

GENDER VIOLENCE IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Femicide, Sexual Assault, and Violence in Mexico, Guatemala, and the
U.S.

Lynn Stephen

Professor, Dept. of Anthropology

Director, Center for Latino/a and Latin American Studies (CLLAS)

MAKING WOMEN AND GENDER VIOLENCE VISIBLE: WHAT IS IN THE FRAME OF ANALYSIS?



What do you see?

WHAT DO YOU SEE HERE?



Routes Through Mexico



DRUG ROUTES IN MEXICO



Human Smuggling Routes
through Mexico to the U.S.



Cuerpo es Mío
No se Toca
No se Viola
NO SE MATA!

1,897 Mujeres
Asesinadas

en Guatemala
de enero 2001
a julio 2005



"Ambitious, a dedicated friend, entrepreneurial."

"Here we have a woman who tried to make a U-Turn, a woman who was unarmed with a 13 month old baby in her car, who was gunned down. I think that should have been the focus of the story."

- Valerie Carey, sister



#SAYHERNAME

MIRIAM CAREY

Killed by Federal agents on October 3, 2013
while with her 1-year old baby

**IF BLACK LIVES MATTER,
JOIN US IN SAYING MIRIAM'S NAME.**

Click here to download

Say Her Name: Resisting Police Violence Against Black Women
<http://bit.ly/sayhernamebrief>



#SAYHER

MIRIAM

Killed by Federal agents
while with her

IF BLACK
JOIN US IN SAY

Click here
Say Her Name: Resisting Fear
<http://bit.ly/1K...>



GENDERED VIOLENCE: GENOCIDE, FEMICIDE, AND FEMINICIDE

- Genocide can be defined as “the deliberate and systematic destruction of, in whole or in part, of an ethnic, racial, religious, or national group” (Funk 2010: 1). Women have received recognition in U.S. asylum law as a social group who are the survivors of a particular kind of violence, which is gendered. If a majority of women in Mexico are victims of violence and potential feminicides then it does not take much of a logical leap to propose that in some areas of Mexico and in some contexts there are deliberate attempts to destroy women as a group?
- Femicide is “the killing of females by males because they are female” (Russell 2001:3)
- Feminicide is a political term. Conceptually, it encompasses more than femicide because it holds responsible not only the male perpetrators but also the state and judicial structures that normalize misogyny. Impunity, silence, and indifference each play a role in feminicide... Feminicide leads us back to the structures of power and implicates the state as a responsible party, whether by commission, toleration, or omission. (Sanford 2008: 112-113).

Mueren cinco mujeres al día por violencia de género. De acuerdo a estadísticas del Observatorio Ciudadano Nacional contra el Femicidio, en el País, fallecieron casi 4 mil damas entre el 2012 y 2013



- Between January of 2010 and June of 2011 data compiled by the National Citizen's Observatory on Femicide show that only eight states had state attorneys who reported 1,235 female victims of femicide—Distrito Federal, Mexico, Nuevo Leon, Oaxaca, Sinaloa, Sonora, and Tamaulipas.
- The greatest number of feminicides in this data base occurred in the state of Mexico, a total of 320 (Católicas por el Derecho a Decir/ Comisión Mexicana de Defensa y Promoción de Derechos Humanos 2012).
- The other 20 states did not have any reports in the data base so the overall number is low for the total number of feminicides from this period of time. Of those that were reported, 41 percent of the victims were between 11 and 30 years old, A majority of the victims in this data base (51 percent) died from beatings, burning, trauma, suffocation or puncture wounds. Firearms killed 46 percent of the women (Católicas por el Derecho a Decir/Comisión Mexicana de Defensa y Promoción de Derechos Humanos 2012).

Linking the U.S. and Mexico in Gender Violence



- Rosalina Fregoso and Cynthia Bejarano state that femicide implicates “the state (directly or indirectly) and individual perpetrators (private or state actors); it thus encompasses systematic widespread and everyday interpersonal violence” (2010:5).
- Fregoso and Bejarano’s statement that femicide is “systemic violence rooted in social, political, economic, and cultural inequalities” makes visible the broader political, legal, and economic context within which the potential and actual killing of women occurs and how it continues.
- Fregoso and Bejarano take their analysis a step further and suggest how the changing structure of global capitalism is strongly tied to femicide. Their analysis gestures towards the transborder political economy and policy that binds U.S. society just as much as Mexican society to alarming rates of femicide and sexual assaults on women.

My Research on indigenous women seeking gendered and political asylum in the U's

Undocumented indigenous and other Mexican women are fleeing conditions of horrible violence, abuse, poverty and hunger. Yet the very fact of their arrival to the border and beyond is testament to their amazing agency and determination to change their lives, those of their children, and often to reunite with partners and other family members.

A complex set of political, economic, and cultural factors in Mexico which combine with U.S. immigration policy, regional political conflict, and the vast smuggling businesses of organized crime (drugs people, cash, and guns) to produce multiple violences which are carried out on women's bodies, hearts, and minds. Less than 2 percent of those who petition receive asylum.



THREE PART FRAMEWORK

- 1. political-economic and gendered analysis of the intersection of U.S. immigration and border defense policy and transnational organized crime networks and businesses.
- 2. discussion of gendered physical and sexual violence reflected in military, paramilitary, and narco-military cultures in Mexico and the U.S. which cuts across class and ethnicity
- 3. an examination of the ways in which women seeking asylum have experienced the structures and practice of gendered sexual violence and through coming to the U.S. and in seeking asylum demonstrate active agency in attempting to change their lives.



- Interconnected violences
- Continuum of gendered violence
- Transborder gendered violence
- Networks of violence reach into all parts of the U.S. and deep into the communities where immigrant women live in both the U.S. and Mexico.



[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=1HT3YOCQ-WA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1HT3YOCQ-WA)

- MARE ADVERTENCIA LIRIKA:
- DEVUELVENMELAS



- Each year in the United States two million women are beaten by their partners, and more than half a million women report being raped or sexually assaulted.
- By U.S. Justice Department estimates, three out of four women will be the victims of some kind of violence in their lifetime.
- (PBS, No Safe Place)

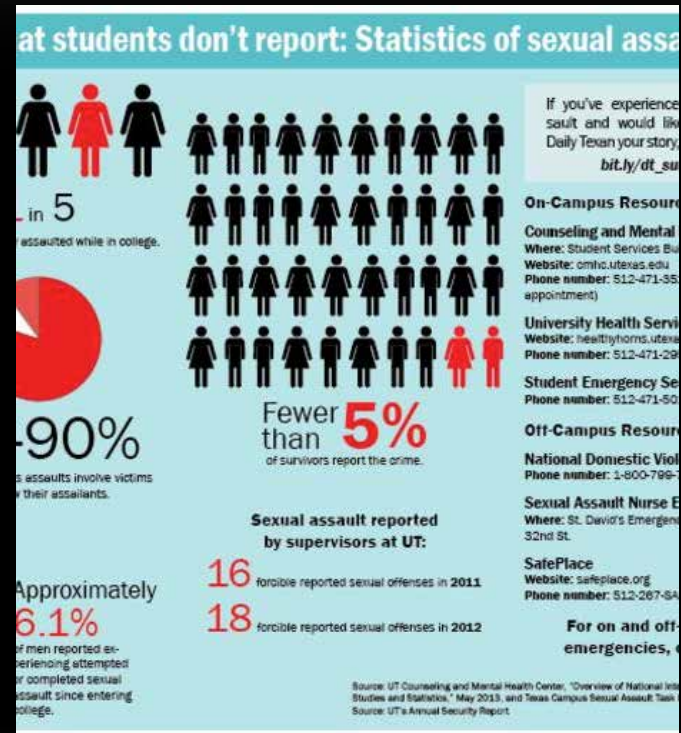
SEXUAL VIOLENCE ON U.S. CAMPUSES



U.S. Department of Justice Definition: Sexual assault is any type of sexual contact or behavior that occurs without the explicit consent of the recipient. Falling under the definition of sexual assault are sexual activities as forced sexual intercourse, forcible sodomy, child molestation, incest, fondling, and attempted rape.

-
- One in five women will be a victim of completed or attempted sexual assault while in college. (Krebs, Lindquist, Warner, Fisher, & Martin, 2007) •
- One in 16 men will be a victim of sexual assault during college. (Krebs et al., 2007) •
- Among college women, nine out of 10 victims of rape and sexual assault knew the person who assaulted them (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000)
- More than 90% of sexual assault victims on college campuses do not report the assault (Fisher et al., 2000) •
- 40% of colleges and universities reported not investigating a single sexual assault in the previous five years (U.S. Senate Subcommittee, 2014)

- New legislation: the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination (SaVE) Act
- In March 2013, the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination (SaVE) Act was signed into law as part of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) Reauthorization. The SaVE Act is an amendment to the Clery Act and requires that all institutions of higher learning must educate students, faculty, and staff on the prevention of rape, acquaintance rape, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. This legislation increases standards of campus response, disciplinary proceedings, and prevention education.
- Do this law suggest that the origins of sexual violence are cultural in the U.S. ?



GENDER VIOLENCE IN THE U.S. / FEMINICIDE IN THE USA.

•	Ranking	State	No.	Rate/ 100,000 females
•	1	South Carolina	61	2.54
•	2	Alaska	7	2.01
•	3	Oklahoma	38	1.99
•	4	Delaware	9	1.92
•	5	Arizona	60	1.84
•	6	Tennessee	59	1.80
•	7	Idaho	14	1.77
•	8	West Virginia	16	1.70
•	9	Louisiana	39	1.67
•	10	New Mexico	17	1.62

- In 2011, there were 1,707 females murdered by males in single victim/single offender incidents that were submitted to the FBI for its Supplementary Homicide Report.
- For victims who knew their offenders, 61 percent (926) of female homicide victims were wives or intimate acquaintances of their killers.
- Nationwide, for homicides in which the weapon could be determined (1,551), more female homicides were committed with firearms (51 percent) than with any other weapon. Knives and other cutting instruments accounted for 20 percent of all female murders, bodily force 14 percent, and murder by blunt object seven percent. Of the homicides committed with firearms, 73 percent were committed with handguns.
- From When Men Murder Women: An Analysis of 2011 Homicide DataFemales. Violence Policy Center.

[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=NEX-QYZAMQS](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NEX-QYZAMQS)

- President Obama's message at the Grammy Awards—U.S. culture and music culture and violence against women.



Comparative Questions

Is sexual violence and the killing of women in the U.S. systemic violence rooted in social, political, economic, and cultural inequalities? What are these inequalities?

Is sexual violence, the killing of women and femicide due to culture?

Why are cultural explanations often used in relation to “other” countries and less in the U.S.?

If femicides implies a link to state policies and structures how does this apply equally in the U.S. and Mexico?

- What kinds of media examples can you think of from Mexico and from the U.S. which you believe contribute to violence against women and excuse or promote the killing of women?
- How are media and other reports of women who are “victims” of domestic violence and other forms of violence racialized? Is violence depicted in ways that justify/promote/ suggest that certain kinds of women are more likely to be “victims”: than others? That some kinds of women are more deserving?
- Are certain kinds of women blamed for their own deaths or being the recipients of violent acts? How and why?

ACADEMIC RESOURCES

- Católicas por el Derecho de Decidir (CDD)/Comisión Mexicana de Defensa y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos (CMDPDH). 2012. Femicide and Impunity in Mexico: A context of structural and generalized violence. A report presented before the Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, CEDAW. July 16. 2012.
http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/docs/ngos/CDDandCMDPDH_forthesession_Mexico_CEDAW52.pdf
- Fregoso, Rosa-Linda and Cynthia Bejerano. 2010. *Terrorizing Women: Femicide in the Americas*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Funk, Marcus T. 2010. *Victims' Rights and Advocacy at the International Criminal Court*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press
- Musalo, Karen. 2010a. A Short History of Gender Asylum in the United States: Resistance and Ambivalence May Very Slowly Be Inching towards Recognition of women's Claims. *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 29(2):46-63.
- _____ .2010b. Towards Full Recognition of Domestic Violence as a Basis for Asylum. Guest Post. American Constitution Society for Law and society. August 20, 2010.
- Preston, Julia. 2014. *Woman is First to be Ruled Eligible for Asylum in U.S. on Basis of Domestic Abuse*. New York Times, August 30, 2014. p. A12.
- Russell, Diane. 2001. The Politics of Femicide. In *Femicide in Global Perspective* Diana Russell and Roberta Harnes (eds.) (New York: Teachers College Columbia University Press)
- Sanford, Victoria. 2008. From Genocide to Femicide: Impunity and Human Rights in Twenty-First Century Guatemala. *Journal of Human Rights* 7: 104-122.
-

REPORTS

- Violence Policy Center. 2013. When Men Murder Women: An Analysis of 2011 Homicide Data. Females Murdered by Males in Single Victim/Single Offender Incidents. Washington D.C.: Available at: <http://www.vpc.org/studies/wmmw2013.pdf>
- American Association of University Women. Ending Campus Sexual Assault Tool Kit. Available at: <http://www.aauw.org/resource/campus-sexual-assault-tool-kit/>
- **The National Organization of Sisters of Color Ending Sexual Assault (SCESA).** <http://sisterslead.org/who-are-we-oct-2014/>

VIDEO RESOURCES

- **Mare Advertencia Lirika “Devuelvanmelas”**. Video on disappeared women in Mexico. Hip Hip Artist. Available at:
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Ht3yoCQ-WA>
- La periodista Carmen Aristegui habló esta mañana con Humberto Padgett, autor del libro "Las muertas del Estado: ". Available at:
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZSLnKipMvco#t=63>
- Obama Grammy video on violence against women. February 2015. Available at:
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NEx-qyZAmqs>