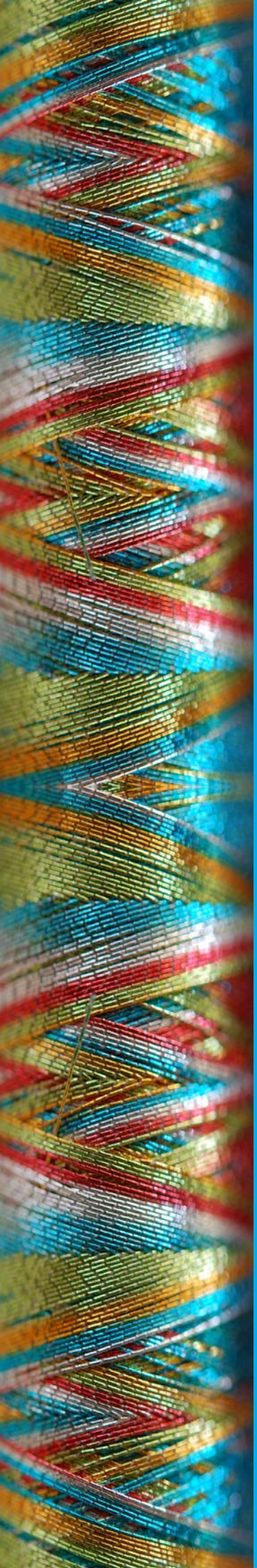

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Researching Femicide from a Qualitative Perspective

by

Shalva Weil
Christiana Kouta

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Femicide: A Glance through Qualitative Lenses

This year, the study of femicide took a leap forward with a pioneering Special Issue on femicide in a sociological journal (Marcuello-Servós et al. 2016). Now we are taking that initiative one stage further by examining for the first time qualitative sociological approaches to femicide in one collection. A forerunner to this Special Issue on *Researching Femicide from a Qualitative Perspective* is an article published in *Qualitative Sociology Review* on femicide survivor narratives among migrant women (Weil 2016a).

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Shalva Weil is the Chair of COST Action IS1206 "Femicide across Europe." She has published articles on femicide in the ACUNS volumes *Femicide* 3, 4 +6, and an article on femicide among girls in India in *Ex Aequo* (2016). She is a co-editor of the Special Issue 2016 on "Femicide: A Social Challenge" in *Current Sociology*. She is a board member of the European Sociological Association (ESA) Research Network No. 20 on Qualitative Methods; from 2005-2007, she served as its Chair. In 2017, she is a co-chair of a Research Stream on "Femicide in Europe" at the ESA meetings in Athens.

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The study of femicide, as opposed to the study of domestic violence, had not been "visible" until recently (Weil 2016b). In some countries, it still remains invisible. However, in general, the world is becoming more aware of issues of femicide, and organizations such as ACUNS (Academic Council on the United Nations System) and COST (European Cooperation of Science and Technology), as well as NGOs, such as WAVE (Women against Violence), EIGE (European Institute for Gender Equality), EWL (European Women's Lobby), and others, have rallied round to combat the phenomenon.

Where femicide has been studied scientifically, it has been almost exclusively researched by means of a quantitative methodology. The World Health Organization (2012) highlighted the difficulty and challenge in collecting correct data on femicide as in many countries police and medical data-collection systems often do not have the necessary information or do not report the victim-perpetrator relationship or the motives for the homicide.

In one exceptional qualitative study, 30 women aged 17-54, who had survived an attempted homicide by an intimate partner, were interviewed. The in-depth interviews were conducted in six cities, as part of an 11-city case-control study to determine the risk factors of actual and attempted intimate partner femicide (Nicolaidis et al. 2003). Victims participated in an audiotaped, semi-structured, in-depth interviews of 30- to 90-minute duration. The interview enabled women to describe, in their own words, their relationship with the partner who had attempted to kill them and their perceptions of the activities and events that had led up to the attempt (Nicolaidis et al. 2003:2). Qualitative studies of femicide in non-Western countries are rarer. There are numerous qualitative studies of African women who have survived domestic violence, but knowledge of the traumas of African women femicide survivors, or qualitative descriptions of male murderers' narratives, are almost non-existent (Weil 2016a).

This Special Issue on *Researching Femicide from a Qualitative Perspective* opens up new vistas in the study of femicide. The collection contains for the first time an article on femicide (as opposed to domestic violence) in Iceland (Freydís Jóna Freysteinsdóttir), and on the other side of the world, in Ecuador (Santiago Boira, Lucia Tomas-Aragones, and Nury Rivera). In the Special Issue, there is a pioneering attempt to develop a qualitative interview tool for the study of femicide (Anita Nudelman, Santiago Boira, Tina [Tiko] Tsomaia, Ecaterina Balica, and Sopio Tabagua). While usually the study of femicide implies research into women, one article suggests focusing on masculinity (James W. Messerschmidt), while another proposes a full-scale study of children, who are left as orphans in the Republic of Cyprus after their mothers have been killed in intimate partner femicides (IPF) during the period 2001-2014 (Andreas Kapardis, Anna Constanza Baldry, and Maria Konstantinou). As Kapardis, Baldry, and Konstantinou point out, children bereaved by the death of a mother at the hands of a father, who is most likely to be imprisoned or to have committed suicide, in effect lose both parents, but the children are often forgotten by the authorities and their families in the midst of the turmoil. Finally, nobody to date has thought

of studying the "femme fatale" as an object of femicide (Naomi Segal). The issue closes with an article explaining the difficulties with quantitative methodology in studying femicide, and the possible advantages of utilizing qualitative methodology (Shalva Weil). The Special Issue produces these highly original contributions on the study of femicide utilizing qualitative methods, or combining qualitative and quantitative methods to produce holistic accounts of heinous killings of women. It brings together scholars who have studied males, and not just females, as well as researchers who have looked at femicide in texts, as well as in narratives. The papers report from a wide variety of countries in which femicide is not normally discussed.

Femicide and Its Definition

It is difficult to produce exact definitions of femicide (cf. Corradi et al. 2016), but usually it is considered to be the murder of women because they are women. Recently, femicide has also included the murder of girls because they might have grown up to be women (Weil and Mitra 2016). The Istanbul Convention (Council of Europe 2011) is the first legally binding instrument to create "a comprehensive legal framework and approach to combat violence against women" (see: Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe 2016:23), but it is focused on preventing domestic violence, protecting victims, and prosecuting perpetrators, and does not necessarily address itself to the final outcome of violence against women, namely, femicide. The United Nations Human Rights Council (2012), when discussing the definition of femicide, referred also to female infanticide, dowry-deaths, clandestine abortions, honor killings, maternal mortality, and deaths arising from harmful practices or neglect of women and girls.

The Vienna Declaration (2013) dealt specifically with femicide and produced a very wide definition of the phenomenon. The term "femicide" is understood as: 1) the murder of women as a result of domestic violence/intimate partner violence, 2) the torture and misogynist slaying of women, 3) killing of women and girls in the name of "honor," 4) targeted killing of women and girls in the context of armed conflict, 5) dowry-related killings of women and girls, 6) killing of women and girls because of their sexual orientation and gender identity, 7) the killing of aboriginal and indigenous women and girls because of their gender, 8) female infanticide and gender-based sex selection feticide, 9) genital mutilation related femicide, 10) accusations of witchcraft, and 11) other femicides connected with gangs, organized crime, drug dealers, human trafficking, and the proliferation of small arms (Laurent, Platzer, and Idomir 2013).

Femicide has been studied in different situations and typologies have been produced to include intimate partner violence, stranger murder, so-called "honor" killings, dowry marriage murders, and more. In its original formulation, in the first anthology published on femicide (Radford and Russell 1992:3), femicide is defined as "the misogynous killing of women by men" to be investigated "in the context of the overall oppression of women in a patriarchal society." The murder takes place against a background of hate and contempt of women. A fascinating question is whether the "femme fatale" can be considered as a femicide, since it is often understood that the woman herself invites her own murder, either by loving her man too little or too much. Nevertheless, she is in fact the primary victim of male violence. As Segal shows in her article in this volume, "In the French confessional narrative, the woman is always somehow at fault for the protagonist's failure…she dies and he lives to tell the tale, recounting it to another man who listens and absolves." Segal compares the femme fatale as a form of femicide as it is portrayed in three French fictions from the 18th to the 20th centuries—Prévost's *Manon Lescaut* (1753), Mérimée's *Carmen* (1845), and Gide's *L'Immoraliste* (1902). She then compares the significance of the life and death of Princess Diana with these fictional examples of femicide. In a fascinating collective, reflexive genre, Segal asks how did our love for her bring on her violent death.

The definitions that have been proposed by researchers and activists affect the way the phenomenon has been studied. In Iceland, a country in which femicide has never been studied before, the researcher defined femicide as the murder of a woman by a partner, former partner, or a murder perpetrated because of passion. According to this definition, 11 femicide cases of women and girls killed during the years 1986-2015 were considered out of 16 femicides carried out during this time period. The data were analyzed qualitatively by means of court verdicts and media reports. Sexually-related femicide cases were prominent. Alcohol consumption was found to be a factor in all partner femicide cases, in addition to the low socio-economic status of perpetrator and victim, and the murder was associated with patriarchal views. In former partner femicide cases, jealousy and possessiveness were found to be major themes, but not alcohol consumption. It is doubtful that these conclusions could have been reached if quantitative analysis alone would have been used.

In addition, while masculinity has been studied in its own right, and while recently femicide has been more widely examined, the obvious relationship between the two has virtually been ignored in femicide studies to date. Messerschmidt examines Raewyn Connell's concept of "hegemonic masculinity" and more recent discussions of hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculinities. He suggests the ways dominant, dominating, and positive masculinities can be applied to two types of femicide: intimate partner femicide and "honor" femicides. This kind of insights could not have been reached by mere quantitative analyses.

Qualitative Methodology

Qualitative research into femicide is often more difficult to carry out than a pure quantitative study, not least because the victims of femicide are not there to tell the tale. Life-histories of victims, as told by the victims themselves, are out of the question. The qualitative researcher, therefore, has to rely on survivor narratives or life-histories of survivors, who are difficult to locate and to gain acquiescence to interview (Weil 2016a), or has to interview family members, or even perpetrators. Even in the case of interviewing, what is needed is

a highly skilled craft requiring a repertoire of specialized tasks and the exertion of personal judgment (Kvale 2006). Despite these obstacles, qualitative research into femicide can still have advantages (Shalva Weil).

In the Cyprus study, Kapardis, Baldry, and Konstantinou stated the conditions under which interviews with orphans of IPF were conducted. A precondition was that the interviewer succeeded in putting an orphan at ease, establishing rapport and gaining his/her trust. The interview therefore took place at a site of the orphan's choice under conditions an orphan felt comfortable. Both a reference letter from the University of Cyprus was provided at the meetings to verify the interviewer's identity, as well as an information sheet and an informed consent form for data confidentiality and protection, and description of the content of study were provided. Each interview lasted approximately 90 minutes and none of the orphans dropped out. A total of 14 orphans from eight femicides were interviewed. Ethical approval for the research had been obtained at a European level by the project coordinator.

An attempt to produce a standardized interview tool to study qualitative aspects of femicide has been made by a group of researchers led by Nudelman, who participated in Working Group 3 meetings on "Culture" established by the COST Action IS1206 meeting on "Femicide across Europe."[1] In their article in this Special Issue, they trace the way they developed a qualitative in-depth tool to interview immigrant/displaced women or women from cultural minorities, and to record the experiences of survivors of attempted femicide. The guide, the first of its kind, was designed to be flexible enough to allow for culture adaptation, the immigration processes, and the specific contexts in the host countries in Europe. Cultural and gender codes and the background in a country of origin (rural or urban, different levels of education, and so on) were given special consideration. They piloted the tool among immigrant femicide survivors: first in Spain, later in Romania, and finally in Georgia, focusing on internally displaced people. Then they analyzed the feedback from the different countries, which led to a refined and improved version of the interview guide. The hope of the authors is to produce a standardized interview guide, which could be adapted to local socio-cultural contexts, and enable further qualitative comparative studies across Europe.

Boira and colleagues' research in the province of Imbabura, Ecuador, involved two major qualitative tools: interviews and focus groups. Their study, based on the participation of 61 individuals, reported in this Special Issue on eight interviews with qualified experts and seven focus groups made up of professionals from the field of social and public services. The study comprises: a) the characterization of the dynamic of violence and risk of femicide; b) the analysis of the microsystem in relation to the family, neighbors, and professionals; c) an examination of the institutional response; and d) the assessment of the patriarchal culture, the role of the church, and indigenism. The results point to the permanence of a naturalized, chauvinistic culture, the lack of an effective network of resources to support victims, and a rigid administrative structure.

[1] The first author, S. Weil, is the Chair of the COST Action IS1206 "Femicide across Europe"; the second author, C. Kouta, is the Chair of the Working Group 3 on "Culture" within the Action.

Policy and Research Implications

Policy-makers are called upon in this Special Issue to commission qualitative, as well as quantitative studies of femicide (Shalva Weil).

The Ecuador study showed that victims have little confidence in public institutions, rates of reporting and prosecuting cases of violence are very low, and there is a perception that the aggressors are able to act with impunity, increasing the risk of severe violence and femicide.

The Cyprus study showed what its authors called "the tragic inability of the authorities" to heed numerous warning signs and threats-to-kill by the offender and so avert such murders. The orphans who are the victims of intimate partner femicides suffer psychological and psychiatric consequences, social and individual stigma, and are embroiled in complicated bureaucratic custody issues. Mostly they are "forgotten." Kapardis, Baldry, and Konstantinou call for better measures for lethal domestic violence prevention and better support of the orphans involved.

The Icelandic case shows that it is important to educate young people about the risks of violence when sex takes place under the influence of heavy alcohol intake.

There are also research implications in the qualitative study of femicide. While the quantitative study of femicide is difficult, the face-to-face qualitative study of femicide is a challenge. That is why some researchers opt for media and court reports.

Ethical considerations are important and each case has to be examined carefully. Ethical clearance has to be obtained from university or other authorities, as well as from the people who are the objects of study.

It is the hope of these co-authors that, now that the first Special Issue on qualitative approaches to femicide has appeared, more researchers will realize the pertinence of qualitative methods and carry out legitimate research in a field which has been neglected until today.

Acknowledgement

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The Different Dynamics of Femicide in a Small Nordic Welfare Society

Abstract In this study, all cases of femicide in Iceland over a thirty-year period were explored. A total of sixteen women and girls were killed during the years 1986-2015. Femicide was defined in this study as the murder of a woman by a partner, former partner, or because of passion. According to this definition, eleven femicide cases occurred during this time period. The data analyzed were court verdicts and news reports of the incidents. Qualitative methods were used for analysis. Interestingly, there was a different dynamic related to femicide cases, which included 1) sex femicide, 2) former partners and 3) current partners. Alcohol consumption and the willingness of the victim to end sex appear to be a dangerous mixture, judging from the results of the sexually-related femicide cases. Alcohol consumption was a factor in all current partner femicide cases in addition to low SES status; empathy was lacking, and patriarchal views were prominent in some of them. In former partner femicide cases, jealousy and possessiveness were major themes, but not alcohol consumption. It is important to study such dynamics and contextual factors in greater detail in larger studies.

Keywords Femicide; Intimate Partner Homicide; Ecological Theory; Gender Equality

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In the majority of homicide cases, both the victim and the perpetrator are males. A part of all murder cases are cases where the victim and the perpetrator are in an intimate relationship (Cooper and Smith 2011; Dobash and Dobash 2012). In a small portion of such homicide cases, a male victim is killed by an intimate partner. However, in the majority of such cases, it is a woman who is killed by an intimate partner (Cooper and Smith 2011). Thus, when homicides take place in intimate relationships, women are much more frequently killed than men (Devries et al. 2013; Stöckl et al. 2013; Smith, Fowler, and Niolon 2014). In some cases, others—such as family members, friends, or neighbors—who might intervene in interpersonal violence, are killed (Dobash and Dobash 2012; Smith et al. 2014).

Some scholars view the killing of women by a partner or former partner as the murder of an intimate partner (Stöckl et al. 2013; The Violence Policy Center 2013; Smith et al. 2014). Others tend to consider this phenomenon as femicide (Beyer et al. 2015); this can be defined as the murder of a woman related to her gender (Weil 2016), comprising a broad definition that can include more than just male perpetrators, where there is violence against women which results in their death, while some include girls as victims in the definition, too (Marcuello-Servós et al. 2016). In this study, femicide was defined as the killing of a woman by a male partner, former partner, a boyfriend, a person with whom the women had a sexual relationship, or where the murder could be considered a crime related to passion.

Several theories have been connected to the phenomenon, such as the feminist perspective (Elisha et al. 2010; Taylor and Jasinski 2011; Chon 2016), the general strain theory (Eriksson and Mazerolle 2013), including the backlash hypothesis (Chon 2016), social disorganization theory (Frye and Wilt 2001), and attachment theory (Elisha et al. 2010). In this paper, two theoretical perspectives are discussed briefly: the feminist perspective (Sörensen 1984; Smith 1990) and Belsky's (1980) ecological model.

Feminists define patriarchy as males dominating females leading to inequality (Smith 1990). Patriarchy has also been defined as the tendency of males to attain higher hierarchical positions and the tendency of women to remain under their authority (Goldberg 1973). Thus, males oppress women (Frye 1995) and have more privileges and power than women (Smith 1990). The key concept in patriarchy is power. Power has been defined as getting others to act in a preferred way. According to the feminist perspective, men have more power than women (Zimmerman 1995).

Belsky's (1980) ecological model is one he developed from Bronfenbrenner's (1977) ecological model, but he laid greater emphasis on micro level factors. Using his model, Belsky (1980) made an attempt to explain why child maltreatment occurs. However, the model can also be applied to violence against women in intimate relationships. According to this model, maltreatment occurs when risk factors are more prominent than protective factors in four main levels: a) individual factors, b) family factors, c) social factors, and d) cultural factors. These factors interact with each other, both within each level and between levels. An ecological model of femicide states that a woman is at risk of being murdered by a partner when the risk factors are more prominent than protective factors. The risk factors are related to: a) individuals involved, b) family dynamic, c) social context, and d) cultural factors. The risk factors in these levels are more prominent than respective protective factors. The ecological model can contain other theories in addition to various risk factors and protective factors (Freysteinsdóttir 2005). For example, the feminist perspective and patriarchy can be viewed as part of the cultural level. After all, cultural views reflect attitudes and behaviors in a given culture (Agathonos-Georgopopoulou 1992). Public policies as macro factors can influence the rate of femicide,

too. For example, murders are committed in various ways, but a gun is most commonly used when there is a gun in the home. An example is the U.S., where the regulations on gun ownership are liberal (The Violence Policy Center 2013). Women are in fact twelve times more likely to be killed if a firearm is involved in interpersonal violence (Smith et al. 2014). Furthermore, other factors can be contained in the ecological model, such as low income or public policy factors that direct formal social support (Freysteinsdóttir 2005) and men's failure to maintain control as a source of strain (Eriksson and Mazerolle 2013). In addition, the ecological model can include attachment (Elisha et al. 2010), social disorganization, such as the disruptive effects of urbanization, immigration, which reduce social bonds (Frye and Wilt 2001).

There has been a longstanding debate on the issue of whether gender equality reduces the risk of violence against women (Bograd 1988:12 as cited in Taylor and Jasinski 2011:342), or whether equality intimidates men with patriarchal views who want to be in superior roles, compared to women (Chon 2016). Gender equality has reached a high level in the Nordic countries, by comparison with other countries. However, the rate of gender based violence has not been lower in these countries (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2014; Gracia and Merlo 2016). It might be theorized that gender equality reduces the risk of violence against women, when gender equality has been reached and is a natural phenomenon in societies and cultures. However, while we are striving to attain greater gender equality, that might not be the case, since a higher level of education or higher salaries among women might prove intimidating for men who experience a push for the role of provider.

Studies have shown that gender equality or inequality issues do not appear to fully explain the rates of violence against women. Low socio-economic status, however, seems to offer a better explanation (Kivivuori and Lehti 2012; Chon 2016), supporting the ecological model rather than the feminist perspective. However, social support and gender equality are extensive in the Nordic countries (Kamerman and Kahn 1995), so intimate partner violence and cases of femicide should be low in these countries. Thus, other factors, such as extensive alcohol consumption, might be more pertinent to the explanation (Gracia and Merlo 2016).

However, we need to bear in mind that cultural factors, such as patriarchal views, constitute certain risk factors within the ecological model. Men who kill women might be more likely to hold such views, regardless of the society in which they live. In fact, results from one quantitative study showed that men who adhered to an ideology of familial patriarchy were more likely to beat their wives than other husbands (Smith 1990). According to a recent study on cases reported to child protection services in Iceland, a higher ratio of those who were violent to a partner were migrants. In most of the cases, the perpetrator was a man and the victim a woman (Árnadóttir 2013). The high number of migrants as perpetrators might explain high numbers of domestic violence in Iceland (Karlsdóttir and Arnalds 2010), despite a high level of gender equality and an extensive social support system. However, that does not explain why domestic violence rates are lower in other European countries than in some of the Nordic countries. But, it is important to bear in mind that even though violence against women in the Nordic countries is higher than might be expected (Gracia and Merlo 2016), the incident rate of women killed by an intimate partner is low in the Nordic countries, ranging from 0.7 to 1.0 per 100,000 in Denmark, Norway, and in Sweden. But, it is higher in Finland, or 2.3 per 100,000. The highest homicide rate is in Central and South America, where it is 68.5 per 100,000, whereas in Europe it is 14.9 per 100,000 (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2011). Thus, a social policy which supports women who try to leave a violent relationship (Johnson and Hotton 2003) might be important in reducing the rates of murders of women, although women are at more risk while they are leaving and shortly after it. As noted, the Nordic countries provide extensive formal social support to families (Kamerman and Kahn 1995). That support benefits women who are less likely to be economically dependent upon men and thus more likely to leave a violent partner.

Femicide has not been studied previously in Iceland. This study was conducted following a participation in a COST project on femicide (femicide.net). Rates for domestic violence in Iceland have been shown to be nearly 14% in the 1990s (Dóms-og kirkjumálaráðuneytið 1997) and considerably higher in a recent study, or 22% (Karlsdóttir and Arnalds 2010). Qualitative studies have shown examples of physical consequences of brutal violence as well against women (Ólafsdóttir, Júlíusdóttir, and Benediktsdóttir 1982; Freysteinsdóttir 2006). It should be noted that Iceland has a fairly small population of only 336,000 (Hagstofa Íslands 2016). In this qualitative study, all the cases of murdered women were explored over three decades in Iceland and contextual factors were analyzed. The research question was the following: What are the dynamics, such that cases of femicide occur in a small Nordic welfare society?

Method

Sixteen women and girls were killed in Iceland by an intimate person during this thirty-year period, compared to three men who were killed by their intimate partner over the same time. Since only two girls were killed during this period, and only one of them could be considered a femicide case, murders of girls were excluded from the analyses.

Design

In this qualitative study, a case study design was used, where the content of existing documents was analyzed qualitatively in depth (Rubin and Babbie 2005).

Data Collection Procedure

All verdicts that included the murder of a woman over a thirty-year period from 01.01.1986 to 31.12.2015 were analyzed; furthermore, written media coverage covering the cases were analyzed, too. First, a list of all murders in Iceland appearing on Wikipedia was examined, to find cases for this study. When it was clear that this list did not yield all the murders, the Fons Juries search machine was used to generate a list of all the verdicts for this period. Verdicts included covered all those relating to

the murder of a woman, according to paragraphs 211 (murder) of the Penal Code. Verdicts were also incorporated if they fell under paragraph 218, which includes aggravated physical assault, according to general criminal law no. 19/1940 [Almenn hegningarlög nr. 19/1940], where the consequences of the physical assault resulted in the death of a woman. However, it cannot be ruled out that other women or girls were murdered during this period without extant verdicts existing on these cases, or where cases were dismissed. Finally, media coverage about the femicide incidents was retrieved from the Internet and all written media coverage concerning those cases was studied. The data collection took place from 2015 to 2016. The results rely primarily on the verdicts; a note appears if they are from the media.

Sample/Participants/Data

Eleven cases out of sixteen were analyzed, as noted. None of the cases included same sex partners. The cases excluded involved the following: a) A woman who was mentally retarded and was stabbed to death by her friend, who also was mentally retarded. According to witnesses, they had been friends for many years and had never had a romantic or sexual relationship. b) An 80-year-old woman, who was killed by a 26-year-old perpetrator who did not seem to know her personally. c) An 11-year-old girl, who was killed by her psychotic mother who tried to kill her brother, too. He survived, but was severely wounded. d) A woman who was killed by a man with whom she was not in a romantic or sexual relationship. It appears that the motive was related to the fact that he had robbed her and she was going to press charges against him. e) An infant girl who was killed by her father while her mother was at work. That case was excluded because it was the only case of femicide involving an infant girl and was, thus, different from other cases.

Methodological Limitations

The main limitation of this study is the small number of cases, in part due to low incidence of femicide in Iceland. However, a strength of this study is that it includes all registered femicide cases involving murders of women that can be traced to their gender. Thus, this study covers the entire population, not just a sample. A further important limitation of this study is that it is possible that cases have not been included, if there were no verdicts related to cases, or if they were dismissed.

Results

First, the incidents and the social contexts are described. All names of perpetrators and victims have been changed.

Arnfríður in 1986

Event: Arnfríður, aged 31, was murdered by Axel, aged 30 years. The event took place in Arnfríður's apartment. Arnfríður had a physical disability and used a wheelchair. Axel pushed her onto the floor, beat her head repeatedly against the floor, removed her clothes, and tried to rape her. When he saw that Arnfríður was having her period, he decided not to rape her and left her severely injured on the floor. Arnfríður was found dead from head injuries about 26 hours later.

Social context: Arnfríður lived in an apartment in a building for disabled people. She had difficulties in motor control. She also had a severe hearing problem and language difficulties. However, she had been a good student and had completed secondary school. The two of them barely knew each other before the incident took place. Axel worked as a driver for disabled people. Axel was married; he and his wife had experienced long term and severe financial difficulties and had recently lost all assets including their apartment. On the evening before the murder took place, Axel had been upset without a significant reason. Both Axel and Arnfríður had gone out with several other people the evening before the murder and then they had continued partying in the building where Arnfríður lived. They had been seen kissing each other during that evening. According to Axel and two witnesses, Axel was heavily under the influence of alcohol that night; however, no substances were found in Arnfríður's body, except caffeine. Arnfríður, Axel, and one other man had taken the elevator, first to the second floor, where the other man went to his apartment. Arnfríður and Axel then went up to the fifth floor to Arnfríður's apartment. A neighbor had woken up and heard a couple arguing in the hallway. The investigation showed that attempted rape had taken place. Axel confessed that he had tried to force Arnfríður to have sex with him.

Guðrún in 1988

Event: Guðrún, aged 26, was murdered by 51-year-old Benedikt. The event took place in the small apartment where they lived. According to Benedikt, they got into a verbal argument because he had gone to a small convenience store where he met a girl and invited her to their apartment; he said that it had made Guðrún jealous. Various injuries were found on Guðrún's body, both recent and old. She had been stabbed in one eye, either shortly before she died, or few minutes after she passed; her cheekbone had also been broken. No injuries were found on Benedikt. According to Benedikt, he kicked Guðrún in the head before strangling her with ropes. At first, Benedikt denied having killed Guðrún and said she had hanged herself; he later admitted to having killed her.

Social context: Both Guðrún and Benedikt had serious alcohol and drug abuse problems. Both were intoxicated when the event took place and other drugs were also found in their bodies. They had been using alcohol and other drugs for days before the incident and, according to Benedikt, he had not slept for four days. They had first met when Guðrún was 17 years old and had been living together for four years when Guðrún was murdered. According to Guðrún's father, brother, and stepmother, Benedikt had abused Guðrún repeatedly, especially when they were using alcohol and drugs. The violence included serious incidents, such as cigarette burns. Guðrún had repeatedly called them while Benedikt was sleeping, complaining about his violence. They had seen injuries and bruises on her following the abuse. According to both Guðrún's stepmother and Benedikt, Guðrún had also abused Benedikt in the past, for example, by throwing alcohol in his eyes, cutting his arm with a knife, and by kicking him repeatedly in the scrotum. Hospital records showed that Guðrún had sought assistance twice for violence-related injuries. However, according to

witnesses, the couple seemed to get on well when they were sober. They had moved home repeatedly because of their alcohol and drug consumption. Information relating to their education or employment was not found in the verdict. Interestingly, Benedict was later killed by a man after serving his jail sentence; that incident was unrelated to this case.

Robin in 1988

Event: Robin was killed by her husband, Tómas, in their home. Both were 27 years old. Tómas shot Robin and then himself, which resulted in his own death, too.

Social context: Robin was from another country. Tómas was a fisherman, but it is not known if Robin had a job. Robin and Tómas had two children together, aged 5 and 10 years. The children were staying with extended family members at the time of the incident. According to the media, they had been at a dance hall until 2:30 a.m. before the incident took place. At 3:35 a.m. Tómas called the police and asked for help. The police heard a gunshot while Tómas was on the phone. Neighbors living near their apartment woke up when they heard the gun being fired. Since Tómas had committed suicide, there was no verdict following Robin's murder. According to the media, other people had not noticed any signs of violence that evening, nor did the taxi driver who drove them home, who had not been aware of anything unusual in their presence. Unfortunately, there are no reports from relatives or friends about their relationship. They had been consuming alcohol that evening, but it is not known how much alcohol they had consumed. Earlier incidents of violence are unknown, prior to this incident. In the media, it was speculated that jealousy might have been the motive for this murder.

Agnes in 1988

Event: Agnes, aged 25, was killed by Gunnar, aged 20. Agnes was murdered in her bed in her apartment while her son was sleeping in his bed which was located next to hers. According to Gunnar, he squeezed her neck until she was unconscious, punched her on the left side of her chin, and finally grabbed a knife in the kitchen and killed her by stabbing her three times over the abdominal area.

Social context: Agnes lived in a small apartment next to her parents' home. She was a single mother and had a 7-year-old son. Agnes and Gunnar first met outside a dance hall around 3:30 a.m., just before the incident took place; they had both been consuming alcohol. Agnes was with her friend. According to the latter, the two of them did not have any money; Gunnar invited them to take a taxi, saying that he would pay. All three of them went to Agnes' apartment. Her friend left shortly afterwards. According to Agnes' friend, Agnes had recently entered a relationship, a few weeks earlier. Her friend did not believe she wanted to get involved with someone else at that time. Agnes' brother came by, after noticing a light in her apartment during the night, and asked if everything was OK. She said it was. After that, she fixed herself a meal and asked Gunnar if he wanted to eat, but he declined. Then she took off her clothes and they started to make love. According to Gunnar, Agnes suddenly wanted to stop having intercourse before Gunnar had reached orgasm; she rolled over and went to sleep. According to Gunnar, he then lost control of his actions. Following the murder, Gunnar said that he had tried to kill himself, first by cutting his wrist and then by trying to hang himself with an electric cord. Gunnar reported the incident at a police station at 7:20 that same morning.

Ásta in 2000

Event: Ásta, aged 19, was murdered with a knife by 21-year-old Ragnar in the bathroom of her apartment. There were 28 stab wounds on her body, as well as bruises.

Social context: Ásta's best friend, Silla, had been living with Ragnar and his parents for nearly two years. They broke up two and a half months before Ásta's murder. Following the break up, Ragnar had forced Silla to give him a blow job and later he raped Silla when she was babysitting his younger siblings at his parent's house. He forced her to have anal sex, vaginal sex, and oral sex, after having abused her emotionally and physically, including asphyxiation to the point that it was difficult for her to breathe. He filmed the rape and told her that if she would try something, he would be able to use the film. Silla pressed charges following the rape. Her friend, Ásta, was her witness because she had contacted her right after the former incident and she had picked Silla up from where Ragnar had left her. The police got hold of the film and the judge concluded that this was indeed a rape. Ragnar had told his friend that if he would be convicted, it would be because of Ásta's statement and that he would take revenge. The evening of the murder, Ragnar had dinner at his grandma's house. After that, he left and saw Ásta and her boyfriend. He told his friend that he was going to beat up her boyfriend for fun. Later that night, he went to their house, broke open the door to their apartment, killed Ásta, and got into a physical fight with her boyfriend when the boyfriend tried to stop him. Then Ragnar went to an acquaintance's house and told the acquaintance that he needed a glass, so he could say his wounds were because he had cut himself on a broken glass. Ragnar was intoxicated when he killed Ásta.

Anna in 2000

Event: Anna, who was 21 years old at the time, was killed by Adam, aged 23. Adam pushed Anna over a balcony railing in an apartment building.

Social context: Anna met Adam for the first time late in the evening of the day she was killed. They were both intoxicated and she was looking for a party where she could get drugs. They went to Adam's sister and asked if they could sleep there, but his sister refused. They took the elevator to the 10th floor in her building. When they reached it, they had sex in the stairway near a balcony. During the intercourse Anna wanted to stop having sex and wanted to take drugs, according to Adam. Adam lost his temper and called her names. It is not clear exactly what happened, but it seems that Adam pushed her over the balcony railing. Anna fell down and landed on the walkway. She died instantly. Her ruined underwear was found in Adam's pocket. At autopsy, a tear was found on her vagina. Thus, it seems that Anna might have been raped, but Adam claimed they had

had rough sex. After Adam had been arrested and was waiting for a doctor's examination, he called out racial insults to a female cleaner and the police had to prevent him attacking her. He also threatened to kill police officers and their children after serving his prison sentence.

Susanne in 2004

Event: Susanne, aged 34, was killed by Henry, aged 45. Henry hit Susanne four times in the head with an iron implement. He then strangled her with a belt. Susanne is believed to have lost consciousness following the first blow.

Social context: Susanne was from Asia and had lived in Iceland for seven years. Susanne and Henry had met in Asia in 1998. Susanne and Henry had lived together for a short time, but Susanne had ended their relationship before their child was born. They had a 2-year-old child and she had two older children, aged 15 and 13 years when she died. According to Henry, Susanne had disappeared repeatedly for weeks while they were in a relationship and when she came back she had money. He believed she was a prostitute. Susanne had denied him contact with their child, whom he had only occasionally seen since its birth. They had been fighting about this when the incident happened. Susanne accused him of abusing her, which he denied. Henry was not under the influence of alcohol or drugs at the time of the incident, but had been abusing alcohol and drugs (amphetamine was found in his urine). According to the media, a journalist who wrote a book about Susanne said she had been abused repeatedly by Henry.

Sigrún in 2004

Event: Sigrún, aged 25, was killed by her husband, Mundi, aged 29, in their home; he strangled Sigrún with a cord. Their two children were sleeping at home when the event took place. The younger one was in a crib in the master bedroom; the other child was in another room. The perpetrator called friends and relatives and told them what he had done. One of his friends notified the police. Mundi also called the police afterwards.

Social context: According to Mundi, they had been in a relationship for ten years and had been married for three years. They were living in an apartment building with their two children, aged four and one. Sigrún had a secondary school diploma and worked as a cleaner; Mundi was an engineer. According to Mundi, the couple was in the process of getting a divorce. Mundi had moved some of his things from their home to his father's house and planned on living with his father. However, he was still sleeping at the apartment. They had been having problems in their relationship for a while and had sought support from two priests without success. According to a psychiatric evaluation, Sigrún had suffered from depression before she had the children and a postpartum depression, as well as having suicidal thoughts prior to the incident. During the divorce, Sigrún was involved with other men and two of them were witnesses in this case. Sigrún was planning to live with one of them; that man had killed someone a few years earlier. Mundi knew she was involved with at least one other man, but was hoping that their relationship would not last. According to Mundi, Sigrún had told him about her sexual relationship with other men and described them in detail. She had asked him to help her end her life since she did not want to live anymore, which he had done. However, the evidence and testimony by one witness did not support that. The witness, a female neighbor, said she had heard a women screaming repeatedly, asking someone else to leave her alone. Furthermore, evidence at the crime scene did not indicate that Sigrún had tried to strangle herself, as Mundi claimed. It seemed rather that she had tried to remove the rope from her neck. Neither of them was under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.

Þuríður in 2011

Event: Þuríður, aged 21, was murdered by Arnar, aged 25. Arnar choked Þuríður, first with his hands, then with a belt; the incident took place outside their car, at a recreation area close to the city. According to Arnar, he could not remember choking Þuríður. He remembered that the three of them went to a swimming pool, ate in a restaurant, and then drove out to the nature site. Then he left the car to smoke a cigar, and he next remembers himself sitting on top of Þuríður, holding down her arms with his knees, so that she was unable to move and her face had turned blue. According to Arnar, their young child was sleeping in the back seat of the car while the incident took place. He placed her body in the trunk of the car and reported the incident at a hospital shortly after.

Social context: Þuríður and Arnar were living together and had a young child. The media reports that their child was two years old when the murder took place and that Arnar also had a 6-year-old child from a prior relationship. Þuríður had been working at a pre-school, but had lost her job for health reasons. The media reports say that Þuríður had earlier been a student at a trade school. No information about Arnar's work or education was found in the verdict. However, according to the media, Arnar had been working on a sanitation crew, but had left that job about one month prior to the incident. Both of them were sober when the incident took place. Neither of them had an alcohol or drug abuse problem, according to the media. The verdict notes that, according to three psychiatrists, Arnar had been diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia three weeks before the incident. He had been hospitalized at a psychiatric unit after assaulting Þuríður's assistant director at her workplace.

Þorbjörg in 2012

Event: Þorbjörg, aged 35, was stabbed 27 times in her head, face, chest, and both arms and both legs by Steinþór, aged 23. The murder took place at Steinþór's home, at his father's house. Both Steinþór and Þorbjörg were using amphetamine and other drugs at the time of the incident. She had an 18-year-old son with another man before she met Steinþór and had repeatedly phoned him and complained that Steinþór had taken money from her and wanted his help to get the money back.

Social context: According to Steinþór, he and Þorbjörg had been good friends for years and had also had a sexual relationship, but they had not been a couple. According to a woman witness in the case and Þorbjörg's relative, Þorbjörg and Steinþór had

been a couple. According to three witnesses, there had been prior violent incidents between Þorbjörg and Steinþór. Both Þorbjörg's relative and the father of her child said that they had seen injuries on Þorbjörg. In addition, Þorbjörg's relative claimed that she and Þorbjörg had been afraid of Steinþór.

Mary in 2014

Event: Mary, aged 26, was strangled with a strap by her husband Michael, aged 28. Their two children, aged two and five years, were in the apartment when the event took place. Michael denied having killed Mary and claimed this had been a suicide. A witness told the police that Michael had called him right after the incident and told him that he had killed his wife. When the police arrived, Michael came to the door with his son on his arm. His wife was lying on the bathroom floor and was clearly dead. The perpetrator was under mild influence of alcohol, but no alcohol or other substances were found in his wife's body.

Social context: Mary and Michael were immigrants. Information about their jobs are unclear in the verdict; however, Michael had a job and Mary worked as a cleaning lady. Witnesses said that he had been drinking a lot of alcohol during the days before the incident took place. According to their older son, a few days before the incident, Michael had been walking around the apartment with a knife. According to Michael, his wife had hanged herself on the bathroom door. The investigation showed that his wife did not hang herself: she was choked by a strap. Michael had been exhibiting severe psychiatric symptoms before the incident. He had been diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia, according to a psychiatrist, and had been hospitalized in a psychiatric ward. He believed his wife was having an affair and he also thought that someone was spying on him. Both were believed to be symptoms of paranoid schizophrenia.

Summary

As can be seen in these eleven cases of femicide, three of them were sex-related. In all these, the perpetrator was intoxicated and hardly knew the victim. In two of those cases, the incident happened when the perpetrator and the victim had started to have sex and the victim wanted to stop the sex. In one of the cases, the perpetrator attempted to rape the victim before he killed her.

In another case, a woman was killed by a man with whom her friend had been in an intimate relationship. The perpetrator had raped the friend after their relationship had ended and the victim testified against him. Thus, it was a passion-related crime.

In four of the seven remaining cases, the perpetrator was the current partner, and in three cases a former partner or the couple was in the process of ending their relationship. The perpetrator had been violent to the victim before the femicide incident took place in four of those seven cases.

In two cases, the couple was in the process of ending their relationship. In those two cases, the motive seemed to be jealousy in one, and possessiveness in the other. However, one of those two perpetrators had earlier been diagnosed with severe psychiatric illness, paranoid schizophrenia. The perpetrator who had acted mainly in terms of jealousy did not have alcohol or drug problem. He was the only perpetrator known to hold a university degree and a professional job. The other perpetrator, who had acted mainly out of possessiveness, held a blue collar job. All three perpetrators were sober when the femicide incidents took place.

In a third case, the perpetrator was a former partner, but they appeared to be seeing each other occasionally. The motive in that case appeared to be related to jealousy and to the fact that they had a child whom the perpetrator had not been allowed to see. The mother might have been protecting the child from a violent father. The perpetrator was self-employed, sober at the time of the incident, but had a history of drug use.

Interestingly, in each of the remaining four of those seven cases, the perpetrator and the victim were a couple; the perpetrator was under influence of alcohol or illegal drugs. In these cases, alcohol and/or drug abuse appear to be the main contextual factors, together with lack of empathy and even cruelty, in half of those cases. In one of those four cases, the perpetrator had previously been diagnosed with a severe psychiatric illness, paranoid schizophrenia, not long before the incident took place.

Discussion

Eleven women were killed in Iceland during a thirty-year period from 1986 through 2015, according to the definition of femicide used in this study. Thus, taking population into account (Hagstofa Íslands 2016) the femicide cases involving women in Iceland during these thirty years were 0.267 per 100,000, which is considerably lower than in many other countries (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2011).

There was only one case that involved a victim other than a partner, a former partner or sexual partner, but that incident was a passion-related crime. That type of crime is much less common than the killing of an intimate partner, as the studies conducted by Liem and colleagues (2011) and Smith and colleagues (2014) have shown. The results show that there are three main types of femicide cases in Iceland: 1) Sexual femicide, where the perpetrator has consumed a lot of alcohol and the victim withdraws from sex after it has already started, or does not want to have sex after the couple has been making out. The perpetrator does not know the victim and loses control of his action when the woman does not comply with his sexual desires. 2) Former partner femicide, involving a former partner or a couple in a separation process, where the perpetrator is sober, but is jealous or possessive. Jealousy and possessiveness also seemed to be key factors in a qualitative study conducted by Weil (2016). 3) Current partner femicide, where the perpetrator is intoxicated and is likely to show lack of empathy, and even cruelty, towards the victim.

The perpetrators showed a degrading attitude towards the victims, according to some of the verdicts. Information about such patriarchal views might be lacking in some of the other verdicts. The majority of the perpetrators had been violent

towards the victim before the femicide incidents took place. This supports the feminist perspective. However, it might be concluded that the ecological model is supported in this analysis, too. Most of those perpetrators did have a low SES status, reflected in a low education level and a blue collar job, and the majority of them were under the influence of alcohol and/or drug abuse when the incidents took place. However, the ecological model can explain the lower rate of incidents as an outcome of a welfare society that strengthens the protective factors, thus resulting in the absence of femicide cases among higher educated and higher SES sectors of the population.

Conclusion, Policy, and Practical Implications

This study provides insight into the phenomenon of femicide and the social context in which it occurs in a small Nordic welfare society. The results cannot be generalized to other countries, since this is a qualitative study of a few cases. However, it does provide rather detailed information about the social context in which the femicide cases have occurred. One of the eleven femicide cases over three decades involved a friend of the perpetrator's former girlfriend. In all other cases, the victim was a current or former partner, the couple was in the process of separating, or they were dating and had just met each other. More women were killed by an intimate partner than men, since only three men were killed by an intimate partner during the same time period. None of the cases involved same sex partners. Although the domestic violence rate is quite high in Iceland, the femicide rate is relatively low, compared to other countries. In only one of the cases, was the woman killed by a gun and the perpetrator killed himself after the incident, demonstrating more risk of suicide-homicide when guns are involved (Large, Smith, and Nielssen 2009). Immigrant status was slightly higher among the perpetrators than among residents in general, but not among the victims.

Femicide was defined in this study as a woman being killed by an intimate person or related to passion. Since only one eligible case involved a child, it was decided not to analyze that case. Three types of femicide cases emerged from the data, which take place in different dynamics and social contexts. It is important to study such dynamics in greater detail in larger studies. Ecological factors, such as low socio-economic status, alcohol problems, patriarchal views, former violence, jealousy, and possessiveness, seem to be warning signs, especially alcohol/drug abuse problems in long-term relationships and in dating relationships. It might be important for societies to de-escalate these factors and to provide their citizens with equal opportunities and value them, whatever path they may take in education and employment. It might also be important to educate young people about imminent risk when sex takes place under the influence of heavy alcohol consumption. Ecological factors, such as low SES status and alcohol and/or drug abuse, do appear to be key factors when current partners were killed, but did not, however, seem to be the key element in femicide cases when a former partner was killed. Possessiveness and jealousy seem to be the key factors in those cases, and thus feminism better explains cases when former partners are killed. It can be argued that jealousy and possessiveness are feelings that have their roots in inferiority.

The rate of femicide cases is very low in Iceland, by comparison with other countries. However, in order to reduce it further, it might be important to increase social support even further and to work on minimizing patriarchal concepts, especially among children, in order to prevent femicides in the future.

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Intimate Partner Violence and Femicide in Ecuador

Abstract This article analyzes intimate partner violence and femicide in Ecuador from an ecological perspective. The qualitative study, involving the participation of 61 individuals, took place in the province of Imbabura and was based on eight interviews with qualified experts and seven focus groups made up of professionals from the field of social and public services. The study comprises: a) the characterization of the dynamic of violence and risk of femicide; b) the analysis of the microsystem in relation to the family, neighbors, and professionals; c) an examination of the institutional response; and d) the assessment of the patriarchal culture, the role of the church, and indigenism. The results point to the permanence of a naturalized, chauvinistic culture, the lack of an effective network of resources to support victims, and a rigid administrative structure. As a consequence, victims have little confidence in public institutions, rates of reporting and prosecuting cases of violence are very low, and there is a perception that the aggressors are able to act with impunity, increasing the risk of severe violence and femicide.

Keywords Intimate Partner Violence; Femicide; Public Policies; Ecuador; Ecological Model

Gender-based, domestic, or intimate partner violence is a global public health problem and a violation of human rights (Ellsberg et al. 2008; WHO 2013). A wide range of international reports has drawn attention to the impact of this type of violence (Garcia-Moreno et al. 2006; Devries et al. 2013). In Latin America, some of these works have been instrumental in assessing and evidencing the prevalence and significance of the phenomenon (e.g., Bott et al. 2012).

Focusing on femicide during the Symposium celebrated in November 2012 at the United Nations in Vienna, it was pointed out that the killing of women is a global reality. Femicide is thus defined as *the ultimate form of violence against women and girls*, which can present in many different ways. In order to examine the etiology of this complex phenomenon, it is necessary to consider its development in relation to the inequity between men and women. This inequity is based on systematic discrimination against females (Laurent, Platzer, and Idomir 2013). Related to this issue, it is important to study the research carried out on femicide in social studies, as well as other research that has addressed this problem (Corradi et al. 2016). Weil (2016) has offered some possible reasons as to why this problem has remained "hidden," highlighting the absence of data and hence preventing transnational comparison. According to the official data available on femicide by the Observatory of Gender Equity of Latin America and the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 1,678 women lost their lives due to their sexual identity in sixteen Latin American countries and the Caribbean in 2014.

To understand the impact of this type of violence in Ecuador, we only need to consider data from the (now defunct) Commissariats of Women and the Family and social surveys undertaken in the country. In 2011, there were 83,115 incidents of domestic violence reported to the Commissariats of Women and the Family (Comisión de Transición para la Definición de la Institucionalidad Pública que Garantice la Igualdad entre Hombres y Mujeres 2014). Figures from the Demographic Maternal and Infant Health Survey (CEPAR 2005) indicate that 31% of Ecuadorian women of childbearing age had suffered physical, psychological, or sexual abuse. According

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to the National Survey on Family Relationships and Gender Violence against Women, 6 out of 10 women living in Ecuador have suffered some type of gender violence and, of these, 87.3% have suffered physical violence in an intimate relationship (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos de Ecuador 2011; Camacho 2014). Regarding femicide data provided by the Police and published by the Latin American Network on Security and Organized Delinquency, 69 women were murdered in Ecuador in 2013, and 97 in 2014.

Despite the importance of the statistics, a thorough analysis of intimate partner violence requires the contemplation of the many factors that can influence the problem. A number of studies have contextualized domestic violence in Ecuador in relation to the following factors: i) differences existing between rural and urban areas (Cuvi, Ferraro, and Martínez 2000; García and Astete 2012; Aguinaga and Carrión 2013; Boira, Carbajosa, and Méndez 2016); ii) women's sexual and reproductive rights (Friederic 2013; 2014); iii) the needs of women, the risk of adolescent pregnancy, and the attitudes of men towards gender-based violence (Goicolea 2001; Goicolea et al. 2009; Goicolea et al. 2012); iv) patrimonial violence (Deere, Contreras, and Twyman 2013); and: v) violence in relation to racial diversity, in the territories of the country in which *Mestiza*, Ecuadorian and African-descendent communities coexist (Prieto et al. 2005; Salgado 2009).

In recent years, Latin America has made significant national legislative advances (UNDP-UNO Women 2013), but there are still a number of meaningful policy issues that have to be tackled in order to guarantee protection and support for the victims of gender violence and intervention treatments for the aggressors (PAHO-WHO 2015). As the United Nations have commented, it is time to move from words to deeds and for the nation states to face up to their responsibilities. It is time to close the gap between international directives and recommendations on the elimination of gender violence and national and local policies and practices (WHO 2006).

In view of the information previously discussed, this study aims to address intimate partner violence in Ecuador and to identify factors associated with the increased risk of femicide. The work comprises a qualitative study undertaken in the province of Imbabura, utilizing the opinions and experiences of relevant professionals and intervention agents.

Methods

Study Area and Participants

Imbabura is located in the Andean region of Zone 1, in the north of Ecuador. The province has a geographical area of 4,599 square kilometers and is divided into six districts (Antonio Ante, Cotacachi, Ibarra, Otavalo, San Miguel de Urcuquí, and Pimampiro). The population is 398,244, with an average age of 29 years. 65.7% of the inhabitants are *mestizos*, 25.8% indigenous, and 5.4% are African-descendent. The school enrollment rate for 5-14 year-olds is 94.5% and this falls to 75.2% in the 15-17 age groups. Illiteracy stands at 10.6% (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos de Ecuador). The national income-based poverty rate is 24.55% with 8.97% of the population living in conditions of extreme poverty; in rural areas, these figures rise to 40.091% and 19.74%, respectively.

This study was based on seven focus groups and eight in-depth interviews, involving 61 participants who were either directly implicated in dealing with cases of intimate partner violence, or held positions of civil or public responsibility in the province.

The eight interviewees (six men and two women) were members of teams belonging to judicial units (a psychologist, a social worker, a judge, and a doctor), female community leaders, and members of the Council for Citizen Participation and Social Control and the UNHCR.

The socio-demographic distribution of the focus groups appears in Table 1.

Table 1. The focus groups.

Group number	Place	Number of participants	Sex	Average age	Ethnicity	Main roles
1	Peña Herrera	5	5 women	42.4	*Mestiza*	Members of mothers of school students association
2	Ambuquí	10	2 women 8 men	36.4	*Mestiza* indigenous Afro-Ecuadorian	Regional government, police, teacher, doctor
3	Peña Herrera	6	6 men	43.1	*Mestiza*	Doctor, teacher, regional government
4	García Moreno	10	6 women 4 men	36.7	*Mestiza*	Police, public administration, regional government, teacher
5	Ibarra	11	9 women 2 men	38.4	*Mestiza*, indigenous Afro-Ecuadorian	lawyer, university teacher, regional government, Prefecture, council of citizen participation, leaders of social organizations
6	Ibarra	6	3 women 3 men	41.5	*Mestiza*	University teachers
7	Ibarra	5	5 women	55.2	*Mestiza*	Representatives of women's associations

Source: self-elaboration.

The variables taken into account for the members of the focus groups were: sex, urban or rural origin, and employment in the public or private sector.

Techniques and Procedures

The study employed a qualitative approach using in-depth interviews and focus groups. The fieldwork took place between September and November 2014. The focus groups were comprised of professionals linked to the Provincial Government of Imbabura, the Imbabureña Integrated Attention Center for Women and the Family (CAIMYFI), and the Technical University of North Ibarra.

Local community representatives were consulted to facilitate contact with the group participants. Group meetings took place in the parishes and rural communities in regional government offices and other buildings of the participating organizations. On average, the group sessions and interviews lasted 1 hour and fifteen minutes. At the beginning of each interview or group meeting, the general objective of the research was explained and participants were asked for their consent. All those invited to attend agreed to participate.

The first named author of this article undertook the in-depth interviews and was responsible for the coordination of the focus groups. Other members of the research team also took part in the focus groups as facilitators. Although there was flexibility with regards to the direction of the group discussions, five major themes were examined: a) intimate partner relationships; b) the causes and dynamic of violence and risk factors; c) access to resources; d) the professional response; and e) prevention and action plans. The group meetings and interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed.

Discourse Analysis

This article is based on an analysis that employs an ecological perspective: it incorporates the relationships between the different roles and factors implicated in each of the systems contemplated by the ecological model—ecosystem, microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem (Bronfenbrenner 1986; Edleson and Tolman 1992; WHO 2002). Some of these factors are associated with the macrosystem (e.g., the patriarchal culture, religious values, or the influence of the indigenous culture) and the exosystem (e.g., public institutions and the Administration), whilst others concern the microsystem and involve an examination of family relations, the neighborhood, or the response of the professionals that intervene in cases of domestic violence.

In terms of the design, execution, and evaluation of public policies, an ecological approach allows for a more integrated analysis that favors the processes of planning and the identification of risk factors (personal, relational, communitarian, and socio-cultural) that can be incorporated into policies and strategic action programs (WHO 2002; Heise 2011).

The establishment of categories used in discourse analysis is a dynamic process. As Taylor and Bogdan (1987) have noted, the original set of analyzed categories evolves as new problems arise and the categories are grouped and separated in accordance with the logic of the discourse. In the first stage of this process, the members of the research team read the transcriptions with the aim of identifying the explicit or implicit enunciations, organizing the information, and evaluating the key themes and discursive positions. The second stage involved the proposal of the main nodes for encoding the opinions of the groups. In the third stage, the material was encoded with the assistance of the Atlas.ti program. Finally, the resulting information was analyzed by the research team.

Results

The key themes were organized in accordance with the levels of analysis suggested by the ecological model.

The Characterization of Violence: Victims, Aggressors, and the Dynamic of Violence

Differences in Violence between Territories and Ethnicities

Although domestic violence is a feature of all the districts of the province, the number of official complaints to the police is higher in Ibarra, Otavalo, and Cotacachi. Violence is common to all ethnicities (*mestizos*, Afro-descendents, and the indigenous population); its expression and justification varies for religious, cultural, and economic reasons:

> **Participant 8, a woman from a social organization:** The women in *Intag* [an Afro-descendent community] stay with their abusers for economic reasons, but not in the Andes region where marriage is forever. Here, the women are more pragmatic and if they had economic independence, they wouldn't hesitate, they would leave…In the case of the indigenous population, religion is much more important: "I got married for life, so I have to put up with it."

Violence occurs in both rural and urban environments. In small communities, the expression "he's my husband" is common and implies the justification of the behavior of the men. Violence is naturalized and, in many cases, denied by the victims.

> **Participant 6, a man from the judicial team of a public institution:** [In the rural areas] women say that although their husbands beats them, "He's my husband." He hits her and she says, "My husband has the right to hit me." I have worked with the indigenous population for many years and I know their customs; the wife stays at home with the animals and the kids, the husband dishes out the punishment and she respects this. He comes home like an ogre, "Get me my food!" and if it is not ready, he hits her and she says, "He's my husband, it's OK," they have this philosophy. A woman from the city would not tolerate this, she would fight back.

Sexual Violence

In isolated rural areas, domestic violence is endemic and involves all members of the family unit. Attitudes transmitted from generation to generation include intense violence against younger members of the family, sexual abuse, and incest.

> **Participant 8, a woman from a social organization:** We realized that there was a common factor: violence was reproduced from generation to generation…

We worked with a group of 10 and 11-year-olds because of the number of young suicides that had taken place…The boys said that they didn't understand why life had to be like this, they had been mistreated since birth, all their lives with problems resolved by violence: they suffered abuse from their parents, who expected them to work three times more than anyone else, planting and harvesting, taking care of the animals, and those that had access, were expected to go to school, many had no access to education. Most women had no access to education and they saw how their daughters and older sisters were abused by their fathers, cousins, or uncles.

Female participant from focus group 4: Here in the parish, we have a social problem that is very difficult to deal with, and it is much more difficult in the rural areas…Inter-family violence is not only directed against the female parent, it is also directed against the children; it is not only physical violence and beatings, there are fathers that rape their daughters.

Another important characteristic of the areas close to the Columbian border is that a part of the population is made up of refugees and people displaced by war, many of whom are undocumented, illegal aliens. For women, the experience of war is often linked to situations of sexual violence.

Participant 2, a man from a social organization: Many of the people that have come here have experienced violence, and for many of the women this means gender violence…Women are used, young women, as tools of war to gain information for the soldiers or armed groups, they are seduced in order to get information. Sexual violence is a complex issue. There are a high number of gang rapes by the armed groups on female survivors that are taken prisoner.

The Causes of Violence

Chauvinistic attitudes, especially among men, are regularly found in personal relationships.

Female participant in focus group 7: I want to make a point about the attitudes of men to football, while they are in the street with their friends, thinking they are the most handsome, the toughest, and the most attractive, the women are at home washing dishes and looking after the kids. In my work at the Ministry, I listen to my male colleagues and when they get home, they can watch a soap opera on the TV and later they talk about it at work, et cetera. When women get home, they are exhausted; they change their clothes and prepare the food or make the coffee while the men relax.

Jealousy and infidelity are also given as excuses for violent behavior, and, as in other situations, patriarchal attitudes are dominant and used by men to justify their actions. Women suffer the consequences; in their social lives and interpersonal relationships, jealousy, chauvinism, and violence are often interlinked.

Focus group facilitator: What would make you want a divorce?
Female participant in focus group 1: I'm not sure, perhaps if he was unfaithful or I was unfaithful…for lack of comprehension or vices or maybe jealousy...I don't know, there are many, many things…Most men are jealous and I ask myself, "What can we, women, do?" Most men, what they do is beat us, that is how it is.
Female participant 2: Yes, that's what happens to most of us.

The excessive consumption of alcohol in the rural areas is also a common excuse for violence.

Focus group facilitator: Do people drink much here?
Participant: In festivals, the weekends, and...
Focus group facilitator: Do you think that drinking is related to the cases of violence?
Male participant in focus group 3: Obviously! It's clear that one of the causes is the *puntas* [a drink with a high alcohol content]. In these isolated areas, most men carry their little bottle like it was a bottle of water, like a friend.

Finally, there were causes linked to economic conditions: poverty, unemployment, and the lack of opportunities or conflicts about ownership and distribution of land. In many homes, economic issues are not only directly associated with violence but also with a permanently hostile relationship between the partners.

The Response of the Microsystem: The Family, Neighbors, and Professionals

The violent relationship between the victim and the aggressor is not produced in isolation—rather, it can be contextualized within a number of microsystems through which men and women interact with the family, the neighbors, and professionals that are called upon to intervene.

Family and Neighbors

The response of the families and neighbors is ambivalence, and, on occasion, they place the blame on the victim. In the case of the family, participants commented that relatives usually encouraged women to stay in the relationship (for religious reasons, to maintain the family unit, for the good of the children, etc.), arguing that the victim should change her attitudes towards her husband and accept her situation. "What will *they* say?" is a concern for many women and can discourage them from leaving their abusive spouse. Social pressure is very strong and more intense in the rural environment where most people know each other and have close contact; rumor and gossip is commonplace and the expression "there's no hell like a small town" is frequently heard.

Female participant in focus group 1: Many women like to chat with friends, but are much more reserved with their husbands…I tell them that women have the right to talk and to go out and enjoy themselves when there is a party; it's not just for the men…My husband doesn't like dancing and goes to bed when I go to a party with my kids. He tells me to go, he trusts me, but people criticize and they ask me why my husband goes to bed and I go to the party. The problem is what the people say.

Apart from gossip and rumor, neighbors do not usually intervene or get involved in what are viewed as other people's problems; in addition, they do not want to risk any reprisals from the aggressor or his family.

The Professionals' Response

The response of the professionals and their relationships with victims are crucial. Unfortunately, their attitude is, in many ways, also one of ambivalence. There does not seem to be a clear understanding as to how domestic violence manifests itself and how it evolves over time. Whilst there is agreement that in severe cases of physical abuse the priority is the protection of the victim, solutions are usually oriented towards mediation and negotiation, only using criminal charges as a warning to the abuser.

Another issue is that whilst the professional may be conscious of the difficulties that the victim has in reporting the abuse, they are not usually proactive, for example, they do not offer to accompany them to the police station.

> **Focus group facilitator:** What can a person do when they suffer these kinds of problems?
> **Male participant in focus group 3:** In the local health center, we have a protocol that they go directly to the national police; they fill in some forms and are sent directly to the national police…What usually happens is that the women arrive, they talk about the problem, they let off steam, but nobody takes the initiative to report the incident…The health center should get involved in domestic abuse, the problem is that before we get involved, we have to have authorization or, at least, evidence of the abuse, it is one thing for us to recognize abuse and another to report it. I have seen women deny everything: the beating, the bruises that they have, they say that they have fallen down, they totally deny it and it makes you look bad. From a legal point of view, there is no point in reporting the incident.

As illustrated by the above example, this failure to act is justified by the refusal of the victim to admit to the abuse, this is often because she has to return immediately to living with the abuser, or because there is not enough evidence. In this regard, the professionals can become cold, cynical, and lacking in empathy.

> **Participant 3, a woman employed by a public institution:** In the area of domestic violence, there should be trained specialists that do not have an uncaring attitude; the response should not be the same as when you go to pay the electricity bill.

Some of the professionals admitted that they were tired and frustrated by the lack of support and resources, one of them commented, "well, so here we are, what can we do?"

> **Male participant, focus group 2:** I know the problems in each of the houses…If I'm honest, and direct and speak openly…Here we have all the authorities, what are we doing? It's not only a question of speaking the truth. Sometimes you can feel impotent as a teacher because you don't have the finance and support of other institutions, because, in reality, they say to us, "You have to do this, you have to fight against that, you have to end this." That's all very well, but I disagree because they are very nice words, and I say, "But how?"

Anxiety and fear are also present, as the professionals do not feel that they are supported by the administration. They are worried about reprisals that may be taken by the family or the husbands, or, as the following example shows, in some cases, women have been killed by men involved in human trafficking or the drug trade.

> **Participant 2, a man from a social organization:** Here there are a lot of organized criminal gangs; even the police limit their investigations into the crimes that take place in our area. There are a lot of death threats; all of us have received threats after attending certain incidents.

The Exosystem: The Performance of the Institutions, Direction, Care of Victims, and Monitoring the Aggressor

The components of the exosystem are relevant to understanding the dynamic of violence and how it can be stopped, or reinforced, by the actions of the administration and public institutions. In this section, we examine aspects related to administrative procedures, the process of reporting an incident, care of victims, the follow-up of the legal process, and monitoring the aggressor.

Bureaucracy and Administrative Procedures

The relationship between the administration and the citizen can have a direct influence on the incidence of gender violence. Despite the fact that there has been progress, there is much criticism of the difficulties faced by victims with regard to the bureaucratic and administrative procedures. For the victim, bureaucracy can discourage the reporting of violent incidents and situations.

There seems to be a lack of clarity with regard to the roles of the institution, the citizen, and the mechanisms of protection and restitution of rights. The approach of the administration is very personal and although the starting point is the law, the citizen does not appear to see the administrative system as a whole, conjoint body; rather, it is interpreted through its representatives who have the power: the councilor, the mayor, or the governor.

Beyond the courts, many citizens are not aware of the specific bodies charged with the protection of their rights (e.g., The Council for Citizen Participation and Social Control, the Ombudsman, etc.) or they do not believe that these organizations can offer a solution to their problems. Most people trust what they know, personal contact, or, as they say here, the *palanca* (the lever) that opens the door.

Reporting and Intervention

Although it was felt that violent incidents were decreasing and there was an increase in reporting incidents, there was a general agreement that the rate of reporting was still very low, especially in the rural areas. Here, it is important to differentiate between cases of violence that are reported to the institutions involved (local government offices, hospitals, health centers, the police, the courts, lawyers, etc.) and cases that result in criminal charges and prosecution.

When dealing with the victims, immediate attention is recommended and they should be supported in the decision-making process. The degree of assistance varies from area to area, so it is vital to identify available resources and organizations that

can offer specialist care and advice. It is also important to note that Ecuador's Gender Violence Judicial Units and other women's support centers are based in urban areas, so victims from rural environments have to travel to the city to make official complaints or receive specialist treatment.

The Gender Violence Judicial Units are dependent on the Judicial Council, which has a national structure and exemplifies the progress that has been made. However, the institution is not without its critics; it is argued that it is focused on the decisions of the judge, not on the needs of the women: it does not pay sufficient attention to the victims and does not contemplate their differing cultural sensibilities.

> **Participant 8, a woman from a social organization:** When you go to the judicial offices, you go alone, a single interview determines the psychological condition of the woman and the man…any woman can tell you that you don't get anywhere with an interview. To start with, the woman is in a state of crisis and she has to be supported.

Specialist psychological treatment for victims and minors is not generalized, and in some areas, it is either not available or a long way from home. Nor is there any systematic treatment aimed at the aggressors, this type of rehabilitation therapy is in its infancy and rarely sentenced. Judges will often recommend therapy for the victim, in some cases, for the aggressor, but there is not usually any type of systematic follow-up or monitoring.

> **Participant 5, a female member of a judicial team of a public institution:** We need to understand that psychological treatments are important and that they can really help us minimize the risks of femicide.
> **Facilitator:** Do you deal with as many victims as aggressors?
> **Participant:** The judge works with judicial orders, but we try to make them conscious, so they don't just see it as a legal requirement, but as a human and family need.
> **Facilitator:** Is it usual for the judge to suggest this type of follow-up and monitoring?
> **Participant:** Very occasionally, just in some specific cases.

Having someone to accompany and support the victim is vital, and this is a role often played by non-governmental organizations, especially women's associations.

> **Participant 7, a female member of a judicial team of a public institution:** This is very important; we are always in contact with women's movements that visit the rural areas and report the incidents.

The Process

It is necessary for both victims and professionals to understand the mechanisms of reporting an incident, the basic procedures of a judicial procedure, and the resources available to the victim. It is also essential to know how these resources respond to the needs of the victim: if a crime is reported, whether it will result in a judicial procedure and trial, with the conviction of the aggressor.

In the province in which this study is based, a number of attempts have been made to develop a support system common to all the districts through the creation of networks such as the Imbabura Network for Integral Protection in Cases of Intra-Family, Gender, and Sexual Violence. However, a provincial model, which identifies the specific function of each institution and coordinates the administration of cases, has not been established.

> **Facilitator:** Who is the current leader of the Integral Protection Network in Cases of Violence?
> **Participant 1, a woman working for a social organization:** This is not really clear, it's complicated and quite sad because it is an issue that was being pushed by the women's organizations, but it is an issue that involves great responsibility and it needs time…In the beginning, it was driven by women's organizations and later, the judicial powers, then the Provincial Government through the Social Action Board, but the attitude and agenda of some people has made it difficult to make much progress.
> **Facilitator:** Their agenda, their objectives, and their political affiliations?
> **Participant:** Absolutely, in the end, you don't get an answer, despite what they say, in reality, nothing. That is when we say, "So, what now?"

The Trial and Conviction of Aggressors

Another important aspect is the evaluation of the possibility that the reporting of a violent incident will result in the prosecution and conviction of the aggressor. As already noted, the perception of the professionals is that the number of reported incidents is low; many cases do not reach trial and if they do, the sentences rarely exceed three months in prison. Furthermore, many of the aggressors do not turn up for the trial and with the passing of time, the case is filed.

> **Facilitator:** Who calls the aggressors to trial?
> **Participant 7, a female member of a judicial team of a public institution:** A court official goes to the houses and workplaces to deliver the summons to be at the court at a specific day and time. Some appear and others, rebels, never come and they abscond… It is difficult for the police to find them; they go to Columbia or to other provinces...There is a time limit to present the reports and it goes to the tribunal and if there is no evidence, there is nothing, there is no case, there is a detention order, but there is nothing.
> **Facilitator:** So what happens with the case? Is it filed?
> **Participant:** Exactly, it is filed until they can catch him and they can start the case again.

Microsystem: Culture, Values, the Church, and Indigenism

Patriarchal Culture, Values, and Confrontation between the New and the Old

The patriarchal culture is undoubtedly one of the underlying causes of gender violence. However, the evaluation of cases of violence only really considers the victims or aggressors, but not the culture that dominates the institutions and represents the structure that models the interpersonal relationships at all levels of society. The patriarchal discourse defines the sex roles of men and women, their behavior, and social rules. Apart from a politically correct form of discourse, there were

very few comments (especially from men) that contemplated new models of masculinity which question sexist roles in relationships or that incorporate non-heterosexual paradigms of interpersonal relationships.

Some of the participants linked the problem of violence with the loss of traditional values and the confrontation between the old and the new. The loss of family and community values and the individualism inherent in globalization and neoliberalism are considered the origin of family dysfunction and violence. Nevertheless, this perspective can be concealed behind the patriarchal tradition that always supports the permanence and asymmetry in gender relations. This confrontation, between the old and the new, also incorporates other influences such as the indigenous culture, ancestral wisdom, the role of the Church, or the part played by the new state and the "citizens' revolution" of Rafael Correa's government.

> **Participant 8, a woman from a social organization:** At the end of the day, as much for the priest as for the psychologist, the focus is to say, "Stay [together], say that marriage is forever, if you don't go back to your husband, your child's schoolwork will suffer, he is cutting himself, he wants to commit suicide, make a healthy family environment." This is what make the women put up with it all.

Blaming the Victim

Not surprisingly, with these attitudes and values, the discourses of both the men and the women participants included many comments that blamed the women for their situation and the violence that they suffered.

> **Participant 4, a female member of a judicial team of a public institution:** We are very clear; we look for what happened in reality and who is really the victim. At the beginning, many women came to report incidents just to get protection orders and to separate, but sometimes this measure was not used correctly because the next day they were fine.

This point of view is very clearly reflected in the following comment:

> **Participant 6, a male member of a judicial team of a public institution:** Nowadays…women know that men cannot insult them at home, raise their hand or hit them or, whatever happens, the men end up losing… Now you hear of cases in which they are washing the clothes, looking after the kids, and if he says something, "I'll report you," or they have a protection order, so they say, "If you say anything, you'll go to prison." They have their husbands like slaves, and all their friends think they are right. Many men have come to me, crying, "Doctor, my wife mistreats me, she hits me and humiliates me, she has a protection order so if I do anything, I'll go to jail." When they investigate cases, they find that the man is not always guilty; I would say for every ten cases in which a woman says she has been beaten by her man, then maybe one of them will be the truth.

There is also a feeling, among many men, that legislation favors the women:

> **Male participant, focus group 3:** The new laws protect them…according to the new reforms…the law is always on the side of the woman and we have no way out.

In the same way, some people accuse women of looking for relationships with men in important positions with the idea of getting pregnant in order to claim a paternity case and obtain economic support. In these situations, a claim for maintenance payments is sometimes viewed as a substitute for reporting a violent incident. A number of participants in this study suggested that this could be a method for taking "revenge" after a separation, or to "provide for the future." They even speak of women who use this tactic as a "business strategy": having a baby with a man in an important social position (teachers, police officers, military personnel, etc.), thereby ensuring financial stability.

> **Male participant, focus group 2:** And I wonder, "What do single women want today?" Have a baby, without caring about their development…The cases that are most resolved in our area, in our police activity, are the famous maintenance payment orders.
> **Facilitator:** Do you know many women that have one or two maintenance payment orders?
> **Participant:** Oh yes. Although it is not generalized among all women, but it does happen here…there are women that live off the maintenance payments and have practically stopped working.

Conclusions

This study has identified some influences and relationships between factors of the different analysis levels (onto-, micro-, exo-, and macrosystems) regarding the comprehension of intimate partner violence in Ecuador. The interrelation between the systems highlights the essential aspects such as the rural setting, patriarchal values, the family, social control, and the fragility of state intervention, which is predisposed to increased risk of femicide. We found a scenario of complex relationships between the victim and the aggressor, all of which can help design public policies in terms of prevention of violence and femicide.

The first noteworthy factor is the permanence of an interiorized patriarchal culture that naturalizes violent attitudes and behavior and occasionally blames the victim for the abuse that she has suffered. The patriarchal culture is present at all levels of society, including formal and informal educational models. As Camacho (2010) concluded, gender roles that emphasize the idea of "women-mother-wife" and "man-provider-leader" are reinforced by the system of education.

Ecuador has undertaken legislative reform that incorporates progressive action plans and strategies: the National Plan for the Eradication of Violence against Children, Adolescents, and Women; the National Agenda of Women and Gender Equality; the National Plan for Well-being (2013-2017); and the Integral Organic Penal Code that categories gender violence infractions and establishes, for the first time, femicide and psychological violence as criminal acts (Boira 2014).

However, some of our findings, based on the interviews and group sessions, indicate that there

remains much work to be done in the campaign to end intimate partner violence in Ecuador. Some of the problems were highlighted by Maira (1999) who wrote of the administrative obstacles and difficulties faced by women in their efforts to react to the violence. Moreover, the response of the state institutions is insufficient and can reinforce traditional gender roles and attitudes that place the blame on the women. In a study on violence in a rural area of Ecuador, Friederic (2013) reported that violence against women and children was widespread and legitimized by both men and women. Also, Caivano and Marcus-Delgado (2013) found that it was very difficult for women to escape the violence, not only intimate partner violence but other forms of cruelty related to wars, displacement, race, and socio-economic conditions.

The relationship between the state and its citizens plays a fundamental role; many of the participants in this study criticized the lack of training of public servants, the lack of empathy, and the proactive behavior towards the victims and their families. Many comments were also offered about the inadequacy of the information made available for women, the limited access to justice, and problems of bureaucracy.

Although there are national and local action plans, they must be improved and evaluated in order to develop public policies that integrate all state organizations; they must be well-funded and sustainable (Essayag 2013). Resources dedicated to combating this problem are not sufficient and many of our participants questioned their distribution, pointing to the paucity of support and attention for victims and their children. There is no public network that offers systematic assistance and protection (legal, psychological, social, educational, etc.).

In rural societies, there is also tension between the sense of community (with its collaborative activities such as *la minga*) and an individualist attitude with regard to supporting others. This is especially serious in relation to domestic violence, as it is often perceived as a private, personal problem. In addition, there are issues of social pressure, the importance of "What will they say?" and gossip which hinders any response. Many victims, their families, and friends are loath to intervene, as they are afraid of possible reprisals by the aggressors (Boira et al. 2016). As García and Astete (2012) pointed out, in Ecuador and Latin-America in general, ethnic and cultural realities offer a very different perspective to Western European cultures. At the same time, the administrative structure and rural and urban differences in access to public services constitute another significant factor.

A consequence of the above-mentioned circumstances is the low level of reporting violent incidents to the authorities; in Ecuador, they are similar to those published by Sagot (2000) for Latin America as a whole, which implies a clear risk to the life of the victim. Silence and inaction are motivated partly by the sense of impunity, the belief that criminal charges will not be effective and the aggressor will be free to return home.

From an ecological viewpoint, and in consideration of the ontosystem, the causes of violence, with regards to the characteristics of the victims and the aggressors, are similar to those identified by studies in other parts of the world: dysfunctional gender structures, alcohol and/or substance abuse, jealousy or infidelity (Boira 2010; Abramsky et al. 2011). At the level of the microsystem, there are some specific aspects such as the ambivalence of the families, neighbors, and professionals, which imply a limited awareness of the impact of intimate partner violence. Analysis of the exosystem reveals severe difficulties for women who have been abused: precarious economic conditions; a fragile state structure in rural areas; limited resources for assistance and support; and excessive bureaucracy in administrative and judicial processes. It is clear that tackling these problems requires structural changes that go beyond specific policies on gender and violence. Finally, the perspective of the macrosystem emphasizes the enormous influence of the patriarchal culture that impacts all the other systems. Reference should also be included on the role of the Catholic Church and the indigenous culture in many rural areas.

In short, the campaign against gender violence and the prevention of femicide in Ecuador is limited by naturalized, chauvinistic structures, the absence of local resources for supporting victims, deficiencies of inter-institutional coordination, and the response of the professionals and the bureaucratization of the administrative processes. These circumstances result in the silence of the victims, difficulties in access to justice, the distrust of the administration, low rates of reporting incidents, and a feeling that the aggressors are not answerable for their actions.

The conclusions drawn from this study can be extended to other areas of Latin America. In an analysis of gender parity, Archenti and Albaine (2013) looked at the complex social and political dynamic in Bolivia and Ecuador where, despite progressive gender equality legislation, change has proved to be very difficult and has been curtailed by institutional political barriers and the dominant influence of a patriarchal culture.

Whilst recognizing legislative progress and the commitment of a number of states to end gender violence, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (2014), in line with what has been presented in this study, identified a number of issues that need to be addressed, namely: a) irregularities and legal pitfalls in investigations into violence against women; b) deficiencies in trials and sanctions in cases of violence against women; c) the lack of effective measures of protection and prevention of violence against women; d) barriers faced by victims attempting to access legal authorities for protection; e) structural problems in justice systems that affect the processing of cases of violence against women.

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"Hearing Their Voices": Exploring Femicide among Migrants and Culture Minorities

Abstract The rates of domestic violence and femicide in various European countries tend to be higher among migrant women, as well as among women from cultural minorities. This led to the development of a culture and gender-sensitive in-depth interview guide aimed at better understanding this phenomenon, as well as identifying specific aspects of the experience of violence in a foreign scenario. The first stage was developing a draft interview guide based on the most important issues addressed in the professional literature, relating both to victims of domestic violence and to survivors of femicide and their families. This has allowed others to "hear their voices" and to understand their own perspectives, which are especially important considering the steady increase of this phenomenon around the world. The second phase was a pilot study among immigrant femicide survivors: first in Spain, later in Romania, and finally in Georgia, focusing on internally displaced people. The last step was analyzing the feedback from the different countries, which led to a refined and improved version of the interview guide. Thus, the current paper presents an ongoing process leading to a standardized interview guide, which could be adapted to local socio-cultural contexts, enabling comparative studies across Europe.

Keywords Femicide Survivors; Immigrants; Qualitative Interview Guide; Culture-Sensitivity

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Background

While attending a meeting in the context of COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) Action IS1206, dedicated to "Femicide across Europe" in 2014 (Weil 2015), the participants were asked to prepare country presentations on the cultural aspects of femicide. Subsequently, the first two authors discussed this issue in their respective countries. In Israel, the data indicated that most femicide victims belonged to immigrant communities (Israeli Parliament 2015), such as Ethiopian and the ex-Soviet Republics (Sela-Shayovitz 2010; Edelstein 2013), to culture minorities, such as Israeli Arab citizens (Shalhoub-Kevorkian 2003; Abu Rabia 2011), and to asylum seekers.[1]

In addition, the Instituto de la Mujer (Women's Institute) of the Government of Spain reported that in 2015, 36.7% of murdered women were foreigners.[2] During the discussions in the aforesaid COST meeting, other group members confirmed that this trend was similar across countries.

Literature Review

Various studies have indicated that migrant women are highly vulnerable to domestic violence in host countries. This is due to legal, language, and cultural barriers which lead to isolation, and is compounded by their low socio-economic status, influencing their possibilities to lodge complaints, as well as their access to support networks and assistance (Ingram 2007; Runner, Yoshihama, and Novick 2009; Rana 2012). In a recent survey done by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2014), a higher prevalence rate of physical and/or sexual violence was found among women who are not citizens of their country of residence. In fact, domestic violence is a significant form of victimization of female immigrants (Davis, Erez, and Avitabile 2001; Raj and Silverman 2002; Hazen and Soriano 2007; Gracia et al. 2010; Carbajosa et al. 2011).

Considering Spain, out of the 123,725 complaints filed on domestic violence in 2015, 30.1% included a non-Spanish victim (Consejo General del Poder Judicial 2015). In addition, the data of the macro survey on violence against women in 2015 indicate that 59.7% of women over 16 years who admitted having suffered physical or sexual violence from their partner, former partner, or any partner in the past 12 months were foreigners (Ministerio de Sanidad, Servicios Sociales e Igualdad 2015). According to official data from the Ministry of Sanitation, Social Services, and Equality of Spain, 22 of the 60 women killed due to domestic violence in Spain in 2015 were foreigners. This percentage has increased throughout the years, from 14.3% in 2000 to 36.7% in 2015. In addition, 26.7% of the aggressors (men) in 2015 were foreigners (Instituto de la Mujer y para la Igualdad de Oportunidades n.d.). During 2010-2011, 135 women were killed by their partners and 39.7% were foreigners (Africa-Asia 11.5%, the rest of Europe 10.7%, and America—North and South 17.6%). The countries from which the highest number of victims originated were Ecuador and Morocco (Sanz-Barbero et al. 2016).

In Romania, a study drew attention to the emigrant[3] women's vulnerability including types of violence and femicide acts (Balica and Stöckl 2016). It emphasized that approximately 30% of the homicide-suicide cases identified in Romania for the period 2002-2013 were committed between Romanian emigrants/former emigrants (Balica and Stöckl 2016), and most of them were intimate partner femicide-suicides[4] (84%). A comparative analysis between the intimate partner femicides and intimate partner femicide-suicides emphasized the fact that the emigrant status (of the victim, of the aggressor, or of both) increases the risk of escalating from violent acts in intimate partner relationships to femicide or femicide-suicide (Balica 2016). It was found that the association of jealousy with suspicion of infidelity and other issues (domestic violence, financial problems, alcohol consumption, depression) were among the factors determining intimate partner femicides or intimate partner femicide-suicides between Romanian emigrants. Both of the studies mentioned were not based on direct interviews with femicide survivors, but on the analysis of information from interviews with aggressors and other sources (such as penal files).

According to a reproductive health survey in Georgia, 6.2 % of married women (or those that had been married before) reported intimate partner violence (IPV), being more widespread among ethnic minorities (Georgians—5.3%, Azeri—11.2% Armenians—7.9%, and other ethnicities—12.6%). In addition, only one out of every three victims of violence sought medical or legal help, the main reasons being embarrassment, not doing any good, and bringing a bad name to family (Ross 2012).

In addition, the data provided by the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia show that in 2014-2015, 53 women were killed. Twenty seven of all murders were so called "domestic killings," 18 women were killed by their intimate partners, while in the rest of cases femicide was performed by other family members (such as the father-in-law or the victim's brother). According to the same analysis, out of the 27 femicide cases, the majority of victims were ethnic Georgians: one was Ukrainian, three were Azerbaijanis, one Armenian, and one Russian (Prosecutor's Office of Georgia 2015).

Official statistics over the years show that domestic violence and femicide are increasing in Georgia. This could be influenced partly by better access to statistics on femicide, but mainly due to conditions of economic hardship, as well as to the history of armed conflicts Georgia experienced in the 1990s and in 2008 in the regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which resulted in displacement of approximately 428,000 people, of whom 232,700 remain as internally displaced persons (IDPs), according to IDMC estimates (IDMC 2014).

The majority of IDPs currently live in government-established IDP collective settlements, characterized by poor living conditions, high unemployment,

[1] As unofficially reported by the Center for Eritrean Women in Tel Aviv. See: http://the-migrant.co.il/en/node/49.

[2] Instituto de la Mujer y para la Igualdad de Oportunidades del Gobierno de España. Retrieved July 01, 2015 (http://www.inmujer.gob.es/estadisticas/consulta.do?metodo=buscar).

[3] Romanian women that had immigrated to other countries and later returned to Romania.

[4] Among the different forms of femicide, it can be followed by the aggressor's suicide (Laurent, Platzer, and Idomir 2013).

poverty, and low access to healthcare (WHO 2009). These tend to increase tensions among families and couples, including domestic violence and femicide. In addition, IDPs exposure to conflict-related violence, forced displacement, and loss of loved ones, homes, and livelihoods has been associated with prolonged poor mental health (Makhashvili et al. 2014). Thus, the risk of femicide is increased, considering that many perpetrators have mental health problems and that their access to mental health services is limited (Chikovani et al. 2015).

The vulnerabilities of immigrants and especially women, such as increased violence and abuse, are well documented in professional literature. Nevertheless, it was important to obtain a deeper understanding of women's risks (Nicolaidis et al. 2003; Herrera 2013; Messing et al. 2013), as well as of the circumstances preceding the femicide and of the triggers that led men to actually kill women, usually their wives or partners (Boira and Marcuello 2013).

Even though the victims are not here to tell their stories, it is possible to obtain them from kin, neighbors, and friends, as well as from failed femicide attempts (Weil 2016). For this purpose, a few researchers had already embarked in qualitative research, interviewing family members and close friends of the victims, such as McNamara (2008) in Australia and Sheehan and colleagues (2015) in the United States, although they did not target immigrants. Gonzalez-Mendez and Santana-Hernandez (2012) and Briones-Vozmediano and colleagues (2014) interviewed professionals in Spain, who had been involved with femicide victims. The first qualitative investigation based on in-depth interviews of femicide survivors was the pioneer study initiated by a working group including Nicolaidis and colleagues (2003) in the U.S., which targeted mostly European Americans and African Americans, while important minorities, including Latinos, were not represented. Thus, it was decided to pursue this direction in order to obtain an insider's perspective from survivors of femicide attempts in Europe—either immigrants, IDPs, or those belonging to cultural minorities.

The review of the situation in the three countries that participated in the pilot study: Spain, Romania, and Georgia, shows some elements that may be crucial when considering violence against women, which due to different circumstances are living outside of their own country, area of origin, and/or in a different cultural contexts.

This article presents an ongoing project to develop in-depth culture and a gender-sensitive interview guide to explore femicide of immigrant women and to identify specific aspects of the experience of violence in a foreign scenario. This method enables us to "hear their voices" and understand survivors' perspectives and their personal experiences regarding this increasing global phenomenon. This paper focuses mostly on the usefulness of this methodology, and not on the detailed content analysis of the data.

Methodology

It was decided to develop a qualitative in-depth interview tool, considering the main risk factors of immigrant/displaced women or women from cultural minorities, as well as their personal experiences as survivors of attempted femicide. The guide was designed to be flexible enough to allow for culture adaptation, considering the various countries of origin, the immigration processes, and the specific contexts in the host countries in Europe. Cultural and gender codes and the background in their country of origin (such as rural or urban) were also given special consideration, since all these may strongly influence how to approach and support survivors of attempted femicide in a culture and gender sensitive way.

Based on the Danger Assessment (DA) instrument, Campbell and colleagues in the U.S. developed a culture-competent intimate partner violence risk assessment tool for immigrant women (DA-I) to identify victims who are at risk of lethal violence from an intimate (or ex-intimate) partner (Messing et al. 2013). In their 2003 study, the group headed by Campbell had used an in-depth interview guide, which they discussed with us (personal communication with Nicolaidis and Campbell).

The Interview Guide

The interview guide was developed by the first two authors (Nudelman and Boira), going through various phases of revision, including discussions with social workers, psychologists, and lawyers dealing daily with victims of partner violence and femicide survivors. The initial tool was based on their combined research experiences: Santiago Boira has worked both in Women Social Services and with femicide perpetrators in prisons in Spain (e.g., Boira 2010; Boira and Jodrá 2010; Boira et al. 2013), while Anita Nudelman has worked with Ethiopian immigrants in Israel. She has lead UNAIDS sponsored qualitative Rapid Assessment Process studies in Africa, examining the gender and culture barriers to utilization of maternal and HIV services—among them the fear of abandonment, violence, and being killed by their partners—often related to the disclosure of a woman's HIV status (Nudelman 2013).

The interview guide is divided into five sections (with some specific items to be included according to each attempted femicide survivor being interviewed and to her own "story"): life in the country/place of origin, the immigration process, life in the host country, the event (attempted femicide), and the rehabilitation process.

1. Life in the country of origin or before forced displacement: growing up, family life, education, jobs, et cetera. If her relationship with her violent partner began in the country of origin, an additional probing is included (development of relationship, changes, problems, coping, support networks, etc.).

2. The immigration/displacement process: reasons that led to migration, family support, the overall experience since leaving the home country until arrival in the host country, IDP camp, et cetera.

3. Life in the host country. The first period after arrival, her social support networks, the

relationship with her violent partner (with different options, depending on whether the violent partner was the same person as in the country of origin or if he is a new partner whom she met in the host country). It investigates their relationship, the problems and changes that occurred, and their causes (such as economic factors, control issues, jealousy, substance abuse), as well as violent episodes and the woman's response/behavior and search for assistance. A special part is dedicated to the victim's relationship with a citizen of the host country and how her immigrant/displacement status (often illegal) affects both the relationship and the use of official support services (and specifically the barriers to seek assistance from police, health and social services).

4. The event (attempted femicide, which is often a turning point in the life of the victim). This section deals with the violent episode that often led to hospitalization and/or to an official police complaint of the partner by the victim. It is the heart of the interview process, including the signs and events preceding the femicide attempt, the attempt itself, how the woman was saved and helped in real time, and how the perpetrator was punished. It includes a reflection process in which the survivor is asked to look back for warning signs and think if she could have done something to prevent this event. The risk of immigrant women is also assessed compared to local ones.

5. Rehabilitation. This section covers the ongoing process from the incident to date. It addresses how the survivor overcame the event, who provided assistance to her (official services, women's organizations, family or friends support), including detailed positive and negative experiences related to the process. It dwells on how her immigration status affected her interaction with the police, health and social services, judicial system, et cetera. Finally, her life at present and her dreams and plans for the future are discussed.

6. The interview ends by asking the survivor what advice she would give other immigrant/displaced women whose partners are violent.

The Pilot Study

Spain—and specifically Zaragoza—was chosen to be the first pilot country. It was appropriate for the joint venture, considering that Santiago Boira is a psychologist who lives and works in this city, and Anita Nudelman, a medical anthropologist, is also a native Spanish speaker.

The original interview guide (developed in English) was translated into Spanish and culturally adapted to the social and cultural context of immigrants in Zaragoza.

Official women's organizations and services were contacted and meetings were held to discuss the pilot project with professionals working with victims of domestic violence and femicide survivors. The draft (Spanish) interview guide was presented and feedback was received. The caseworkers identified immigrant women survivors of femicide, whom they considered would be able to speak about their experience. Those willing to participate received a detailed explanation of the aims of this study and of the interview process and gave their consent.

Additional countries were included in the second phase. As a visiting scholar in Rome, Italy, Ecaterina Balica, a sociologist, interviewed a Romanian emigrant survivor of femicide, translating the interview guide into Romanian. The participant was identified during exploratory research among the Romanian emigrant community, through information received from relatives, and not with the assistance of institutions for social services or victim protection as in the other countries participating in the project.

In Georgia, Tina (Tiko) Tsomaia, a journalist and lecturer, who is researching the phenomena of sex-selective abortions, translated the interview guide into Georgian. She contacted Sopio Tabagua, a psychiatrist and manager of the Georgian Center for Psychological and Medical Rehabilitation of Torture Victims. This organization has a branch in Gori, which works with the victims of violence, including IDPs. Social workers and psychologists identified survivors of femicide who had a history of displacement (12 women out of total 61 that used their services in the years of 2014-2016) and could speak about their experiences. The aims of the study were explained to them and after receiving informed consent from six women, meetings were scheduled in Gori Service Center, where they were interviewed by Tsomaia and Tabagua.

The Participants

The first pilot in Spain included 3 immigrant femicide survivors (2 from Latin America and one from Romania); aged 33 to 37, all of them had been in Spain for more than 10 years. The survivor from Romania had gone back and forth a few times and her relationship was with a man she had married at a young age in her home village. The two South American women were middle class with college level education and both married Spanish men: one in her country of origin and the second shortly after arriving in Spain. All the women had one child.

The second Romanian survivor had immigrated to Italy in 2000. She was a 38-year-old housewife with a high school education, married to a 65-year-old Italian man. They have an 11-year-old son (with health problems). At the time of the interview they were living together.

Six interviews were conducted in Georgia, five were IDPs and one was a refugee from Chechnya. Out of six interviewed women aged 27-50, five had IDP backgrounds: three of them were internally displaced from the South of Ossetia and two were displaced from Abkhazia. Five of the participants were ethnic Georgians, one Chechen; five were Christians and one was Muslim. All the women had children (1, 2, or 3 each) from both genders. Half of them had secondary education and half higher education. At the time of the interviews, all participants but one had jobs.

The Interviews

In Spain, the interviews were scheduled by the survivors' therapist or caseworker according to the survivors' convenience and took place inside of Women Protection Services (a familiar environment, where they have been helped and continue to meet their caseworkers). After obtaining consent from each participant, both researchers participated in the interview, although—for gender considerations—they were mostly conducted by Anita Nudelman. They lasted between 1.30 to 2 hours each, were recorded and later transcribed by a professional transcriber. After each interview, notes were compared and summarized. The process was similar in Georgia, where both researchers jointly conducted the first interview and the following ones separately.

In the case of the Romanian immigrant in Italy, the interview was scheduled directly by the researcher, who already knew the participant who had been a victim of domestic violence. However, it was the survivor's mother who told her about the increased violence of her Italian husband, which culminated in the failed femicide. After the research and its aims were explained, she agreed to be interviewed in the researcher's room, but without audio recording.

Thus, holding the interview in a trusted environment was very important. In two countries—Spain and Georgia—they were held in the same building where victims previously had received support and services, while in Italy it was done in the privacy of the researcher's room.

The interview was designed to encourage/enable a relation of trust between the interviewer and the participant/survivor (Visentin et al. 2015).

When developing the guide, it was taken into consideration that these women had been through severe trauma and some must have lost trust in the system. Therefore, the interview began in an informal manner, speaking about the survivor's background, with the interviewers telling a bit about themselves, and gradually introducing the objectives and issues of the interview guide. In some cases, it was noticeable that questions about the victim's childhood help to gain trust. It was important to establish a positive rapport while explaining the flexible rules of the interview process, in order to create a pleasant atmosphere of trust, safety, and support, especially considering the sensitivity of dealing with this specific target population (Changa et al. 2005). All interviews took place in a comfortable environment, with the interviewers displaying empathy, warmth, and compassion towards the survivors (Changa et al. 2005; Campbell et al. 2009) and, in general, the conversation flowed naturally. The structure of the interview guide led the women gradually into their stories and allowed for different rhythms, considering each survivor's personal situation and background.

To illustrate this point, some women were ashamed of talking about their experience of being sexually abused and asked to switch off the voice recorder.

In a situation when a participant did not want to elaborate on some part of her experience and said, "I don't want to talk more about it" (Georgia), the interviewer refrained from probing and went on to discuss another issue.

All women talked openly, were very emotional with moments of sorrow and tears, and then went back to their stories.

During an interview, one IDP in Georgia spoke about her traumatic experience of attempted suicide. Since the interviewer was a qualified psychiatrist, after completing the interview, she took time to discuss the participant's suicidal thoughts with her. Thus, holding the interview in an appropriate setting may allow for an intervention, when necessary. In contrast, the Romanian immigrant in Italy did not cry during the interview and there were only moments of silence. At times she talked about her own experience as if it was about another person. It seemed as if she was telling scenes from a movie that she was now watching again. During her interview, this survivor often mentioned the experiences of other immigrant women, also victims of intimate partners' violence.

In most cases, the interviews were part of the reflection or introspection process, which is often ongoing, considering the challenges that some women are still facing.

In addition, it was considered essential for the interview to have a proper closure, considering that for some participants, it was difficult to recall the past and talk about the violence experienced. Therefore, it was important to end the interview discussing the rehabilitation process, the woman's personal achievements, and her hopes for the future.

In general, the interview was a positive process for most of the women, which allowed them to reflect on all the years of abuse and suffering, the "breaking point" (the femicide attempt), and the changes after this event, including their rehabilitation process (although a few of them are still traumatized).

Findings/Results

This section encompasses three parts: the first relates to the issue of attempted femicide through shared characteristics of the survivors interviewed in different contexts and countries. The second part discusses important themes elucidated from the pilot study that should be especially addressed during the interview. Finally, some meaningful modifications and additions to the interview guide are discussed.

Part 1: Common Characteristics in All Case Studies

A common issue in all interviews was the extended suffering from severe violence. In the case of the survivors living in Spain and Italy, all women had a long history of beating and violence. Among the Georgian ones, five out of six women indicated that physical violence had started or was severe during their pregnancies, and the Chechen survivor said that physical violence occurred after the child was born. Three out of six Georgian women reported being sexually abused.

In general, most survivors were ambivalent and expressed lack of trust towards professionals and security forces. This was more pronounced among women without legal status in the host country. The feeling of discrimination towards immigrants in the host country was an additional barrier to seeking help, as expressed clearly by the immigrants living in Spain. They were scared of complaining due to their perception that the authorities would always believe Spanish people (such as their husbands) over immigrant women, who were often treated as liars or as abusers of the system, and some had even been told: "You married for convenience" (to obtain benefits in the host country).

In the case of the Romanian survivor in Italy, this fear was compounded by the attitude of her Italian partner, who always reminded her that she is, "Only a Romanian immigrant and has no rights in Italy" and repeatedly indicated that all Romanians are criminals or prostitutes.

Most immigrant women also had had some negative experiences with doctors, policemen, and other professionals, and therefore did not have much faith in the people and in the systems of the host country. This was even more pronounced in the case of the Rumanian survivor in Spain because she was an illegal immigrant. Only one out of the six perpetrators in the Georgian cases was arrested. According to the survivor, her husband was only arrested because he also beat the policemen who arrived at the scene of violence. Otherwise, she believed that the police would not have arrested him, but would only have given him a warning, since they tend to see violence between partners as an internal family issue. Only one Georgian woman gave positive feedback about the police, explaining that she had never considered the possibility of separation until being informed about the availability of shelter by a police officer.

Similarly, the Romanian survivor in Italy appreciated the police (*carabinieri*) for doing their job and for the tips they had given her on how to avoid risky life situations. She also had positive perceptions of judges and lawyers, but not of social workers. This was explained by examples of immigrant women who lost custody of their children (because they were immigrants and did not have enough money). The Georgian participants had contacted health services at some point, but most did not consider them helpful.

A patriarchal culture of origin was common to most participants, as well as the fact that their husbands frequently got drunk, thus greatly increasing the level of domestic violence. All men were extremely jealous (control freaks) and wanted to exercise complete control over their partners, restricting the women's movement and activities. Half of the Georgian participants reported that their husbands were prescribed some psychotropic drugs by medical doctors. One partner was a criminal and presently lives in the Ukraine, because he is still wanted by police in Georgia.

Another common characteristic among some survivors was their social isolation, as in the case of the two Latin American women in Spain, who lacked their traditional family networks and support and for a long time did not find any alternative support in Spain. Thus, they were totally dependent on their spouses and did not share their situation with their families at home due to shame (as both came for middle/high socio-economic levels). This situation was also experienced by the Romanian survivor married to an Italian, although she secretly communicated with some family members.

Violence towards their children, either in the host country or in the country of origin, was also a common issue raised by many of the survivors. Among several of them, the children were involved and used as pawns by their husbands. The two women with Spanish husbands were scared of filing an official complaint, since in that case their children could be "taken from them." All the children were mistreated and they also witnessed the abuse and beating of their mothers for years.

In most of the Georgian cases, the children remained with their violent fathers, because they were considered more protected with them, since most women did not own their own home or property, due to cultural codes. This fact often influenced a woman's decision to stay with or even to go back to her husband after a separation period (since otherwise she could remain homeless and without money). In one instance, after the mother was thrown out of the family home, her daughter (who had stayed with her father) wrote an official letter refusing to meet her mother. According to the survivor, her daughter quit school in order to do all housework instead of her mother.

Part 2: Themes to Be Especially Addressed in Interviews

The pilot study validated most of the issues that composed the original draft interview guide. During its implementation, it was realized that better understanding of the key themes presented in this section was crucial for enabling a meaningful process through which the survivors could share their experiences.

Living Inside Closed Communities with People from the Country of Origin

If the survivor and her husband lived together in a closed community composed only of people from their country of origin, it is likely that the same values and behaviors will be reproduced, including those related to traditional and patriarchal gender roles. For example, the Romanian survivor interviewed in Spain shared the same apartment with people from her home town and there was a constant interaction among everyone. Nevertheless, not one of them intervened on her behalf when her husband beat her, since this was considered a normal behavior in their villages in Romania.

Violence may also increase in closed communities due to constant gossip, especially when a woman violates accepted gender behavioral expectations (for example, adopting modern dressing and lifestyle, going to bars, as well as talking or interacting with people—especially men—outside the closed community).

Survivors' Social Networks Considering Their Partners Country of Origin

It is important to assess the survivor's social network and relationships in the host country. If a woman only socializes with family and friends from the community of origin, the values of that culture may be reproduced and even intensified, making a victim's violation of culturally accepted behavior even more punishable and her possibility to escape almost impossible, since there is strict social control over her. Therefore, the interview explored socio-cultural and symbolic meanings from the victims' countries and specific places of origin (such as villages or cities), as well as the level of patriarchal attitudes and practices. All these factors may influence the way in which the victim copes with the abusive situation in the host country.

The Georgian survivors were raised in an environment where the father was the head of the family, controlled everything, and women were relegated to a secondary status. They had to obey certain rules that were favorable to men. If a woman's parents said that they should marry a person, leave school, help in agricultural or housework, she had to do it. This patriarchal culture persists when they are living as IDPs.

Conversely, some Georgian husbands used their power (derived from their gender roles) to isolate their women from neighbors and community members, so that no one would intervene or prevent them from beating their wives.

Therefore, it is also crucial to explore the culture of both the survivor's and the aggressor's country of origin in order to understand the specific processes relating to violence.

Perception of Threats and Resources Available to the Victim/Survivor

It was very important to understand the survivor's perception of the seriousness of the aggressor's threats, as well as her potential sources of support. This included both her personal support network (family, friends, workmate, etc.) and the formal system of support.

It was also crucial to assess the characteristics of the familial and informal support networks of the victim, identifying their presence, the strength of the relations, and how they would feel and react if the woman would opt for leaving the violent relationship. For example, Georgian survivors indicated that they were ashamed of sharing their problems with their families, and they knew that even if they would, their fathers and brothers' first reaction would be to tell her to be patient (and to continue living inside the violent situation). Therefore, some women preferred not to seek the support of their family.

A very important point to be considered was if a woman's social networks were really her own or were actually her partner's, which could have a negative impact on her overall situation, instead of providing her with the needed support. This was the case of the Colombian survivor in Spain, who emphasized that the aggressor's friends were her only social relations in the host country.

A woman's use of the official support system depends on her familiarity with the resources available to her and on her perception of their potential for helping her. Some survivors indicated the difficulties to access the host society's formal institutions, while others felt that these may even pose a threat to them.

This issue was addressed in the interview guide with questions such as: "How did you connect/interact with the different services (police, health, social, legal, specific ones that deal with gender violence, female organizations, other)?" "How did they treat you/relate to you?"

At this point it was important to enquire about bureaucratic processes (both positive and negative experiences), as well as about their perception of culture and gender sensitivity of service providers.

Barriers to Lodging Complaints

One of the main objectives of our interview guide was to identify the barriers to filing official complaints to the police, the judicial system, or other institutions. This issue has been addressed in different sections of the interview. For example: "During the first period of the violent relationship, did you ask for help?" "When?" "Why?" "From whom (probe for a specific person, organization or institution, such as police, health or social services)?"

The barriers to lodge complaints or seek assistance identified during the pilot study included the feeling of shame for being in such a situation, the fear of the aggressor, the fear of the family's reaction, and of what the institutions could do as a result of a woman filing a complaint (for example, take away her child). An additional barrier was having an illegal status in the host country (due to fear of deportation), being scared of supporting and taking care of her children on her own ("When you have children, what can you do? You cannot divorce," Georgian survivor), as well as gender discrimination and other barriers related to cultural and symbolic meanings.

Part 3: Important Changes and Additions to Original Draft Guide

Use of Violence by the Victims Themselves

One issue that was not originally included among the interview guide's questions was the use of violence by the victims themselves, either self-inflicted or towards their partners, children, or other family members. This topic was raised during some interviews and thus relevant questions were added: "Have you ever tried to react to physical violence of your intimate partner?" "Why?" Or: "Why not?" "Could you recall if you have used violence towards your kids?" "When and why did it happen?"

Specific Issues Related to the Perpetrators' Behavior and Threats

Throughout the various phases of the interview, questions addressed the perpetrator's behavior

and his history of violence towards the survivor. This issue was approached in different ways, depending on whether he was from the host country or from the same country of origin (and also if the relationship had begun there or if they had met in the host country). After the pilot study, it was decided to focus on some specific types of threats made by the aggressor. For example, when the Romanian survivor's husband was back in Romania (after having lived with her in Spain), his threats were a kind of blackmail affecting her reunification with her child (who at that point was also in Romania). Thus, he told her: "If you want the boy to return to Spain, I must sign [an authorization for him to leave Romania], otherwise he can't go." Of course, different conditions were attached to this signature.

Therefore, in cases when there are children involved, specific questions were added, such as: "What threats have you received from your partner?" "Were any of them related to your child?" "Has he tried to blackmail you?" "How?" "What did you do?"

These kinds of threats also occurred when the immigrant woman's partner was a citizen of the host country. In that case, the threat often focused on her inferior position as an immigrant. To illustrate this point, the Spanish partner of the Mexican survivor in Spain put a lot of pressure on her, emphasizing his nationality and therefore his superior rights: "I am Spanish, you are only a foreigner and [therefore] you are the one who will be blamed" or "Who will believe you?" (from field notes).

Thus, it was decided to add some questions to the interview guide to enable a better identification of aggressors' specific types of behaviors and threats. Mixed couples (usually an immigrant woman and a local man) should be especially address targeted questions, since the man can easily take advantage of this point.

Focusing on the Children's Experiences

As a consequence of our pilot interviews with immigrant survivors of attempted femicide, in which a child played an important role in the process which ultimately lead to the femicide attempt in all cases, we realized that their overall situation should be better explored. Therefore, a few questions regarding a woman's violence towards her children were added mostly relating to her life in the host country and specifically to the changes in the relationship with the partner and increased violence.

In the original guide, in case the survivor had children, she was asked: "How did this situation [of violence] affect them?" "Were they abused?" "Were they in danger?"

In the revised guide, the following questions were added: "As a consequence of all the aforesaid, did you ever display violence towards your children?" "Please explain in what ways, in which occasions, and what were the triggers that lead to this."

In the improved version of the interview guide, the gender issue related to the child was incorporated into these questions, since it had not been expanded in the original guide (instructions: please enquire both for boys and for girls).

Adaptations Related to the Different Types of Interview Populations

Originally, the interview guide was developed to target immigrant women who survived attempted femicide in European host countries. Throughout the pilot study we realized that there were other specific populations for which this tool could be relevant and useful. The first are the internally displaced people (IDPs) who were forced to leave their areas of origin (for example, due to political turmoil or foreign occupation, like in Georgia). Considering that IDPs are from the same country of origin (but from another area of the country and often belonging to an ethnic minority group), the terminology: "host country" and "home country" must be adapted throughout the interview guide, as well as other questions related to the place of origin. In addition, the causes that led to this internal displacement should be further investigated. For example, the women interviewed in Georgia were mostly IDPs, meaning that the country was the same, but the locations were different, since many of the people's "hometowns" are still occupied by foreign forces. Thus, some changes were made in the text, using terms such as "before displacement" and "after displacement."

For example, instead of asking: "Why did you decide to immigrate and come to [host country]?" "Please tell us about the immigration process itself since you left your hometown till arrival in this country" "Please explain the difficulties you had," IDPs were asked: "Why did you decide to move?" "How did you make this decision?" "Please tell us about the displacement process itself since you left your home till arrival in this place" "Please explain the difficulties you had."

Other populations with similar characteristics could benefit from this interview tool in the future, such as second or third generation immigrants who live in closed communities (ghettos) in big cities across Europe. A final target population could be women victims of violence among the hundreds of thousands of asylum seekers and refugees who arrived in Europe in the last few years (Freeman 2016), having gone through long and traumatic journeys (from Middle Eastern countries at war and from Africa). This may be an important population to focus on in the future, especially since violence and the risk of femicide may escalate under these circumstances.

Conclusions

The aim of this paper was to present the ongoing development process of a culture-sensitive interview guide which could be used for female victims of violence and survivors of attempted femicide who are immigrants, have been displaced, and are living away from their familiar/home environment. It was based on previous initiatives (Nicolaidis et al. 2003) and the issues to be addressed in the guide were identified from a review of the relevant literature. As indicated, it was found that in general there is a higher

prevalence of violence among people with a migrant background (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2014). Therefore, the objective of the guide is to enable an in-depth assessment of the dynamics and mechanisms related to this specific type of violence, thus making it relevant to violence prevention and femicide, as well as for public policies on these issues in the European context.

When developing this pilot study, immigrant women living in European host countries were targeted (such as the cases in Spain and Italy), as well as women displaced inside their own country (Georgia). In the future, female refugees who are in host countries or still in temporary settlements should also be addressed.

Similar issues and circumstances were shared by women in both scenarios (immigrants and IDPs). These included the presence of an entrenched patriarchal culture, certain characteristics of the aggressors (such as alcohol or substance abuse), and long histories of violence or use of certain strategies to pressure the woman, including the manipulation of their relationship with their children. In addition, certain changes experienced by an immigrant woman in the host country often increased the risk of violence (for example, a decrease in her socio-economic status which increased her dependency on her partner, or xenophobic attitudes and exclusion due to her skin color). Thus, it may be useful to consider the intersectionality approach as a more comprehensive way to analyze the issues identified (Sokoloff and Dupont 2005).

In future studies, it will be important to further discuss the situation of survivors that are married to men from other countries and of women with children. In the case of women married to men from host countries, it may be necessary to include additional questions related to the victim's relationship with other community members (neighbors, colleagues, other immigrants), as well as to the threats received from their partners.

After piloting this interview guide in the field, some methodological reflections regarding its use and application were considered. First of all, it is essential to create an atmosphere of trust that takes into account both the survivor's place in the context of the host country (her general situation, level of integration, characteristics of violent relationship, etc.), as well as relevant specific cultural aspects from her country of origin. Secondly, it is important to consult with professionals (such as caseworkers) in order to identify if a survivor is at a stage in her rehabilitation process in which she is ready to participate in this kind of interview. In addition, it was found that the structure of the interview guide helped women to focus and to be able to share important parts of their stories, since in a few cases, the beginning of the narratives had been fragmented with participants jumping from one topic to another, making it hard to follow the story.

Considering the aforesaid, the interviewers using this guide should be experienced with qualitative research in very delicate situations (Changa et al. 2005; Campbell et al. 2009). Some studies indicate important elements and strategies to be used among victims of violence, such as acceptance and empathy, establishing a bond of trust between the professional and the woman, including dialogue, and intent listening. These issues should be addressed in the training of professionals (Visentin et al. 2015).

Another important aspect of the interview guide is its flexibility, both in the form and in the order of the questions and issues raised, as well as in the option to dwell on specific cultural issues that may arise during the interview. As previously explained, it is essential for the interviewer to understand the survivor's background and cultural codes, in order to enable the elaboration of details that may be critical to fully understanding her situation. For example, one of the Georgian interview narratives involved a sex-selective abortion. A survivor's husband had told her that if she gave birth to a son, everything would be fine. But, since she had a girl, she was forced to have an abortion. This is related to some patriarchal cultural codes, in which sons have a higher value than girls and nowadays, as a result of ultrasound technology, selected abortions of female fetuses occur. Therefore, questions should also be adapted to culture-specific issues.

Finally, when applying the interview guide, it is essential to be aware of the survivor's stage in the rehabilitation process. It was considered important to interview women who were in an advanced stage of their rehabilitation process (especially regarding coping with their traumatic experiences). If a newly arrived woman to a shelter is interviewed, who has just begun her treatment, she may be overwhelmed by the exposure of the trauma, which may also affect the interview. This was confirmed in one of the case studies, in which the discussion evoked suicidal thoughts. Since one of the interviewers was a psychiatrist, she was able to deal with the situation, which could have been prevented during the selection process. Thus, when piloting this guide in different countries and cultural contexts, it is recommended to discuss and to coordinate the selection of potential femicide survivors to be interviewed with their caseworkers or professionals, in order to determine if they are able to participate in this kind of interview.

Upon completion of the development of the interview guide, it is recommended to conduct an additional pilot among a few more survivors of failed femicide[5] in order to finalize this ongoing process leading to a standardized interview guide, which can be adapted to local socio-cultural contexts, enabling comparative studies across Europe.

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[5] Professionals who are interested in collaborating in the validation process are requested to contact the first author.

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Masculinities and Femicide[1]

Abstract The relationship between masculinity and femicide has been virtually ignored in the literature on both masculinities and femicide. The aim of this paper then is to concentrate on the relationship between masculinities and femicide by first briefly summarizing feminist theorizing in the 1970s and 1980s and its relation to the emergence of Raewyn Connell's concept of "hegemonic masculinity." Following that, new directions in scholarly work on hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculinities are discussed, with particular attention directed to the recent work of the author on the relationship among hegemonic, dominant, dominating, and positive masculinities. Finally, the paper concludes by briefly illustrating how this new conception of masculinities can be applied to two types of femicide: intimate partner femicide and so-called "honor" femicides.

Keywords Hegemonic Masculinity; Dominant Masculinity; Dominating Masculinity; Positive Masculinity; Intimate Partner Femicide; "Honor" Femicide; Patriarchy

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Studies of femicide rarely discuss how particular masculinities are associated with differing types of this heinous crime. In this paper, I concentrate on this issue by first summarizing briefly feminist theorizing in the 1970s and 1980s and exploring its relation to the emergence of Raewyn Connell's concept of "hegemonic masculinity." Following that, I discuss new directions in scholarly work on hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculinities, with particular attention directed to my own work on the relationship among hegemonic, dominant, dominating, and positive masculinities. Finally, I close the paper by briefly illustrating how this new conception of masculinities can be applied to two types of femicide: intimate partner femicide and so-called "honor" femicides.

[1] This paper was originally the Keynote Address at the conference on "Culture, Masculinities, and Femicide in Europe," Ljubljana, Slovenia, May 11-13, 2016. I thank participants for their critical and insightful comments.

Feminist Theory and the Emergence of "Hegemonic Masculinity"

I define "femicide" as *the intentional killing of girls and women by boys and men because the victims are girls and women*, and this definition necessarily calls for an analysis of unequal gender relations in the pursuit of conceptualizing why femicide occurs. Historically, feminist approaches to femicide have turned to the concept of "patriarchy," arguing that femicide is simply one of the oppressive dangers girls and women face in a male-dominated, patriarchal society. For example, from the late 1970s to the 1980s, radical feminists argued that masculine power and privilege are the root cause of all social relations, all forms of inequality, and thus of femicide, and that the most important relations in any society are found in patriarchy; and that all other relations, such as class and race relations, are secondary and derive from male-female relations (Dworkin 1979; 1987; MacKinnon 1979; 1989). Radical feminism then advanced a structural and mono-causal explanation for gender inequality and femicide that concentrated on patriarchy (Radford and Russell 1992).

Because of this structured mono-causal explanation by radical feminism, another structured feminist theory also appeared during this time period to explain gender inequality—socialist feminism (Eisenstein 1979). Socialist feminists sought to conceptualize the intersection of patriarchy and capitalism, of gender and class inequality, and how that structural intersection impacts social action, such as femicide.

However, it was not long after the development of both radical and socialist feminism that solid criticisms of these perspectives began to appear. For example, scholars argued that both perspectives are deterministic in the sense that behavior is seen as simply resulting from a social system—either "patriarchy" or "patriarchal capitalism"—a social system that is external to the actor (Messerschmidt 1993). In such a view, individuals display little or no agency—their actions result directly from the structural system of patriarchy or patriarchal capitalism. Both radical and socialist feminism then failed to account for the intentions of actors and for how social action is a meaningful construct in itself.

Yet probably the most central critique of both radical and socialist feminism concentrated on the concept of patriarchy. Feminist scholars argued that this concept restricts the exploration of historical variation in gender relations, obscures the multiplicity of ways in which societies have defined gender, and therefore implies a structure that is fixed, missing the kaleidoscope of gender relations, both historically and cross-culturally. In addition, the concept was criticized for its unidimensional conceptualization of gender and its neglect of differences and power relations between men and women and among women and among men (Rowbotham 1981; Connell 1985; Beechey 1987; Acker 1989). Finally, in much theorizing of patriarchy, the categories of "women" and "men" are considered

as being in no need of further examination, finer differentiation, or a determination of how they came to be what they are, thereby ignoring the social construction of masculinities and femininities and the relations between and among them (Connell 1985).

This spectrum of criticism indicated that efforts to theorize *patriarchy* had come to an end, and thus this realization spawned new ideas about the social character of *gender*, including masculinities. In this regard, it was the work of Raewyn Connell (1987; 1995) that provided a perspective for conceptualizing gender inequality through an understanding of the social construction of masculinities and femininities. Connell's initial formulation of the concept of "hegemonic masculinity" concentrated on that form of masculinity in a given historical and society-wide setting that legitimates unequal gender relations between men and women, masculinity and femininity, and among masculinities. Connell argued that hegemonic masculinity is always constructed in relation to various subordinated masculinities, as well as in relation to women. Both the *relational* and *legitimation* features were central to Connell's argument, involving a particular form of masculinity in unequal relation to a certain form of femininity—that is, "emphasized femininity"—which is practiced in a complementary, compliant, and accommodating subordinate relationship with hegemonic masculinity. Furthermore, the achievement of hegemonic masculinity occurs largely through discursive legitimation (or justification), encouraging all to consent to, unite around, and embody such unequal gender relations. For Connell, then, there exists a "fit" between hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity that discursively and materially institutionalizes men and masculinity as more powerful than women and femininity (Connell 1987; 1995).

Connell emphasized that hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculinities are all subject to change because they come into existence in specific settings and under particular situations. Moreover, in the case of the former, there often exists a struggle for hegemony whereby older versions may be replaced by newer ones. The notion of hegemonic masculinity and non-hegemonic masculinities then opened up the possibility of change towards the abolition of gender inequalities and the creation of more egalitarian gender relations.

Connell's perspective found significant and enthusiastic application from the late 1980s to the early 2000s, being utilized in a variety of academic areas (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). However, and despite considerable favorable reception of Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity and notion of multiple non-hegemonic masculinities, her perspective nevertheless attracted criticism that focused almost exclusively on the concept of hegemonic masculinity. For example, concerns over the underlying concept of masculinity itself were raised, arguing that it may be flawed in various ways; questions regarding who actually represents hegemonic masculinity were advanced; it was noted that hegemonic masculinity simply reduces in practice to a reification of power or toxicity; and finally, it was suggested that the concept maintains an allegedly unsatisfactory theory of the masculine subject (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005).

Reformulation

In a paper published in 2005, Connell and Messerschmidt responded to these criticisms and reformulated the concept of hegemonic masculinity in numerous ways. That reformulation first included certain aspects of the original formulation that empirical evidence over almost two decades of time indicated should be retained, in particular, the relational nature of the concept (among hegemonic masculinity, emphasized femininity, and non-hegemonic masculinities) and the idea that this relationship is a pattern of hegemony—not a pattern of simple domination. Also well supported historically are the seminal ideas that hegemonic masculinity need not be the most powerful and/or the most common pattern of masculinity in a particular setting, and that any formulation of the concept as simply constituting an assemblage of fixed, "masculine" character traits should be thoroughly transcended. Second, Connell and Messerschmidt suggested that a reformulated understanding of hegemonic masculinity must incorporate a more holistic grasp of gender inequality, which recognizes the agency of subordinated groups (e.g., women and gay men), as much as the power of hegemonic groups, and includes the mutual conditioning (or intersectionality) of gender with other social inequalities, such as class, race, age, sexuality, and nation. Third, Connell and Messerschmidt asserted that a more sophisticated treatment of embodiment in hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculinities was necessary, as well as conceptualizations of how hegemonic masculinity may be challenged, contested, and thus changed. Finally, Connell and Messerschmidt argued that, instead of simply recognizing hegemonic masculinity at only the society-wide level, scholars should analyze existing hegemonic masculinities empirically at three levels: first, the *local* (meaning constructed in arenas of face-to-face interaction in schools, organizations, and immediate communities); second, the *regional* (meaning constructed at the society-wide level); and third, the *global* (meaning constructed in such transnational arenas as world politics, business, and media).

Scholars have since applied this reformulated concept of hegemonic masculinity in a number of ways, from specifically examining hegemonic masculinities at the local, regional, and global levels; through demonstrating how women and subordinated men, under certain circumstances, may actually contribute to the cultivation of hegemonic masculinity; to demonstrating how hegemonic masculinities may be open to challenge and possibly reproduced in new form; and to analyzing how neoliberal globalization impacts the construction of hegemonic masculinities in several countries in Asia, Africa, and Central and Latin America (Messerschmidt 2012).

It emerges clearly from these and other studies that scholars are now conducting impressive research on how specific, unequal, structured gender relationships between men and women, between masculinity and femininity, and among masculinities are legitimated—they are capturing certain of the essential features of the all-pervasive reproduction of unequal gender relations. Indeed, this research documents the continued significance of the concept of hegemonic masculinity and simultaneously

inspires additional gender research that further extends our knowledge in similar and/or previously unexplored areas. Nevertheless, problems remain.

Problems Remain

Almost 18 years ago, the American sociologist, Pat Martin (1998), raised the issue of inconsistent applications of the concept of hegemonic masculinity, observing insightfully that some scholars equated the concept with a fixed type of masculinity, or with whatever type of masculinity happened to be dominant at a particular time and place. More recently, the Australian sociologist, Christine Beasley (2008), labeled such inconsistent applications "slippage," arguing that "dominant" forms of masculinity—such as those that are the most culturally celebrated or the most common in particular settings—may actually do little to legitimate men's power over women and, therefore, should not be labeled hegemonic masculinities. American sociologist, Mimi Schippers (2007), had similarly argued that it is essential to distinguish masculinities that legitimate men's power from those that do not.

Martin's, Beasley's, and Schipper's insights unfortunately continue to ring true, as there remains a fundamental tendency among some scholars to read hegemonic masculinity as a static character type and to ignore the whole question of gender relations, and thus the legitimation of gender inequality. Furthermore, some scholars continue to equate hegemonic masculinity with: 1) particular masculinities that simply are dominant—that is, the most culturally celebrated or the most common in particular settings—but do *not* legitimate gender inequality, or 2) those masculinities practiced by certain men—such as politicians, corporate heads, and celebrities—simply because they are in positions of power, ignoring once again questions of gender relations and the legitimation of gender inequality.

A New Formulation

Permit me now to turn to my most recent work on hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculinities that builds on my 2005 co-authored paper with Connell and addresses seriously the criticisms of Martin (1998), Beasley (2008), and Schippers (2007). As previously mentioned, to elucidate the significance and salience of hegemonic masculinities, gender scholars must distinguish masculinities that legitimate gender inequality from those that do not, and I have now begun to accomplish this. For example, in my most recent book, *Masculinities in the Making*, I distinguish "hegemonic masculinities" from "dominant," "dominating," and "positive" forms of masculinities (Messerschmidt 2016). I define *hegemonic masculinities* as those masculinities constructed locally, regionally, and globally that legitimate an unequal relationship between men and women, masculinity and femininity, and among masculinities, and that hegemonic masculinities must be culturally ascendant to provide a rationale for social action through consent and compliance. *Dominant masculinities* are not always associated with and linked to gender hegemony, but refer to (locally, regionally, and globally) the most celebrated, common, or current form of masculinity in a particular social setting; *dominating masculinities* refer to those masculinities (locally, regionally, and globally) that also do not necessarily legitimate unequal relationships between men and women, masculinities and femininities, but rather involve commanding and controlling particular interactions, exercising power and control over people and events: "calling the shots" and "running the show." While dominant and dominating masculinities may sometimes also be hegemonic, dominant and dominating masculinities are never hegemonic if they fail to legitimate unequal gender relations in a cultural context. *Positive masculinities* are those masculinities (locally, regionally, and globally) that contribute to legitimating egalitarian relations between men and women, masculinity and femininity, and among masculinities.

Research on such dominant, dominating, and positive masculinities is significant because it enables a more distinct conceptualization of how hegemonic masculinities are unique among the diversity of masculinities, and because drawing a clear distinction between hegemonic and dominant and dominating masculinities will enable scholars to recognize and research various non-hegemonic yet powerful masculinities, and how the latter differ from hegemonic masculinities, as well as how they differ among themselves.

Furthermore, identifying gendered practices that do not legitimate patriarchal relations should be considered valuable, in the sense of recognizing and pinpointing possible positive masculinities and thus gender practices and relations that feminists support: positive masculinities that challenge gender hegemony and consequently have crucial implications for social policy.

Application

In closing, then, let me now apply this new formulation of masculinities just outlined to two differing types of femicide: intimate partner femicide and so-called "honor" femicide. I begin with intimate partner femicide.

Intimate Partner Femicide

For men who eventually commit femicide against their intimate female partner, the evidence indicates that, over the course of the relationship, the eventual perpetrator attempts increasingly to dominate his partner through physical battering. In other words, when a femicide is the outcome, the battering has usually been progressively persistent and severe (Campbell et al. 2007). Men who engage in intimate partner femicide assume they have the right to dominate their partner violently and, overwhelmingly, female partners are beaten for issues centering on, for example, household labor, possessiveness, and sexual jealousy (Adams 2007; Goussinsky and Yassour-Borochowitz 2012). Therefore, the eventual perpetrator is constructing a wholly dominating masculinity, whereby he is commanding and controlling the relationship, he is exercising power and authority over his partner, and he is employing physical violence to call the shots and run the show.

However, intimate partner femicides usually occur when the man concludes that he is losing his power to dominate and control what he sees as his possession. Intimate partner femicides are almost always immediately preceded by a major

confrontation in the privatized setting of the home that they usually both share (Dobash and Dobash 2015). Moreover, the confrontation most likely centers on the female partner acting independently of his commands and requirements by engaging in certain practices, such as attempts to end the relationship, planning to move out of the house or actually moves out, or establishing a new relationship with another man. Her attempted or actual separation and sovereignty in fact threaten and challenge his masculine control directly; the conflict over his possessiveness of her as his own is at once intensified, and the man ultimately rationalizes that, "If I can't have her, no one can," and the result often is a femicide (Dobash and Dobash 2015). In other words, when he realizes that his possession is vanishing, or actually has vanished and will most likely not return, he becomes acutely angry, enters into a resentful rage, and kills his partner because, from his point of view, he has been seriously wronged.

Intimate partner femicide reproduces the gender inequality that the female partner has challenged because the very act of femicide inscribes the female victim—who now embodies weakness and vulnerability—as feminine and the perpetrator—who now embodies strength and invulnerability—as masculine, thereby constructing an "inferior" partner and a "superior" perpetrator. For the perpetrator, then, gender difference and inequality are re-established in his mind through intimate partner femicide. The perpetrator restores his dominating masculinity by once again commanding and controlling the violent interaction through exercising aggressive and dominating power over "his" partner and the situation—he ultimately assures himself that no one other than him will ever "own" her.

So-Called "Honor" Femicide

So-called "honor" femicide refers to the killing of a female family member by a male family member due to the belief that the female has allegedly brought gendered dishonor upon the family. In societies where so-called "honor" femicide occurs, the mere perception that a woman has behaved in a gendered way that supposedly "dishonors" her family is sufficient to set in motion a series of events leading to a femicide (Dogan 2016; Grzyb 2016). For example, members of the extended family may plan together how to respond to the offending revelation; an important aspect is the ostensible reputation of the family in their respective community and the stigma associated with possibly losing social status within that community. If it is determined that the family has been dishonored, then immediate retribution is exercised to restore that alleged honor in order for the family to avoid losing status in the community (Gill, Strange, and Roberts 2014; Begikhani, Gill, and Hague 2015).

A male member of the family will usually then be chosen to carry out the killing; he will most likely experience pressure from the family and/or community to reportedly restore the family honor, and such men are celebrated for their "bravery" once the femicide has been completed (Dogan 2016; Grzyb 2016). The killing is broadcast throughout the community and thus the perpetrator is publicly constructed as a masculine hero within both the family and the community (Gill, Strange, and Roberts 2014).

The distinct character of this type of femicide is that it takes place within the context of family- and community-wide masculine control over women and their bodies. This control of women is achieved through the ever-present threat and fear of violence, if a woman should construct bodily practices that venture outside her predetermined and policed femininity. In such a situation, "honor" is simply code for hegemonic masculinity and "dishonor" is code for challenging that hegemonic masculinity. In other words, the discourse of "family dishonor" is a major aspect of gender hegemony embedded in the family and community, but it is simultaneously a measure of the imperfection of that gender hegemony. So-called "honor" femicide occurs when the men of the family fear their control over the bodies of women is breaking down because of women's gendered "transgressions." Gender antecedents by women that ultimately lead men to engage in femicide include, for example: 1) refusing to enter an arranged marriage; 2) being in a disapproved relationship; 3) having sex outside of marriage; 4) being the victim of rape; 5) dressing in inappropriate ways; 6) engaging in same-sex sexuality; and 7) seeking a divorce, even from an abusive husband. When a woman steps outside the bounds of acceptable femininity, men turn to so-called "honor" femicide to regain control and reproduce hegemonic masculinity within the family and the community. In such settings, hegemonic masculinity has been compromised through the behavior of the "offending" woman and the femicide at once restores that hegemonic masculinity and thus gender inequality. "Honor" femicide thus reinstates the compliant and accommodating notion of femininity in such families and communities, encouraging all to unite around unequal gender relations—so-called "honor" femicide therefore serves to legitimate, at the local level, an unequal relationship between men and women, and masculinity and femininity.

Conclusion

In this paper, I briefly summarized feminist theorizing in the 1970s and 1980s that set the stage for the emergence of the concept of hegemonic masculinity. I then presented the criticisms leveled against this concept and therefore the arrival of new directions in scholarly work on hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculinities. As part of these new directions, I considered my most recent work on hegemonic, dominant, dominating, and positive masculinities. Further, given that the concept of patriarchy fails to examine the differences among the category of "men" (as well as "women"), the concentration on gender diversity—and in this case, masculinities—provides that distinction among men and masculinities, and thereby advances a detailed conceptualization of the contrasting masculinities involved in two distinct types of femicide; namely, intimate partner femicide and so-called "honor" femicides. The direct implication of this discussion, then, is that examining masculinities will deepen comprehension about why different types of femicide are perpetrated.

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A Qualitative Study of Intimate Partner Femicide and Orphans in Cyprus

Abstract The paper first contextualizes femicide in the broader context of domestic violence, and homicide in the Republic of Cyprus. It then goes on to report a qualitative study of eighteen intimate partner femicide (IPF) orphans during the period 2001-2014. Findings concerning IPF, offender, and victim characteristics but also pertaining to a broad range of themes that emerged in the face-to-face interviews with the orphans are also reported and discussed. In support of theoretical notions of power and control and gender inequality, the study reported also documents of a prior history of serious conflict, physical, verbal, and psychological abuse of the IPF victim by a jealous, possessive, controlling, and oppressive violent male partner or ex-partner. Evidence is provided of the tragic inability of the authorities to heed numerous warning signs and threats-to-kill by the offender and so avert such murders. Finally, attention turns to the policy and research implications of the findings with emphasis on lethal domestic violence prevention and better support of the orphans involved.

Keywords Domestic Violence; Intimate Partner Femicide; Homicide; Orphans; Cyprus; Victims; Gender

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Introduction: Domestic Violence, Homicide, and Femicide in Cyprus

As Brookman and Robinson (2012:570) remind their readers, "it is impossible to understand the risk of victimization without considering gender." At the same time, it is established in criminology that the risk of being a victim of violent crime increases when one or more static (e.g., gender, age, social class, race, and ethnicity) and/or such dynamic factors as place and type of work, "lifestyle" factors (e.g., frequenting pubs, nightclubs), and mental health are present (Brookman and Robinson 2012). However, what sets "domestic violence" apart from other crime is the nature of the victim/offender relationship (Robinson 2010).

Women are more likely than men to experience domestic violence, but, compared to men, they do so differently and this includes being more likely to fear being killed or be afraid their children will get harmed (Robinson 2010). Female domestic violence

victimization is higher among the younger, living in households with lower incomes, with children in their households, and in rental accommodation. One possible explanation for the increased risk of such women is that they are more likely to want to keep their family together and so more reluctant to leave their violent partners (Walby and Allen 2004).

Concerning domestically violent versatile men, they are likely to have previous convictions, to be alcohol dependent, have "macho" attitudes, be characterized by narcissism, and psychopathology. The last attribute comprises superficial charm, need for stimulation, callousness, and antisocial history (Robinson 2010). Also, as Dobash and Dobash (1979) reported almost four decades ago, such offenders demonstrate jealousy, are possessive and try to control their partners, threaten to kill, increase the severity of violence against their partner over time, and/or threaten to commit suicide. Also, consistent with theoretical notions of power and control, the more jealous domestic violence perpetrators initiate conflict over child contact when the intimate relationship is over (Robinson 2006).

Concerning lethal domestic violence, across time and space, homicide (the killing of one human being by another whether in the form of murder or manslaughter) has been and is structured by sex and gender. The simple fact is that males are disproportionately represented among both offenders and victims (LaFree and Hunnicutt 2006; Office of National Statistics 2014). Concerning macro-level explanations for female and male victimization trends, patterns, and rates, according to Gartner and Jung (2014), the research shows that: (a) there is a close positive relationship between female and male victimization; (b) both have similar correlates; (c) since the middle of the twentieth century the two victimization rates remain divergent; and, finally, (d) various measures of gender inequality cannot adequately account for the consistent differences in victimization as a function of gender. The same authors conclude that, "the evidence points toward general theories of homicide victimization, although the validity of sex- or gender-specific theories cannot be ruled out" (Gartner and Jung 2014:435).

Considering micro-level homicide victimization studies, it is found that, irrespective of one's sex, the risk of homicide victimization is significantly higher for the young, members of marginalized racial and ethnic groups, the undereducated, the underemployed, and, predictably, also disadvantaged socio-economically and living in unsafe and economically disadvantaged neighborhoods (Kershaw, Nicholas, and Walker 2008; Pizzaro, DeJong, and McGarrell 2010). However, a close examination of the literature by Gartner and Jung (2014) leads them to state that there are some important risk and context differences in male and female homicide victimization; more specifically, females are more likely to be victimized by an intimate partner or family member, whereas males by an acquaintance or a stranger; and women who are separated from their intimate partners are more likely to be victimized than if living with them. Thus, the difference lies in the relationship with their killers. Gartner and Jung (2014:436) conclude that, as in the case of macro-research, the evidence from micro-research supports general theories of violence and homicide, but "sex- and gender-centered theories also help to contextualize or deepen the understanding of the factors suggested by general theories of crime." The inescapable conclusion is that the prevalence and nature of homicide is largely shaped by gender (Smith 2014).

Victims of Domestic Violence in Cyprus

According to the Cyprus Statistical Service, the estimated population of Cyprus living in the free areas of the Republic today (i.e., not in the areas in the northern part of Cyprus that is under the occupation of the Turkish army since 1974) is around 910,000. The Cyprus Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family (n.d.), inter alia, offers face-to-face and over the phone advice and guidance concerning domestic incidents and, also, provides a shelter for victims of domestic violence. According to the Association's research report in 2012 (Kyriakidou 2012), during the period January 1997-June 2012 the Association handled 14,228 cases, yielding an average of 77 domestic incidents each month. In the same period, a total of 963 victims of domestic violence requested shelter, averaging 68.79 requests a year. Of the victims, 63% were married, 17% single, 18% separated, and 2% widowed/engaged; 77% were adults and of those 92% were female. The two genders were equally represented among child victims. There were 130 victims who were pregnant, 77% of the victims lived with their abuser, and 92% had children. Of the 12,312 victims whose nationality was known, Greek-Cypriots made up 86%, Greeks 3%, and the remaining 11% comprised different nationalities. Of the 8,009 victims for whom the information was available, 46% were unemployed.

Regarding the relationship between victims and offenders, a 2012 study of 12,239 cases by the Cyprus Association for the Treatment and Handling of Violence in the Family reported that the victim was a spouse (68%), parent (14%), child (9%), ex-spouse (4%), or, finally, a sibling (1.5%). The most frequent type of abuse reported was psychological, followed by physical, sexual, as well as neglect and combinations of different types.

Homicide and Gender in Cyprus

Examination of Cyprus Police homicide statistics for the period 01/2010-31/7/2014 (N=186), of which 51 (27%) were attempts, reveals that 70% of the cases involving 184 accused had been detected by the time of the analysis. Of the accused, 9% were females, while of the 217 victims, 22% were females. Thus, in support of the established finding internationally (LaFree and Hunnicutt 2006; Gartner and Jung 2014; Office of National Statistics 2014), females are much more likely to become victims of homicide than offenders.

Bearing in mind that some were multiple-offender homicides, when one takes a closer look at the 66 female victims of homicide in Cyprus during the period in question, it was found that they were killed: 22 by unknown (33%) and 3 by a male stranger (4.5%), 16 by a husband, 1 by ex-husband (26%), 8 by a lover (12%), 7 by a friend/somebody they knew (11%), 3 by the co/ex-cohabitee (4.5%), 2 by a brother (3%), and 4 (6%) by a member of their immediate family (daughter [1], son [1], sister [1], mother [1]). Thus, without ignoring the proportion of "unknown" homicide offenders, 63% of female

homicide victims are killed by someone they know well and trust.

Intimate Partner Femicide (IPF) Orphans

It is noteworthy to mention that children bereaved by the death of one parent at the hands of the other, who is most likely to be imprisoned, in effect lose both parents, but are often forgotten in the midst of such a dramatic situation. Bereavement is only a part of the process: there is the grief associated with the loss of both parents simultaneously because one deliberately killed the other; dislocation and insecurity regarding where and with whom they will live; stigma; secrecy; and, often, serious conflicts of loyalty—all devastating problems. IPF is a crime against humanity and the surviving orphans are the living voices of the killed ones. Who are they? When it happened? What happened to them from the point of view of custody issues, psychological, and psychiatric consequences, social and individual stigma? Many consider them the forgotten party who paid the highest price of the killing.

Children whose mother has been killed by their father suffer psychological, psychiatric, and social long-term problems. In a moment, their lives have been "switched off" in the worst and most tragic way. They are orphans of both parents because the mother has been killed, the father has either committed suicide or is in prison or in a mental forensic hospital. Other "parents" are not always available, while the best solution, or the only solution decided by the Courts in terms of custody, is not always in the best interest of the under-aged child.

Little is known about children orphans who witness their mother murdered by their father because, as far as it has been possible to ascertain, there have been very few such in-depth studies available internationally. Documented consequences of IPF on the orphans include PTSD (Black, Harris-Hendricks, and Kaplan 1992), especially if they witnessed the murder, enuresis, sleep disturbances, flashbacks, anxiety, psychosomatic disorders, aggression, and dissociation (Black and Kaplan 1988; Egeland, Jacobvitz, and Stroufe 1988; Burman and Allen-Meares 1994). As Ferrara and his colleagues (2015) remind their readers, the decision whom to place IPF orphans with is indeed problematic.

Children orphans who witness their mother murder are largely forgotten by society and live with the scars of witnessing one parent murdering the other. This article is an attempt to address a number of basic but vital questions: Who are these children? Where do they live? What happened to them after the incident? How do they, themselves, reflect on the experience of becoming an IPF victim?

Femicide: Maternal Death through Paternal Homicide

Children all over the world experience a range of traumatic events, but none can be more horrific than witnessing one parent murdering the other parent. Femicide is an example of Intimate Partner Homicide (IPF) and its incidence varies across countries (Stockl, Devries, and Rostein 2013). According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2013), the murder of women is less common in Europe than in the Americas, Africa, and Asia. Femicide is very often preceded by physical violence against the victim. Furthermore, correlates of femicide include: the end of a relationship (i.e., actual or imminent separation), access to a firearm, prior threats to kill the victim, the offender having serious psychological problems, and, finally, being unemployed (Campbell et al. 2003; Moracco, Runyan, and Butts 2003; Koziol-McLain et al. 2006; Campbell et al. 2007).

It is undoubtedly true that this very traumatic social problem changes children's life drastically. Straight after the femicide, they are interviewed by police and social services personnel and are the subject of court interventions and child welfare decisions (van Nijnatten and van Huizen 2004). They are somehow expected to pick up the broken pieces of their tragic life and soldier on.

New Guardians for Orphan Children

When one parent kills the other, the child loses both parents. Most of the times, new surrogate parents undertake the guardianship of the child. The disorganization through the violence and the sudden loss and disruption of children's caring environment and relationships may lead to their assumptions about the availability and reliability of a "new family" (Kaplan 1998).

When children lose their parents, maternal and paternal grandparents usually offer to raise the children. In some occasions, feelings like guilt and shame lead maternal and paternal sides to have a say in what procedures should be followed for children's upbringing (Lev-Wiesel and Samson 2001). The extended family from both sides often intervene to offer a home for the children, or at least they have a say in what arrangements are made for the children and how they are to be brought up (Kaplan 1998).

According to Lev-Wiesel and Samson (2001), most of the times relatives of the offender take care of the children because they see their role as temporary caretakers until their father's release from prison. Children living with relatives of the perpetrator are more likely to return to their surviving parent's care.

Motivational factors for the father's family will necessarily be different from those for the mother's family. The father's family will often have a need to manage shame and guilt, while for the mother's family a need to deal with grief and mourning. According to Kaplan (1998), mother's parents are more likely to forgive if: (1) the father accepted responsibility for the killing and presented regretfulness with remorse; (2) the father's parents acknowledged their shame and if they shared a true grief for their daughter-in-law; (3) during the criminal trial, if there were any provocations; and (4) the sentence of the father was the proper one.

When the children grow up with relatives of the one or the other family, an additional weight is added in their emotional world, since relatives have a continued war of who caused the result. The mother's relatives usually talk with hate about the "murderer father." In contrast, the father's relatives tend to blame the mother's behavior for provoking the homicide. When children are with their mother's relatives, they may avoid expressing love and longing

towards their father and/or anger and resentment towards their mother. On the other hand, when children are with the father's relatives, they may avoid expressing anger and hostility towards their father and love towards their mother (Lev-Wiesel and Samson 2001:239, 243). As Kaplan (1993:95) put it: "The children are embroiled in conflicts of loyalty, and have to placate relatives on both sides to prevent what they fear will be another catastrophic resolution to a dispute over them."

Some relatives may well-pressurize an orphan not to speak about the femicide in the hope that with time he/she "will forget it." In this way, however, well-intentioned relatives in effect prevent femicide orphans from mourning the loss of one or both of their parents. But, as mental health workers know only too well, the suppressed memory will not be forgotten.

IPF Orphans as Vulnerable Individuals

Little is known about how many children witness their parents murder, since no specific records are kept nationally that would verify this number (Burman and Allen-Meares 1994), or about what happens to these children after the incident, and to what extent social services psychologically help these children and for how long. Moreover, children who lose their parent/s are at higher risk for psychiatric difficulties in later childhood. Those who lose their parent between the ages of 3-5 years seem to be at higher risk. Those who lose their parent before the age of 10 are at greater risk for the development of depression and suicidal attempts. However, when the survived parent provides a helpful role model for the child, the difficulties are less (Lev-Wiesel and Samson 2001).

Drawing on Liamputtong's 2007 book, *Researching the Vulnerable: A Guide to Sensitive Research Methods*, despite the fact that there is no consensus on what exactly is meant by the term "vulnerable" and it is socially constructed, femicide orphans can justifiably be considered "vulnerable persons" because the term is often used interchangeably with such terms as "sensitive," the "hard-to-reach," and "hidden populations." As the study reported below documents the very tragic and very violent circumstances under which children and adolescents lose their mother, while the killer who is often their own father or their mother's partner or ex-partner is arrested, tried, and imprisoned, mean that themselves are taken into care, if under-aged. Thus, in effect, they become hard-to-reach and remain "hidden" from the rest of society. As the study also reports, the majority of them qualify as "sensitive" individuals.

As Liamputtong (2007:1-2) reminds us, one reason why sensitive researchers need to engage with the "vulnerable, disadvantaged and marginalised groups as it is likely that these population groups will be confronted with more and more problems to their health and well-being." Lest it be thought that such a task is not without challenges, Liamputtong (2007:2) goes on to remind her readers that such research presents researchers with "unique opportunities, but also dilemmas." Also, as Liamputtong (2007) points out, for many of them, having been marginalized, invisible, not shared their experience and feelings of the killing with strangers at all before, coupled with feeling stigmatized and being skeptical, generally about the utility of research, means that a number of them, at least, would be reluctant to participate in research.

A Qualitative Study of Femicide Orphans in Cyprus

In the light of the noticeable lack of research into femicide orphans worldwide and having determined that no such study had been undertaken in Cyprus and wishing to give femicide orphans a voice by directly coming into contact with them face-to-face, it was decided to carry out the sensitive research reported below in full knowledge that as vulnerable individuals, femicide orphans, irrespective of age, require special care from the researchers. A basic reason why femicide orphan research is sensitive is because the orphans would be asked to disclose very personal information and feelings they normally would prefer to keep to themselves. The present authors share the view (Liamputtong 2007:7) that qualitative research methods are especially appropriate to the study of families by virtue of their being open-ended and flexible, thus enabling the researcher to hear survivors' stories and to understand "the meanings, interpretations and subjective experiences of vulnerable groups." It needs to be emphasized in this context that a qualitative researcher is committed to hearing research participants on their own terms and seeing the world through their perspectives in order to elicit very sensitive information from them and, thus, having an insight, open a window into their lives. Therefore, the format of the questions used is along the lines of "explain it to me—how, why, what's the process, what's the significance" (Hesse-Biber and Yaiser 2004:28). In addition, a qualitative researcher aims not only to learn from the research participants but also to utilize such knowledge in order to have an empirical basis for proposing particular policy reforms in order to support vulnerable individuals and improve their lives. Finally, such a qualitative researcher needs to be aware and remember that the research may very well not only present difficulties for both the researcher and the researched but also impacts both on the research participants, as well as him/herself emotionally and not only.

Methodology

As the Cyprus partner in the Daphne European Project www.switch-off.eu: *Who, Where, What. Supporting WITness CHildren Orphans from Femicide in Europe*, entitled "Women as Victims of Lethal Domestic Violence during 2001-2014," the authors undertook to carry out face-to-face semi-structured interviews of femicide orphans. Both the Cyprus Police and the Department of Social Services were used as "gatekeeping agencies" (Liamputtong 2007). With the cooperation of a trusted "insider" in the Cyprus Police and another in the Department of Social Services and utilizing both electronic searches of print media, as well as door-knock enquiries where the homicide victim lived prior to the killing and by contacting the priest where the victim's funeral had taken place, it became possible to identify all 40 orphans from the 18 femicide cases during the period in question. All 40 orphans or, where appropriate through their legal guardian or a social worker "gatekeeper," were contacted by phone and, where required, with the assistance of the Social Services Department, were asked if they wished to participate in a university study of the experience of losing one's parent/s. 14 orphans themselves or their legal guardian, having also been assured of confidentiality, freely consented to participate and were interviewed using the semi-structured questionnaire during June-July

2014 period. No compensation or payment was provided for participating in the research, but one obvious incentive for taking part in the research was to improve the quality of services and support provided to femicide orphans in Cyprus by sharing their experience with the interviewer.

A precondition for the interview was that the interviewer had succeeded in putting an orphan at ease, establishing rapport, and gaining his/her trust. It was, therefore, important that the interview took place at a site of the orphan's choice under conditions an orphan felt comfortable. Both a reference letter from the University of Cyprus was provided at the meetings to verify the interviewer's identity, as well as an information sheet and an informed consent form for data confidentiality and protection, and description of the content of study were provided. Each interview lasted approximately 90 minutes and none of the orphans withdrew from the interview process. Ethical approval for the research had been obtained at a European level by the project coordinator.

The 14 orphans—5 children (5 boys), 3 teenagers (1 boy and 2 girls), and 6 adults (4 men and 2 women)—came from eight cases of femicide: 1 & 3; 2; 4; 5-7; 8; 9 & 10; 11-13; and 14.

Regarding the interview site, sibling orphans 5, 6, and 7 being under-aged were interviewed individually in an office of the Social Services in the presence of the social worker who had the legal responsibility to care for the three of them. Under the same conditions were interviewed sibling orphans 9 and 10, but in a conjoint interview. Orphan 8 was interviewed in a cafeteria in the presence of her aunt, sibling orphans 11, 12, and 13 at the home of their foster family. Orphans 1, 2, 3, 4, and 14 were interviewed alone in their houses.

The content of the semi-structured questionnaire was formulated by the European project coordinating team at the University of Naples II, Psychology Department and was based on the following tools: (a) "Child Behavior Checklist for Ages until 11 Years Old" (see: Achenbach 2001), (b) "Youth Self-Report for Ages 12-17 Years Old" (see: Achenbach 2001), (c) the "Cognitive Behavioral Assessment for Females and Males for Ages above 18 Years Old," and (d) the "Fatality—Child Review (Data Capture Form)." It should be noted at this point that (c) and (d) were constructed by the Department of Psychology of the Second University of Naples. The content of the interviews was analyzed thematically. The qualitative method was chosen in order to get deep and rich data primarily on IPF orphans' own experience. In view of the very sensitive nature of the femicide, the interviews were not recorded, but detailed notes were made straight after the interview.

In carrying out the in-depth interviews face-to-face with the orphans, it was essential to treat the research participants with the utmost respect and sensitivity to their lives and needs throughout the process, establishing first trust and rapport. In effect, the interviewer obtained an oral history from each orphan concerning the femicide event. In the case of the five orphans who were adult at the time of the killing, the orphan's entire life became a focus and, thus, a life story or life history was obtained from those orphans' perspective. Overall, the research was aimed at identifying significant themes that emerged in the course of the in-depth interviews.

The young female co-researcher who conducted the interviews possessed sufficient expertise in psychology and criminology, was experienced in carrying out personal interviews, and had good interpersonal skills. Finally, in order to deal with the psychological impact of interviewing femicide orphans on herself, the interviewer was debriefed after each interview by the senior researcher in the project who was also experienced in psychological counseling.

Findings

The Orphans

Of the 40 orphans (children and adults), two were themselves injured in the course of the homicide and two others were themselves killed by the killer after witnessing the murder of their mother. Of the fourteen orphans interviewed (see: Table 1), 10 were male and 4 female, their age at the time of the killing ranged from 3 to 38, yielding an average age of 14.7 years. Thus, an IPF orphan does not necessarily conform to the expectation that it is a child. The orphans were interviewed on average 4.4 years after the killing. More than half (N=8) of the children were aged 3-11 at the time of the killing and at the time of the interview 5 were living with their grandparents and 3 were under the care of the Department of Social Services and living with a foster family. Of the older ones, 2 were living with their siblings, one was living with her partner, and 3 with their spouse and children.

Table 1. Children's and Femicide Characteristics.

Case	M/F	Age at killing	Age at study	Where residing	How killed	Child witnessed
1	M	37	42	With wife and children	Shotgun	Yes
2	M	19	29	With his partner	Shotgun	No
3	M	38	43	With wife and children	Shotgun	Yes
4	M	20	25	With grandparents	Kitchen knife	No
5	M	5	7	With grandparents	Strangle & burn	No
6	M	6	9	With grandparents	Strangle & burn	No
7	M	11	13	With grandparents	Strangle & burn	No
8	F	10	11	With grandparents	Military rifle	Yes
9	M	6	9	With siblings	Asphyxiation	Yes
10	F	20	23	With siblings	Asphyxiation	No
11	F	10	15	Social services care	Asphyxiation	No
12	M	5	10	Social services care	Asphyxiation	No
13	M	3	8	Social services care	Asphyxiation	No
14	F	17	25	With husband and children	Shotgun	No

Source: self-elaboration.

Findings will next be reported pertaining to a number of themes that emerged in the course of the semi-structured interviews with the orphans.

Characteristics of the IPF

In five of the eight IPF cases, the victim was strangled and in three of those, the killer subsequently burned the body, in four a shotgun was used, a military rifle was used in one, and, finally, one victim was stabbed to death with a kitchen knife. In some cases, the police had confiscated the firearm, but, due to gaps in the legislation, it was returned to the violent male partner after a few hours or days, who subsequently used it to perpetrate the femicide. The majority of the couples were still living under the same roof, but were in the process of separating or had been living apart. Also, in support of other studies (Dobash and Dobash 1979), pathological jealousy and possessiveness by the male husband/cohabitee or ex-husband/cohabitee was very common. Four of the orphans were present at the killing and witnessed their mother getting killed, while two were injured trying to save her. Some of the killers had been under psychiatric care and/or had been on medication. In a number of cases, the killing was premeditated and was carried out in open areas and especially in the fields/countryside. To illustrate, the femicide took place: in the case involving orphans 1-3, 6, and 8 in a field, but in 1-3 the victim's body was thrown into a well by the offender, while in 9-10 it occurred in a coffee shop, while in the case involving orphan 11 the location was the yard outside the house where the victim was residing.

Femicide followed by suicide: Almost half the killers (3 out of 8) committed suicide after the killing of their partners, while four were serving prison sentences in the Central Prison in Nicosia at the time of the study and one had been released from prison.

Antecedents of IPF

Domestic violence prior to the femicide was a recurring theme in the interviews reported by all the orphans, except in one case. Similarly, all orphans reported physical and psychological violence by the killer against their mother and, with the exception of one femicide involving orphans 1-3, also against the orphans themselves as children or adolescents. In three of the eight femicides (orphans 5, 8, 11-13), the killer had been living apart from the victim before he committed the homicide; in fact, in the femicide with orphans 12-14, the offender and the victim had been divorced. Another recurring theme was pathological jealousy of the victim by the killer. Tragically, the IPF could have been averted because warnings had been repeatedly given—the killer himself had threatened through the children he would kill their mother if she did not return to him, while in two cases (orphans 2, 1 & 3, and 4-5), the killer had tried unsuccessfully once before to perpetrate the homicide (by attempted strangulation) and has also threatened to kill his spouse's mother (orphans 4-5). The father of orphans 4-5, who had tried once before to kill his wife, was subsequently convicted of murder in order to collect her life insurance, while the father of orphans 1 and 3, who had also tried once before to kill his spouse, was pathologically jealous of her. As has also been documented by researchers in other countries, in case 14, a father threatened through his children that he was going to kill their mother if she did not return to him. Finally, the police had been informed of the killer's death threats, but failed abysmally to intervene and protect the victim and, in the one case, where they had confiscated his shotgun, it was returned to him soon afterwards.

The Orphans' Childhood

All orphans reported having lived in an oppressive and violent environment characterized by too frequent shouting and fights and, thus, experienced psychological violence and not only. Their father or step-father was a nasty, violent tyrant who would frequently beat up their mother badly, while in three femicide cases, the father/step-father/cohabitee of six of them (orphans 1-3, 6, 9-10) did likewise to the children themselves. In effect, there was neither real, meaningful communication in their family, nor meaningful discussion and, consequently, the orphans preferred to discuss any issues that worried them with their friends.

Feelings/Emotions Expressed by the Orphans during the Interviews

As perhaps should have been expected, the feelings and the emotions expressed during the interviews were rather mixed. Some orphans expressed relief and pleasure because someone was interested to hear them. Some others expressed sadness and cried when they remembered the incident and felt grief when event-related images came to their mind and had difficulty coming to terms with the knowledge that one day, sooner or later, their father would be released from prison and would want to see them. Others initially refused to articulate their thoughts and felt embarrassed about being asked to think back and share their experience of such a tragic event. Finally, orphans 1-3 were very keen on seeing their father when he would come out of prison and blamed their mother for beating them and provoking their father (a Muslim) by being unfaithful to him.

Others expressed frustration from the way the system works in Cyprus as far as the courts and social services are concerned, but expected that things would improve, especially now that a study was being done and someone was taking an interest in them as individuals. Interestingly, some of the orphans expressed anticipation that life in general would improve for them.

Feelings of anger and sadness permeated the interviews because they had lost their mother and been through a very traumatic experience, especially for those who were children at the time. A willingness to cooperate with the researchers in order to help and support other femicide orphans in a practical way through the study was evident in most of the interviews.

How Children Described Their Mother and Their Father or Step-Father

Their mother: Only three orphans (siblings 11-13) described their mother as cold and insensitive, who neglected them severely. These three orphans would go out until late, their mother did not know where they were, who they were with, or what they were doing, they came back home late at night, they

would get drunk and did not wake up in the morning to go to school. However, the remaining eleven orphans described their mother as having a good personality, being a caring, hard-working person, resilient in many situations, though not very sociable, perhaps due to the serious and prolonged domestic violence at home.

Their father or step-father: They described him as a very strict man who imposed his will on the family, beat their mother badly in all cases, and in two cases, involving orphans 1-3 and 9-10, he did the same on the children; he was psychologically and physically violent and for two of them (orphans 2 and 8) he used to buy them things to gain their support. Four orphans (5-7, 8) described their father being a compulsive gambler who forcefully would take their mother's money. Moreover, two orphans (9 & 10 with one of them being a step-child of the killer) said he was not only shouting all the time but had serious psychological problems and did not have time to play with his children, let alone advise them. However, three sibling orphans (11-13) described their father as loving and caring. It is worth mentioning that the orphans whose father was described as having serious psycho-social problems worried that they themselves would also develop such problems later in their life.

Acting as a Parent at an Early Age

Two under-aged girls (orphans 4, 8) and a woman (orphan 10), who were interviewed, said that they found themselves having to perform a parent's role at a very early age and they fed, changed, cared, and looked after their younger siblings because their mother worked or did not care about her children.

Taking Initiatives

When adult orphans were younger, they did not take initiatives as the environment where they were growing up was not conducive for doing so. The same was mentioned by those orphans who are under-aged today. Orphans 2 & 3 who were adults at the time of the interview reported they gained their freedom after leaving their family home and started taking initiatives in all sectors in their life (studies, who to live with, employment, hobbies) and doing things they had been deprived of when they were under-aged.

School

As far as their scholastic achievement is concerned, the orphans are average to excellent students. Those in the last year of school at the time of their mother's death (10, 14) did very well at school as they wanted to achieve their goal of going on to University. Two women (10, 11) did not manage to study at University. The first got married after finishing school and she gave birth to her first child. The other one left school when finishing the first year of High School at the age of sixteen because she wanted to find a job to make ends meet. Another orphan (8), a teenage girl, is a perfectionist and always wants to be the best pupil at school. Some children and teenagers have cooperated with Educational Psychologists (5, 7, 8, 11-12), while others (13) have not. Some of the orphans still at school were being bullied and other pupils teased them by asking them how their father had killed their mother.

Employment and Dealing with Conflict

With one exception, the orphans who were adult at the time of the interview had jobs and described themselves as hard-working who enjoyed their jobs. However, one of the two female orphans (14) was not working due to serious psycho-social problems. At the workplace, one adult male orphan (1) said that if he is confronted with conflict, he prefers to leave the place, while others prefer to discuss it (2 & 3).

Friends

Generally speaking, the orphans had many friends, but would only discuss issues that worried them with a few of their friends. The adult orphans (1, 2) said they had childhood friends, while the children and teenagers reported that they mostly used to play football and go swimming with their friends. Interestingly, the same two of the orphans who were adult men when interviewed said they had friends who had themselves experienced difficult situations and, thus, were in a position to receive support and advice from them. Generally, the adult orphans were eager to help and advise others facing difficulties, and one of the men expressed his readiness to be standing by and ready to help if called upon when another IPF occurs and orphans needed support.

Ease with which They Could Get to Know Strangers

Responses varied regarding how easily orphans got to know people they met for the first time, and included: a defensive attitude (1), a positive attitude (2 and 3), an attitude that depended on the expressed attitude of the other person (10), and, finally, the stranger themself and venue where such a meeting occurred (4). Likewise, the response to the same question by children orphans also varied with one needing time to get to know somebody (5), getting to know somebody easily (6 and 7), while, finally, others were reserved and needed time to become familiar with someone (9 and 12).

Interests

Spending their free time on a Smartphone, tablet, playstation (see below), or laptop was a way to relax themselves from the everyday routine or when someone made them angry (1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11). It is quite interesting that when the incident occurred, orphans 4 and 10 started martial arts and specifically kickboxing training. All of the orphans said they loved animals and most enjoyed activities like dancing, swimming, and reading.

It was reported by boys that they liked playing football with their friends in their neighborhood or at school (5, 6, 7, 9). It is worth mentioning that three of them (5, 6, 7) also liked playing playstation games that include scenes of extreme violence and, also, listen to songs with insulting content.

Victims Reflecting on the Aftermath of the IPF

Some of the orphans felt the police officers who dealt with them generally did their job reasonably well, taking care to meet with the orphans in places where they felt comfortable. However, they simply did their

job and did not have the specialist knowledge and the training to deal with orphans from femicide. For all the orphans, a moment that stuck in their mind was when the police arrested their father/step-father for their mother's murder in their presence.

Looking back, those victims who were adults at the time (1 and 3) felt very strongly about the lack of psychological support by the relevant agencies of the state which are understaffed with non-specialists, did not show sufficient interest, and ceased to be interested completely when the trial finished and their father/step-father, et cetera, was convicted, but the victims' life had to go on as best they could, largely on their own.

In the case of under-aged victims at the time of the killing, they were either (a) taken into the care of the Department of Social Services and were fostered out (11, 12, 13), or (b) were cared for by one or both grandparents (4, 5, 6, 7, 8). In the latter case, persistent serious financial difficulties were and continue to be a major problem as is adequate supervision and guidance of orphans by the grandparent/s when they reach adolescence and later.

Adults and especially those grandparents who cared about the orphans (4, 5-7, 8) experienced serious financial difficulties. Minors who were in foster families received the government's financial support and some psychological support from Social Services. However, minors who lived with their grandparents, apart from an orphan's allowance, did not receive any other support from the government. Most of the grandparents became unemployed because they left their jobs to raise their orphaned grandchildren.

Adult orphans who had their grandparents, other relatives, friends, and school's support when they were minors had managed better to get on with their life (e.g., study at University, find a job, get married and have their own family) (1, 2, 3, 4). Those orphans were more sociable, seemed to have come to terms with the killing of their mother (1, 2, 3, 4), and two (2 and 4) were willing to help other femicide orphans. However, orphans who did not receive any support (4, 14) presented psycho-social disorders, lack of self-esteem, and depression. It is evident they had not yet come to terms with what happened.

It is also interesting to note how orphans got used to their new environment after IPF. Minors who subsequently lived with their grandparents (cases 5, 6, 7, 8) soon became accustomed to their changed environment and they often did not react negatively. Grandparents satisfied all the orphans' favors because they feared otherwise the children would react negatively. Children benefited from the situation and they sought more and more favors. In general, grandparents were unable to set limits and many of them did not receive any advice from professionals on how to handle their orphaned grandchildren. In a case where an orphan was under the care of her grandparents, the Welfare Services' support was weak (case 8). However, there were cases where there was adequate psychological support by the Services (5, 6, 7).

Additionally, minors (cases 10, 11, 12, 13) who were in foster families reacted variously. The foster mother was the half-sister of orphan 9 and he was happy in the family; case 11 was a reactive child when placed in a foster family. Finally, one of the orphans (12) complied with the situation, but did not react negatively; and orphan 13 faced difficulties settling into his new environment.

The Impact of IPF on the Victims, Both Children and Adults at the Time

The following symptoms were reported by the orphans themselves, social services officers, and grandparents as having been caused by the experience of the homicide: sleeping disorders; waking up during sleep; bedwetting; somnambulism; "imagined patient"; feelings of dizziness and visiting the hospital for tests; believing there is no life, they have no energy; negative thoughts constantly on their mind; reactivity; screaming a lot; constipation; avoiding people who remind them of the incident; telling lies; suicide attempts; missing their parents; daydreaming; creating an image for themselves that does not exist, such as believing that they are singers or prostitutes; being prone to accidents such as car accidents; hyperactivity; and constantly trying to be the center of attention.

In addition, as a result of the femicide experience, the orphans had an increased risk of low scholastic achievement, antisocial behavior, substance abuse, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, depression, and risk of suicide. To minimize such risks it is vital that the orphans enjoy steady and long-term meaningful support, including professional support, from their immediate social environment.

The femicide also impacted some orphans leaving them with a strong sense of guilt that they had not prevented the killing of their mother. A child stated that he should not have left his house the morning of the murder and gone to school (5). In the same case, the father influenced his child what to report to the police. In another case, a child (8) tried to defend her mother when her grandparents (father's parents) would blame her for provoking her killing. That child broke out crying several times when the incident was being discussed. In addition, a child (11) had a conversation with her father, when he killed her mother after a fight, whether he should surrender to the police or not, placing her at a tender age in a terrible dilemma.

Alcohol and Drugs

Regarding alcohol abuse, orphan 1 said he liked consuming alcohol when going out with friends, whereas case 4 used to drink a lot, staying out of his house until late and driving to go back home. As a result, he caused many serious car accidents, but no longer drinks to get drunk. Orphan 11, an under-aged girl, would leave home secretly, get drunk, stay out until late, and exhibited extreme views on a range of issues. Once, her foster father found her unconscious and drunk outside her school.

As far as *illicit drug use* is concerned, orphan 4 indicated he had been convinced by his friends to smoke cannabis and along the way he occasionally used hard drugs. He said he was free from addictive substances and had changed his everyday routine: he started working early in the morning and finishing late in the afternoon. Then he would attend martial arts training. He said that he might use cannabis once during the weekend when he meets his

friends. This person did not have the attention, support, and control of his parents when he was younger. He relied on his friends' support and advice.

Suicide Attempts

There were two cases of attempted suicide by two females. One case concerns orphan 11, a female juvenile who experienced a traumatic childhood. She undertook to bring up her two brothers from a very early age. Moreover, she had low self-esteem and had no relatives to support her and she knew it. The only support she had was from the Social Services. She had been living with a foster family, but most of the time she would secretly leave her foster family's home. The same teenage girl presented a bad image of herself, she wanted to be like her mother who had worked at a bar and had a bad reputation. She scarred her hands and abdomen with a blade and had also been admitted to the Inpatient Care Unit for children and adolescents with severe psycho-social disorders.

The other case concerns orphan 14, aged 17 at the time of her mother's killing, an adult woman aged 25 years at the time of the interview, who also experienced a traumatic childhood. As a teenager, she would secretly leave her home. Her father used to beat her severely. From a very early age she took on the role of bringing up her three siblings. When she finished school, she became pregnant and she immediately got married. Three weeks after the marriage, her father killed her mother with a shotgun. She did not have her relatives' support because they gave all their attention to the three minor siblings. She was monitored by a psychiatrist, but she stopped seeing him because she felt it was not making her better. One day she took an overdose of anti-anxiety pills and attempted suicide. At the time of the interview she admitted to constantly feeling tired and anxious.

Orphans' Own Families and Relations with Relatives

Orphans' own families: Orphan 1 felt happy with his family and, likewise, orphan 2 was engaged to get married and felt happy. However, case 4 was afraid of entering into relationships, fearing he would be hurt and was not in any relationship. Case 10 planned to have his own family when his younger brother would be older, while, finally, orphan 14 was married with children, but felt unhappy.

Relations with relatives: The fourteen orphans present a mixed picture regarding their relationship with their father in prison (where applicable), siblings, and relatives. Orphans 1 and 3 had a good relationship with their siblings, but no contact with their father who had been released from prison. Orphan 2 had a good relation with his sister, while his step-father had committed suicide after the femicide. Orphan 4, whose father committed suicide, had a very good relationship with his grandparents, but not with his brother. Orphans 5-7 had very good relations with maternal grandparents and siblings and a good relationship with their father who was in prison. Orphan 8, whose father committed suicide, had very good relations with siblings and maternal grandparents. Orphans 9 and 10 had very good relations with half-sisters and step-father, but no relationship with their father who was in prison and his relatives. Orphan 11 was jealous of and kept annoying her siblings and, also, was on bad terms with her foster-family, as well as her father in prison. Orphans 12 and 13 had good relations both with their respective brothers, as well as with their father in prison and foster parents. Orphan 14, whose father committed suicide, did not get on with siblings and relatives, and described her partner as uncaring.

Three out of the six adult orphans (1, 2, 3) had formed their own family and they expressed their happiness with their partners and with their children, where applicable. One of the adult orphans (4) said that he is not in a relationship and is afraid to create his own family because he believes he would be hurt. Orphan 10 wants to create her own family when her step-brother grows up. Finally, orphan 14 was married and had children, but did not feel happy.

Brief Excerpts from the Orphans' Interviews

The following are some of the noteworthy expressions some of the orphans used in the course of the interview: "I think five times before speaking and acting because I do not want to hurt anyone" (case 4); "I do not easily trust anyone" (case 4); "I like freedom, but not if it means hurting others" (case 4); "I do not like to always win—sometimes we must lose" (case 9); "I do not like being better than other children" (case 9); "It [the foster family] was a really nice family, I do not deserve to live with them" (case 11); "If I do something wrong, it is not my fault" (case 11); and "I have only bad experiences. I cannot remember any positive incident that happened in my life until now" (case 14).

Conclusions

The fourteen orphans interviewed were largely heterogeneous in terms of: their age at the time of their mother's killing, whether they were physically present and witnessed the killing, whether their father/step-father or their mother's partner or ex-partner committed suicide after the murder, how much time had elapsed between the killing and time of the interview, and, finally, differences in the kind and quality of support they have had. It came as no surprise, therefore, to find that the interviews gave rise to a mixture of different feelings and emotions, including contradictory ones, when the orphans were asked to recall the most tragic event in their life.

In support of other studies, a prior history of serious conflict, physical, verbal, and psychological abuse of the IPF victim by the male killer was a common feature of the eight homicides as was premeditation. All orphans reported having lived in an oppressive and violent environment characterized by too frequent shouting and fights and, thus, had experienced prolonged psychological and (three of them) physical violence. With one exception, the orphans described their father or step-father as a nasty, violent tyrant who would frequently beat up their mother badly. With the exception of three siblings, eleven orphans described their mother as having a good personality, being a caring, hard-working person, resilient in many situations, though not very sociable, perhaps due to the serious and prolonged domestic violence at home. Even though a variety of methods was

used to perpetrate the killing (strangulation, a firearm [almost always a shotgun], and a kitchen knife), the police had been given more than sufficient warnings of the impending femicide. Sadly, the authorities failed abysmally to protect the victim and prevent the femicide, despite being informed about the killer's threats.

With the violent domestic conflict coming to an abrupt and tragic end, for two of the orphans, it signaled their "liberation" because without the violent tyrant father/step-father controlling and oppressing them, they were now free to use their own initiative and did so by taking control of their own lives. Concerning the impact of the killing itself on the orphans' education, the in-depth interviews revealed that it depended on the age of the orphan at the time and whether they enjoyed the benefit of good professional support long enough.

Regarding research and policy implications arising from the study findings, there is an urgent need in Cyprus for research at the micro- and macro-level into sex, gender, and violence in both urban and rural areas. The government must address the structural inequalities at the root of neighborhood and family (broadly defined) disadvantage. Meanwhile, there is an urgent need for therapeutic help for femicide orphans by professionals, especially for those children and adolescent orphans who witnessed the killing.

Since women are frequently on their own in protecting themselves and often their children from violent men they have trusted, it is vital that doctors notify the police immediately about women's victimization by the partners or ex-partners and alert the police to the increased risk of IPF if the violent male has threatened to kill. There is also a need to increase the accountability of those services/institutions charged with these responsibilities.

Moreover, there is a need to provide stable programming and relationships with caring professionals vis-à-vis disadvantaged families with a history of serious domestic violence, and also change gender ideologies and challenge gender inequality, especially through education and prevention. Finally, the government in Cyprus as elsewhere ought to enhance the provision of interpersonal skills education and domestic abuse prevention in schools (Gadd, Fox, and Hale 2014) and teach conflict resolution skills to all and from very early on.

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The *Femme Fatale*: A Literary and Cultural Version of Femicide

Abstract The figure of the *femme fatale* is understood as inviting her own murder. Supposedly, the cause of the violence done by a man in thrall to her, she is in fact the primary victim of this violence. In the French confessional narrative, the woman is always somehow at fault for the protagonist's failure, whether by loving him too little or too much; she dies and he lives to tell the tale, recounting it to another man who listens and absolves. Thus, the heroine both dies again and is revived, to be contained—in both senses—in the text. Fictions from three centuries—Prévost's *Manon Lescaut* (1753), Mérimée's *Carmen* (1845), and Gide's *L'Immoraliste* (1902)—will be compared for their representation of literary femicide. Almost a century later, the changed ending of *Fatal Attraction* (directed by Lyne in 1987) demonstrates the public's clamor for the killing of a supposedly dangerous woman. A final section compares the significance of Princess Diana with these fictional instances of femicide: How did our love for her bring on her violent death?

Keywords Blood; Cultural Literacy; Fantasy; *Femme Fatale*; Gypsies/Roma; Princess Diana

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Femicide is a widespread social phenomenon, but it is also a cultural fantasy; arguably, one cannot exist without the other. In a recent article in *Current Sociology*, Weil (2016:2) notes that recent fictions lean on an increased sensitivity and knowledge of femicide "which goes beyond our western familiarity with Othello and Carmen." Yet that familiarity is still with us: one thing Othello and Carmen have in common—and share with the other instances discussed below—is a fantasy that locates what Othello terms "the cause" (Shakespeare 1951:1149) in the woman who dies, rather than the man who kills her. This idea of a sexual danger embodied in the *femme fatale* may, in some ways, appeal to women: either for the glorious empowerment it seems to offer their narcissism (see: Dinnerstein 1977), or for the righteous anger of "good" women against "bad"; but it is essentially a fantasy of self-justification for the male violence that murders on the grounds of "passion." Moreover, this fantasy may—perhaps must—coexist with the knowledge that "she asked for it" or "I couldn't help myself" are no longer acceptable defenses in Western criminal law.

Methodology

My critical position is interdisciplinary, based on a training in comparative literary studies, which now takes its methodological angle from literary-and-cultural studies (see: Segal and Koleva 2014 and http://cleurope.eu/). I read mainly male-authored fictions through feminist and psychoanalytical approaches, analyzing the unconscious fantasies that have shaped them. In the article referred to above, Weil (2016:6) argues that "the study of femicide, whether perpetrated consciously as an act of will or unconsciously or irrationally, falls squarely within the realm of sociology." In literary-and-cultural studies, there is no dividing line between conscious and unconscious motivations: fantasy underlies any action and an act is always the realization of a fiction—though, once again, this in no way diminishes the materiality of the outcome in which one dies and one lives. In this essay, I aim to carry the image of the *femme fatale* through five iterations and show how variously, and at times counter-intuitively, its mislocation of the motive of "passion" operates. Manon, Carmen, Marceline, Alex, and Diana are of course very different women and suffer very different deaths; yet I hope to show that we can think about them all through the same analytic lens.

Odd bedfellows as they may seem, I would situate this essay in the context of two non-literary theorists—Sigmund Freud and Michel de Certeau. From Freud, I take the fundamental assumption that everything is an utterance and no utterance is innocent; thus, the overt or conscious intention of an artifact, system, or action is never more than part—arguably the least interesting part—of the story. Everyday parapraxes are purposeful acts, and

> I fail to see why the wisdom which is the precipitate of ordinary experience of life should be refused its place among the acquisitions of science. The essential character of scientific work derives not from its distinctive objects but from its stricter method of establishing facts and its search for far-reaching correlations. [Freud 1999a:175-176][1]

In a similar way, I suggest, there are no earmarked objects for literary readings, but one can read both texts and other things in a literary way. Freud's (1999b:293) mode of interpretation—of dreams, jokes, slips, or the social imagination—works best by taking what he calls "an irregular path full of twists and turns…like the zig-zag of the solution of a knight's-move problem." Gradually, by this method, he undoes overdetermined knots of meaning, based on the inference that these knots must have been purposefully (unconsciously) knotted up in that way. Literary reading can make use of both his assumptions and his methods.

[1] All translations from French and German are my own, and reference is provided to the original text.

About a hundred years later, Certeau offers a perfect example of how the ideas of literacy can be used on a variety of objects apparently unconnected with direct acts of reading. Thus, he refers to walkers "whose bodies follow the downstrokes and cross-strokes of an urban 'text' which they write but cannot read" (Certeau 1990:141). The walker makes shapes—but far above his or her puny movements, the tourist looking down from on high (Certeau was writing in 1980 from the 110th floor of the World Trade Center) possesses a New York that is a "city composed of paroxysmal places in monumental reliefs. In it the spectator can read a universe that is taking off into the air" (Certeau 1990:139). The walker writes, the viewer from above reads; one traces and is traceable, Daedalus creating the labyrinth, while the other becomes "a voyeur" or more precisely "a god's eye" (Certeau 1990:140). He concludes: "being nothing but this point of vision is the fiction of knowledge" (Certeau 1990:140). Thus, all knowledge is fiction-making, and to know is to read.

The *Femme Fatale*

This essay, then, is a literary-cultural tour of a number of instances exemplifying a concept of dangerous femininity that has been all too influential. My first two examples, Manon Lescaut and Carmen, are figures as well—perhaps better—known from opera and ballet as from their literary originals, and both sprang from a Romantic masculine fantasy of murder that will never be his fault. My third textual example hides its violence deeper under the supposed weakness of the benighted intellectual and his late discovery of the body that bleeds. My fourth example illustrates how audiences refused to take the side of a *femme fatale* at the center of a 1980s film; and my last follows an adored figure from recent history who, in her life, embodied a popular fantasy in which, perhaps, a violent death was always presaged. What all these figures have in common is the seductiveness—to both sexes?—of the fatal and fated woman whose death is the premise for a fantasy of desire.

The term *femme fatale* is familiar enough—a brief Internet search produces pages of sultry-eyed loveliness from Garbo to Britney Spears, Lauren Bacall to Lolita. They gaze out of a frame both sideways and head-on. Of course, they may feed a narcissistic fantasy in their female viewers, but, more particularly, they license violence to them, by suggesting that the motive has originated in them. Let me begin this tour with a female-authored text, which indirectly exposes the phenomenon at its root. It will not surprise us to discover that the motive does not originate in the victim but in the resentment of a man who happens not to be loved.

The scene is from Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1965). The monster is wandering in lonely despair, trying to find his way back to his creator and enemy, Victor Frankenstein. By chance, he meets Victor's young brother William and, goaded by the child's taunts, strangles him. Then he notices a miniature hanging round the boy's neck. The portrait is of Victor and William's mother. Her beauty moves him first to desire, then to a correlative bitterness:

> For a few moments I gazed with delight on her dark eyes, fringed by deep lashes, and her lovely lips; but presently my rage returned; I remembered that I was forever deprived of the delights that such beautiful creatures could bestow and that she whose resemblance I contemplated would, in regarding me, have changed that air of divine benignity to one expressive of disgust and affright. [Shelley 1965:136]

Enraged, he goes into a barn, where another woman lies asleep:

> I bent over her and whispered, "Awake, fairest, thy lover is near—he who would give his life but to obtain one look of affection from thine eyes; my beloved, awake!"
>
> The sleeper stirred; a thrill of terror ran through me. Should she indeed awake, and see me, and curse me, and denounce the murderer? Thus would she assuredly act if her darkened eyes opened and she beheld me. The thought was madness; it stirred the fiend within me—not I, but she, shall suffer; the murder I have committed because I am forever robbed of all that she could give me, she shall atone. The crime had its source in her; be hers the punishment! [Shelley 1965:137]

This young woman is Justine and hers is, indeed, the punishment: she is condemned to death for William's murder, and Frankenstein, who realizes what must have happened, believes (rightly) that he is guilty of both deaths, both miscarriages of justice.

I want to examine the psychological mechanism revealed in this episode, the curse laid upon the blameless woman condemned for a crime she has not committed, but which a man has perpetrated because he believes she will not love him. She dies indirectly, but this is femicide nevertheless, in a mediate form. The key point is the line: "the murder I have committed because I am forever robbed of all that she could give me, she shall atone." I shall explore three literary cases of this motive, and in all of them, directly or indirectly, the murder for which the guiltless woman is condemned is perpetrated against her.

The concept of the *femme fatale* is a Romantic one, born out of the hugely influential art movement of the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century. Some—for example, Goethe (in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* 1795-1796) and Nietzsche (in *Die Geburt der Tragödie* 1872)—would argue that Romanticism began with the figure of Hamlet, for whom "conscience does make cowards of us all" (Shakespeare 1951:1047), on the grounds that a person, especially a young person, who thinks too much will never act. The feebleness of the Romantic hero is one reason why the harm he does is re-read as sensitivity or susceptibility, not least to frustrated desire.

Little more than a century after Shakespeare, the Abbé Prévost created Des Grieux, the narrator-protagonist of *Manon Lescaut*, another brilliant youngster, who has—so we are told—wasted his life chasing after a flighty minx unworthy of his abiding passion. Manon is the first of a series of "bad" women in French *récits* (see: Segal 1986; 1988) whom immature young men fall in love with and for whose sake—again, so the text argues—they abandon promising careers in the church, army, or politics. This protagonist's life is the subject of the story he tells to an older man who listens eagerly (as we do) and either sympathizes or condemns him—occasionally both.

The lost life at issue is that of the young man; yet, actually, he does not lose his life: the woman does. She dies and he tells the tale. She dies, I will argue, so that he can tell the tale. In other words, much of the most important modern literature is based on a case of femicide, and comes into being precisely on the grounds of that death.[2]

According to Wikipedia,

> A ***femme fatale*** is a stock character of a mysterious and seductive woman whose charms ensnare her lovers, often leading them into compromising, dangerous, and deadly situations…Her ability to entrance and hypnotise her victim with a spell was in the earliest stories seen as being literally supernatural; hence, the femme fatale today is still often described as having a power akin to an enchantress, seductress, vampire, witch, or demon, having power over men. [Wikipedia *Femme fatale*]

In this "stock" view, the woman is dangerous, wily, deceitful—but what motivates her? It is meant to remain mysterious, no doubt, but mysterious for whose benefit?

In Mario Praz's *The Romantic Agony* (1970), the panoply of nasties, to cite his chapter headings—The beauty of the Medusa, The metamorphoses of Satan, *La belle dame sans merci*, Byzantium, Swinburne, and "le vice anglais"—stand in the shadow of the grand-daddy of them all, the marquis de Sade. *His* Justine is another innocent caught in the snare of others' wickedness. It is precisely her innocence that feeds a masculine fantasy of danger and violence.

Manon Lescaut (1753)

My first fiction is *Manon Lescaut* (1753). Like the other two literary fictions I shall discuss, it has a central first-person narrative in which a young man tells his story to a frame-narrator, who presents it. Des Grieux, a 17-year-old theology student, takes one look at a girl a few years older "and much more experienced" (Prévost 1995:20) than him, and abandons his studies, his religion, his friends, family, and apparent principles, to follow her wherever she may go. First, they run off to Paris, "defrauding the rights of the church" (Prévost 1995:25), but with a vague intention of marrying, and when the money runs out, without telling Des Grieux, Manon calls in his older brother to take him home to his father.

This is the first of a series of what Des Grieux will call "betrayals," but it is possible to read Manon's life-choices differently since, as often as she leaves him, she also comes back to him, and it is she, not he, who understands the practicalities of life. He is no more honest than she, and it is only ever he who breaks the law—he abducts her from prison, killing a guard, he makes money by card-sharping, and on more than one occasion he lies his way into the assistance of his devout but besotted friend, Tiberge. These criminal acts are all justified in his (and maybe our) eyes by being committed in the name of his one morality: keeping Manon by his side.

[2] The death of the beloved woman is similarly a universal premise of the novel of adultery, the key genre of European realism: see Segal 1992.

As for Manon, in a rare passage in direct voice (a letter she leaves for him when joining another rich lover), she justifies her actions thus:

> I swear to you, my dear Chevalier, that you are the idol of my heart, and the only one in all the world that I could love as I love you; but don't you see, my poor darling, that in the state we have been reduced to, fidelity is a silly virtue? Do you think one can be truly loving when one has nothing to eat? Hunger would cause me to make some fatal mistake: one day I would breathe out my last, thinking I was uttering a sigh of love. I adore you, believe me, but for a while you must leave the management of our affairs to me. Woe betide whoever falls into my clutches! I am working to make my Chevalier rich and happy. My brother will let you know how your Manon is, and tell you how she wept at having to leave you. [Prévost 1995:68-69]

Whether or not we believe what Manon says here—Des Grieux certainly does not, and his attachment grows ever more bitter, but nonetheless strong for that, maybe stronger—it can surely be understood as a different "economy" of love from his. For her, it seems, the co-presence of the body is less essential than what she later calls, in similar tones, "the fidelity of the heart" (Prévost 1995:147).

What is the outcome? Manon is punished for what are largely Des Grieux's crimes, on the grounds that if he—a talented young man of high birth—committed them for love of her, then that is clearly her fault. She is a classic *femme fatale*, in other words.

Manon is condemned to be deported to the new French colonies in America. Des Grieux refuses to let go and follows her there. Once again, this is perceived as the most touching devotion, rather than as an addiction: he will support her in her exile. Yet this is not what happens. Once in New Orleans, they tell the colonial Governor they are married. All goes well for a while, even though the Governor's nephew, Synnelet, is in love with Manon. However, Des Grieux then decides he is ready to marry Manon for real and confesses the lie to the Governor who, naturally, unimpressed by this belated honesty, promises Manon to Synnelet. Des Grieux kills his rival, he and Manon run away, and, once in the desert, an uncharacteristically feeble Manon does indeed breathe out her last.

This is how Des Grieux buries his beloved:

> For more than twenty-four hours I remained prostrate, my mouth pressed to the face and hands of my dearest Manon. My intention was to die there, but at the beginning of the second day, I realized that this would leave her body exposed, after my death, to being devoured by wild beasts. So I resolved to bury her and wait for death on her grave…I broke my sword, to use it for digging, but my own hands were of more service. I dug a wide grave and there I laid the idol of my heart, after having wrapped her in all my clothes, so that the sand would not touch her. I did not place her there until I had kissed her again a thousand times, with all the ardor of the most perfect love. I sat down again close by her and gazed at her for a long time. I could not bring myself to close up the grave. At last, my strength beginning to fail, and fearful that it might run out altogether before I had completed my undertaking, I buried in the bosom of the earth the most perfect and beloved thing it ever bore. Then I lay

> down on the grave, my face turned to the sand and, closing my eyes with the intention of never opening them again, I invoked the aid of Heaven and waited impatiently for death. [Prévost 1995:200]

So upset that he cannot speak, Des Grieux is almost a zombie; in other words, he borrows her state of death (for a time). Then, he is rescued by Tiberge and later by the frame-narrator, to whom he tells this affecting story a few years later. In narrating to these men (and to us), Des Grieux absolves himself both of his crimes and perhaps of his love of Manon; he is exculpated and can return to respectable society. She, on the other hand, is exposed and effectively reinterred in his story. His version of their two motives is the only one that can, henceforth, be known.

Carmen (1845)

Something very similar happens to Carmen, the equally lively, wayward heroine of Prosper Mérimée's (1980) novel. Like the frame-narrator of *Manon Lescaut*, the frame-narrator of this short novel meets the protagonist twice, before and after the woman's death, and also has a brief chance to meet Carmen. He is struck by her powerful presence, big black eyes, and air of being "'Moorish, or…'—I stopped, not daring to say 'a Jewess'" (Mérimée 1980:54). "She laughs: 'Oh come! Can't you see I'm a gypsy! Would you like me to tell your *baji* [fortune]? Have you ever heard of La Carmencita? That's me!'" (Mérimée 1980:54).

We next meet Don José when he is awaiting execution for having killed Carmen. He too tells the frame-narrator his life-story. Born in the Spanish Basque country, of highborn stock and a keen player of *pelota*, he kills an opponent and has to escape to the army. After a short time he is "led astray" by the brilliantly seductive Carmen, who persuades him to set her free after he has arrested her for attacking a fellow cigarette-girl; a skilled mimic, she tells him she is from his country, but

> She was lying, *monsieur,* she did nothing but lie. I don't know if that girl ever spoke a word of truth in her life; but when she spoke I believed her: I just couldn't help it. She was mangling the Basque language, yet I believed she was from Navarra; her very eyes and mouth and coloring proved she was a gypsy. I was crazy, I didn't know what I was doing…It was like being drunk. [Mérimée 1980:68]

So, we have here another addict whose attachment is based as much on hatred as anything we might call love; he calls it madness. He despises her for the very qualities—her independence, her skill with languages, her knowledge, and leadership—that he admires in her and knows are lacking in him. Carmen promises him love (as her *minchorrò*) and even a gypsy marriage (as her *rom*), but not for ever. Don José joins her bandit gang and takes active part under her command in what he calls their "ugly trade" (Mérimée 1980:96). But soon:

> "Do you know," she said, "since you've been my *rom* for real I don't love you as much as when you were my *minchorrò*. I don't want to be harassed and above all I don't want anyone telling me what to do. I want to be free and do what I like. Beware of pushing me too far; if you get on my nerves I'll find myself some nice lad who'll do to you what you did to the One-Eyed Man" [her husband, whom Don José has killed]. [Mérimée 1980:95]

Yet, despite this independence, Carmen is made (in supposedly traditional *roma* fashion) to foretell, and thus seemingly invite, her death at Don José's hands. In response to his threats, she says:

> "I've always thought you would kill me. The very first time I saw you I had just met a priest at the door of my house. And tonight, as we were going out of Cordova, didn't you see? A hare ran across the road between your horse's feet. It is written." [Mérimée 1980:99]

Written is, of course, exactly what it is. And this is how she dies, and how Don José's narrative ends. They ride together to "a lonely gorge" (Mérimée 1980:102). The act of femicide is worth reading in detail.

> "Is this the place?" she said.
> And with one spring she was on the ground. She took off her mantilla, threw it at her feet and stood motionless with her hand on her hip, gazing at me.
> "You want to kill me, I can see that," she said. "It is written. But you won't make me give in."
> I said to her: "I beg you, be reasonable. Listen to me: the past is all forgotten. Yet you know it's you who have ruined me: it's for your sake that I became a robber and murderer. Carmen, my Carmen! Let me save you, and save myself with you."
> "José," she answered, "you are asking the impossible. I don't love you anymore; you still love me, and that's why you want to kill me. I could go on lying to you, but I can't be bothered. It's all over between us. You are my *rom*, and you have the right to kill your *romi*, but Carmen will always be free. A *calli* she was born, and a *calli* she'll die."
> "You love Lucas [the toreador], then?" I asked.
> "Yes, I loved him—as I loved you—for a while—less than I loved you, perhaps. But now I don't love anything, and I hate myself for having loved you." [Mérimée 1980:102]

> Don José weeps and begs her to relent. She refuses to change her mind and throws away a ring he has given her. "I struck her twice. It was the One-Eyed Man's knife, which I had taken because I had broken my own. She fell at the second blow without a cry. It's as if I can still see her great black eye staring at me. Then it grew dim and closed." [Mérimée 1980:102]

Like Des Grieux, he cannot leave her:

> For an hour or more I remained beside the corpse, exhausted. Then I remembered that Carmen had often told me she would like to lie buried in a wood. I dug a grave for her with my knife and laid her in it. I searched a long time for her ring, and found it at last. I put it in the grave beside her, together with a little cross. Perhaps I was wrong. Then I mounted my horse, galloped to Cordova, and went to the nearest guardhouse, where I made myself known. I told them I had killed Carmen, but I would not say where her body was...Poor child! It's the *Calle* who are to blame for having brought her up like that. [Mérimée 1980:103]

With these words of self-exculpation, the internal narrative closes. Now, this famous death-scene is generally read as the proof of Carmen's resistance, her refusal to let herself be loved, the explanation

for—indeed justification of—her murder. The last sentence above blames her *roma* inheritance (*femmes fatales* are of course often "dark ladies from the other side" and Carmen's baleful dark eye repeatedly stands metonymically for her foreignness) for all that has happened. But, once again, we can see that the violence is entirely on the man's side, though the narrative does everything possible to argue the reverse.

Before going on to my third text, I would like to gather together the main points that emerge from my first two, classic *femme fatale* texts. What do they have in common? Both the heroes, young men who tell their story to a willing male listener, have failed in life. Each passionately loves a woman who, seemingly, does not love him. Why does Manon die? Because Des Grieux insists on following her to America. Why does Carmen die? Because Don José will not let her go. Both men watch their beloved die and then bury her. After this, they remain semi-lifeless (prostrate, exhausted), as if imitating her state. Until they have told the story—disinterring and reinterring her in words—they are like zombies. Telling the story against her allows them to live again.

L'Immoraliste (1902)

My third text is André Gide's (2009) *L'Immoraliste* (*The Immoralist*). On the surface, it looks quite different from the other two: the woman is far from a *femme fatale*. But, once again, she dies in a dramatic climax and a pool of blood, and, once again, it is a matter of misplaced desire and two wasted lives, of which only the woman's is violently ended. The book opens, like the others, with a frame. The frame-narrator, with a small group of friends, has been summoned by Michel to a village in Algeria where he is stranded, lacking the strength to return to France. Michel tells his story, and this story ends with the death of his wife Marceline.

Everything in *L'Immoraliste*—implicitly, but never explicitly—suggests that Michel is gay, as his author was; but he never acts upon his implied desires. When both the bright-eyed boys of Algeria and the charismatic Ménalque beckon him to other acts and other lives, he is fascinated, but never follows. One critic alone noticed this and wrote to Gide, just after publication: "the husband is a pathetic lunatic whose very vices are half-hearted, a sadist and pederast in vain…Michel moves about in an unknown world without desires…Your hero has just one fault that makes him uncongenial to me: that is his total lack of immorality" (letter from Francis Jammes, June 1902 as cited in Gide 1958:1515). And yet, every review you will find of the book asserts, as the title implies, that Michel is a self-indulgent "immoralist." As the Amazon blurb has it: "One of Gide's best-known works, *The Immoralist*, concerns the unhappy consequences of amoral hedonism, telling the story of a man who travels through Europe and North Africa and attempts to transcend the limitations of conventional morality."

What creates the impression that Michel is radical, hedonistic, or immoral? Simply the fact that, every time he *almost* commits an act of betrayal, his wife bleeds—finally, to death. Blood is part of an implicit hydraulics of exchange in this novel. What one has (it seems), the other must lack. We have already seen this in the inability of both Manon and Des Grieux, Carmen and Don José, to be powerful or criminal at the same time. In *L'Immoraliste*, this works by a process of draining. Familiarly, blood may be gendered "good"/masculine or "bad"/feminine but never both; and where it denotes illness it may flow from Michel or Marceline, but not both at once (for the metaphorics of blood, see: Segal 1992). The Arab boys have bright, healthy blood: one cuts his thumb while carving wood and laughs in pleasure at the gash of red, but when Michel spits a "huge grotesque [affreux—this word recurs at key moments of bleeding, as we shall see] clot of blood" (Gide 2009:607), it is the sign of the tuberculosis that almost kills him. Later, when his wife is pregnant, Michel arrives home from an evening visit to Ménalque, to find Marceline surrounded by bloody medical instruments, having suffered a violent miscarriage.

Thus, after a few hours spent just talking with the potential corruptor, we find the signs of a temptation Michel has neither admitted nor espoused etched on the body of his wife. The evidence of this weird bargain—that she must suffer both for his wish to betray her and for his failure to do so—has gone right back to the opening of their story, where the narrative set up a reciprocal exchange between them.

A studious boy brought up by his professor father, Michel is married off at the latter's deathbed; Marceline is someone he has known all his life and yet "I knew my wife very little" (Gide 2009:598). He discovers that he is rich and Marceline is poor, that he is delicate while she is healthy. These differences will be the coinage of their exchange as they, like stupidity, become something not to be shared, but to be shared out between men and women: "We began to talk. Her charming remarks delighted me. I had formed, as best I might, a few ideas about the silliness of women. Beside her, that evening, it was I who appeared to myself awkward and stupid" (Gide 2009:601).

Like the supposed hydraulic exchange of qualities, the plot of the book is highly symmetrical: after their honeymoon in North Africa, they travel through Italy to Normandy, then to Paris; and then take the same route in reverse—Paris, Normandy, Italy, and again North Africa—as, following her miscarriage, Marceline somehow contracts TB in her turn. The places that aided Michel's recovery are deadly for her: she grows weak, making him feel strong. And, just like our other two heroes, Michel clings to the wife he apparently does not love, dragging her to the place of his desire. Why? Because without her decline he has no "evidence" of the proud immoralist he now believes himself to be.

Both Ménalque and the Arab boys represent a kind of power and desire that Michel does not have. Earlier in the story, he watched, fascinated, as the boldest of the boys, Moktir, stole a pair of Marceline's scissors. Now, back in Biskra, she is extremely unwell. He rediscovers Moktir—still gorgeous, though all the other boys have grown out of their attractiveness. The last night proceeds thus. After staying beside his wife till nightfall, weary of "the superhuman effort," his eyes "drawn horribly [*affreusement*] to the black holes of her nostrils" (Gide 2009:687-88),[3]

[3] On the theme of the "black vortex," see: Segal 1988: on *Carmen*, 42-43 and 51; on Fromentin's *Dominique*: 149, on *L'Immoraliste*: 151, and on "Men's mirror and women's voice," 202-223.

Michel slips out and follows Moktir to a café where his mistress leads Michel to a low bed and at last: "I let myself go to her as one lets oneself sink into sleep…" (Gide 2009:688 [ellipses Gide's]). Thus, passively, still not responsible for his acts, the protagonist commits a limited adultery—not with the desired Moktir, but only with his mistress.

Of course, he rushes home to find the room awash with blood and Marceline's hideous eyes gazing at him in uncanny silence. He searches her face to find somewhere "to place a dreadful [*affreux*] kiss" (Gide 2009:689). She dies after losing her faith, dropping her rosary, and only hours later: "towards early morning, another vomiting of blood…" (Gide 2009:689 [ellipses Gide's]). And that is the end of Marceline and, with her, of Michel's narrative. However, before he finally stops speaking, he makes two revealing remarks. First, familiarly, he expresses his incapacity to act for himself following the death of the woman: "Take me away from here; I can't do it by myself. Something in my will is broken" (Gide 2009:690).[4] And then he utters the curious observation: "At times I am afraid that what I have suppressed will take revenge" (Gide 2009:690).

What exactly has Michel (or indeed Gide) destroyed or suppressed from the text that might take its revenge on them? The answer brings us back to my reading of the *femme fatale* and, indeed, our overall theme of femicide. If Marceline just goes inexorably downhill, dies a "natural death," why is there so much blood? Because, essentially, she has been murdered by Michel's failure to be three things: firstly, what he thinks he is—actively immoral; secondly, what he will not admit he is (or what the author chooses not to make him)—actively homosexual; and finally, and most significantly here—dependent for his idea of freedom, independence, desire, on the presence and destruction of the woman.

Is this love? Is it desire? It is hard to say, in any of these cases. Des Grieux certainly appears to love Manon passionately. Don José, whether he loves her or not, desires Carmen beyond reason, and way beyond her wish. Michel seems to cling to Marceline, despite his failure to love or desire her. What these three young men have in common is that they cannot separate from their women and hound them to a femicidal death, which leads *them* through a temporary state of disempowerment to a new life as narrators, reinserted into the world of the patriarchy.

Fatal Attraction (1987)

I want to move sideways now to another fiction, the movie *Fatal Attraction* (directed by Adrian Lyne in 1987),[5] as popular as *Manon Lescaut* and *Carmen* in their day, and which gave English a new term for the *femme fatale*: "bunny-boiler." However, it generally escapes the notice of viewers that Alex Forrest (Glenn Close) never attacks any human beings apart from herself. All the active violence in the film is perpetrated by the male protagonist, Dan Gallagher (Michael Douglas). Yet the film is addressed to, and focused upon, the experience of an adulterous man who, it is implied, gets out of his depth and deserves a second chance at a good marriage.

This balance of power is nowhere better exemplified than in the film's closing scene. Dan has been allowed home by his wife Beth (Anne Archer), bruised both emotionally by his betrayal and physically after she crashed the car, believing Alex was a danger to their daughter. Throughout the film a number of references to *Madame Butterfly* in the earlier lives of Alex and Dan have suggested the damage that unloving fathers may do their children, and of course the shock of women abandoned by men. This has offered viewers a way both to see the difference between Butterfly's sublime (traditional, feminine) passivity and Alex's (modern, unfeminine) refusal to "be ignored," and to detect an undertow in which Butterfly's agony and thus, implicitly, her trajectory is mirrored in Alex's.

The original ending—still featured in the DVD extras—was a suicide à la *Madame Butterfly* which, although the mechanics were crude, appeared to show an elegant Alex sitting cross-legged in a white dress cutting her throat. This scene is cited visually in the following exchange.

> **AL:** The way the ending was originally in the screenplay was that he got the blame…for something he didn't do. She killed herself, she committed suicide, and that was the end of the movie.
>
> **SJ:** When we shot the picture, we all liked the ending—the original ending.
>
> **NM:** The ending I wrote for *Fatal Attraction*, the *Madame Butterfly* ending, was the ending that was filmed.
>
> **SJ:** It was intelligent, it was risky, and the way Adrian shot it was brilliant. But the audience was unsatisfied.
>
> **MD:** What happened is nobody could anticipate the anger that the audience had for the character that Glenn portrayed so brilliantly.
>
> **SJ:** We tested the picture in Seattle, in San Francisco and twice in Los Angeles, and you could have put a postage stamp over the reactions of the audience.
>
> **AA:** As they began to test the movie, it became apparent that audiences were really uncomfortable and unsatisfied.
>
> **SL:** The audience was on the edge of their seat, and then you would come to a certain place, and you could just feel that they weren't satisfied.
>
> **AL:** The ending just felt flat. It felt like the movie was working terrifically, you know, up until the last quarter of an hour.
>
> **SJ:** And in every one of the screenings, when Anne picks the phone up and says, "If you ever come near my family again, I'll kill you, you understand?" the audience erupted. And you knew they wanted some... revenge.
>
> **SL:** By then we knew that the audience wanted Anne Archer to defend her family, we knew that they wanted Glenn Close to die, we knew all of these things...

Both the production team and, especially, Glenn Close preferred the original ending. As Close puts it:

> I thought it was a joke, when they came to me—when Stanley called me and said, "We're going to reshoot

[4] You do not have to be a vulgar Freudian to note the same epithet, "broken," used of Des Grieux's sword, Don José's knife, and Michel's will.

[5] Quotations from *Fatal Attraction* are retrieved from the DVD of 1987. Characters are listed by their first name, and other speakers are abbreviated as follows: AA = Anne Archer; AL = Adrian Lyne (director); GC = Glenn Close; MD = Michael Douglas; NM = Nicholas Meyer (screenwriter); SL = Sherry Lansing (producer); SJ = Stanley Jaffe (producer).

the ending." Because for me, for all the research I'd done, that's how that character would end and that's how a lot of characters like that end: they're self-destructive and they kill themselves, whereas the way the new ending portrayed her character was as "a one-note, sort of knife-wielding villain."

Finally, she was over-ridden and gave in.

AA: Adrian made no bones about it that the new ending he wanted to use was in the style and the genre of the French film *Diaboliques*.

AL: And listen, there's probably many better endings than we came up with, but this was an ending that was sort of operatic... [Special features: "Forever fatal"]

"Sort of operatic" is a fascinating conclusion. The ending which was finally chosen—surely more *grand guignol* than high art—is precisely the one that the *Madame Butterfly* thematic had not implied. Even if far from high tech, the original ending was, as the make-up artist Richard Dean notes elsewhere in the features, both picturesque and beautiful; elegance and blood have now been replaced by a furious resurrection from an artificially deepened bath, and a "clean" shot from a righteous woman. This is the revenge of virtue against vice, as represented by the two traditional female types, virgin and whore, *maman* and *putain*, fairy godmother and wicked stepmother. What was brought together in sublime tart-with-a-heart, Cio Cio San, and remains potential in transgressive Alex, falls apart again in the violence of woman against woman that was the preferred ending.

Although it is Beth who kills Alex, that is only after Dan has horribly drowned her; the uncanny of the *femme fatale* is enacted by her terrifying rise from the watery depths, like the "one-note" monster she has been made to appear. If this conclusion seems to change femicide into a woman-on-woman murder, it is only, I suggest, because the audiences of Seattle, San Francisco, and Los Angeles felt compelled to forgive the male protagonist both his treachery and his violence, by displacing both characteristics onto his victim.

Princess Diana (1961-1997)

And what of the real-life case of Princess Diana? Let me begin by declaring that I am *not* going to suggest her early and sudden death was a case of femicide—as defined and understood by this project—except in the eyes of the conspiracy theorists whose contributions on the web (see: Wikipedia Diana conspiracy) constitute the main, lasting echo of those heady days of shock, almost twenty years ago. I want instead to examine how she functioned as a *femme fatale*, magnetizing the fantasies of those who adored and, arguably, sacrificed her. Some deaths are, of course, genuinely accidental. However, Diana in the Paris underpass, Alex in the bath, Marceline in an Algerian hotel, Carmen in the "lonely gorge," and Manon in the Louisiana desert are perhaps less different than they appear on the surface. Each was brought to a place where something seemingly inevitable happened through a combination of circumstances in which blame circulates.

Diana lived and died at the point of extreme visibility and her death provoked, at least in the UK, a rare example of promiscuous grief played out in the same visible mode. What was the actual process of her ability to represent in this way "the unusually multi-faceted reflector of a fragmented and fractious time" (Unsigned Editorial 1997:25)? I have argued elsewhere that the *motif* of radiance, ubiquitous in the media in the week after Diana's death, can be connected structurally to her presiding condition of bulimia. For both are circuits traced around, into and out of, the surface-point of the skin. It is not greed, in any normal sense, that motivates binge-eating, but the drive to circulate food without possessing it. Rather than consumption, this seems to be a fascination with repeatedly rehearsing consumption without being its slave. The slavery of bulimia, unlike the different slavery of anorexia, is reproductive of itself; for this reason, if for no other, it is feminine. The bulimic of either sex is repeating the pattern that relegates women to reproductive, rather than productive work; but it is not work, in that it has no end-product; the body disguises its self-disgust in a "normalizing" treadmill of giving and taking.

Radiance, surprisingly perhaps, works in a very similar way. It too is a circular system in which what comes out has first been put in. Only our gaze makes her look radiant. She was, as Martin Amis (1997:53) put it, "a mirror, not a lamp." Rilke (1965:4) describes this exactly in the second Duino Elegy, when he likens angels to mirrors that "draw their own streamed-forth beauty back into their own countenance." No doubt, this was because, bizarrely it seemed, the only person who did not love her was her husband: the large circuit of celebrity substituted for the ideal small circuit of intimacy.

If Diana seemed to present to us "the dazzling surface of our accumulated desires" (Gerrard 1997:23), it is surely because she stood, in a very specific way, at the meeting-point of Foucault's (1975) two representations of the relation of power to the gaze in *Surveiller et punir* (*Discipline and Punish*). Here, he describes the people looking up to the monarch: "Traditionally, power was what was seen, shown and manifested…Up to this point it had been the role of political ceremony to be the occasion for the excessive yet regulated manifestation of power" (Foucault 1975:219-220). At such moments, royalty was on display and the people were allowed to look, not on the face of power, certainly not into its eyes, but at a proper distance and logically from below. Genet's (1956) *Le Balcon* (*The Balcony*) satirizes this relation of mass to icon when the denizens of his brothel present themselves as the Queen, the Judge, the Bishop, and the General, on the balcony that marks the liminal point between two worlds. The balcony and the media screen are such transmitting skins, dual-sided in their function of presenting and protecting. We gazed up and, by a certain distortion (because she was actually taller than Prince Charles), we saw her gazing up too.

Diana, in fact, came to embody the dual verticality of power. Power is vertical, firstly, as we have just seen, because the few are on display to the many. Typically, in feudal regimes (of which the British monarchy is a late version, writ small), rituals and ceremonies ensured that those with power and privilege become known to their public by an "ascending" individualization. Over the last two centuries, on the other hand, the downward gaze of a punitive surveillance or discipline individualizes

the common man or woman "by comparative measures referring to the 'norm' rather than by genealogies using ancestors as reference points; by 'gaps' rather than deeds" (Foucault 1975:226).

It is in this sense that Princess Diana was, as endless accounts from all quarters marvel, "one of us." And yet we also—as we discovered with contrition after she died—wanted to see her displayed, and thus wanted the discipline by which *paparazzi* pursued her, hounded her out of doors and forced her indoors, with the threat of "face rape," "hosing her down," "whacking her," or "blitzing her" (see: Alter 1997:41; MacDonald 1997:18; the first term is Diana's own, the others are photographers'). Diana was a double-facing skin between the feudal and modern modes of the exercise of power. This was most particularly her function for women. She could be adored, but also pitied, because whatever misfortunes we think we have endured by virtue of our sex she seemed to have experienced, too. We looked simultaneously up and down, as she did. Our lives and fantasies (including our ambivalent longing to be gazed upon) were embodied in her. And, logically, we must have wished for her death at the hands of those who made her visible to us.

Thus, we reach the logical conclusion of the Diana phenomenon and the way in which we loved collectively in the 1980s and 1990s, and perhaps still do. The immortality or virtuality of the object is already anticipated in life by the intense feelings generated by someone whom we do not know—and the underlying assumption that those who ought to love her will never do it as well as we do. This, my fifth example, seems to take the murderous attitude of the *femme fatale* to its furthest distance from *Othello* or *Carmen*. Yet it also exemplifies the way in which the supposed love-object, glowing at first with charm and beauty, is finally wished dead by the very individual, or crowd, who cannot bear her strengths.

Conclusion

I hope I have shown how my literary cases exemplify a cultural phenomenon, demonstrating versions of femicide. In *Manon Lescaut* and *Carmen*, we have instances of the *femme fatale* whom the male protagonist blames for her own destruction. In *L'Immoraliste*, too, he can, he feels, only be strong if she is weakened to death—but, as in the first two texts, it turns out that her death deprives him of everything. These fictions disguise their femicidal motives in the poignancy of a young man's life ultimately saved; yet this relies on the blaming of a victim guilty of not loving in exactly the way he wanted her to. In Alex Forrest, Dan discovers the power of desire and has to destroy it to recover his social and familial "virtue." As for Diana, she was the object of a collective love based on the exposure of a failed intimacy and a seductive combination of glamour and humiliation. Unlike the literary texts, in which apparent circularity covers a deadly unilateral impulse, her story was indeed one of circulation—her need, our need, her comfort, our comfort—turning upon the reflective screen of her skin. Her death is also a clear case of fatality—and yet, if it was a femicidal murder, the responsibility for it, like the modern-day version of love that it represents, cannot be located, it can only be mislocated.

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The Advantages of Qualitative Research into Femicide

Abstract This article reviews the state of the art of qualitative research on femicide, which, until the publication of this Special Issue, has been extremely sparse. The paper mentions some of the limitations of the qualitative approach, such as time consumption, ethical liabilities, and non-generalizability. However, it advocates qualitative research because of its advantages in capturing the context, describing the experience, identifying the motives, highlighting the relationship between perpetrator and victim, identifying the risk factors, and suggesting apt policies. The article concludes by cautiously recommending a mixed-/merged-methods approach, which, in turn, depends upon the research question and has its own inherent disadvantages.

Keywords Femicide; Survivors; Qualitative Research; Non-Generalizability; Narratives; Interviews; Perpetrator; Victim; Policy; Mixed-Methods

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In the past few years, there has been a surge of articles on femicide, which had previously been "invisible" (Weil 2016a) in sociology. While domestic violence is a common object of enquiry, its fatal consequence had been relatively ignored. Now, due to the activism of several organizations, research into femicide is on the rise; however, the vast majority of the studies are quantitative. As in sociology in general, qualitative sociological research into femicide has been relegated to an inferior position in the discipline, and represents a minority sub-discipline.

It is a truism that it is difficult to conduct qualitative studies of femicide, not least because the victim is dead. The qualitative researcher therefore often takes recourse to studying "failed femicides" of survivors. By "failed femicides," the intention is "an attempted femicide where the medical examination of the victim confirmed a life-threatening event, the victim had been hospitalized in emergency, and she or the perpetrator had described the event as an attempted murder" (Weil 2016b:7). In the WHO report on femicide, the authors were keenly aware of the untenable situation in which survivors find themselves and proposed legal reforms globally to protect them. The report stated: "Studies are also needed to investigate cases of near-fatal intimate partner violence, not only to understand the needs of survivors and characteristics of perpetrators but also to shed light on the factors that may prevent femicide" (WHO 2012:6). Nevertheless, to date, the majority of studies of femicide survivors that *do* exist are quantitative in nature, and shed little light on the circumstances of the murder of a woman because of her gender. Qualitative studies of femicide are sparse and, by definition, restricted to small numbers. They are even rarer among displaced, refugee, or migrant women, who may make up a disproportionate share of attempted femicide victims.

This article reviews the use of qualitative methods in the study of femicide, and argues that a qualitative approach can be of great use to researchers of the phenomenon. Qualitative studies are usually small-scale micro studies, which are discovery-oriented, typically yielding detailed descriptions, and revealing experiential data. Often, they produce hypotheses that can later be tested in larger-scale studies. Clearly, there are different kinds of qualitative studies ranging from the examination of paper or internet documents, media reports, medical documents (if released), and court and other transcripts. Qualitative studies can consist of interviewing, focus groups, and the collection of narratives. Observations, the classic mark of ethnographic research, are necessarily rare in femicide studies. To date, and up to the publication of this Special Issue, the multiple forms of qualitative research into femicide have been largely neglected.

In the first section of this article, I shall review the state of the art of qualitative research on femicide, as it stands today. In the second section, I shall mention some of the limitations of the qualitative approach, and in the third section, I shall discuss its advantages. I shall conclude the article cautiously recommending a "mixed-methods" approach.

Qualitative Research on Femicide: The State of the Art

Most qualitative studies of femicide utilize some form of interviewing technique, usually focusing on the survivors of "failed femicides," but also recording the narratives of "significant others," such as perpetrators, relatives, and neighbors, in "successful" femicide cases, where the woman is eliminated. A pioneering research with a "semi-qualitative," face-to-face orientation was the questionnaire administered by McFarlane and colleagues (1999) to 65 attempted femicide survivors during the years 1994-1998 in 10 U.S. cities, in order to examine the phenomenon of stalking prior to an attack. The victims were identified from closed police records and contacted by mail. Trained doctoral students ran a questionnaire, including an 18-item stalking survey; the interview took one hour. However, the

results neither contain quotations from the victims, nor do they convey the quality of the lethal experience.

Another study of the qualitative aspects of femicide was carried out by Nicolaidis and colleagues (2003), who conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 30 women who had survived an attempted intimate partner femicide in six cities in the U.S. This was part of a larger, 11-city case-control study setup to determine the risk factors of actual and attempted intimate partner femicide. The female victims described in their own words their relationship with the partner, and their understanding of the events prior to the attempted femicide (Nicolaidis et al. 2003:2).

Sheehan and colleagues (2015) interviewed co-victims, family members, and close friends of femicide victims. They also examined criminal case files and media reports. Their study was insightful in that it showed acute risk factors prior to the femicide, identified changes in the perpetrators' behavior and the perpetrators' perceived loss of control over the victim, and described barriers that victims faced when attempting to gain safety (Sheehan et al. 2015). McNamara (2008) interviewed friends of victims of an intimate partner femicide in Australia. Dobash and colleagues (2004) managed to conduct qualitative interviews with perpetrators. In a relatively large qualitative study, Adams (2009) interviewed 31 killers of women and 16 perpetrators of attempted femicides by means of an in-depth structured interview that included 30 open-ended, as well as closed questions about their childhoods. The researchers also accessed the men's criminal history records.

Limitations of Qualitative Research on Femicide

The major limitations of qualitative research are its time consumption, its non-generalizability, and ethical liabilities.

Time Consumption

In dental public health research, Gill and colleagues (2008) distinguish between three basic types of interviews: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured. In femicide research, I would suggest that structured interviews are of little use, since the researcher is seeking in-depth information. Semi-structured interviews pose several key issues that the interviewee can discuss. Unstructured interviews may be particularly useful in asking about femicide incidents. Nevertheless, Gill and colleagues (2008) caution:

> Unstructured interviews are usually very time-consuming (often lasting several hours) and can be difficult to manage, and to participate in, as the lack of predetermined interview questions provides little guidance on what to talk about (which many participants find confusing and unhelpful). Their use is, therefore, generally only considered where significant "depth" is required, or where virtually nothing is known about the subject area (or a different perspective of a known subject area is required). [p. 291]

Open-ended or even semi-structured interviews, which attempt to capture an experience, take much longer than simple questionnaires. Much depends upon the interviewee and the context. In the case of Ethiopian female migrants whom I interviewed in Israel, most interviews took several hours—one took nine hours—and had to be preceded by a ritualized coffee ceremony in which the interviewee gains the confidence of the interviewer (Weil 2016b:12).

Not all qualitative research into femicide is, or has to be, by means of interviewing. Forming a focus group may take months. Media data, the analysis of criminal records, and numerous other techniques are also legitimate qualitative tools, but gaining access to archives or police records can also take weeks.

Ethical Liabilities

For both the qualitative and the quantitative researcher, it is essential to receive ethics approval from universities or ethics committees from the relevant professional associations in order to conduct a femicide study. While content analyses of news releases of femicide cases may not involve extra ethical considerations, interviewing "failed femicide" survivors or kin, including orphans or people who might have been present at the time of the murder, requires special skills and involves special ethical considerations. Particularly if the interviewer is male, and the interviewee is a close friend or relative of the victim, or a survivor of an intimate partner homicide attempt, the interview situation itself may involve transference issues. It also may be the first time that the interviewee has reenacted the lethal killing and it may represent for the victim a cathartic experience.

Even good interviewers may be ill-equipped with the knowledge of how to handle situations in which the interviewees may cry, shout, or express deep emotions. McNamara (2008:202) was more suited than some other researchers to elicit qualitative data, since she is an experienced social worker and psychotherapist. However, researchers have to be aware that participants in a study on intimate partner femicide may be emotionally fragile and that an interview or involvement in a focus group may potentially place a participant at mental health risk.

Non-Generalizability

The sociological sample in qualitative research into femicide is necessarily small, both because it may be difficult to identify the object of study and because the cases are rare. In my own study of migrant women from Ethiopia in Israel, only three women were included in my sample. Clearly, one cannot generalize from three cases to larger populations, either of migrant women or of Ethiopian women. Nevertheless, as I showed (Weil 2016b), the three cases were independently very similar and the narratives the women told in open interviews, that often took many hours, were remarkably similar. Therefore, the issue is more of whether one can generalize from a small or minute sample to a population based on inferences. This follows Ercikan and Roth's (2006:22) statement with respect to qualitative studies in education: "generalization is not a feature of mathematization but a descriptor for the tendency of inferences to go beyond the context and participants involved in the research."

Advantages of Qualitative Research on Femicide

In the past 30 years or so, both the quality of qualitative research and its legitimation have improved,[1] such that it is timely to record here the advantages of the qualitative study of femicide.

Capturing the Context

Recording narratives by survivors, close kin, friends, or even perpetrators of femicide attacks is the most efficient way of capturing the context of a lethal murder. The context may include the location of the homicide and identify a domestic or non-domestic arena. It may include the history of the victim and the perpetrator and pinpoint their relationship. It may relate the months, days, or even hours leading up to the murder. In McNamara's (2008) qualitative descriptive case study of Australian femicides, friends narrated the impact of the murder on their life-world. Their reactions depended upon the relationship of the victim with her assailant, whether children were involved, and whether friends and family were threatened. Surprisingly, both the friends and the victim were from middle-class backgrounds, who, like other femicide victims, lacked the power to protest domestic violence. The study was carried out by one-off focus groups preceded by long telephone interviews (McNamara 2008:202); it revealed insights that no quantitative study could have explored.

[1] The quality of qualitative research debate is huge with thousands of references. It also embraces QHR (Qualitative Health Research) (Calderón Gómez 2009).

Describing the Experience

Femicide narratives thus provide understanding into women's subjective experiences, the ways they understand events, and the episodes they are trying to organize in their heads. Sometimes this is coincidental with a phenomenological approach in which the researcher identifies the essence of human experience about femicide as described by the participant in the study.

Quantitative research cannot capture an experience. An attempted femicide or watching a femicide may be the most traumatic episode in someone's life. Asking a respondent to recount the narrative of the dreadful night or day in an unstructured interview clarifies for the listener and the reader exactly what femicide is and what the victim suffered. It heightens awareness for both the narrator and the narrated.

Recounting it provides the narrator with an identity as a "friend of" or "bystander," but gives the narrated more information than numbers alone can provide. It allows readers, academics, and advocates to understand the event, and perhaps to find solutions or implement guidelines. Describing the experience of femicide, particularly among migrant female survivors, may become an increasingly important tool for policy-makers to understand how femicides occur, how they are perceived by victims, perpetrators and society, and how they can be combated.

Identifying the Motives

Statistics on homicide or even disaggregated data on femicide do not identify the motives for femicide. In order to prevent femicide, it is essential for practitioners to understand the underlying motives of the killing. Some countries blur the data by lumping femicide with homicide, while the motivations for femicides remain unknown. In many cases, the murder is carried out for one reason only: that the victim is female. A substantial percentage of femicides are intimate partner murders, where the victim knew her murderer. In some cases, the femicide is solely misogynist. In a study of 60 wife-killings in Ghana reported in a national daily newspaper, jealousy and suspicion of infidelity overwhelmingly provided the basis for femicides (Adinkrah 2008).

Motivations are never clear-cut. The WHO (2012:2) report on femicide states that the motive for what is branded "honor" killing could be a cover-up for other vices, such as incest, that could only be revealed by a sensitive in-depth interview.

Highlighting the Relationship between Perpetrator and Victim

Quantitative studies often fail to understand the relationship between perpetrators and victims, and specifically intimate partner history. Victims may have turned to the police, social workers, or other authorities complaining of severe domestic violence; they may have been hospitalized in the past as a result of severe beating or attempted strangulation. Perpetrators may have had previous sentences, or a history of substance abuse or alcoholism. Either of them may have been treated for mental disorders. All of these variables, including socio-economic factors, come to the surface in qualitative research, but are rarely investigated once the victim or the perpetrator is simply a statistic.

Identifying the Risk Factors

In the quest for comparability, quantitative data is often standardized, thereby removing any hope of receiving indicators of risk factors. In an attempt to discover the risk factors in intimate partner homicides, Campbell and colleagues (2003) carried out a large survey of 220 victims. They discovered that the major risk factor is prior domestic violence. However, femicides far outweigh homicides in intimate partner homicides and constitute four to five times the rate of male victims. Other important risk factors include alcohol and drug use, the perpetrator's access to a gun or a previous threat with a weapon, the perpetrator's step-child residing in the home, estrangement, especially from a controlling partner, stalking, and more. While this study represents a leap forward in research on femicide, the authors are quick to point out that more information beyond that collected through police homicide files could be achieved by innovative means. The researchers themselves also interviewed a family member or close friend of the victim as a "proxy" informant. More research needs to be carried out to identify patterns which can help prevent the risk of femicide.

Suggesting Apt Policies

The criticism of qualitative research in general gave rise to criteria in order to assess qualitative studies, and a relatively large number of guidelines used to evaluate qualitative research in the social and health sciences. The discrepancies between different guidelines and criteria tended to reinforce the impression that qualitative research

was confusing and "unscientific." However, qualitative studies of femicide can produce greater in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. Once it is demonstrated by qualitative means that orphans left behind after their mothers have been murdered have largely been neglected or "forgotten" by different authorities (Kapardis, Baldry, and Konstantinou [in this issue of QSR]), policies can include support programs for these children, too.

If policy-makers wish to suggest guidelines once they understand the motivations for femicide or what actually happened on the fatal (or near-fatal) night, they can consult qualitative researchers. It is for this reason that a Femicide Watch, promoted by the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime,[2] and a European Observatory on Femicide, promoted by COST Action IS1206 on "Femicide across Europe,"[3] should collect not only quantitative but also qualitative data in the form of case studies or analyzed according to type.

Conclusion

This article clearly demonstrates that qualitative research can provide insights into femicide, not readily available by quantitative studies. However, qualitative studies have limitations and that is why many methodologists add information culled from other qualitative techniques or champion the "mixed-methods" studies or a holistic approach to a phenomenon. In a brief 2015 article, the methodologist Gobo argued that the next challenge is to move from mixed to a fully "merged methods."

In femicide studies, some qualitative studies do not yield sufficient information in order to write up policy guidelines. That is why researchers (e.g., Sheehan et al. 2015), upon the completion of interviews, supplement the collected data with other sources of data, such as media releases or affidavits by policy officials. When one cannot generalize from qualitative data, researchers may also seek the statistical context in order to document trends.

The choice of qualitative or quantitative methods is often dictated by the research question. One type of research is not always conducted at the expense of another, and a holistic-, mixed-, or merged-methods approach can often be the ideal. As in the collected volume edited by Ercikan and Roth (2009), we must get beyond the qualitative and quantitative polarization. This in turn may have its challenges in that the use of multiple methods may be both expensive and take extra time because of the need to collect and analyze different types of data. To date, femicide studies have not received high priority as funding goals.

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[2] See: http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/press/releases/2016/November/systematic-collection-and-documentation-of-killing-of-women-and-girls-needed-to-combat-femicide--say-participants-of-symposium-in-vienna.html. Retrieved June 24, 2017.

[3] See: press release: www.femicide.net. Retrieved June 24, 2017.

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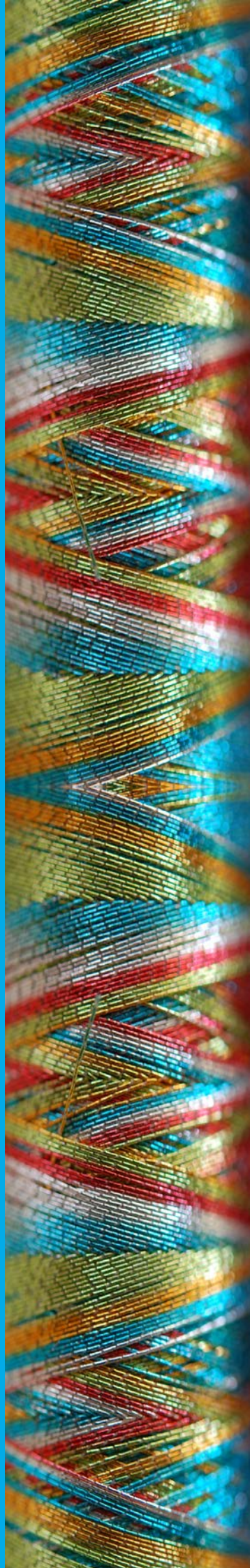
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