


## Chapter 8

# Analysis of the Increase in Femicide Following Its Classification as a Crime in the Digital World

Arturo Luque González

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7447-7560>

*Universidad Tecnica de Manabí, Ecuador & Universidad del Rosario, Colombia*

### ABSTRACT

*Femicide, or feminicide as it is known in some Latin American jurisdictions, is the murder of a woman because of her gender. National and international regulations agree that this constitutes a hate crime, rather one of habitual violence since femicide is motivated by more complex factors than those of mere physical assault. Violence has become a social problem that has changed the dynamics of the family and associated elements, leading to implications in the psychological, personal, and social spheres, among others. With this perspective, the study carried out a normative analysis of the current situation in Ecuador following the separate classification of the crime of femicide in the General Organic Penal Code (GOPC). The research drew heavily on interviews with active members of Ecuadorian legal institutions in order to build a taxonomy of inconsistencies that determine the reasons for the increase in these murders after the change to the law, at the same time as the stiffening of the state's resolve to prevent them.*

### INTRODUCTION

The authors Russell and Radford (1992) use the term femicide to refer to the murder of women by men motivated by misogyny. As Heise (1989, p. 3) states, “This is not casual intimidation, the risk factor is being a woman.” Victims are chosen for their gender; the message is one of domination. Violence is the product of a structural system of oppression in which women have been positioned below men on the scale of value in a clear masculine hegemony of male virility. Aggressors feel entitled to have control over women's lives and the resulting deaths, classified as femicide, represent the most extreme form of gender

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-7998-9187-1.ch008

### ***Analysis of the Increase in Femicide Following Its Classification as a Crime in the Digital World***

terrorism (Sagot, 1994). Femicide implies a feeling of direct hatred against women and manifests itself in response to a perceived threat to two fundamental laws of masculinity and patriarchy, the first being the norm of control and possession of the female body, and the second being male superiority (Segato, 2006). It is clear that such deaths are not the result of opportunistic homicide or a sporadic encounter between the victim and her killer, it usually comes from a need to erase the identity of women in an act of manifest hatred evidenced by the viciousness and cruelty with which the victims die. These crimes occur in all societies and have occurred throughout history (Carcedo, 2006).

Deaths arising from gender-based violence are preventable since they are largely foreseeable rather than spontaneous. Victims have typically been subjected to a number of previous threats or aggressions and, when such murders are investigated, it is no surprise to find multiple allegations of mistreatment, female subjugation, discrimination and violence in the offender's record. Furthermore, women who have been beaten by their partners, or others, have often been failed by the social phenomenon of "blaming the victim" for what has happened to them (Bunch and Carrillo, 1995), which contributes to masking the extent of the problem. Consequently, the exact scale of the figures of women who are mistreated cannot be known, leading to inadequate action and resources being directed to deal with the issue and stop it effectively (Carcedo and Ordoñez, 2010). In Latin America, the term femicide or feminicide—as it is known in countries such as Mexico, Colombia, Peru, Bolivia and Venezuela—emerged in the 1990s and was used to describe the murder of girls and women in the city of Juarez, Chihuahua state, on Mexico's northern border, the victims of which were found with signs of violence and sexual abuse (Lagarde, 1999). In these murders, two messages were implicitly communicated by the men who committed them. There was a vertical expression of their power over women; and then a horizontal expression from the murderer to other men as a demonstration of their control of certain territories and their freedom to act with impunity and to murder again at will. The slogan, well known in Latin America, "woman's body; danger of death," might have been coined for Ciudad Juarez (Segato, 2004). The increase in murders of women in the city was attributed by the authorities to social behavior or serial killers and there was opposition to defending the rights of women, who were, if anything, blamed for the crimes, being characterized as prostitutes, women in miniskirts, of easy virtue, fun-loving, et cetera. The response received by relatives of the victims was one of indifference or even hostility (Snaidas, 2009). After the emergence of the concept of femicide in Mexico, Guatemala was the next to focus attention on the phenomenon, having the second highest figures of violence and murder against women according to the National Civil Police of Guatemala (Carcedo, 2006). The characterization of women as the guilty party is precisely the inverse of the reality of the situation and guilt becomes a legitimizing argument for the conduct of men (Aguilar, 2006; Hagemann-White, Kelly and Rumkens, 2010).

According to the latest data from the United Nations organization, ECLAC, the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, a total of 1,998 women were victims of femicide in 2016, based on the figures for 14 Latin American and 3 Caribbean countries. Table 1, Femicide, shows the alarming nature of the figures for femicide in Latin America. According to UN Women (2017), 14 of the 25 countries in the world with the highest numbers of femicides are in Latin America and the Caribbean, and at least 1 in 3 women over the age of 15 has experienced sexual violence; this constitutes an epidemic according to World Health Organization (WHO) criteria.

In the last decade, the number of women killed has grown to be a dominant trend in Latin America: the consequence of the inadequate response of a penal system to murder motivated by hate, contempt and the problems of power relations between men and women (Garita, 2014). According to Mills (1966, p. 59), to understand the concept of power and its associations, it should be noted that "Authority (power

20 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:  
[www.igi-global.com/chapter/analysis-of-the-increase-in-femicide-following-its-classification-as-a-crime-in-the-digital-world/296084](http://www.igi-global.com/chapter/analysis-of-the-increase-in-femicide-following-its-classification-as-a-crime-in-the-digital-world/296084)

## Related Content

---

### The Science of Cell Phone Use: Its Past, Present, and Future

Zheng Yan, Quan Chen and Chengfu Yu (2013). *International Journal of Cyber Behavior, Psychology and Learning* (pp. 7-18).

[www.irma-international.org/article/science-cell-phone-use/76273](http://www.irma-international.org/article/science-cell-phone-use/76273)

### Cyber Behaviors of Immigrants

Wenli Chen and Wenting Xie (2012). *Encyclopedia of Cyber Behavior* (pp. 259-272).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/cyber-behaviors-immigrants/64759](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/cyber-behaviors-immigrants/64759)

### Empowering Students in the Digital Age Through Psychoeducational Programs

Eirini Karakasidou, Athanasios Tapeinos, Maria Christina Pyloti and Anna Papadimitriou (2025). *Students' Online Risk Behaviors: Psychoeducational Predictors, Outcomes, and Prevention* (pp. 293-318).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/empowering-students-in-the-digital-age-through-psychoeducational-programs/369807](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/empowering-students-in-the-digital-age-through-psychoeducational-programs/369807)

### Will the "Phisher-Men" Reel You In?: Assessing Individual Differences in a Phishing Detection Task

Allaire K. Welk, Kyung Wha Hong, Olga A. Zielinska, Rucha Tembe, Emerson Murphy-Hill and Christopher B. Mayhorn (2015). *International Journal of Cyber Behavior, Psychology and Learning* (pp. 1-17).

[www.irma-international.org/article/will-the-phisher-men-reel-you-in/145790](http://www.irma-international.org/article/will-the-phisher-men-reel-you-in/145790)

### After Auction's Complete: What Will Buyers Do Next? – A Case Study of Feedback Rating at eBay

Lei Chen, Min Lu and Yanbin Tu (2019). *Multigenerational Online Behavior and Media Use: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications* (pp. 819-836).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/after-auctions-complete/220978](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/after-auctions-complete/220978)