human rights violations.

The 2005 CEDAW report represents the point at which the CEDAW entered the discourse. As was the case with the letters from the activists, this 2005 report focused primarily on the failures of the government at preventing gender-related violence. While the activists mentioned that many of the victims were maquiladora workers, the CEDAW expanded upon this. When describing the context for the violence and discrimination found in Juárez, the CEDAW explained that the growth of the maquiladora industry caused a population boom of migrants that the infrastructure of Juárez could not handle (United Nations, 2005). Due to extreme poverty as a result of this newly created situation, criminal activity including drug trafficking, human trafficking, and prostitution

flouished. The CEDAW noted that these crimes took place in a society that accepts violence against women as normal and struggles with systemic gender-based discrimination. However, the majority of this report (77%) was dedicated to addressing the authorities' incompetence with regard to conducting investigations, disrespect and hostility towards victims' families and civil society organizations, and the inconsistent or non-existent data related to the deaths and disappearances of women. The CEDAW also mentioned that perpetrators continued to act with impunity because of the government's failure to prosecute or investigate many of these crimes. In this first response, the CEDAW and the activists were closely aligned in their ideological perspectives regarding femicide.

After Mexico re-entered the discourse with its 6th report (discussed later), the CEDAW responded with its 2006 Concluding Observations (United Nations, 2006). This CEDAW report represented a dramatic change of focus from its 2005 report. Statements that focused on the failings of the state decreased from 77% to 20% of total content, which also contrasted greatly from the message of the activists. The majority of this CEDAW report (57%) consisted of statements addressing cultural and institutional patriarchy. The CEDAW's broad generalizations addressing discrimination and culture frequently contrasted with the urgent, personal, and specific solutions sought by victims. The 2006 CEDAW report had double the percentage of content with regard to Neoliberal Reforms as did its 2005 report. Observations included concerns about the Mexican government's lack of effort to change the Federal Labour Act to include federal inspection of maquiladora factories. The 2006 CEDAW report included a section

dedicated to addressing the way that macroeconomic policies implementing NAFTA were discriminatory toward women, and the importance of the creation of laws related to women's equality, as represented by the statement that, "The Committee remains concerned about the pervasiveness of patriarchal attitudes which impede the enjoyment by women of their human rights and constitute a root cause of violence against women" (United Nations, 2006, p. 4).

In 2012, the CEDAW produced its Concluding Observations on Mexico's 7th and 8th Report, involving a discourse very similar to the previous CEDAW report. Again, the CEDAW acknowledged the issue of State Corruption, Incompetency, and Impunity as problematic (33% of the content), but the majority of the report focused on cultural and institutional patriarchy found in Mexico's laws and social structures. However, a sizable portion of this document addressed the military tactics the government had used to combat organized drug cartels. The CEDAW claimed that the government's use of military tactics to reduce crime had resulted in a violent environment that was conducive to violent and sexual abuse of women by law enforcement officials. The CEDAW also requested that the government continue to address issues of human trafficking and gender discrimination found in the maquiladora factories. The language the CEDAW used differed greatly from the government's language (examined below). The government framed the issue of femicide, as it related to organized crime and crime within the maquiladora factories, as issues aggravating both the government and victims of violence. In contrast, the CEDAW stated that the government was often part of the problem and responsible for protecting the victims. To summarize, the CEDAW's

discourse shifted from being aligned with the activists' focus on the failures of the government—specifically the police—to protect women from violence, to a broader discussion about changing patriarchal culture and institutional discrimination in Mexico.

The Mexican Government

The Mexican government's position is represented by three documents in this study. First, it responded to the CEDAW in 2005 (United Nations, 2005, in which the government's reply is included), addressing the CEDAW's specific accusations. The content analysis shows that more than half of the government's verbiage was devoted to the need on the part of the state to improve with respect to the justice system and related services. This represents significantly less attention than both the activists and the CEDAW devoted to the state's failures. What is nonetheless noteworthy is the fact that the attention given was significant for the government and represented a substantial increase relative to earlier documents. Even when acknowledging the failures of the justice system, however, the Mexican government included patriarchal language not found in the discourse of the other actors. The government placed blame on the victims and the criminals instead of itself. As previously noted, the government asserted that families sometimes fail to take advantage of programs and services offered by the state. Another example of this attempt to shift blame is reflected in government's assertion that the women coming to work in the maquilas were poorly educated and unable to balance their work with their responsibilities at home. The government pointed to this as the true reason for the high rate of domestic violence in the area. Although the government asserted that 20% of all female deaths in Juárez could be attributed to domestic violence,

only six percent of the content of this document was dedicated to addressing it. Like the CEDAW and the activists, the government of Mexico also mentioned that drug trafficking was problematic with respect to violence against women, but the government's language asserted that the increase in organized crime was one reason the justice system was unable to create a secure environment for women. What was missing in Mexico's report were the concerns of activists and the CEDAW that it is the military police targeting organized crime who are also abusing women in these areas. The Mexican government dedicated a majority of this document to addressing the accusations of the CEDAW by discussing the need to implementing programs for victim's families, awareness campaigns for domestic violence, and surveillance sweeps of high crime areas. However, the government concluded the document by stating that the "[g]overnment of Mexico wishes to stress that, while the justice system has its defects, there is nothing to suggest that the State, pursuing a deliberate policy of discrimination against women, is behind those crimes" (United Nations, 2005, p. 93). Not only did the state deny its culpability in the murders, but it added that Mexico has age-old traditions rooted in gender discrimination that cannot be changed quickly.

In 2006, Mexico filed its official 6th periodic report to the CEDAW (United Nations, 2006a). It is important to note that this report was prepared by INMUJERES, Mexico's national institute for women. This helps explain the change in language between the 2005 response and the 2006 report. In this 2006 report, the Mexican government addressed each of the CEDAW's recommendations, explaining its actions and intent to fulfill obligations. In this report, there was a complete change in objectives

from the previous response. Instead of focusing on the corruption and incompetence of officials and their investigations, the report devoted most of its space to promoting women's equality and improving the social fabric of Mexican society as a whole. This included improving education and healthcare for women, particularly in indigenous communities, promoting equal pay for women, and promoting women to positions of political and economic power. Although it cannot be understated that addressing cultural patriarchy and discrimination (61% of the content) represented important objectives, this dramatic shift away from government failures toward matters of culture was not in alignment with the position of the activists or the CEDAW's initial response. Other contributing factors of femicide, such as organized criminal activity and unintended consequences of neoliberal reforms, were largely brushed off, to and became a smaller part of the government's analysis. Consistent with the position takey by the CEDAW and the activists, neoliberal reforms were rarely mentioned. The only part of the document that mentioned neoliberal reforms was a paragraph explaining how INMUJERES initiated a reform in the Federal Labour Act that would prohibit firing a female worker because of pregnancy. The Mexican government stated that this was an attempt to fix gender discrimination in the maquiladoras. According to the government's 7th and 8th reports to the CEDAW, however, maquiladora factories were exempt from the Federal Labour Act (United Nations, 2011). Unlike the reports from both the activists and the CEDAW, the Mexican government shifted its focus away from the issue of its own corruption and failures, dedicating a majority of its report to dealing with gender equality

in society as a whole. While the content of the activists' reports was largely unchanged, the CEDAW echoed the government's shift.

In 2011, the Mexican government compiled its 7th and 8th reports to the CEDAW, addressing many of the CEDAW's concerns in great detail (United Nations, 2011). The report, authored by INMUJERES, covered the time from August 2006 to September 2010. As shown in Table 10 above, the majority of the content of this report (70%) was devoted to explaining issues relating to institutional and cultural patriarchy. The report stated that it was the aim of the National Development plan to "mainstream the gender perspective, equality between women and men, and the elimination of any form of discrimination based on gender" (United Nations, 2011, p. 12).

To understand the evolution of the change in content, it is important to remember where the discourse began. The activists demanded justice from the government of Mexico, specifically outlining the failure of the justice system to protect women from violence. Over 80% of the activists' statements in that original letter focused on this very specific and very visible issue. In the most recent government report included in this study, issues pertaining to the government represented only 10% of the content, much of it promoting new programs and policies. Similar to the reports of the activists and the CEDAW, this government report contained content in other categories, but only briefly. Specific examples included the government's plans to fund campaigns and create new legislation to address the problem of human trafficking, as well as plans to fund domestic violence shelters and provide support for families dealing with violence. Government

discourse also focused on repairing the social fabric by helping indigenous communities and promoting agrarian reform to help residents of rural communities.

The government's position could be summed up as saying that the problem is with the culture. This represented a convergence between the positions of the government of Mexico and the CEDAW, diverging from the position of the activists.

The content analysis of the documents covered here lends itself to a number of meaningful conclusions that may be drawn about the differences between the perspectives of the three actors with regard to the problem of femicide in Mexico.

Similarities Among the Discourse of the Three Actors

All three actors devoted relatively little space in their reports to discussions of the consequences of neoliberal reforms as they related to the problem of femicide. All three actors in their reports acknowledged that many of the victims of femicide were working in maquiladora factories. Apart from the matter of discriminatory practices within the factories, the industries within the border town of Juárez did not receive much attention. Ten percent or less of the content of the reports from the three actors focused on the social fabric of Mexico, with the government addressing the subject the most frequently of the three, specifically to explain programs or policy improvements intended to help members of society regardless of gender. The subject of domestic violence constituted less than ten percent of the content of the discourse. While the overall domestic violence content percentage of the reports from the activists and the government was very similar, the emphasis of the activists was on seeking justice, in contrast with the government's emphasis on work-life balance as potentially helpful in decreasing violence. All three

actors agreed that organized crime, specifically drug and sex trafficking, played a major role in the problem of femicide, although this topic comprised less than ten percent of the content of the reports. The perspectives adopted by the three actors, however, were not similar. The activists were focused on asking the question, "Who is killing our daughters?" The Mexican government was pointing at organized crime as an important factor. The CEDAW, for its part, responded by asserting that government officials were often complicit and that government policy on organized crime resulted in increased violence against women.

Differences Between the Discourse of the Three Actors

The activist groups consistently focused on the issue of State Corruption, Incompetency, and Impunity. On average, this category comprised 77% of their content. Their focus on drawing attention to government failures to protect its citizens was consistent throughout the ten-year span of this discourse analysis. This contrasts markedly with the government of Mexico's approach to the subject, which began the dialogue both admitting and defending the failure on the part of the government to address femicide (for example, mentioning the intent to improve investigations and compile more accurate data relating to the murders) but subsequently pivoted to the broader topic of cultural patriarchy. Like the government, the CEDAW began the conversation with an emphasis similar to that of the activists, but moved in the direction of the government as the discourse evolved, concluding that the violence stemmed from a culture of patriarchy and the focus should be on promoting equality for women in

general—an approach for which mechanisms of accountability are difficult to apply, as this involves changing attitudes and beliefs.

Another area of contrasting focus was the category of Cultural and Institutional Patriarchy. As previously mentioned, this category proved the most problematic because it factors into all other issues related to the problem of femicide. The activists in their reports rarely wrote in broad terms of culture, gender equality, discrimination or patriarchy. This type of language constituted on average only 11% of the content of their statements. Instead, they consistently wrote about the victims, the specifics of violence, and how women were mistreated by the police. Many activists, epitomized by Cano (described above), were highly organized and focused with regard to what they wanted the government to address. They sought immediate, specific reform of the criminal justice system. The CEDAW and the government of Mexico, possibly for different reasons, wrote spoke far more frequently about patriarchy within the context of the culture of Mexico. The Mexican government used phrases and sentences within this category in over half the content of its discourse. While these statements were often used as an explanation for gender-related violence, they were sometimes used to acknowledge failure or to demonstrate an end to discriminatory practices or policies.

Looking at the discourse as a whole, in many instances the government shifted the spotlight away from the victims, the activists, and its own officials, toward the issue of culture as a whole. Whether the shift in discourse will produce results with regard to ending femicide remains to be seen. The CEDAW, the actor functioning as an intermediary, responded using largely the language with which it was being addressed, by

either the activists or the government. When responding to the activists' appeals, the CEDAW's references to cultural and institutional patriarchy were minimal (an average of 10% of the content). When engaged with the government of Mexico, however, such language comprised more than half the content of the CEDAW reports. Though this may be appropriate for a committee of the United Nations, demonstrating diplomatic communication, the question remains as to whether when the CEDAW exits the discourse, will the activists and the government communicate effectively on the subject of femicide?

Conclusion

The problem of femicide in Juárez and throughout Mexico is as complicated as it is disturbing. Many factors need to be addressed before this extreme form of gender violence can be effectively dealt with. By conducting a discourse analysis of reports representing the main actors involved in the struggle against femicide, this study attempted to gain a better understanding of the differences in perspective. The activists focused on addressing the failure of the government to protect the human rights of women and prevent femicide. Although this group could have focused on a larger diversity of factors, it was successful in attracting domestic and international attention to the issue and convincing the CEDAW to investigate. The Mexican government and the CEDAW both addressed gender discrimination and inequality in considerable detail, but sidestepped some of the important specific factors contributing to femicide.

From this examination of the issues, it becomes clear that in order to accomplish key goals in this area, criminal justice system reform is a necessity. Key goals include changing the attitude of indifference to violence against women, addressing the impact on women of the violent war on drugs, and the protection of women working in the hostile environment of the maquiladora factories, with the resulting negative effects on the poor population of the area. The CEDAW clearly played a positive role in terms of engaging the government of Mexico to address issues raised by the activists. The evidence presented here suggests that by continuing to demand accountability, the CEDAW can continue to make a positive contribution toward constructively addressing the important and disturbing problem of femicide in Mexico today.

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