

The Language of Violence: Gender-Based Murder and the Patriarchal State

A Feminist Case Study of Femicide in Chile from 2010-2017



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Research Puzzle and Research Questions

What explains institutional responses to gender-based violence?

How have state institutions responded to femicide in Chile, and what are the implications of these responses on reducing levels of femicide?



Significance: Theoretical and Practical

Theoretical: gap in knowledge in literature

- Approaches to femicide:
 - Human rights
 - Feminist
 - Decolonial
 - Criminological
 - Sociological
- Language
 - Discourse
 - Framing

Practical: implications for policies and programs

- Domestic law and policy
- International institutions
- Social movement campaigns

**10 FEMICIDIOS
DURANTE EL AÑO 2018
NO + FEMICIDIO**

Argument: The Language of Violence

- Continuum of gender-based violence normalizes femicide
 - Underlying structural and cultural violence
- Language matters: relationship between power and discourse
- Complex process of norm localization
 - Dissonance between state and civil society frames of women's human rights norms

Research Design: Case Study and Methods

Single-case study: Chile

- Unique case
- Data rich
- Sheds light on new variables



Methods:

Part 1: (Qualitative – State)

- Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) of legal documents

Part 2: (Qualitative – Civil Society)

- 15 semi-structured interviews

Part 3: (Quantitative)

- Database comparison: Public Ministry, National Ministry of Women (SERNAM), Red Chilena Contra la Violencia Hacia las Mujeres



Findings: The Language of Femicide in the Chilean State

“... as a country we cannot continue accepting that mothers, wives, lovers, and cohabitants die at the hands of their partners for whatever reason... a man who murders the mother of his children, the woman to whom he promised love and companionship for the rest of his days, brings society to ask ourselves what we are facing and where we are today.”
(Law 20.480 Congressional Hearing, 2007)

Findings: Counterdiscourses in Civil Society



Gender and Power

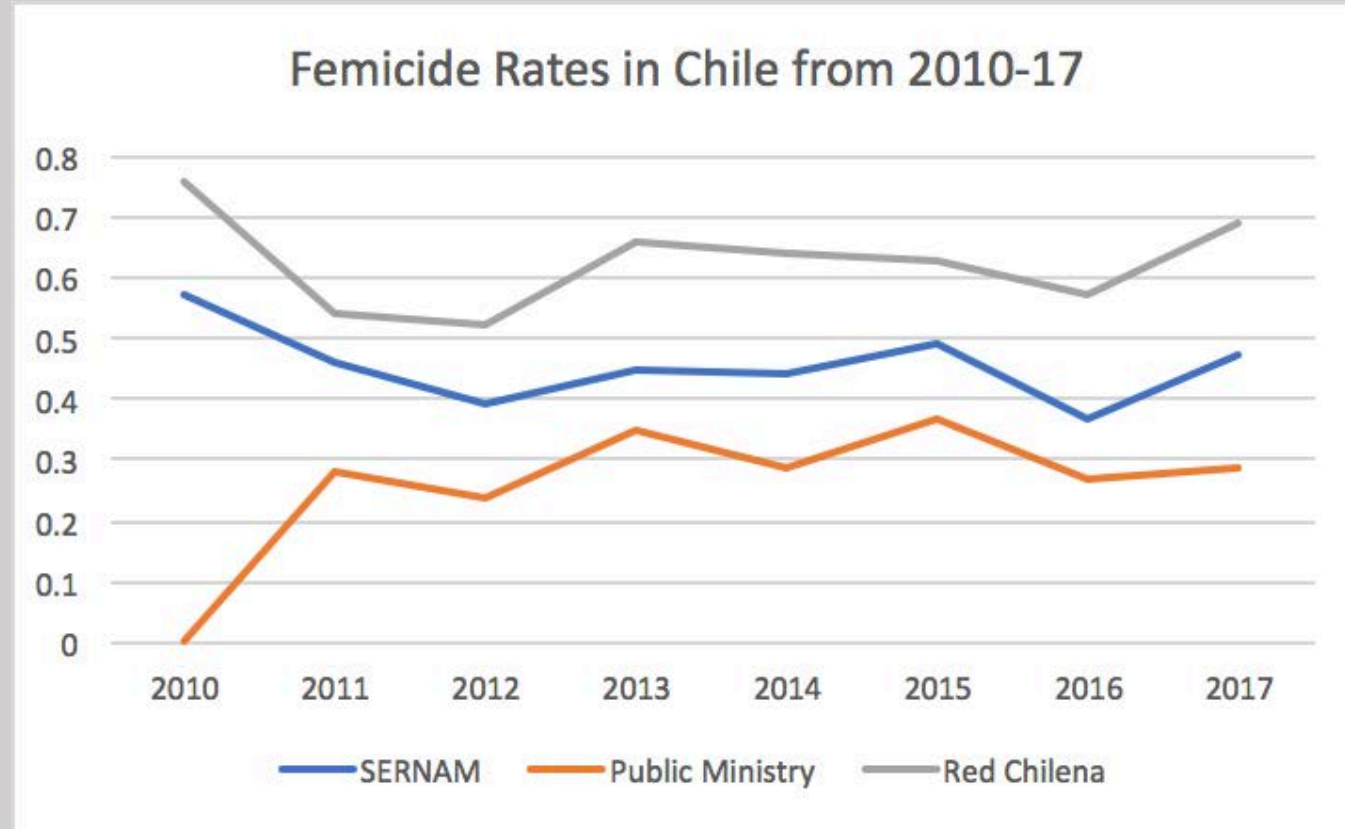


Structural and Cultural



Framing: Continuum of Gender-Based Violence

Findings: Rates of Femicide in Chile from 2010-17



Source: Data from SERNAM is publicly available at <http://www.ine.cl/estadisticas/menu-sociales/genero>. Data from the Public Ministry is my own calculation using raw data requested through the Law of Transparency. Data from the Red Chilena is my own calculation based on raw data publicly available at <http://www.nomasviolenciacontramujeres.cl/registro-de-femicidios/>.

*Rates shown per 100,000 women

**Comprehensive data not provided by the Public Ministry for 2010 in Law of Transparency request.

Conclusions

The Language of Gender-Based Violence

1. Language reproduces power – institutionalized patriarchy
2. Context and language shape adoption of women's human rights norms – multiple processes of localization
3. Structural and cultural change is needed to break the cycle of violence that culminates in femicide



Implications and Future Research

- **Theoretical implications:** language and context matters, challenges for human rights framework, comparative analysis is difficult
- **Practical implications:** targeted policy reform, communication between state and civil society
- **Future research:** realms of discourse, comparative studies