Distribution Agreement

In presenting this thesis or dissertation as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for an advanced degree from Emory University, I hereby grant to Emory University and its agents the non-exclusive license to archive, make accessible, and display my thesis or dissertation in whole or in part in all forms of media, now or hereafter known, including display on the world-wide web. I understand that I may select some access restrictions as part of the online submission of this thesis or dissertation. I retain all ownership rights to the copyright of the thesis or dissertation. I also retain the right to use in future works (such as articles or books) all or part of this thesis or dissertation.

Signature:

_____ Date:

Eleanor Fahs

Understanding Femicide from the Perpetrators' Perspective: narratives around gender, violence, and identity in Buenos Aires

By

Ellie Fahs

Master of Public Health

Behavioral, Social, and Health Education Sciences

_____

Dabney P. Evans PhD MPH

Committee Chair

_____

Martín Hernán Di Marco MsC

Committee Chair

_____

Colleen McBride PhD

Department Chair

Understanding Femicide from the Perpetrators' Perspective: Narratives around Gender, Violence and Identity in Buenos Aires

By

Ellie Fahs

Bachelor of Science in Public Health

The Ohio State University

2016

Thesis Committee Chair: Dabney P. Evans, PhD, MPH

An abstract of

a thesis submitted to the Faculty of the

Rollins School of Public Health of Emory University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Public Health

in Behavioral, Social, and Health Education Sciences

2021

Abstract

Femicide has received growing attention as an important social issue in Argentina and other Latin American countries. Currently, most of the sociological, psychological, criminological, and public health research available on the topic focuses on victims rather than perpetrators; research on femicide perpetrators has tended to be quantitative or from an etic perspective. Understanding the narratives around violence and gender that perpetrators use to contextualize, justify, or legitimize their crimes is crucial in preventing future femicides. Narrative interviews were conducted in three correctional facilities in Buenos Aires, Argentina with thirteen men convicted of femicide. Interviews were coded in MAXQDA20 and analyzed thematically using deductive and inductive codes with an eye towards identity, gender, and violence. Our analysis found that risk factors were mechanized into actual IPV behaviors based on how the perpetrator related to the situation in the context of their own masculinity. Threat of abandonment and necessity to physically communicate emotional turmoil both emerged as themes where adherence to traditional gender norms were mechanized into violence. Few participants characterized themselves as violent people though they were all serving sentences for violent crimes. Violence was normalized and frequently justified by most perpetrators. In some cases, participants explicitly said that they did not have an option other than violence. Participants viewed themselves exceptionally and did not view themselves as belonging to the category of people who commit femicides. Our analysis offers recommendations for primary violence prevention and gender-based violence interventions to center young men and potential perpetrators of IPV and femicide. In doing this, the burden of violence prevention shifts from victims to perpetrators and society at large.

Understanding Femicide from the Perpetrators' Perspective: Narratives around Gender, Violence and Identity in Buenos Aires

By

Ellie Fahs

Bachelor of Science in Public Health

The Ohio State University

2016

Thesis Committee Chair: Dabney P. Evans, PhD, MPH

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of the

Rollins School of Public Health of Emory University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Public Health

in Behavioral, Social, and Health Education Sciences

2021

Acknowledgements

A number of people were instrumental in the conception and execution of this analysis. First of all, thank you to the participants who trusted the research team with their stories and to the correctional facilities where they live for allowing interviews to be conducted there. Thank you to the approval boards in Argentina and to Emory IRB for their distinction to use this data. This analysis was conducted under the guidance of Dr. Dabney P. Evans and Dr. Martin DiMarco. I am extremely grateful to both of them for their guidance, support and perspective in conducting this analysis. I appreciate how Dr. Evans and Dr. DiMarco supplemented the thesis writing process with other opportunities including conference presentations and the publication of an OpEd. I am especially appreciative for how my thesis committee navigated this process in such an unprecedented year.

I'd also like to thank the BSHES department at Rollins School of Public Health for building the skills needed to conduct this analysis. Specifically, I'd like to thank Dr. Sydney Spangler for promoting the practice of cultural humility and reflexivity in qualitative research.

Lastly, thank you to my friends and family who supported me throughout this process and were willing to have productive conversations around narratives we carry around gender, identity and violence.

Table of contents

Glossary

Domestic violence: "the willful intimidation, physical assault, battery, sexual assault, and/or other abusive behavior as part of a systematic pattern of power and control perpetrated by one [domestic] partner against another. It includes physical violence, sexual violence, psychological violence, and emotional abuse."-National Institute of Corrections (*DV/IPV*, 2018).

Femicide: gender-based killing of a woman because of their gender (*Femicide in Argentina | The Borgen Project | Women's Rights*, 2019).

Feminicide: another term for femicide. The gender-based killing of a woman because of their gender (*Femicide in Argentina | The Borgen Project | Women's Rights*, 2019).

Gender-based violence: any act of violence that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women (*Gender Based Violence | UNECE*, n.d.).

Intimate partner violence: physical, sexual, or psychological violence by a current or former partner or spouse (*Intimate Partner Violence |Violence Prevention|Injury Center|CDC*, 2020).

Uxoricide: the killing of a wife by her husband (*Definition of UXORICIDE*, n.d.).

Violence against women: "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or s likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life" (*Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women | UN*, 1993)

Acronym List

DV- Domestic violence

GBV – Gender-based violence

IPH – intimate partner homicide

IPV – Intimate partner violence

VAW – Violence against women

Chapter 1: Introduction

The issue being investigated in this thesis report and manuscript is intimate femicide in Argentina. Femicide is the intentional killing of a woman or girl at least in part motivated by her female status (*WHO_RHR_12.38_eng.Pdf*, n.d.); intimate femicide is an extreme form of intimate partner violence (IPV). The manuscript presented in Chapter 4 is secondary analysis of qualitative data collected from interviews with men who have been convicted of femicide in Argentina. The parent study sought to collect life-course narratives from femicide perpetrators (Rosenthal, 2006). Narrative interviews were conducted in Federal and Municipal Penitentiary facilities in Buenos Aires (Di Marco & Evans, 2020). The parent study was published in the Journal of Feminist Criminology in 2020.

The purpose of this analysis was to identify risk factors and gendered narratives that enable femicide and gender-based violence (GBV) to occur among male perpetrators of intimate femicide in Buenos Aires, Argentina. In analyzing the data from a public health and human rights perspective, we provide recommendations to inform upstream violence prevention strategies targeting potential perpetrators of IPV and femicide.

Femicide has received growing attention as an important social issue in Argentina and other Latin American countries. Currently, most of the sociological, psychological, criminological, and public health research available on the topic focuses on victims rather than perpetrators; research on femicide perpetrators has tended to be quantitative or from an etic perspective. Understanding the narratives around violence and gender that perpetrators use to contextualize, justify, or legitimize their crimes is crucial in preventing future femicides. This analysis will focus specifically on femicide in the Argentinian context as all participants in the sample are Argentinian and committed femicide in the greater Buenos Aires area. Buenos Aires has the highest rate of femicide in the region (La Casa del Encuentro, 2018). Though Argentina is a high-income country with a GDP of about $450 billion dollars, the rate of urban poverty is 35.5% and poverty among children is 52.3%. Additionally, the Argentinian economy has been unstable since 2018 (World Bank, n.d.). This information is relevant as financial dependency, employment status, and poverty status are all risk factors for IPV (CDC, 2020). In 2018, Argentina recorded the third highest number of registered femicides in Latin America. Between the years of 2007 and 2017, there were 2,638 recorded femicides in Argentina (Matienzo, n.d.). Hauntingly, the vast majority of the perpetrators were close to the victim either as an intimate partners or family member. A study conducted on femicides in 2017 found the most common way that perpetrators killed their partners was by stabbing though that only represented 29% of the femicides. The other manners in which these women were killed varied greatly and included firearms, strangulation, beating, burns, and other causes (*En Los Últimos Once Meses Hubo 254 Femicidios En La Argentina*, 2017).

IPV and femicide have large implications on personal, interpersonal, and societal health. Therefore, it is important to study factors surrounding femicide from a public health perspective to account for the intersectional risk factors at play at all levels of the socio-ecological model. Public health research approaches explore the upstream risk and protective factors of violence in addition to potential downstream health effects (*WHO_RHR_12.38_eng.Pdf*, n.d.). Therefore, understanding femicide from a public health perspective recognizes the environmental and behavioral determinants that enabled a femicide to occur and how rates of femicide can be a determinant of violence in families, communities, and societies.

Furthermore, femicide should be viewed as a public health and human rights issue to take the focus away from the individual contexts which often lends itself to victim blaming or painting the perpetrator as an irrational out of control monster. Studying femicide from a public health and human rights perspective takes it out of a private "one off" context and turns it into a public issue that the public and lawmakers can be aware of. Better understanding IPV morbidity and femicide mortality can help public health officials understand the epidemiology of IPV. In this context, morbidity is measured by physical injuries sustained from violent events with well documented mental health comorbidities including depression, substance abuse, and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Kilpatrick et al., 2003). Femicide is a measure of mortality – deaths that occur as a result of IPV.

Research on femicide, IPV and GBV should be approached from a human rights perspective in addition to a public health perspective. Human rights frameworks are too often seen as purely legal frameworks instead of intervention based approaches (Choudhry & Herring, 2006). Violence against women is a violation of human rights and has a symbiotic relationship with gender inequity (*Gender Based Violence | UNECE*, n.d.). One of the most widely signed, ratified and accepted works of human rights legislation is the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). CEDAW Recommendation No. 19 named violence against women as a form of gender-based discrimination. The Office of the High Commissioner characterized its impact by saying, "[No. 19] unequivocally brought violence outside of the private sphere and into the realm of human rights," (*OHCHR | Launch of CEDAW General Recommendation No. 35*, n.d.). In 2017, CEDAW Recommendation No. 35 expanded Recommendation No. 19 to include a variety of social and cultural factors that contribute to violence against women. This is particularly relevant as human rights activists frequently cite the machismo culture in Argentina as a factor that perpetuates violence against women and femicide. A grassroots feminist movement called Ni Una Menos (Not One Woman Less) started in Argentina in 2015 and has since spread across Latin America. Ni Una Menos runs various marches, campaigns, and assemblies to bring awareness and advocacy to this issue. Though Ni Una Menos started in Argentina, it has spread through much of Latin America and has gained global attention. In 2016, they organized the first ever Women's Strike in protest of the murder of 16-year-old Lucia Perez. The core focus of Ni Una Menos is ending violence against women but expanded their focus to include abortion access as, until December 30th 2020, abortion was illegal in Argentina.(*Argentina's Ni Una Menos Turns Focus to Economic Crisis, Abortion*, n.d.; Politi & Londoño, 2020). Sexual and reproductive health rights are relevant to the issue of GBV as unplanned pregnancy is a risk factor for IPV (CDC, 2020). Ni Una Menos has been recognized by UN Special Rapporteurs on violence against women as a driving movement in turning GBV from a private matter to a public one (*Argentina, with Its "Machismo Culture", Fails in Its Protection of Women and Girls*, n.d.).

Ni Una Menos mirrors characteristics of other successful human rights movements. The issue being addressed (femicide) is associated with a deeply rooted history of discrimination based on demographic (gender) with a history of systematic impunity for perpetrators (Cabrera, 2010). The movement itself relies on multiple points of leverage, broad-based alliances, advocacy, research, and leadership by those most affected (*Jo Becker*, n.d.; *Ni Una Menos*, n.d.).

The body of research on femicide is small when compared to the amount of research on GBV and IPV; the literature on femicide perpetration is particularly scarce. There are many methodological considerations when conducting research related to violence. The majority of the

data, statistics and research on femicide is quantitative in nature. Ethical considerations are paramount when designing qualitative studies on GBV, IPV and femicide. It is impossible to interview victims of femicide but it is possible to interview victims of attempted femicide and perpetrators of femicide. However, there are many ethical considerations when conducting research with either population. Specific to perpetrators, there are heightened ethical considerations when working with incarcerated populations (Medicine et al., 2007). The parent study of this analysis complied with necessary guidelines and obtained written and verbal consent before enrolling participants in the study. Therefore, the qualitative data set analyzed in this study gives us the unique opportunity to explore narratives related to identity in the context femicide perpetration.

Previous research on femicide, feminicide, and uxoricide find that it is an incontrovertibly gendered phenomena that appears in many cultures, countries and societies (Stöckl et al., 2013). Though risk and predictive factors for violence perpetration exist, there is a gap in exploring how perpetrators of violence relate to those factors in the context of their gender identity. While anti-femicide movements, such as Ni Una Menos and non-governmental responses such as that of ProMundo are well-established, fast-growing and gaining international attention, the body of academic research about femicide in the Argentine context is still relatively small ("Manhood 2.0," n.d.; *Ni Una Menos*, n.d.). There is a gap in the understanding of how sociological phenomena (such as machismo culture) is mechanized into femicide though the correlation is apparent (Messerschmidt, 2017).

Much of the current research and IPV prevention focuses on early identification of the victim. When responding to femicide, this remains true. In doing so, the burden of responsibility falls on the victim to avoid being abused or "letting" the abuse escalate (Krug et al., 2002). Primary prevention of IPV, preventing violence from occurring in the first place, is a less interruptive intervention than secondary prevention of IPV. Secondary prevention of IPV involves the victim removing themselves from the relationship or situation which often puts the victim at higher risk for physical abuse, social vulnerability, and economic vulnerability (Campbell et al., 2003; *WHO_RHR_12.38_eng.Pdf*, n.d.). This project seeks to contribute to the research and advocate for primary violence prevention targeting perpetrators and potential perpetrators. In doing so, we seek to shift the burden of responsibility in violence prevention from the victims to potential perpetrators.

This is a particularly significant time to address the topic of femicide as violence against women has been deemed a shadow pandemic of COVID-19 (*The Shadow Pandemic*, n.d.). Domestic violence has increased globally due to an increase in the frequency and intensity of risk factors for experiencing and perpetrating violence. Economic stress, stay at home orders, isolation with abusers, movement restrictions and lack of social accountability all contribute to environments where violence is more likely to occur (*The Shadow Pandemic*, n.d.). Femicides in Argentina are increasing dramatically during lockdowns related to COVID-19. Since 2016, the average number of femicides per year has been 312.5 (Statista, 2019). During a two-month period in 2020, more than 50 femicides occurred (Reuters, 2020). In this time in history, it is crucial to study the systematic violence that societies and cultures have enabled and stand up in the face of murders of innocent people no matter who they are perpetrated by.

The results of this analysis bolster findings from studies that explore violence in the social cognitive theoretical framework. Social cognitive theory explores behavior as a product of

personal factors, behavioral processes, and environmental context (Bandura, 2001). Relevant constructs within personal processes include social comparison, values, outcome expectations and attributions. Behavioral processes include the notion of choice and behavioral patterns. Most salient to this study is the environmental component where constructs include social models (including gender norms), societal feedback, standards, and rewards (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). The interplay between personal, behavioral, and environmental determinants can be explored at all levels of the social ecological model when exploring perpetration of GBV.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

As stated previously, femicide is broadly defined as the murder of a woman motivated at least in part because of gender (*WHO_RHR_12.38_eng.Pdf*, n.d.). Femicide is a difficult topic to study methodologically as every country defines, investigates, and prosecutes femicide differently. There is no uniformity in the term or translation of the term in this research topic. Some countries use the terms femicide or feminicide while others use the phrase uxoricide which encompasses the killing of wives specifically and is often used in research on honor killings (Stöckl et al., 2013). Additionally, as with other forms of domestic violence, femicide is under reported, under investigated, and under prosecuted (Fernández, n.d.-a). The majority of the data, statistics and research on femicide are quantitative in nature. This is a convenient and responsible way to conduct research on femicide as being included in a quantitative sample is often less traumatic for the victim or perpetrator of femicide. Additionally, forensic evidence, court records, and other sources can be used to triangulate data. It is particularly difficult to study femicide using qualitative research methods and analysis. As femicide culminates in the murder of the woman, it is impossible to collect qualitative information from victims. Qualitative data may be collected from victims of attempted femicide or family members but there are major ethical considerations to conducting responsible research. Similarly researchers conducting qualitative research with perpetrators of femicide must consider the ethics of gathering data from incarcerated people as well as persons known to be violent who are not incarcerated (Medicine et al., 2007).

The history of the relationship between masculinity and domestic violence in Latin America draws upon narratives around colonization and power dynamics in society that were mirrored at home. Disempowerment and subordination of people of colonized nations contributed to hypermasculine expression in personal and private spaces (Viveros-Vigoya, 2016). Femicide is incontrovertibly a gendered phenomenon (Spencer & Stith, 2020). Though many civil and social rights organizations address masculinity and machismo culture as a driving enabling component of violence against women, there is little research into how masculinity is mechanized in committing femicide (*Ni Una Menos*, n.d.). As a femicide in defined as having a gender-based motive, it can be categorized as a socially determined murder. Therefore, there is a need to study and address the social conditions that enable and perpetuate GBV. The language in publications on femicide uses phrases like sex terrorism, extreme expressions of patriarchal force, and hegemonic masculinity (Fernández, n.d.-b; Messerschmidt, 2017). The research that does exist on masculine typologies come from radical and socialist feminism but fails to account for the role of life-course narratives (Messerschmidt, 2017).

Hypermasculinity and machismo ideology create an ecosystem where violence is normalized. Patricia Cabrera argues that machismo creates a definition for “natural male behavior” in which it is their right to abuse women psychologically, physically or sexually. Notably, the abuse and violence can be manifestation of harmful pressures of masculinity such as the suppression of emotion and denial of sensitivity (Cabrera, 2010). GBV has been explored as a tool in maintaining the balance of power in private and public settings. Studies on GBV found that violence is often seen as a means of maintaining a “moral economy” and that there is a practical and cultural value in exercising that in private and public settings (Karandinos et al., 2014). Seeing the propensity to escalate into violence when one’s masculinity or position is threatened contributes to victim blaming narratives and maintains a moral impunity of perpetrators of GBV (Karandinos et al., 2014).

Many studies on femicide in Argentina break up the crime into three main sub-categories. These categories include intimate femicides, non-intimate femicides and linked femicides. Intimate femicides are femicides perpetrated against a woman who was or previously had been intimate with their perpetrator either in the form of a romantic relationship, a sexual relationship, or familial relationship. Non-intimate femicides relate to femicides who were perpetrated by men who do not fall into those categories. Linked femicides refer to a crime where the woman "got in the firing line" of another act or to invoke violence upon a woman or girl to illustrate control over a broader situation (Cabrera, 2010).

In the fields of public health and human rights there is ample research on IPV -- which is a risk factors for femicide. However, femicide itself remains under-researched in both fields. Studying violence, and femicide in particular, from a public health perspective is appropriate as it accounts for the intersectionality of sectors in prevention and response at all levels of the socio-ecologic model (Krug et al., 2002). A human rights approach to GBV is appropriate as there are mechanisms, governing bodies, and declarations dedicated to implementing the political, economic, education rights, and health rights of women; although widely adopted these rights are still under-enforced (*Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, n.d.). Citing "significant short-comings" in the Argentinian Penal Code in 2015, the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women called attention to harmful patriarchal narratives playing out in public institutions tasked to protect and enforce the rights that women have to safety in addition to outdated definitions on gender-based violence, rape, and femicide (*Argentina, with Its "Machismo Culture", Fails in Its Protection of Women and Girls*, n.d.).

Between 2007-2017, there were 2,638 recorded femicides in Argentina and in 2018, Argentina recorded the third highest number of registered femicides in Latin America (*Number of Femicide Victims in Argentina 2019*, n.d.). The vast majority of the perpetrators were close to the victim either as an intimate partner or family member (Matienzo, n.d.). The manners in which these women were killed varied greatly and included firearms, strangulation, beating, burns, and other causes. Stabbing was the means of death for nearly a third (29%) of victims (*En Los Últimos Once Meses Hubo 254 Femicidios En La Argentina*, 2017). Prior to 2009, the impunity enjoyed by perpetrators of femicide and violence against women sent the message, "impunity favors the increase and reproduction of femicides," (Fernández, n.d.-a). Although a series of laws to prevent and prosecute violence against women were enacted in 2009, unpunished murders of women remain high and caught the attention of human rights organizations (*World Report 2019*, 2018, p. 20). Femicide was added to the Argentinian Penal Code in 2012. Retroactive investigation of suicides that occurred before legal reform found that many female deaths that had been documented as suicides were in truth femicides.(Fernández, n.d.-a) This is a wildly troubling notion as it communicates a standard of impunity for perpetrators of femicide.

The law includes femicide as a type of aggravated homicide. Notably, if a perpetrator has a history of violence, a conviction of femicide excludes them from being eligible for mitigating sentencing (Rodriguez-Ferrand, 2012). Though legislative acknowledgment is progress, Argentine lawmaker Gabriela Alegre says it is not enough. In an interview to BBC, she said, "the current situation shows that legislation and prison sentences are not enough. We have to confront the problem by changing the culture and educating people" (*Cómo Los Hombres Perpetúan La Violencia de Género y Qué Deberían Hacer Para Cambiarla*, 2016).

An instrument the Argentinian government implemented to address these violations was the National Registry on Femicide. The National Registry of Femicides serves to document the scope of femicide more accurately and serve as an accountability mechanism for prosecuting femicide. The registry collects data of all homicides of women by men in the entire country. The data collected and published by the National Registry of Femicides found that in the first 60 days of 2020, 63 women were killed by men.(*Buenos Aires Times | Femicide in Argentina Every 23 Hours in First Two Months of 2019*, n.d.)

Risk factors for violence perpetration can occur at the individual, interpersonal, community and societal levels. At the individual level, psychological factors including low self-esteem, aggressiveness, anger, substance abuse, belief in strict gender norms, hostility towards women and attitudes accepting violence are associated with violence perpetration. Additionally, past experiences of violence, a history of delinquent behavior, low income, low education, and unemployment increase the likelihood of violence perpetration (CDC, 2020). In approaching violence from a public health and human rights perspective, it is important to note that unplanned pregnancy is a risk factor for experiencing violence as a perpetrator and as a victim (Ni Una Menos, n.d.; CDC, 2020). At the interpersonal level, marital conflicts, economic stress, unequal power in the relationship, and witnessing IPV are risk factors for violence occurring in a relationship (CDC, 2020). Community factors associated with poverty, low social capital, low social cohesion, and few community sanctions against violence increase the likelihood of violence occurring. At the societal level, cultural norms that support aggression, traditional gender norms, societal inequality, and weak laws surrounding violence enable environments where violence can occur (CDC, 2020) Ni Una Menos and human rights mechanisms have identified machismo culture and under-enforcement of the law as crucial components to address in stopping GBV in Argentina (*Argentina, with Its "Machismo Culture", Fails in Its Protection of Women and Girls*, n.d.; *Ni Una Menos*, n.d.; *WHO | RESPECT Women*, n.d.).

Though violence, risk factors, and gender norms have been explored in sociological and public health sectors, there is a need to explore how perpetrators relate to risk factors in the context of their masculinity. The purpose of this study is to explore factors that enable femicide perpetration among male perpetrators of femicide in Buenos Aires, Argentina. In analyzing the data from a public health and human rights perspective, we hope to provide recommendations to inform upstream violence prevention strategies targeting potential perpetrators of gender-based violence and femicide.

Chapter 3: Student Contribution

This secondary analysis was conceptualized in tandem with Dr. Dabney P. Evans, Dr. Martin DiMarco, and Dr. Sydney Spangler. In Spring 2020 during my first academic year at Rollins School of Public Health, I took Qualitative Research Methods and Health and Human Rights with Drs. Spangler and Evans respectively. Dr. Spangler's class honed my interest in responsible tactics in qualitative research and set a foundation for ethical, reflexive, and comprehensive approaches to qualitative research. At the time, Dr. Evans was looking for students with specific language skills to work on two different studies on femicide. I scheduled a meeting with her and she and I agreed that I was well positioned to conduct secondary data analysis on this data set due to my language skills, passion for human rights, and commitment to cultural humility. I later met with Drs. DiMarco and Evans (who are lead authors on the parent study) and together, we developed the study design for this analysis.

As this study is a secondary data analysis, the interviews had been collected, transcribed, and deidentified before I had access to them. I read all of the interviews (in Spanish) and developed an inductive and deductive codebook. The codebook centered around biographical narratives (the research question of the parent study), characterization of self, gender norms, violence, and risk factors for violence. The codes related to risk factors for violence were developed based on the CDC's Violence Prevention literature on Risk and Protective Factors for IPV (CDC, 2020).

I then uploaded and coded all interviews in MAXQDA 20. Though the codebook was developed in English, I coded the interviews in the original Spanish. Additionally, I utilized excel to facilitate data management of demographic information, risk factors, and other variables of interest. This was done to explore the relationship between demographic characteristics and established risk factors for IPV (CDC, 2020).

During my coding process, I included detailed memos to aid in theme development and ensure the accuracy of my translations. For similar reasons, in my coding style, I coded larger portions of the transcripts rather than just the sentence that applied to the code. During analysis, I utilized MAXQDA functions to pull relevant coded segments, and create and compare document portraits.

After coding, I conducted thematic analysis on the codes that I felt most compelling including gender norms, femicide, violence, and characterization of self. I conducted thematic analysis based on guidance from Patricia Bazeley's textbook and instruction from my qualitative data analysis course (BSHES 539). In conducting the research and writing up the findings, I prioritized adhering to the most recent health equity guidelines; specifically the guidelines about writing about people who are incarcerated (CDC, 2020).

In July of 2020, we had the opportunity to submit to the Congreso Nacional sobre Violencias de Género, contra Mujeres, Ninãs y Adolescentes (National Conference on Gender-based Violence Against Women and Girls). I wrote an abstract that was accepted. I then wrote the 10-page extended abstract and presentation that was presented in November of 2020. Adhering to deadlines for the Conference has been helpful in maintaining internal deadlines related to thesis submission.

Upon defending the thesis, I intend to submit the manuscript to the Journal of Interpersonal Violence (JIV). This decision was made based on a bibliometric analysis on publication sources

for articles on IPV and guidance from my thesis committee (Wu et al., 2020). The manuscript format adheres to the manuscript submission guidelines outlined by the JIV (*Manuscript Submission Guidelines*, n.d.).

Chapter 4: Journal Article

Abstract

Femicide has received growing attention as an important social issue in Argentina and other Latin American countries. Currently, most of the sociological, psychological, criminological, and public health research available on the topic focuses on victims rather than perpetrators; research on femicide perpetrators has tended to be quantitative or from an etic perspective. Understanding the narratives around violence and gender that perpetrators use to contextualize, justify, or legitimize their crimes is crucial in preventing future femicides. Narrative interviews were conducted in three correctional facilities in Buenos Aires, Argentina with thirteen men convicted of femicide. Interviews were coded in MAXQDA20 and analyzed thematically using deductive and inductive codes with an eye towards identity, gender, and violence. Our analysis found that risk factors were mechanized into actual IPV behaviors based on how the perpetrator related to the situation in the context of their own masculinity. Threat of abandonment and necessity to physically communicate emotional turmoil both emerged as themes where adherence to traditional gender norms were mechanized into violence. Few participants characterized themselves as violent people though they were all serving sentences for violent crimes. Violence was normalized and frequently justified by most perpetrators. In some cases, participants explicitly said that they did not have an option other than violence. Participants viewed themselves exceptionally and did not view themselves as belonging to the category of people who commit femicides. Our analysis offers recommendations for primary violence prevention and gender-based violence interventions to center young men and potential perpetrators of IPV and femicide. In doing this, the burden of violence prevention shifts from victims to perpetrators and society at large.

Introduction

Femicide is broadly defined as the murder of a woman motivated at least in part because of her gender (*WHO_RHR_12.38_eng.Pdf*, n.d.). Because every country defines, investigates and prosecutes the phenomena differently, femicide has proven to be a difficult topic to study methodologically. There is no uniformity in the term between countries. Some countries use the terms femicide or feminicide while others use the phrase uxoricide which encompasses the killing of wives specifically and is often used in research on honor killings (Stöckl et al., 2013). Additionally, as with other forms of domestic violence, femicide is under reported, under investigated, and under prosecuted (Fernández, 2012; Dobash & Dobash, 2017). The majority of the data, statistics and research on femicide are quantitative in nature; secondary sources such as forensic evidence, court records, and other sources can be used to triangulate femicide data (Di Marco & Evans, 2020). It is particularly difficult to study femicide using qualitative research methods and analysis. Since femicide culminates in the murder of the woman, it is impossible to collect qualitative information from the victims' perspectives. Qualitative data may be collected from victims of attempted femicide or family members but there are major ethical considerations to conducting responsible research. Similarly, in conducting qualitative research with perpetrators of femicide, researchers must consider the ethics of gathering data from incarcerated people as well as persons known to be violent who are not incarcerated (Medicine et al., 2007). That being said, qualitative data on violence against women informs how people who experience

violence conceptualize violence and gender and can be used to create more appropriate and violence prevention interventions (Evans et al., 2018).

In the fields of public health and human rights there is ample research on gender-based violence (GBV) and intimate partner violence (IPV), yet femicide itself remains under-researched in both fields (Campbell et al., 2003). Studying violence, and femicide in particular, from a public health perspective is appropriate as it accounts for the intersectionality of sectors in prevention and response at all levels of the socio-economic model (Krug et al., 2002). A human rights approach to GBV is appropriate as there are mechanisms, governing bodies, and declarations dedicated to implementing the political, economic, education rights, and health rights of women; although widely adopted these rights are still under-enforced (*Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, n.d.) Citing "significant short-comings" in the Argentinian Penal Code in 2015, the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women called attention to harmful patriarchal narratives playing out in public institutions tasked to protect and enforce the rights that women have to safety in addition to outdated definitions on gender-based violence, rape, and femicide (*Argentina, with Its "Machismo Culture", Fails in Its Protection of Women and Girls*, n.d.).

Between 2007-2017, there were 2,638 recorded femicides in Argentina and in 2018, Argentina recorded the third highest number of registered femicides in Latin America (*Number of Femicide Victims in Argentina 2019*, n.d.). The vast majority of the perpetrators were close to the victim either as an intimate partner or family member (Matienzo, n.d.). The manners in which these women were killed varied greatly and included firearms, strangulation, beating, burns, and other causes; stabbing was the means of death for nearly a third (29%) of victims (*En Los Últimos Once Meses Hubo 254 Femicidios En La Argentina*, 2017). Prior to 2009, the impunity enjoyed by perpetrators of femicide and violence against women sent the message -- the crime was acceptable. (Fernández, n.d.-b). Although a series of laws to prevent and prosecute violence against women were enacted in 2009, unpunished murders of women remain high and have garnered the attention of human rights organizations (*World Report 2019*, 2018). Femicide was added to the Argentinian Penal Code in 2012. Retroactive investigation of suicides that occurred before legal reform found that many female deaths that had been documented as suicides were in truth femicide (Fernández, n.d.-b) This is a wildly troubling notion as it communicates a standard of impunity for perpetrators of femicide.

The law includes femicide as a type of aggravated homicide. Notably, if a perpetrator has a history of violence, a conviction of femicide excludes them from being eligible for mitigated sentencing (Rodriguez-Ferrand, 2012). Since 2016, the average number of femicides per year has been 312.5 (*Number of Femicide Victims in Argentina 2019*, n.d.). Though legislative acknowledgment is progress, Argentine lawmaker Gabriela Alegre noted "…legislation and prison sentences are not enough. We have to confront the problem by changing the culture and educating people," (*Cómo Los Hombres Perpetúan La Violencia de Género y Qué Deberían Hacer Para Cambiarla*, 2016). An instrument the Argentinian government implemented to address these violations was the National Registry on Femicide. The National Registry of Femicides serves to understand the scope of femicide more accurately and serve as an accountability mechanism for prosecuting femicide. The registry collects data of all homicides of women by men in the entire country. The data collected and published by the National Registry of Femicides found that in the first 60 days of

2020, 63 women were killed by men.(*Buenos Aires Times | Femicide in Argentina Every 23 Hours in First Two Months of 2019*, n.d.)

The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between risk factors and gendered narratives that enable femicide and GBV to occur among male perpetrators of intimate femicide in Buenos Aires, Argentina. In analyzing the data from a public health and human rights perspective, we provide recommendations to inform upstream violence prevention strategies targeting potential perpetrators of IPV and femicide in Argentina.

Methods

Design

We conducted a secondary analysis of qualitative data collected from femicide perpetrators in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The parent study sought to collect life-course narratives from femicide perpetrators (DiMarco and Evans, 2020). Narrative interviews were conducted in Federal and Municipal Penitentiary facilities in Buenos Aires. This secondary analysis utilized the same data to identify risk factors and gendered narratives that enable femicide and GBV to occur.

Participants

Participants self-identified as cis-gender males over the age of 18 and were serving a sentence for an "aggravated homicide due to femicide" for a crime that occurred within the last five years. For this study, we used the Argentinean Penal Code's definition of femicide which is "a crime of murder perpetrated by a man against a woman in the context of gender violence" (Rodriguez-Ferrand, 2012). As a result of these inclusion criteria, all participants were men who murdered their women based on their gender. Some participants were serving a sentence for femicide in addition to other charges.

Data Management

The interviews were deidentified prior to this analysis. Demographic data including age at interview, age at crime, hometown, and education level were collected and compiled into an excel spreadsheet. The spreadsheet was further populated with the socioeconomic status of hometown, if they were cohabiting with the victim, the scene of the femicide, and the method of femicide. This was done to explore the relationship between demographic characteristics and established risk factors for IPV (CDC, 2020; Spencer & Stith, 2020). All files and data were uploaded to a secure password protected shared drive. A codebook of inductive and deductive codes was developed in collaboration with members of the research team (Saldana, 2015). While the codebook was created in English, the interviews were coded in Spanish. Specific codes and subcodes were developed to identify individual, interpersonal, and community level risk factors for IPV (CDC, 2020).

Data Analysis

A narrative thematic analysis was conducted in MAXQDA 20 using memos, thick descriptions and coding with the previously described codebook. After an initial reading of the interviews, memos were made to summarize the broad themes and anecdotes of that specific interview. Once coded, a deeper analysis was conducted within the most frequently coded sections that related to our research questions. The codes that were selected for the development

of thematic analysis were: characterization of self, risk factors of femicide, normalization of violence, and gender norms. They were analyzed with an eye towards identity, gender, violence, and health. Thematic analysis was conducted by comparing themes to coded segments and creating thematic maps in MAXQDA 20 (Smith, 2015). The codes were analyzed independently and in reference to their intersectionality. Certain codes were reported from the emic perspective but analyzed using an etic framework.

Ethics

The participants were informed about the purpose of the study and how the information they shared would be used. Both written and verbal consent was obtained prior to enrolling a participant in the study. The informed consent form was designed in compliance with the guidelines N° 2857/2006 of CONICET ("Guidelines for ethical behavior in Social and Human Sciences"). Pseudonyms used here are different than those used in the parent study. Prior to implementation, the study was reviewed by the Bioethical Committee "Dr. Vicente Federico del Giúdice" of the National Hospital Prof. A. Posadas. An additional determination from the Emory University IRB was obtained for the purpose of the secondary data analysis; the study was found to be exempt due to its nature as a deidentified secondary analysis. Any reference to a specific participant in the results and discussion uses an assigned pseudonym.

Results

Thirty-three unstructured in-depth interviews were conducted with thirteen men in three correctional facilities in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The average age of the participants at the time of the interview was 32 years with the youngest being 18 and the oldest being 48. Most participants were interviewed at least twice, two participants were interviewed only once, and one participant was interviewed seven times. Some spoke only briefly about the femicide while others declined to speak about it entirely. The variance in the number of interviews was due to logistical considerations and the desires of the participants. Most interviews were between 60 and 90 minutes. Among the participants, 9 participants committed femicides of their wife, current girlfriend, or regular sexual partner. Among the remaining four participants, two committed femicides on their former girlfriends, and two committed femicides on women they knew only briefly.

Three salient themes emerged from the data: abandonment as a trigger for femicide perpetrators, perpetrators do not view themselves as violent, and the femicide act serves to transfer emotional pain.

***Theme 1**: Abandonment triggers possessiveness among femicide perpetrators*

The theme of abandonment and its biographical impacts emerged as a prime aspect in the narratives. Participants who were abandoned during childhood by one or both parents projected suspicion and accusations about leaving onto their partners. This suspicion was mechanized by controlling their partners' movement, employment status, access to money and who they spent their time with. High levels of control were established early, setting expectations for the relationship. When challenged or if partners sought to change this dynamic, participants felt disrespected and that unspoken agreements had been violated -- principally manifesting as a violation of gender norms. This was illustrated both in the unequal acceptance of previous abandonment in their own lives and in freedoms afforded in the intimate relationship.

For instance, Santiago's mother left him, his fathers and his two sisters. His mother's departure was a large turning point in Santiago's life and connections can be seen from how he processed that experience to how he speaks about his partner and women in general. Santiago blames his partner entering the workforce as a turning point where the relationship went south. When his partner started working, he said "s*he developed a taste for money*" and repeatedly stated suspicions that she was planning on leaving him. The femicide occurred when she said she would leave and he strangled her.

> *"We grabbed each other and I hit her with a hard punch. And she fell back right there in the living room. And she kept screaming. She would not stop saying that I was a beast, an animal and I don't know what else. When the son-of-a-bitch was her. It's very unfair. And I wanted for her to stop screaming because, I don't know. In the moment she said was going to leave me. That she was going to leave. And I strangled her."*

In another case, Tomas's late wife started packing to leave after she found out that her husband had been giving her antidepressants without her knowledge or consent. He felt he had no other option than to kill her. He said,

> *"I felt the escalation, that she was leaving, that if she left I would not be able to help her, that it would be too late. And I felt anger that there was no other option."*

Tomas took out a gun with the intention to scare her into staying and shot her when she continued to try to leave. Her leaving triggered a fear that he would not be able to protect or help her which would make him unable to fulfill that part of his masculine protector identity. Counterintuitively, he says he shot her because he would not be able to protect her if she left.

Another participant, Vicente, killed his partner when she was trying to leave. Vicente's girlfriend was exhibiting signs of depression after a miscarriage. He had begun being intimate with other women though he and his girlfriend were still living together. One day, she began packing a bag to leave and he barricaded them both in their home to prevent her from doing so. He said,

> *"She wanted to leave. She wanted to leave my house. And I said no. And that's what happened. It was that she was leaving, she was putting things together, which I had also bought. And I said no. That she couldn't leave whenever she wanted. That it was my house. And she wasn't going to leave, just like nothing from one day to the next…..You can't do that to someone. You can't get out of here, move on up and then grab your panties and leave. And so we are at the end of it."*

In describing the femicide, he explained that he beat her and she hit her head. He continued to beat her even after she was unresponsive. Vicente's situation demonstrates how stringent gender norms related to control, possession, and power inside of the home can turn into fatal violence.

Theme 2*: Femicide perpetrators do not view themselves as violent: Understanding the context*

Participants frequently did not self-identify as people who perpetrated violence. This was evidenced by frequently repeating, *"I'm not a violent person"* or *"I'm not like the other guys in here."* This affirms prior studies that concluded that perpetrators "exclude themselves from a problematic social group of 'violent offenders'" (Presser, 2004). In stressing the context of the femicide over the outcome of the event (death), perpetrators maintain narratives of moral

decency. This self-impunity was also illustrated in multiple participants stressing, *"you need to understand the context."*

Context referred to the context in which someone was raised and the role that violence played in their upbringing. This included those who were introduced to crime and violence at a young age either in their community or through interaction with juvenile detention centers. Jorge said *"stealing, stabbing and shooting was all I knew."* Alonso, Pedro, and Mateo all described the interaction between development of violent patterns and interactions with the criminal justice system prior to committing femicide. Pedro said, *"jail is crime school"* to characterize how a lot of his outlook and behavior was honed during his time in juvenile detention centers. Mateo described how his indoctrination into petty crime was learned from observing older peers who he admired during his adolescence. The results bolstered previous research of crime as a means of attaining and maintaining access to masculine expression in youth culture such as taking girls out, going dancing, buying cool clothing, and accessing alcohol and drugs (C. F. Byrne & Trew, 2007). Similarly, participants cited that what they were told about what an education can get you did not line up with what they were seeing in their daily lives. That is to say that there was not a belief that completing education could secure employment or a more comfortable lifestyle. This was especially true among participants who grew up in neighborhoods with low socio-economic status. Many cited their departure from formal education as turning point towards negative behaviors (drugs, crime, gang activity etc.).

Context was a common theme for perpetrators who felt that their case did not have a gendered motive and used it as rationale for self-impunity when referring to community norms around violence -- including blaming the anti-femicide movements for their imprisonment. They felt that the charge of femicide had been pinned on them to justify this social movement rather than self-identifying with a gender-based motive. For example, Joaquin and his friends' crew went to intimidate the man who had hit his friend; by coincidence that man was now dating one of Joaquin's exes. The situation turned violent and Joaquin ended up killing the man. Joaquin's ex-girlfriend *"got in the way"* of the situation and he killed her. He said, *"My ex was there, she had put herself in a situation where she didn't belong…..When the [men] are fighting, you don't have to intervene, she got in the way."* He claims that because she was an ex, the courts charged him with femicide even though the goal of the interaction was not motivated by her or her gender.

> *"I mean, it didn't look good. And you see that what matters is that it looks good, that they create the story to say it in some way. It doesn't matter that…. there was really no intention of hurting her or that something like this had never happened, something so heavy. No. It just matters how they fit things in, the situation. And besides, we must not lose sight of this happening at the moment when they bring to light this [thing] of femicide and want to make it an important issue, then they need cases. And I'm not a scapegoat, because what happened happened, but it wasn't femicide. It wasn't that I wanted to kill her because of her status as a woman. I don't know what that means. But to be honest, I feel like I'm a victim of this shitty context."*

Throughout Joaquin's interviews, he focuses on notions of loyalty to a crew and defending one's honor (traditionally masculinity reinforcing motivations) rather than acknowledging that he was responsible for the death of his ex-girlfriend.

Self-identifying as someone who perpetrates violence, acknowledging the agency that perpetrators of violence have, and accepting responsibility for the charge are differentiating factors between those who desist from criminal behavior and those who do not (Liem & Richardson, 2014). This theme explores narratives related to those constructs.

***Theme 3**: Violence as a transference of emotional pain*

The next salient theme was violence as a tool to transfer and communicate emotional discomfort. After a fight about him coming home later than expected and dinner getting cold, Santiago's girlfriend went out dancing. In the fight that ensued, he described violence as a transference of his emotional pain by saying,

> *"When she arrived [home] we fought and yes, I slapped her. But I swear, it was something stronger than me. It's just that your girl puts you in that place of suffering, leaves you there, and [a man is] a machine where anything can happen. And she escaped one blow, crying and carrying on. [pauses] After everything that's happened I see it differently. It was the first time something like this had happened. But I swear to you, I lived it like I couldn't contain myself. And she was doing that to me."*

Santiago and Marcos both expressed wanting to make their partner feel the same pain physically that they were feeling emotionally. Santiago said, "*she made me feel disposable"* after his partner bought a store-bought cake for his birthday instead of making one herself. In the fight that ensued after this incident, he broke a chair in addition to hitting her. In all of the fights that he described; he framed the violence as a reaction to something that she had done. He justified violence against his partner as manifestations of his emotional reactions to non-violent acts from his partner. She went out dancing, she bought a cake instead of making one, there were messages from another man on her phone—this hurt his feelings or made him feel threatened and he hurt her physically to communicate that.

In both Santiago and Marcos' cases, the femicides were a product of escalated IPV triggered by suspected infidelity. Marcos drew on masculine provider narratives that he felt were violated. He was hurt at his wife's suspected infidelity saying, *"after all I had done for her. After putting a roof over her head and providing for her."* Marcos described the fight that ensued after he had gone through his partner's phone and found messages that evidenced an affair.

> *"It was like I was gathering smoke. And I exploded. I erupted. I grabbed a jar and threw it at her. With all the strength I had. I didn't think, I just wanted to unload. And I threw a bottle at her. She broke down and started crying and screaming. And I hit her. I wanted to unload. I wanted her to understand what I felt inside. Like that rage."*

In another case, Tomas's wife was exhibiting symptoms of depression after her children grew up and moved out of the house. She wanted to start spending more time outside of the home and get a job to fill her time. Tomas was deeply hurt by this notion. He said,

> *"I think she was depressed because she didn't have a purpose. And there I realized that she wasn't taking me into account. I know it's not best to say something like this, but what about me? Because I understand the kids are gone, but I was still there. That was very painful…..It's crazy. I couldn't stand it. It was very, very hard. I didn't know how to handle the situation."*

In another case, Alonso's ex-girlfriend had gotten married to someone else while he was in prison. He said, *"I went to see her and she was talking about her husband and she was rubbing it in my face."* In defense of this machismo reaction, he said *"she was going to fuck me over….. I had to fuck her over before she fucked me over."* This reflects the broader perceived morality in maintaining a gendered power dynamic that situates the perpetrator as in charge and their partner's action as a violation of that hierarchy. Alonso felt discomfort with his ex-girlfriend speaking about her new partner. The only option, from his perspective, was to communicate that discomfort and perceived violation via violence.

Discussion

Based on our analysis, experiences of abandonment have a dual role. First, they appear to have a significant impact on controlling behaviors. Second, they are experienced as a legitimate justification for violence because being abandoned is experienced as a worse outcome than inflicting violence. Specifically, the femicides that resulted from men panicking at their partners' attempted departures stressed the perceived importance of possession and control in a relationship, and a moral defense of gendered responsibilities in a romantic partnership. Tomas' felt that if his wife left, he would have no way of protecting her from the world (his perceived responsibility as a man) and there would be nobody to take care of him domestically (the responsibility projected onto her as a wife). Some participants, like Vincente, portrayed masculine provider narratives. They project that because they have provided housing and economic support to their partner, their partner has relinquished their right to leave. When their partner tries to leave, violence is seen as a way to enforce their own moral order. This is mirrored by the conclusions of Dobash & Dobash that, "Men who use lethal and nonlethal violence against their women partners are highly controlling and use violence to enforce their own moral order and to punish perceived transgressions from it. They lack empathy with the victim of their violence, and their beliefs and orientations provide them with a cognitive foundation for justifications and rationales for the violence," (Emerson Dobash & Dobash, 2011).

Perceived infidelity was a subtheme within abandonment as a trigger for femicide. Santiago, Pedro, and Marcos all committed femicide in the same episode that they perceived infidelity and felt that the infidelity was evidence that their partner was trying to leave the relationship. There seemed to be a consistent formula for the violence that appeared within this theme: female partner's perceived violation of gender norms triggers violence designed to communicate disapproval and reestablishment of the gender norms status quo. The inverse of that justification was also present in the underlying assumption: If I don't [get violent], my masculinity will be threatened. In this way, violence is merited as a way to create and maintain a social position and an expression of emotions. These feelings could result from perceived lack of control of their partner or family, or fears of infidelity and abandonment. This theme supports claims that "if masculinity is based on impermeable defenses and the feeling of being in control, then violence may be restorative, returning the situation to the moment before that sense of vulnerability and dependency was felt and one's sense of masculinity was so compromised," (Kimmel, 2013).

The second theme, that femicide perpetrators do not view themselves as violent is crucial in understanding the social and environmental determinants that shape understandings of violence. Time and again, participants explained the roles that crime and violence played in their friendships, relationships, families, and communities. It became clear that macro and micro social structures had massive effects on participants' propensity for crime and violence. Strain theory explains

crime as a product of conformity to cultural values and societal structural discontinuity (Rosenfeld, 1986). Strain theory can be applied to this theme as the path into crime often resulted from conforming to the cultural and subcultural values of machismo culture combined with a lack of buy in that a formal education and desistance from criminal activity would accomplish positively valued goals. Previous research on pathways through crime found that men are able to "achieve positively valued features of masculinity" through crime (Messerschmidt, 2017). Autonomy, control, and economic independence are more likely to be pursued through crime when unavailable (or perceived as unavailable) through social and economic societal structures (C. F. Byrne & Trew, 2007). Furthermore, application of neutralization techniques theory accounts for the disconnect between committing a femicide and self-identifying as a violent person, which has been indicated by other IPH/IPV studies (Skykes & Matza, 1957; Boira & Marcuello, 2013). Though the laws in Argentina have changed in the past decade to improve the language, prosecution process, sentencing, and accountability in addressing femicide, cultural dialogue surrounding gender is not reflected in our participants' transcripts. This is evidenced by participants not identifying a gendered motive while serving a sentence for femicide.

In the final theme, a concerning narrative emerged in perpetrators' justification for their violent behavior; the notion that they needed to make their partners physically feel the emotional pain that they were experiencing. In this way, the femicide was a transference of the emotional pain the perpetrator was feeling onto their partner. Similar findings have been presented in studies where male perpetrators of violence claim that something their partner did or said made them feel inadequate, and they felt the need to show their physical control of the situation to stop that feeling (Dobash et al., 2009). Traditional views of masculinity (and machismo culture) do not prioritize (and often demonize) men emoting. Emotional regulation skills are often underdeveloped especially when this doctrine is adopted at a young age. This enables environments where violence seems like the only option to communicate and deal with emotions. Prevailing theories on this dichotomy elucidate the danger that highly patriarchal society has in creating environments where violence can occur. At a societal and cultural level, the difference between what will make someone turn violent with their wife or girlfriend in the face of humiliation and stay calm if humiliated by a boss or peer, is that they feel they are entitled to do so (Kimmel, 2013). This phenomena is illustrated in Juan's story. He never got violent with his boss though he was treated poorly at work and eventually fired for someone else's mistake. A few months later, he killed his wife when she decided to buy tickets to her preferred vacation destination instead of his. He did not report getting violent with his boss because that was not within his right in that hierarchy or relationship. Conversely, he felt he had the right to be violent with his wife when she made a decision that was different than his preference. This is an example of colonization narratives where men who feel emasculated and oppressed in their public lives present as hypermasculine and oppressive in their private ones (Viveros-Vigoya, n.d.).

While evidence-based violence prevention programming has had well documented success in the past few decades, the majority of the programming depends on victims either identifying unhealthy aspects of their relationship or escaping once the violence has begun. Over the past 30 years, the rates of intimate partner homicide have decreased but the vast majority of that decrease is in female murder of male partners (Spencer & Stith, 2020). Rates of male perpetrated homicide remains high (Kimmel, 2013; Spencer & Stith, 2020). Therefore, we recommend designing violence prevention interventions that target harmful narratives and behaviors in potential perpetrators. In doing so, the burden of violence prevention will be the responsibility of the perpetrator instead of the victim.

Programming directed towards men and boys facilitating strategies for healthy relationships will create healthier individuals, relationships, and families ("Prevention+ Program," n.d.). In doing so, primary prevention of GBV can be addressed at all levels of the socio-ecological model.

Limitations

As with most secondary data analysis, this analysis is limited in that the primary author was not present at the interviews. However, the interviewer is a member of the research team and was able to advise on the nuances of the data. Another limitation is that the research team did not have access to legal files, police or hospital records. Therefore, we were not able to triangulate or verify the veracity of the information given in the interviews. However, as this analysis sought to understand the narratives around violence and gender from an emic perspective, this allowed for more objective analysis of the transcripts.

Our sample was limited to self-identified heterosexual cis-gendered men and therefore excluded same sex couples or other gender identity dyads. As we came into contact with participants through the Argentinian correctional facility system, the sample only includes perpetrators who were convicted of femicide and excludes those who were not charged or those who had never been prosecuted. Lastly, the sample does not include perpetrators who committed murder-suicide. This is of particular significance as globally, the majority of pre-meditated femicides and family annihilations are murder-suicides (Kimmel, 2013).

Recommendations

This analysis informs violence prevention interventions aimed at supporting male development of healthy communication skills, and violence de-escalation strategies. Though research on risk factors for experiencing IPV exists, this analysis finds that femicide occurs as a result of how men relate to those factors in the context of their masculinity and relationship rather than the factors themselves. We recommend designing and implementing upstream tools to assess the narratives that young people carry surrounding women and violence. This analysis provides evidence that bolsters demands of women's rights groups (including Ni Una Menos) to address the role that machismo and patriarchy plays in femicide justification. Additionally, we support the demand to view GBV and IPV as a public health issue. Furthermore, this analysis elucidated the need for research into social and psychological services targeting perpetrators of GBV in Argentine correctional facilities. Many participants in this study would reference the programs that they were involved in and rehabilitation and redemption themes emerged, but they were outside the scope of this analysis.

Conclusions

Femicide is gendered phenomena, a public health issue and human rights violation that is methodologically difficult to study in a qualitative manner. Though legislative efforts have been made to address previous under investigation and prosecution, cultural machismo and patriarchy enable environments where femicide continues to occur in private settings. This analysis addresses the gap in knowledge about experiences of gender norms, violence and femicide from the perspective of perpetrators of femicide. Through this study, we understand the life course narratives of perpetrators of femicide from a qualitative emic perspective. In doing so, we are able to simultaneously study risk factors of femicide and GBV from an emic life course perspective and inform violence prevention interventions aimed at primary violence prevention.

Chapter 5: Public Health Implications

Implications

The results of this study serve to inform and validate the importance of primary violence prevention strategies that focus on perpetrators and potential perpetrators of violence. The first theme explored how abandonment triggers possessiveness, illustrating that secondary prevention strategies – where women attempt to remove themselves from the potentially violent situation – can trigger potentially lethal escalations in violence. This elucidates the need for upstream primary violence prevention. Furthermore, the findings presented in this analysis acknowledge and explore the role that gender identity and traditional gender norms play in risk factors being mechanized into actual violent acts. The second theme explored how perpetrators of femicide emphasize understanding their context and how that related to their life trajectory. This theme highlights the need for general violence and crime prevention in childhood and adolescents. Specifically, this theme shows the importance of prioritizing social services as intervention methods rather than early interaction with the criminal justice system. The theme of violence as a transference of emotional pain illustrates the role that emotional turmoil of the perpetrators has in committing femicide. Participants reported wanting their partners to feel the pain that they were feeling and felt there was "no other option" than to communicate that physically. Toughness, aggression, risk-taking, dominance and rejection of behaviors regarded as traditionally feminine (such as expressing emotion) are well established expressions of masculinity that contribute to perpetration of GBV (Baugher & Gazmararian, 2015; Jakupcak et al., 2002; Vandello & Bosson, 2013). This relationship confirms the need for programs that emphasize healthy communication, healthy relationships, youth empowerment and emotional regulation strategies among young men.

Recommendations

Future research

We recommend conducting similar studies with a larger sample size and access to other data types. Future studies on femicide should strive for an increased sample size with access to data sources for triangulation (e.g. criminal records, investigation files). Additionally, future studies with larger sample sizes should stratify based on demographic and geographic variables to better understand the role that social determinants play in propensity for violence perpetration. Based on the findings in the preliminary analysis of this dataset, stratifying by urban vs rural settings, socio-economic status, and age could be helpful in better understanding what drives men to murder their partners. As our sample size was small and we did not have validated data sources on these variables, this type of analysis was not conducted for this study. Furthermore, we recommend conducting more qualitative research on violence perpetration to better inform mechanizing factors and how perpetrators of femicide characterize themselves and their relationship with violence.

Another theme that emerged in this analysis was the notion of how convicted perpetrators related to their sentence, redemption, and recovery. Many of the participants in our study were enrolled in psychological treatment and workshops surrounding GBV. Some of our participants were

presenting a sense of agency over their situation and a shift in conceptualizing their criminal identity. It would be important to explore the narratives and turning points related to these concepts as previous research on these topics has informed theories on criminal desistance (C. F. Byrne & Trew, 2007; Jarman, 2017; Liem & Richardson, 2014).

Practice

Based on this analysis, we recommend more violence prevention programming focused on men and boys. International organizations such as Promundo and local organizations such as Men Stopping Violence focus on confronting the role that men play in perpetuating gender inequity and domestic violence (*Men Stopping Violence | Working Together for a Change*, n.d.; "Prevention+ Program," n.d.). It is important that public health programming on violence prevention focuses on gender equity in addition to violence prevention. This was shown as some participants in the study committed femicide as a result of IPV escalation while others committed femicide of a woman they knew for a short amount of time or claimed that "[she] got in the way." This finding shows that there needs to be an overall shift in the narrative around violence and the narrative around the value of a woman's life; so that women are not seen as collateral damage of violence intended for someone else.

Policy

CEDAW needs to be signed, ratified, and implemented globally. Definitions of femicide, gender-based violence, and rape need to be updated and prosecution of these offences needs to be enforced legally. Additionally, IPV screenings are recommended to be conducted yearly on women of childbearing age (Dicola & Spaar, 2016). Screening potential perpetrators of IPV is equally as important and should be incorporated into medical and social service. This finding is further bolstered by previous research that found that 90% of an all-male sample reported that they believed health care clinicians should screen for violence perpetration (Walsh et al., 2020). Additionally, findings from this analysis support demands outlined in Ni Una Menos's charter including the right to abortion and ending impunity for GBV and femicide (*Ni Una Menos*, n.d.). Abortion was legalized in Argentina on December 29th, 2020 in large part to the consistent advocacy from feminist organizations like Ni Una Menos (Politi & Londoño, 2020).

References

Argentina, with its "machismo culture", fails in its protection of women and girls. (n.d.). Equal Times. Retrieved September 7, 2020, from https://www.equaltimes.org/argentina-with-its-machismo

Argentina's Ni Una Menos turns focus to economic crisis, abortion. (n.d.). Retrieved September 1, 2020, from https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/06/argentina-ni-una-menos-turns-focus-economic-crisis-abortion-190603203634026.html

Bandura, A. (2001). Social Cognitive Theory: An Agentic Perspective. *Annual Review of Psychology, 52*(1), 1–26. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.52.1.1

Baugher, A. R., & Gazmararian, J. A. (2015). Masculine gender role stress and violence: A literature review and future directions. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 24*, 107–112. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2015.04.002

Boira, S., & Marcuello, C. (2013). Male Abuser: Type of Violence and Perception of the Relationship with the Victim. *Psychological Reports*, *112*(1), 210–238. https://doi.org/10.2466/21.02.16.PR0.112.1.210-238

Buenos Aires Times | Femicide in Argentina every 23 hours in first two months of 2019. (n.d.). Retrieved September 28, 2020, from https://www.batimes.com.ar/news/argentina/femicide-in-argentina-every-23-hours-report-finds.phtml

Byrne, C. F., & Trew, K. F. (2007). *Pathways Through Crime: The Development of Crime and Desistance in the Accounts of Men and Women Offenders* (SSRN Scholarly Paper ID 1142364). Social Science Research Network. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2311.2008.00520.x

Campbell, J. C., Webster, D., Koziol-McLain, J., Block, C., Campbell, D., Curry, M. A., Gary, F., Glass, N., McFarlane, J., Sachs, C., Sharps, P., Ulrich, Y., Wilt, S. A., Manganello, J., Xu, X., Schollenberger, J., Frye, V., & Laughon, K. (2003). Risk Factors for Femicide in Abusive Relationships: Results From a Multisite Case Control Study. *American Journal of Public Health*, *93*(7), 1089–1097. https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.93.7.1089

CDC. (2020, April 30). *Communities, Schools, Workplaces, & Events*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/health-equity/cdc-strategy.html

Choudhry, S., & Herring, J. (2006). Righting Domestic Violence. *International Journal of Law, Policy and the Family*, *20*. https://doi.org/10.1093/lawfam/ebi034

Cómo los hombres perpetúan la violencia de género y qué deberían hacer para cambiarla. (2016, October 20). BBC News Mundo. https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-america-latina-37720329

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. (n.d.). Retrieved September 29, 2020, from https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/

Definition of UXORICIDE. (n.d.). Retrieved January 5, 2021, from https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/uxoricide

Di Marco, M. H., & Evans, D. P. (2020). Society, Her or Me? An Explanatory Model of Intimate Femicide Among Male Perpetrators in Buenos Aires, Argentina. *Feminist Criminology*, 1557085120964572. https://doi.org/10.1177/1557085120964572

Dicola, D., & Spaar, E. (2016). Intimate Partner Violence. *American Family Physician*, *94*(8), 646–651.

Dobash, R. E., Dobash, R. P., & Cavanagh, K. (2009). “Out of the Blue”: Men Who Murder an Intimate Partner. *Feminist Criminology*. https://doi.org/10.1177/1557085109332668

Dobash, R. E., & Dobash, R. P. (2017). When Women are Murdered. In *The Handbook of Homicide* (pp. 131–148). John Wiley & Sons, Ltd. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118924501.ch8

Doc.21_declaration elimination vaw.pdf. (n.d.). Retrieved January 12, 2021, from https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocity-crimes/Doc.21_declaration%20elimination%20vaw.pdf

DV/IPV: Domestic Violence/Intimate Partner Violence. (2018, February 27). National Institute of Corrections. https://nicic.gov/dvipv-domestic-violenceintimate-partner-violence

Emerson Dobash, R., & Dobash, R. P. (2011). What Were They Thinking? Men Who Murder an Intimate Partner. *Violence Against Women, 17*(1), 111–134. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801210391219

En los últimos once meses hubo 254 femicidios en la Argentina. (2017, November 21). https://www.lanacion.com.ar/sociedad/en-los-ultimos-once-meses-hubo-254-femicidios-en-la-argentina-nid2084452

Evans, D.P, & DeSousa Williams, N.S. (2018). “He said he was going to kill me”: Case Studies of Attempted Intimate Femicide in São Paulo, Brazil. (n.d.). Retrieved January 12, 2021, from https://web.a.ebscohost.com/abstract?direct=true&profile=ehost&scope=site&authtype=crawler&jrnl=08099936&AN=131664958&h=00xk9gx%2flHHtnCVuCMIViam6VY%2b7TBXQoBqYpfCbQnvzzwZpAbNvm72KDLDTr79IRxWZbsZ5JpZ64REHkuU%2ffQ%3d%3d&crl=c&resultNs=AdminW

Femicide in Argentina | The Borgen Project | Women's Rights. (2019, March 17). The Borgen Project. https://borgenproject.org/femicide-in-argentina/

Fernández, A. M. (n.d.-a). *Gender violence: Femicides in Argentina*. 7.

Fernández, A. M. (n.d.-b). *Gender violence: Femicides in Argentina*. 7.

Gender based violence | UNECE. (n.d.). Retrieved December 29, 2020, from https://unece.org/statistics/video/gender-based-violence

Intimate Partner Violence |Violence Prevention|Injury Center|CDC. (2020, October 9). https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/index.html

Jakupcak, M., Lisak, D., & Roemer, L. (2002). The role of masculine ideology and masculine gender role stress in men's perpetration of relationship violence. *Psychology of Men & Masculinity*, *3*(2), 97–106. https://doi.org/10.1037/1524-9220.3.2.97

Jarman, B. (2017). *Turning Points or Dead Ends? Identity, desistance and the experience of imprisonment* (SSRN Scholarly Paper ID 3353143). Social Science Research Network. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3353143

Jo Becker: 5 ways to a successful human rights campaign. (n.d.). ISHR. Retrieved December 22, 2020, from https://www.ishr.ch/news/jo-becker-5-ways-successful-human-rights-campaign

Karandinos, G., Hart, L. K., Castrillo, F. M., & Bourgois, P. (2014). The Moral Economy of Violence in the US Inner City. *Current Anthropology*, *55*(1), 1–22. https://doi.org/10.1086/674613

Kilpatrick, D. G., Ruggiero, K. J., Acierno, R., Saunders, B. E., Resnick, H. S., & Best, C. L. (2003). Violence and risk of PTSD, major depression, substance abuse/dependence, and

comorbidity: Results from the National Survey of Adolescents. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, *71*(4), 692–700. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-006X.71.4.692

Kimmel, M. S. (2013). *Angry white men: American masculinity at the end of an era*. Nation Books.

Liem, M., & Richardson, N. J. (2014). The Role of Transformation Narratives in Desistance Among Released Lifers. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, *41*(6), 692–712. https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854813515445

Manhood 2.0. (n.d.). *Promundo*. Retrieved October 28, 2020, from https://promundoglobal.org/programs/manhood-2-0/

Manuscript Submission Guidelines: Journal of Interpersonal Violence. (n.d.). SAGE Journals. Retrieved December 22, 2020, from https://journals.sagepub.com/author-instructions/JIV

Matienzo, E. R. (n.d.). *FEMICIDES IN ARGENTINA*. 5.

Medicine, I. of, Policy, B. on H. S., & Research, C. on E. C. for R. to D. R. for P. of P. I. in. (2007). *Ethical Considerations for Research Involving Prisoners*. National Academies Press.

Men Stopping Violence | Working Together for a Change. (n.d.). Retrieved December 29, 2020, from https://www.menstoppingviolence.org/

Messerschmidt, J. W. (2017). Masculinities and Femicide. *Przeglad Socjologii Jakosciowej*, *13*(3), 70–79.

Ni Una Menos. (n.d.). Ni Una Menos. Retrieved September 29, 2020, from http://niunamenos.org.ar/

Number of femicide victims in Argentina 2019. (n.d.). Statista. Retrieved August 31, 2020, from https://www.statista.com/statistics/1102274/number-femicide-victims-argentina/

OHCHR | Launch of CEDAW General Recommendation No. 35. (n.d.). Retrieved September 3, 2020, from https://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/cedaw/pages/gr35.aspx

Politi, D., & Londoño, E. (2020, December 30). Argentina Legalizes Abortion, a Milestone in a Conservative Region. *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/30/world/americas/argentina-legalizes-abortion.html

Prevention+ program. (n.d.). *Promundo*. Retrieved October 28, 2020, from https://promundoglobal.org/programs/prevention-plus/

Rodriguez-Ferrand, G. (2012, May 3). *Argentina: Criminal Code Amendment to Include Femicide | Global Legal Monitor* [Web page]. //www.loc.gov/law/foreign-news/article/argentina-criminal-code-amendment-to-include-femicide/

Rosenfeld, R. (1986). Urban Crime Rates: Effects of Inequality, Welfare Dependency, Region, and Race. In J. M. Byrne & R. J. Sampson (Eds.), *The Social Ecology of Crime* (pp. 116–130). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4613-8606-3_7

Saldana, J. (2015). *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. SAGE.

Schunk, D. H., & DiBenedetto, M. K. (2020). Motivation and social cognitive theory. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, *60*, 101832. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2019.101832

Smith, J. A. (2015). *Qualitative Psychology: A Practical Guide to Research Methods*. SAGE.

Spencer, C. M., & Stith, S. M. (2020). Risk Factors for Male Perpetration and Female Victimization of Intimate Partner Homicide: A Meta-Analysis. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, *21*(3), 527–540. https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838018781101

Stöckl, H., Devries, K., Rotstein, A., Abrahams, N., Campbell, J., Watts, C., & Moreno, C. G. (2013). The global prevalence of intimate partner homicide: A systematic review. *The Lancet*, *382*(9895), 859–865. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(13)61030-2

Sykes, G. M., & Matza, D. (1957). Techniques of Neutralization: A Theory of Delinquency. *American Sociological Review*, *22*(6), 664–670. https://doi.org/10.2307/2089195

The Shadow Pandemic: Violence against women during COVID-19. (n.d.). UN Women. Retrieved November 24, 2020, from https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/in-focus-gender-equality-in-covid-19-response/violence-against-women-during-covid-19

Vandello, J. A., & Bosson, J. K. (2013). Hard won and easily lost: A review and synthesis of theory and research on precarious manhood. *Psychology of Men & Masculinity*, *14*(2), 101–113. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0029826

Viveros-Vigoya, M. (n.d.). Masculinities in the continuum of violence in Latin America. *Feminist Theory*, *17*(2), 229–237.

Walsh, T. B., Seabrook, R. C., Tolman, R. M., Lee, S. J., & Singh, V. (2020). Prevalence of Intimate Partner Violence and Beliefs About Partner Violence Screening Among Young Men. *The Annals of Family Medicine*, *18*(4), 303–308. https://doi.org/10.1370/afm.2536

WHO | RESPECT women: Preventing violence against women. (n.d.). WHO; World Health Organization. Retrieved December 22, 2020, from http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/preventing-vaw-framework-policymakers/en/

WHO_RHR_12.38_eng.pdf. (n.d.). Retrieved October 13, 2020, from https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/77421/WHO_RHR_12.38_eng.pdf?sequence=1

World Report 2019: Rights Trends in Argentina. (2018, December 20). Human Rights Watch. https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/argentina

Wu, Y., Chen, J., Fang, H., & Wan, Y. (2020). Intimate Partner Violence: A Bibliometric Review of Literature. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *17*(15). https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17155607