

THE INVENTION OF A CONCEPT FOR THE MURDER OF WOMEN: A
HISTORICAL STUDY ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF FEMINIST
KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION

By

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Submitted to

Central European University

Department of Gender Studies

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

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Abstract

The following research is a conceptual history done through the history of the present time as its theory of periodization with an international women and gender history methodological perspective of the of concept(s) *femicide/feminicide/feminicidio* (*f/f/f*).¹ My research questions are the following: how are the multiple meanings of the concept produced and changed in variable sociopolitical and historical settings, what are the feminist debates regarding the production of these meanings, and what are the changes they produce in reality?² In the research I argue that *f/f/f* is a feminist invention in historical terms, understanding that the meaning creation has been produced through the development of specialized literature and by the process of naming a practice that did not have a previous name. The concept of this form of murder as a social phenomenon had to become apparent for it to appear in history, and it has done so by means and through a feminist interest to define it. *F/f/f* is thus a feminist invention. In the research I study the three periods of temporality inscribed inside the historicity of the concept. These temporal spaces are that of immediacy (the multiple definitions of *f/f/f* from 1992 onwards), the broader period of time where the event is encompassed (1970s radical feminism), and the third space is that of the long-term process³ (the history of the transnationally interconnected women's activisms and activist scholarly discourses). The goal of this study is to introduce the discipline of history in conversation with *f/f/f* literature and to fill the gap in this literature regarding the historical processes embedded in the creation of feminist sociopolitical concepts.

¹ As it will be demonstrated, there is no consensus for the grammar of the word. The debate regarding how it should be written, and what that writing means, is part of the ongoing conversation about the scope and the limits of the definition of the concept. I will use "femicide", "feminicide", or "*feminicidio*" whenever I talk about the particular acceptability of the term in specified contexts. Otherwise, whenever the conceptual construction/phenomenon as a whole is being analyzed or mentioned I will refer to it as *f/f/f*.

² Jean Terrier, "Observations on the Semantic Trajectory of Pluralism in Scholarly Discourse: A Study of Two Argumentative Tropes," *Contributions to the History of Concepts* 13, no. 1 (June 1, 2018): 100–124, <https://doi.org/10.3167/choc.2018.130106>.

³ Hugo Fazio Vengoa, "La historia del tiempo presente: una historia en construcción," *Historia Crítica*, no. 17 (1998): 47–57, <http://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=81111329004>, p.55

Declaration of original research and word count

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of original research; it contains no materials accepted for any other degree in any other institution and no materials previously written and/or published by another person, except where appropriate acknowledgment is made in the form of bibliographical reference.

I further declare that the following word count for this thesis are accurate:

Body of thesis: 21,391 words

Entire manuscript: 26,229 words

Signed: Camila Ordorica Bracamontes

Acknowledgements

To all women-presenting people in the world who have been killed for embodying womanhood.

I would like to thank the professors that have taught me and trained me in academic and historical thinking, as well as my parents, my sister, and my friends for the support they have given me through my life, without which I could not have done this research.

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Introduction

The following research is a conceptual history of the concept of *femicide/feminicide/feminicidio* (*f/f/f*).⁴ The concept has been in development since 1976, and it has stretched over national and cultural boundaries, generating a global feminist theoretical and practical effort to visualize this particular form of gender-based violence. As a general rule, the definition of *f/f/f* concepts accounts for the murder of feminine bodies due to gender reasons. The concept's central claim is that women die and are murdered for different reasons than men, thus are victims of gender-based violence. This is the result of the hierarchization of masculine bodies through the institutionalization of patriarchal structures. In other words: the use of either of these three words studies and shows why and how women are killed and die and signal patriarchal structures as the main perpetrator.

As my research questions, I have applied Jean Terrier's questions published in his 2018 article "Observations on the Semantic Trajectory of Pluralism in Scholarly Discourse: A Study of Two Argumentative Tropes" and adapt them to study *f/f/f*. These questions are: first, how have multiple meanings been produced and changed? Second, what are the ongoing debates regarding these meanings? And third, what are the historical changes brought about from the invention of concepts?⁵ In doing so, I argue for the instability of the concept, its condition of invention, and the potential feminism has to change the world.

⁴ As it will be demonstrated, there is no consensus for the grammar of the word. The debate regarding how it should be written, and what that writing means, is part of the ongoing conversation about the scope and the limits of the definition of the concept. I will use "femicide", "feminicide", or "*feminicidio*" whenever I talk about the particular acceptability of the term in specified contexts. Otherwise, whenever the conceptual construction/phenomenon as a whole is being analyzed or mentioned I will refer to it as *f/f/f*.

⁵ Terrier, "Observations on the Semantic Trajectory of Pluralism in Scholarly Discourse." p.100

I understand invention the same way that Mexican historian Edmundo O’Gorman understands a historical invention to become in history in his book *La invención de América* (*The Invention of America*). O’Gorman argues through a Heideggerian understanding of historical ontology that the continent of America was not discovered but was instead invented. The difference and the potential in understanding the “discovery of America” as the “invention of America” reside in the fact that the character of invention does not retroactively interpret the past. For O’Gorman, Cristopher Columbus made a trip across the ocean with the unconditional hypothesis that supposed that land laid to the west, as he believed the Isle of Earth to be larger than acknowledged. When he returned with the news of what had been seen, both the official discourse and the scientific discourse understood the reports of Cristopher Columbus as a conditional *idea* subject to proof.⁶ Literature, science and political analysis got to the task of proving if what Columbus had found was indeed new land, and they did so by producing literature that proved the existence of what they saw as America, of what they invented America to be. The producers of this discourses saw, interpreted, and invented what they were seeing materially and named it “America.”

In the same way but for a different object of study, I argue that *f/f/f* is a feminist invention that believes in the existence that the way women die and are murdered has to do with patriarchal structures of oppression. This idea has been proved through various discourses and research projects that result in the production of specialized literature in a global order of feminist discussion. As a feminist invention, the meanings attributed to the concept have contextual limits, which have been stretched using cultural translations, thus re-filled with variable sociopolitical

⁶ O’Gorman, Edmundo. 1995. *La invención de América*. México D.F: FCE.p.11

meaning. This process is what O’Gorman denominates as an invention, and this is how I understand *f/f/f* to be a feminist invention.

Before the 1970s, the murder of feminine bodies due to gender reasons did not have nomenclature. The concept of this form of murder as a social phenomenon had to be named in order for it to appear in history. It’s becoming in the present as historical time was achieved through the creation of a word that had to be filled with meaning shaped by politico-social contexts of meaning and experiences.⁷ The theorization of these contexts has been observed and studied by particular feminist thinkers, with variable understandings of feminism and the historical feminist movement, positioned in different geographical locations.

The variable meanings of the concept filled with different sociopolitical contexts result in different conceptualizations of the same word. It is in this sense that I argue that each time a new conceptualization of the word is a *re-invention*. This is because the changes in the words of *femicide*, *feminicidio* or *feminicide* change according to the observable contexts the word is filled with since it is a product of the historical construction of a place of enunciation where feminist thinkers speak about the different geo-political sociopolitical formations.

The study of *f/f/f* is interdisciplinary, and the disciplines that are present in conversation are generally social psychology, anthropology, sociology, legal studies, political science, economics, labor studies, and gender studies, as the main actors. The central gap that I see in the way that *f/f/f* is studied is that the discipline of history is absent from the conversation. In this sense, the main

⁷ Koselleck, Reinhart. 1985. *Futures Past. On the Semantics of Historical Time*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England: The MIT Press., p.84

contribution of my research to *f/f/f* literature is to bring the discipline of history into the conversation, so that the interdisciplinary character of the subject of study can be expanded, thus bringing new perspectives and sketching new solutions to the occurrence. I do this for I believe history has the potential to clarify the importance of contextualization to knowledge production practices, as well as to concept creation. To incorporate a historical approach to *f/f/f* is significant because history has the potential to portray answers regarding spatiotemporal conditions of possibility to the studied circumstances, thus deepening the analysis. The way history is used in *f/f/f* literature is through the incorporation of historical examples of famous executions of women.⁸ Furthermore, I believe that a historical study is able to give further insight as to how concepts are created in the present as a historical time.

The research of the historicity inscribed inside within *f/f/f* concept(s) is an intellectual endeavor that I have produced because of my particular interest in the theorization of time and the history of sociopolitical concepts. The topic of *f/f/f* served me inasmuch as it allowed this form of historical research to be possible and exciting. The results of my work and the evidence I was able to find showed me the extension of feminist theorization and meaning creation, while it also elucidated the relevance of a global women and gender history perspective for the study of feminism(s) as a series of historical social movements. The study of *f/f/f* is vital in and of itself because the phenomena these concept(s) designate are seeking justice for feminine bodies. In this sense, my principal concern with this research rests in my interest for theoretical, methodological, and

⁸ Most articles refer to contemporary ways in which women are being murdered around the world, and only a handful studies past experiences. See: Diana Russell, Jill Radford. 1992. "Part 1: Femicides as Old Patriarchy" in *Femicide, the politics of woman killing*. Buckingham: Open University Press, pp.25-76

historiographical postulates about the function on the operation of knowledge production and historical invention.

In the first chapter, I outline what I understand by history, as well as the methodological and theoretical presuppositions I have defined to construct the lens of analysis through which I have seen my object of study. In this chapter, I explain what I understand by history as a discipline and how I am using conceptual history. I also outline the basis to understand what history of the present time as a theory of periodization of historical time and the importance it has for the accurate production of a conceptual history. Furthermore, I explain what the women and gender history perspective of history brings to the table, and I outline the global character this form of research has to have if this form of research expects to be fruitful.

In the second chapter, I trace the origins of the concept of *femicide* to 1976 at the First International Tribunal on Crimes Against Women held in Brussel, where two U.S feminist alongside a Lebanese witness gave the first definition to the word, which was initially outlined by U.S American radical feminists. The later development of an academic category was produced by Diana E.H. Russell, a participant of radical feminism and a fierce advocate of the movement against pornography and *femicide*. Because one of my research questions asks for the ongoing debates about the meaning of concepts, I need to do some intellectual historical analysis to the academic production of the leading figures who have developed the most important definitions. This is because it is through the scrutiny of intellectual histories that the conceptual historian can elucidate and show the doctrines and ideologies inscribed within the imagination process of knowledge and concept creation.

In the third chapter, I analyze the Mexican understanding of *femicide* as *feminicidio*, concept invented by feminist Marcela Lagarde y de los Ríos. The concept came about because of the historical event of *the feminicidios of Ciudad Juárez*. I argue for the scrutiny of the historicity of this concept through the study of this event as an event of the interconnected present. This event was the result of the rise of violence and its relationship with the international War on Drugs and was studied and fought against in an international feminist academic and activist effort inscribed within the broader history of women's human right theorization and history of the United Nations, which I associate with the long-term historical process of the transnationally interconnected women's activism and activist scholarly discourses.

Finally, in the fourth chapter, I outline the overall conclusions of the research and the possibilities the object of study has for further expansion, as many loose paths of research remain. Keeping in mind Joan Scott's "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," I conclude that the conceptual historical study of *f/f/f* demonstrates that feminist socio-political concepts use differential understandings of the category of gender. Thus, the visible change in the usage of gender propelled by the increase in feminist and *f/f/f* literature alongside the fluctuating usages of "women" and "gender" as socio-political categories inside the concept(s) are an example of the "redefinition and restructuration in conjunction with a vision of political and social equality that includes not only sex, but class and race."⁹ Finally, I propose after what I call the "Ciudad Juárez Destabilization"¹⁰ (CJD), the concept acquired a new ontology which requires to be *re-invented* in order to appear in history.

⁹ Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *The American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (1986): 1053–75, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1864376>, p.1075

¹⁰ Reference to the fracture in meaning of the original concept of *femicide* into *feminicidio* in the Mexican context of Ciudad Juárez.

“To be sure, we need history. But we need it in a manner different from the way in which the spoilt idler in the garden of knowledge uses it, no matter how elegantly he may look down on our coarse and graceless needs and distresses. That is, we need it for life and action, not for a comfortable turning away from life and action or merely for glossing over the egotistical life and the cowardly bad act. We wish to use history only insofar as it serves living. But there is a degree of doing history and a valuing of it through which life atrophies and degenerates. To bring this phenomenon to light as a remarkable symptom of our time is every bit as necessary as it may be painful.” – Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Use and Abuse of History for Life*

Chapter 1 - On the Need for History

I understand the process of historical production as a human practice¹¹ that cannot in any way assume that its producer, the historian, is capable of erasing the particularities of her place of enunciation or her scope of research.¹² Following the theory of history developed by Michel de Certeau, I believe history to be an operation of the product of three characteristics: the place it is produced, the product of procedures of analysis, and the construction of a text.¹³ It is in the relation between the historian and her relationship with the social body that she is inscribed where the object of her historical research production lies.¹⁴ Furthermore, outlining my research with my standpoint recognizes that the “human knowledge of the empirical world is grounded in human experience.”¹⁵ This relation is connected with the socioeconomic, political, and cultural components that define the historians’ research questions and objects,¹⁶ as knowledge is always socially situated.¹⁷ Creating a historical feminist text is thus a process of pressure, privileges, and particularities through which topographies of interests are developed.¹⁸

¹¹ Certeau, Michel de. 2006. *La escritura de la historia*. Ciudad de México: Universidad Iberoamericana., p.52

¹² Certeau, *La escritura de la historia*, p.67

¹³ Certeau, p.68

¹⁴ Certeau, p.74

¹⁵ Harding, Sandra. 2004. "Introduction: Standpoint Theory as a Site of Political, Philosophic, and Scientific Debate." In *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader. Intellectual and Political Controversies*, by Sandra Harding (ed.), 1-16. London and New York : Routledge., p.7

¹⁶ Certeau, p.69

¹⁷ Harding, “Introduction”, p.7

¹⁸ Certeau, p.69

Understanding history as a product of the particular topographies of interest that are shaped through the social world that the historian embodies, I cannot in any way erase the particularities of the place where I speak from. This place constitutes the scope through which I have constructed my subject of study, as well as the implicit networks of information I have organized to make its existence visible. Therefore, I consider the acknowledgment of my positionality as a fundamental aspect of my research as it gives me particular critical insights through which I aim to contribute to human and feminist knowledge.¹⁹ Making this positionality explicit establishes an honesty platform between my individuality as a researcher and my topic of study, and I believe honesty in academical production is fundamental for the proper progression of knowledge production.

Having said that, I would like to start by stating that I am a Mexican woman whose subject of study is murdered female bodies. When living in Mexico, the concept *feminicidio* is part of everyday jargon: you see it in the news, you hear it in the streets, and the subject is debated in all forms of social interactions. Furthermore, one of the most important standpoints for *f/f/f* literature and activism is located in Mexico, for the magnitude of the case of *the feminicidios of Ciudad Juárez* is considered to be the most compelling and preposterous instance of *f/f/f*.²⁰ I will further address this case, but for the moment I will mention that since 1993, date when the case of *the feminicidios de Ciudad Juárez* is accepted to have started, Mexican culture, society and feminism have been reshaped through the proliferation of the concept of *feminicidio*.

¹⁹ Harding, "Introduction", p.9

²⁰ See: Consuelo Corradi et al., "Theories of Femicide and Their Significance for Social Research," *Current Sociology* 64, no. 7 (November 2016): 975–95, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011392115622256>, Gayón, Mariana Berlanga. 2016. "Feminicidio." In *Conceptos clave en los estudios de género*, by Eva Alcántara Hortensia Moreno. Ciudad de México: UNAM.

Experiencing life through a female body shapes practices, navigations, and understandings of the world. When in Mexico, the shape of my body translates into what feels like a death sentence. The threat of *feminicidio* becomes all too real, and gender-based violence acquires a tangibility that diffuses in other contexts. In Mexico City, most of the women in my social circles are engaging in the construction of safe spaces and networks through which we can share cab rides and real-time locations when moving independently in the city's entangled urban terrain. I cannot deny that this form of experiencing the world and the increase in the use of *feminicidio* in my immediate context is a fundamental aspect of my interest in Gender Studies in general, and *fff* in particular.

In this sense, my standpoint is fundamental for my academic interest in the subject, as the reiterated use of *feminicidio* in my immediate context is the origin of my intellectual preoccupation with the meaning of the concept. Its popularity and overuse made me curious about what it meant, and the more I read, the more I realized that I would have to engage in a long investigation, for I could not find one singular meaning, and the discrepancies and differences of the concept fascinated me. Each piece of literature available differed in its understanding of what the concept meant, but they all had a general underlining definition for it. How could it be possible that such different and yet so similar definitions could co-exist and coincide? What did *feminicidio* mean?

As my research developed, I discovered that the study of the Mexican case is fundamental to understand the genealogy of *fff*, and thus it became clear to me why it was that *feminicidio* in my context is such a popular word. As much as it may appear heavily biased to give an entire chapter to this historical spatial-temporal analysis of the Mexican case, it was also a surprise for me to discover this.

1.1 Studying *f/f/f* as historical: conceptual history and history of the present time

I argue that *f/f/f* can be studied through a historical lens of analysis, thus as the product of historical practices, first and foremost because as concepts they can be analyzed as the result of political, cultural, economic, and ideological symptoms that produce social effects.²¹ A historical practice depends upon the structure of society and thus, conceptual history is fundamentally intertwined with social history. Thus, when society endures changes, so do contingent practices. These contingencies enable the study of the practices as historical,²² and the changes in practices produce words that may or may not become socio-political concepts through which make references to these practices.²³ This is a particular way of understanding history, one that acknowledges the co-originality of language with social existence.

All through my research, I argue that *f/f/f* are socio-political concepts since they are shaped by the “plenitude of politico-social contexts of meaning and experience in and for which a word is used can be condensed into one word.”²⁴ As theoretical categories, *f/f/f* concept(s) are used to think of the broader social, political, cultural, and economic contexts where these forms of gendered murder are performed. Inasmuch as the way to understand the world is socially situated, the meanings of the concepts vary.

²¹ Certeau, Michel de. 1986. *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other (Theory and History of Literature)*. University of Minnesota Press., p.21

²² Certeau, *La escritura de la historia*, pp.77-80

²³ Koselleck, Reinhart, *Futures Past*, p.83

²⁴ Koselleck, *Futures Past*, p.84

The production of a historical analysis begins with the gesture of collecting and gathering documents, thus producing sources.²⁵ In this case, I will use feminist academic research publications as my primary source. The original purpose of these papers, with its considered variations which I will address in the in-depth analysis, is generally to bring light to *f/f/f* as a material occurrence, to debate among the available literature for better conceptualizations, to cast light on contextual particularities regarding *f/f/f*, and to sketch legal and social sciences responses and predicaments. In this research, I have departed from the original purpose of this articles from an ongoing conversation and presentation of facts into specific pieces of documentation that represent the history, the *discursive time*²⁶ that I am aiming to construct, that of the concept(s) of *f/f/f*. It is through the use of these materials in the manner mentioned above that I will reconstruct the historicity of the object of my study.

In my research, I have the aspiration to use history in order to construct the discursive temporality of these concept(s). This temporality shapes and is shaped by women and gender history, which can function by studying the history of the transnationally interconnected women's activisms and activist scholarly discourses (long-term duration, stability, and change,)²⁷ of analysis. In doing so, I argue that the temporal determinants of the concept(s) can be reconceived using a feminist understanding of time, which de-monopolizes the understanding of time to masculine logic. I thus propose a feminist temporalization of history through the study of the invention and use of the concepts produced by international feminist movements that I argue can function as an alternative way to understand social history.

²⁵ Certeau, *La escritura de la historia*, pp.86-87

²⁶ Certeau, p.104

²⁷ Koselleck, *Futures Past*, p.107

Finally, the decision to write this thesis through the “practice of the writing of history,” as Michel de Certeau would put it has two main aspects which differentiate it from other disciplines, and I turn to de Certeau’s words for a more transparent accountability of its power:

“On the one hand, the ethnologic and quasi-religious sense, writing plays the role of a burial rite; she exorcises death by introducing it to a discourse. On the other hand, the practice of writing has a *symbolizing* function; it allows for a society to situate itself through the attribution of language to the past, thus creating an opening for the present: ‘establishing’ the past is to give space to the dead, but is also to redistribute the space of possibilities, to negatively determine *what is still left to do* in order to use the narrativity that buries the dead as the means that can fixate a space for the living.”²⁸

In the same way, the writing of this form of history has the potential to introduce the dead into a discourse, while it can also be used to attribute language to the present as a historical time. With the historian turned towards the present instead of towards the past as its temporal space of study, she has the potential to engage politically with the lived times, with the lives at stake, and with the communities affected by violence which have become contemporary urgencies.²⁹ In this sense, the historical exercise of *f/f/f* also functions as an exorcism of the death, with aims to fixate a space for the living.

As it has been previously mentioned, the *discursive time* of the development of *f/f/f* begins in 1976 and is stretched until 2019. This is thus the time frame for my research and analysis. The question that arises now is what conceptual history is, what is its particular methodology, and how to frame

²⁸ Certeau, *La escritura de la historia*, p.117

²⁹ Eugenia Allier Montaño, “Balance de La Historia Del Tiempo Presente. Creación y Consolidación de Un Campo Historiográfico,” *Balance Sheet of the History of the Present Time: The Creation and Consolidation of a Historiographic Field.*, no. 65 (July 2018): 100–112, <https://doi.org/10.7440/res65.2018.09.>, p.110

f/f/f as a concept that can be studied through conceptual history. In order to establish the development of the debate regarding the construction of the concept(s) of *f/f/f* I will follow Reinhart Koselleck's theorization of history, conceptual history, as my principal methodology. I will also draw on the work produced by the History of Concepts Group, which is a global network of knowledge production, which can be found in the *Concepta: Contributions to the History of Concepts* journal, and by the work produced by the Iberoamerican studies group *Iberoconceptos: Proyecto y Red de Investigación en Historia Conceptual Comparada del Mundo Iberoamericano*. The work of both these conceptual history groups draws from Koselleck's theory of history. The work they have developed accounts for the lengths conceptual history can reach, both theoretically and methodologically. Looking into the journals and book publications strengthens my understanding how conceptual history can be applied beyond the original concepts proposed by Koselleck.

The conceptual history developed by Reinhart Koselleck follows on Kant and Heidegger's idea of what concepts are, which according to Rivero and Javier, he understood as a "net of distinctions that discriminate what part is defined and what is not is."³⁰ Koselleck's main contribution to the disciplinary genealogy that studies concepts is that he brought conceptual history from the discipline of philosophy to that of history.³¹ The philosophical interest with concepts studied through a historical perspective brings further spatiotemporal depth to conceptual creation. Koselleck argues that concepts are conceived in spatial terms and that they hold temporal

³⁰ Blanco Rivero and José Javier, "La historia de los conceptos de Reinhart Koselleck: conceptos fundamentales, Sattelzeit, temporalidad e histórica," *Politeia* 35, no. 49 (2012), <http://www.redalyc.org/resumen.oa?id=170029498009>, pp.5-6

³¹ Blanco Rivero and José Javier, "La historia de los conceptos de Reinhart Koselleck," p.5

meanings.³² This means that concepts are conceived within the limits of the space and time which create them, gap where the historian comes into play.

According to Koselleck, concepts can mediate between what we experience with our senses, and what we can communicate. It is thus of the utmost importance to study concepts for they are the way the social and cultural world is framed and communicated. Concepts can also change the material realms of the societies that create them while they also modify experiences and expectations of the social world in a specific historical and geographical location. In other words, they act as *indicators*³³ of the social world that they produce and that produces them. In order for concepts to “catch on,” they must develop semantic stability, which is achieved through a structure of repetition produced by social institutions that makes them possible. Following this theory, I argue that *f/f/f* has modified the experiences of the social world by making visible and criminalizing the murder of women due to patriarchal structures of oppression in particular ways that depend on the genealogy at hand.

Likewise, concepts are created by a synchronic and a diachronic element. The synchronicity regards the topical presentness of the events that give them meaning, that is the uses given to either *femicide*, *feminicidio* or *feminicide*, while the diachronicity refers the historical temporalization of women’s history as a long-term structural change, which makes possible each case.³⁴

³² Koselleck, Reinhart. 2002. *The Practice of Conceptual History. Timing History, Spacing Concepts*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, p.6

³³ Koselleck, *Futures Past*, p.82

³⁴ Koselleck, pp.31-32

From a temporal point of view, Koselleck organizes social and political concepts into three groups: (1) traditional concepts whose meanings have persisted even under modern conditions, (2) concepts whose content has changed radically over time in spite of the stability of the word, and (3) concepts that are “recurrently emerging neologism which reacts to specific sociopolitical circumstances.”³⁵ I argue that *f/f/f* can be understood as the third form of concept since they “register and provoke novelty of the circumstances at hand.”³⁶ These circumstances are that of the changes brought about by the history of global organizations, cooperation, and debate amongst women.

Political and social concepts are an “inherent part of politics because political life cannot dispense with them.”³⁷ As a political and social concept, *f/f/f* has now become part of the political history of the world. I argue so because *f/f/f* encompasses the explicit aim to indicate and modify the world that produces it through the signalization and criminalization of these practices. *F/f/f* is thus not only a rupture in the political history of the world, but it is also a manifestation of question-oriented politics that aim to open new horizons for discussion.³⁸ This is a sign of the changing of times, one where “old structures have made contact with new meanings, and thus new semantics are introduced in language as a result of new experiences.”³⁹

Finally, the invention and use of these concepts demonstrate the binding of historical experiences and collection of theoretical and practical references into a relationship, which can only be

³⁵ Koselleck, *Futures Past*, p.82

³⁶ Koselleck, p.82

³⁷ Kari Palonen, “The Politics of Conceptual History,” *Contributions to the History of Concepts* 1, no. 1 (March 1, 2005): 37–50, <https://doi.org/10.1163/187465605783406370>, p.46

³⁸ Palonen. “The Politics of Conceptual History”. p.46

³⁹ Javier Fernández Sebastián, Juan Francisco Fuentes, and Reinhart Koselleck, “Conceptual History, Memory, and Identity: An Interview with Reinhart Koselleck,” *Contributions to the History of Concepts* 2, no. 1 (March 1, 2006): 99–127, <https://doi.org/10.1163/187465606783406153>, p.103

observable through the concept itself.⁴⁰ These observable theoretical practices, denominated as “ideological currents which crystallized around the expression and they must be examined”⁴¹ by Koselleck are the indispensable basis of creation of socio-political concepts. Thus, the study of the forms of geographical and temporal localization of particular feminist practices which give meaning to *f/f/f* is the path to follow in order to make a viable conceptual history.

Conceptual history cannot manage without a theory of periodization.⁴² By this Koselleck refers to the temporal specificities of the political and social concepts that order source materials.⁴³ In addition to temporal specificities, he indicates that concepts are always conceived initially from the spatial realm, that means, from a geo-localized standpoint, expressed in metaphorical expressions. Thus, I turn to history of the present time as my theory of periodization. I argue that the concept of *f/f/f* is primarily characterized by its historical presentness, by the fact that it is rapidly reconstructed in real-life, as events unfold, as new investigations regarding the murder of women are made public. Thus, in order to address the prevailing presentness of the historicity of the concept, I will use the theory of periodization of the Latin American understanding of the historiographical postulate of the history of the present time, initially developed by French new history.⁴⁴

The history of the development of the history of the present time as a form of history production derives from the 20th-century turn in the humanities and social sciences. This methodological shift

⁴⁰ Koselleck, *Futures Past*, p.84

⁴¹ Koselleck, p.84

⁴² Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History*, p.4

⁴³ Koselleck, p.4

⁴⁴ Pierre Sauvage, “Una historia del tiempo presente,” *Historia Crítica*, no. 17 (1998): 59–70, <http://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=81111329005>.

came from the distancing that history, in particular, took from more “traditional” and politically popular forms of making history, thus developing social history, cultural history, intellectual history, and sexual history to name a few examples.⁴⁵ According to historian Hugo Fazio, this historical operation of change increased the importance in the study of historical processes and structures of change, thus separating history from political history, which had always been the “natural” environment for history to be produced.⁴⁶

As a second element to consider, Fazio distinguishes a change in the historical work produced due to the amount of information available in the present. By this, the author means that the present, differently than any other period in the history of, has a quasi-congestion of available information, which can all be historicized. For example, in the case study at hand and since the first academic publication on the subject in 1992, the amount of literature on the subject has been rapidly growing. When looking for the topic “*femicide*” in JSTOR 61 results are retrieved, out of which 42 are journal publications, and 19 are book chapters. In applying the date of production filter to the database, 56 results appear to have been produced between 1992 and 2019, out of which 36 were published between 2010 and 2019. This means that 60 percent of the overall results available in one of the essential academic databases were produced in the last nine years and that the growth of this production is progressively increasing.

⁴⁵ Because the history of the present time is a historical practice in construction, there are discrepancies as to the reasons why this form of history came to be, to the time-line proposal of their emergence, and to the chronological schematization of what is conceived to be the “present.” Nevertheless, in my research I follow the work produced by Colombian historian Hugo Fazio, and by the Latin American understanding of what the history of the present time is. I choose to do so because I agree with his theoretical proposal the most and because its various constitutive and methodological elements are the most useful to my research. Furthermore, I believe it to be imperative to use Latin American theoretical productions in order to further demonstrate that Latin America is not only a place to be studied, but that it is a geo-political region that produces theory. For other theorizations see: **Sauvage**, Pierre, “Una historia del tiempo presente,” **Gamboa**, Angel Soto, “Historia del Presente: Estado de la cuestión y conceptualización,” *Historia Actual Online*, no. 3 (2004): 10, <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=829443..>

⁴⁶ Fazio, “La historia del tiempo presente.”, p.49

The history of the present time is the adaptation of the historical practice to be in synchrony, to adapt to the circumstances that are in development.⁴⁷ Furthermore, it is a social and political need that aims to understand the vertiginous occurrences continuously happening all around us. *F/f/f* concept(s) can be studied as a present phenomenon through the application of the history of the present time because of the aforementioned proposed chronology of its development. Fazio argues that for history of the present time to differentiate itself from contemporary history, it has to be studied from the decade of the 90s onwards,⁴⁸ where a new global order resulting of the interconnection of the world in a post-Cold War setting.

The history of the present time has to be affirmed within three temporal spaces in order for its present character to become visible. These temporal spaces are that of immediacy, the broader period of time where the event is encompassed, and the third space is that of the long-term process.⁴⁹ In this sense, 1976, the date when *femicide* was mentioned for the first time in the First International Tribunal on Crimes Against Women becomes the second temporal ground that constructs the present as a historical time. This is because the concept was made public and some witnesses gave testimony of it in the Tribunal, but factual academic production was published only since 1992. Finally, the long-term historical process that englobes these smaller times is the history of the transnationally interconnected women's activisms and activist scholarly discourses. Therefore, the intention behind studying *f/f/f* concept(s) as a phenomenon using the methodology of the history of the present time with women and gender history perspective is substantiated.

⁴⁷ Fazio, p.51

⁴⁸ Fazio, p.51

⁴⁹ Fazio, p.55

The two historically contextual examples I will be analyzing are that of U.S 1970s radical feminism and that of 1990s Mexican feminism. I study only these two moments in detail, which reference the long- and medium-term temporality inscribed inside conceptual historicity. Because of the space restrictions of this particular thesis, I can only sketch the complications and outline the map as to how the immediate temporal meaning creation of the variable definitions' *f/f/f* has experienced from the late 1990s can be studied. Nevertheless, I address the concerns and particularities of the study of *f/f/f* as a concept which is changing in the light of the present as historical time.

1.2 Transnational/global feminist history: Women and gender history methodology

It is possible to study and thus understand *f/f/f* as a global and present time object of conceptual study, among other things, because of transnational dimension inscribed in its historicity. It is possible to reconstruct this historicity because of the transnational efforts done by women and gender historians in the recollection and analysis of the sources left behind by women's organizations since the 19th century. Some of these sources have been compiled and are now available through various feminist and women's history archives all around the world.⁵⁰ Because of the study of women and gender history in this light, women and gender historians agree that it has been through the historical network of women's activism that much of the political progress of women has come about. Thus, the historicity of the concept(s) of *f/f/f* is a global phenomenon that goes hand-in-hand with the history of the international connections of women reflected in the

⁵⁰ For example, Kathryn Kish Sklar and Thomas Dublin have co-edited since 2016 a database named "Women and Social Movements, International", which is composed by two separate archives, "Women and Social Movements in Modern Empires Since 1820" and "Women and Social Movements, International – 1840 to Present". This database holds thousands of documents that bind together hundreds of different national chapters of the transnationally interconnected women's activisms and activist scholarly discourses, thus presenting it as a unified unit of analysis. The presentation of these movements and literature as this unicity of knowledge and activism demonstrates the continuity of the organization and its inseparable global character.

transnationally interconnected women's activisms and activist scholarly discourses. These movements and connections have enabled the emergence of the traveling of feminist concepts and ideas across cultures and national boundaries. In this sense, the long-term process that encompasses the historicity of *f/f/f* goes all the way back to the 1820s.

In my research, I argue for the globalized aspect of the development of theories that aim to encompass the experiences, structures, and processes that interplay within the occurrence of *f/f/f*. I do so for two main reasons. The first one regards the historical globality that exists in the contemporary historical present and the influence this global world has regarding knowledge production practices.⁵¹ I understand the global character of history, mainly through the history of the present time as it encompasses a historical postulate of globality that serves the purposes of my subject of study. Other theories of globalization may come in handy for more extensive research projects, but for the research at hand, I will frame the analysis only through this historiographical postulate.

In this sense, Hugo and Daniela Fazio argue for the importance of a global understanding of contemporary events, and they do so on the basis that there is no plausible way to understand the present world without taking into consideration the phenomenon of globalization.⁵² They maintain that the history of the present time is impossible to understand without the contemporary meaning of the temporal prevalence of the present through a reflection of the phenomenon of globalization.⁵³

⁵¹ Hugo Fazio and Daniela Fazio, "El tiempo y el presente en la historia global y su época," *Revista de Estudios Sociales* 65 (July 1, 2018): 12–21, <https://doi.org/10.7440/res65.2018.02.>, p.13

⁵² Fazio and Fazio, "El tiempo y el presente," p.15

⁵³ Fazio and Fazio, p.15

The globalization process is conceived to be *cronotropic* in the sense that it links time and space under the same rubric, as well as it links social phenomena.⁵⁴ In other words, the historical discipline in the post-1989 world has become a global history, as it reflects the contemporary transformations in modern institutions.⁵⁵ This form of history argues for the correlation between modernity and globalization as fundamental aspects of the present as a historical time. Understanding history in this fashion means that an acceptance that history has become global and has thus substituted universal and world histories.⁵⁶

I am following the building of concepts from a global history perspective that differs from general modernist Eurocentric understandings of modern history and is thus based on the understanding of a world in common. The understanding of the world in this fashion procures a synchronic understanding of all forms of experiences in a global history scheme, which is also a decolonial endeavor that aims for the decentering of Eurocentric modernity.⁵⁷ Furthermore, the complexity of the processes of the contemporary world can only be apprehended and further analyzed through its scrutiny on a global scale.⁵⁸ Thus, the process of concept development that *f/f/f* as an academic concept has undergone since the 1990s can in no way be understood without global scrutiny of the practices that circumscribe it. These are concepts that have traveled around the world and that have been adapted to local contexts and local understandings of reality and violence.

⁵⁴ Fazio and Fazio, p.15

⁵⁵ Fazio, Hugo. 2010. *La historia del tiempo presente: historiografía, problemas y métodos*. Bogotá: Universidad de los Andes., p.109

⁵⁶ Fazio, *La historia del tiempo presente*, p.111

⁵⁷ This understanding of a non-Eurocentric modernity derives from an Einsteinian understanding of time. This form of time, unlike the Newtonian one, sees historical time as a manifestation of multiple social phenomena, and thus recognizes that there are various experiences of modernity. See: Fazio and Fazio, “El tiempo y el presente,” p.16

⁵⁸ Fazio and Fazio, p.17

The second reason to study *f/f/f* through a global lens on analysis, much like the history of the present time is because of critical women, and gender history considers for globalization a defining aspect of the lives and minds of the inhabitants of the world in the 21st century.⁵⁹ From a transnational perspective, women, gender, and feminist history are both influenced by this process of globalization and driven by it.⁶⁰ Another point in common women and gender history holds with history of the present time is that it has also been since the decade of the 1990s that this form of research has intensified.⁶¹ In analyzing the so-called “first-wave” of the International Women’s Movement, Rupp mentions the following: “Understanding that the national women’s movements influenced each other not only directly but also through their interactions in the international arena gives us a more richly textured history of global women’s movements.”⁶²

About more contemporary representations of the transnationally interconnected women’s activisms and activist scholarly discourses the concept of “transnational” has now become “a new way of looking at different kinds of historical objects that transcend national or cultural boundaries.”⁶³ This results in the consolidation of a transnational approach to women and gender history, which synthesizes, amongst other things, information flows and transfers.⁶⁴ In this sense, understanding *f/f/f* production as a transnational/global process of formation gives new perspectives and historical

⁵⁹ Oliver Janz, Daniel Schönpflug. 2014. *Gender History in a Transnational Perspective. Biographies, Networks, Gender Order*. New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books., p.1

⁶⁰ Janz and Schönpflug, *Gender History in a Transnational Perspective*., p.1

⁶¹ See: **Oliver Janz, Daniel Schönpflug**. *Gender History in a Transnational Perspective*, and **Francisca de Haan, Margaret Allen, June Purvis, Krassimira Daskalova**. 2013. *Women’s Activism. Global Perspectives from the 1890s to the Present*. London and New York: Routledge.

⁶² Rupp, Leila J. 1997. *Worlds of Women. The Making of an International Women’s Movement*. Princeton: Princeton University Press., pp.207-208

⁶³ Janz and Schönpflug, *Gender History in a Transnational Perspective*, p.2

⁶⁴ Janz and Schönpflug, p.2

questions to the usage and origins of the concept(s), which is one of the main goals of transnational women and gender history.⁶⁵

This historical focus through which I define most of my analysis accounts for the globalized aspect of the history of the transnationally interconnected women's activisms and activist scholarly discourses as a lens of analysis through which I understand women and gender histories as both global and historic, and not just as independent political struggles.⁶⁶ In this sense, a transnational perspective in this manner allows me to frame *f/f/f* around them in order "to explore entangled histories and interconnections between groups, societies, and cultures, both synchronically and through time."⁶⁷ Furthermore, this global perspective is critical and conscious of the differences in the processes lived, experiences, and produced by women positioned in different locations in the globe.⁶⁸ *F/f/f* literature provides a wide range of understandings of gender-based violence in the world, and all of their variations have proven to respond to contextualized conditions of possibility. I thus argue for the transnational understanding of the material reality *f/f/f* represents, and for the theoretical construction that responds and shapes it as a way to further understand the differentiated experiences and structures that feminist knowledge production faces.

Throughout the thesis, I outline the three temporal spaces that constitute the temporality of *f/f/f* concept(s), thus determining its possibilities for historization. These are the history of the transnationally interconnected women's activisms and activist scholarly discourses as the long-

⁶⁵ Janz and Schönplugg, p.18

⁶⁶ See: **Karen Offen, Ruth Roach Pierson, Jane Rendall.** 1991. *Writing Women's History. International Perspectives.* Hong Kong: The MacMillan Press LTD., **Offen Karen.** 2010. *Globalizing Feminisms 1789-1945.* New York: Routledge.

⁶⁷ de Haan, Allen, Purvis, Daskalova. *Women's Activism*, p.5

⁶⁸ de Haan, Allen, Purvis, Daskalova., p.5

term process, the 1970s radical feminist formulation as the medium-range process, and the 1990s as the immediate presentness temporal space of conceptual meaning creation.

The first cluster refers to the original work produced to develop the concept of *femicide* and its relationship with radical feminism. The second cluster refers to the original destabilization of the definition of the concept produced by Mexican feminists in its understanding as *feminicidio*. The third cluster regards the eruption of the concept by using the general understanding of *femicide*, *feminicidio* or *feminicide* as a recognized unstable concept, open to the opportunity to be defined by the context it signals. I argue for the importance to study of the Mexican case as a particularity, thus in need for a separate and individual analysis because of the consequences, both positive and negative, that the theorization of *feminicidio* in this region accounted for. Because of the contextual particularities of the Mexican case and the theoretical development of the meaning of *feminicidio*, the concept produced changes in reality as it was typified as a crime. This analysis is based on the idea that the interrelation between material historical developments and the concepts that describe them exists in an ongoing manner.⁶⁹

These clusters are internally organized by the two following principles. The first principle is that the three clusters account for the inter/transnational aspect of the knowledge production hereby scrutinized. This is as such because the history of feminist knowledge production and that of women's movements is a dialogue that undoubtedly plays in the international arena. The global aspect of feminism concerning the particularities of knowledge production is a global process since feminist ideas and concepts inherently travel across borders, as has been demonstrated by Kathy

⁶⁹ Terrier, "Observations on the Semantic Trajectory of Pluralism in Scholarly Discourse," p.100

David's *The Making of Our Bodies, Ourselves. How Feminism Travels Across Borders*. Furthermore, this process is global inasmuch as the present as a historical time is fundamentally composed by the component of contemporary globalization. The second principle has to do with the argument that the traveling of knowledge and concepts, their appropriations, and their further use is based on timing. In this sense, something must first be said to that it can then travel and be *re-invented* elsewhere. Thus, by making visible the internal chronologies of the clusters of organization, I aim to elucidate further the present character of the temporal structure that composes the particular historicity of *f/f/f* concept(s).

In breaking the articles up into these groups with reference to time and space and in analyzing the ways in which the constructions of the concept have come to be, my aim is to further understand how the multiple meanings of *f/f/f* have been produced and changed, to study what are the ongoing debates regarding these meaning, and third to analyze what are the changes produced in reality through the theoretical development of these meanings.⁷⁰ Furthermore, by allowing the historicity of the concept to have a thematic principle of organization, I aim to demonstrate the particularities of the production of meaning this concept(s) have acquired, while also allowing the differential definitions *f/f/f* has to dialogue amongst similar characterizations of the phenomenon at hand. In doing this, I maintain that the reader will be able to acquire a deeper understanding of the complexity concept production has in general, and in *f/f/f* in particular. I argue that the exemplification of the complex of the processes through which feminist concepts are invented and endowed with meaning should be an essential aspect of gender studies as an academic discipline, because it proposes that fighting universal claims is a good thing in and of itself.

⁷⁰ , p.100

Summarizing the theoretical and methodological proposal presented in this chapter, I have decided to study the construction of *f/f/f* concept(s) through the history of concepts proposal supported by the history of the present time as my theory of periodization with a women and gender history perspective. In using these three methodologies of history, the global character of the concept construction practice of *f/f/f* becomes visible. My objective in doing this exercise is to understand how the multiple meanings of *f/f/f* have been produced and changed and to study what are the ongoing debates regarding their meaning. By doing this, my research will further problematize the growing de-contextualized usage of *f/f/f* as an over-arching metahistorical concept.

In the following chapter, I study the particularities of the original invention of *femicide* in its radical feminist inception in the late 1970s as part of an international consciousness raising conversational forum in the First International Tribunal on Crimes Against Women.

Chapter 2 - The radical feminist international invention of femicide

In the previous chapter, I briefly outlined what I am proposing as a new categorization for the understanding of the analysis done through various disciplines of *f/f/f* as a phenomenon and as a feminist theorization. These clusters of organization are: (1) the early works on *femicide* in its radical feminist formulation, (2) *feminicidio*, the Mexican case as a response to *the feminicidios of Ciudad Juárez* as a historical event, (3) *femicide/feminicide/feminicidio*, global and contextual *re-invention* by a global feminist knowledge production rephrase. In the present chapter, I begin by analyzing the origin of the word *femicide* and its relationship with the historical transnationally interconnected women's activisms and activist scholarly discourses through its inception in the 1976 First International Tribunal on Crimes Against Women. The Tribunal was conducted and organized by a seemingly global radical feminist platform but was mostly western dominated.

In the chapter, I study radical feminism in itself alongside the intellectual production of Diana E.H. Russell as a figure of radical feminism. Studying Russell is pertinent inasmuch as she is generally considered to be the inventor of *femicide* by *f/f/f* literature. Through this initial analysis, I aim to further strengthen the understanding of the original concept of *femicide* as historically contingent and dependent on broader long-term historical processes, mainly as I argue this is part of the transnationally interconnected women's activisms and activist scholarly discourses as the long-term feminist historical process.

2.1 “The personal is political” – Radical feminism and femicide

Radical feminism's slogan is that “the personal is political” meaning that women's sexuality has a political dimension. Radical feminists that women's oppression was the “first, oldest, and primary

form of oppression.”⁷¹ During the 60s and at the beginning of the 70s in the United States, small groups of women discussing their sexual lives began to emerge. Through this form of conversational platform, women analyzed the social basis of their sexual discontent through conscious raising practices like these conceived as a political tool⁷² The idea of these radical feminist circles was that through the analysis of women’s discontent with their sexuality and their sexual practices, women would be able to figure out together how to transform the oppressive situation that the women of the world were in.⁷³ Radical feminists’ idea of sexuality revolves around its relationship with power in the sense that the agenda was directed towards women taking control over their lives and their bodies, retrieving them from the male yoke, which equates sexual relation as another form of oppression of women.⁷⁴ In this sense, marriage was conceived as an unequal social and cultural institution fundamental to the denunciation of personal violence.

Feminist scholarship has characterized radical feminism generally using its universal construction of the category of “women.”⁷⁵ In radical feminist literature, the category of “women” is understood as a political class characterized by a sexual function.⁷⁶ In this sense, the category of “women” would account for oppression under capitalism done by means of the sex role attributed to women to promote consumerism.⁷⁷ If “women” is a political class characterized by a sexual function, then crimes against women must necessarily be sexualized, since oppression is produced due to a power

⁷¹ Crow, Barbara A. 2000. “Introduction” in *Radical Feminism. A Documented Reader*. New York and London: New York University Press., p.2

⁷² Alix Kates Shulman, “Sex and Power: Sexual Bases of Radical Feminism,” *Signs* 5, no. 4 (1980): 590–604, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3173832>, p.593

⁷³ Shulman., “Sex and Power,” p.594

⁷⁴ Shulman., p.596

⁷⁵ Crow, Barbara, “Introduction,” p.3

⁷⁶ Atkinson, Ti-Grace. 2000. “Radical Feminism.” In *Radical Feminism. A Documentary Reader*, by Barbara A. Crow, 82-90. New York and London: New York University Press.

⁷⁷ Ellen Willis, “Radical Feminism and Feminist Radicalism,” *Social Text*, no. 9/10 (1984): 91–118, <https://doi.org/10.2307/466537>, p.93

dynamic structured around gender differences, represented in control over the sexuality of women as gendered bodies.

As in almost every topic of research, there are precise figures whose work is indispensable for the topic itself and the analysis. Regarding the available academic literature on *f/f/f*, it is clear that this figure is by Diana E.H Russell. Russell is a U.S based South African radical feminist and social psychologist that pioneered in *f/f/f* literature production, as she was the first person who introduced the concept *femicide*. Her contribution is so widely spread, that whenever articles refer to the genealogy of the concept(s) of *f/f/f*, Russell is almost invariably mentioned as its creator. Furthermore, Russell names herself the person who coined the term, as she mentions in her online article “The Origin and Importance of the Term Femicide:” “If I hadn't used and disseminated the term *femicide* by speaking and publishing books about it, there would be no such term [...]”⁷⁸

Russell's academic path has mostly been directed towards researching, writing, and publishing on radical feminist topics,⁷⁹ and she is a critical anti-pornography advocate. Some of her books are *The Politics of Rape; Rape in Marriage; Sexual Exploitation: Rape, Child Sexual Abuse, and Workplace Harassment; Making Violence Sexy: Feminist Views on Pornography*. As the inventor of *femicide*, the first time she made the concept public was at the First International Tribunal on Crimes Against Women in Brussels, Belgium. This Tribunal followed the principles outlined by the theorization of consciousness-raising methods through the sharing of experiences regarding

⁷⁸ Russell, Diana. 2011. "The Origin and Importance of the Term Femicide." *Diana E.H. Russell, PhD*. December. Accessed April 19, 2019. http://www.dianarussell.com/origin_of_femicide.html.

⁷⁹ “Lone Radical Feminist Actions.Pdf,” accessed May 7, 2019, http://www.dianarussell.com/f/Lone_Radical_Feminist_Actions.pdf.

sexual violence and sex class oppression as means for political action as it aimed to create a safe space for women to share their personal sexual experiences in order to politicize them.

2.2 “Sisterhood is powerful! International sisterhood is more powerful!” - the First International Tribunal on Crimes Against Women

The first historical moment of the genealogy of *femicide* is in its inception and first political presentation in the 1976 First International Tribunal on Crimes Against Women which took place in the Palace des Congrès in Brussels, Belgium. Here, Russell was a participant and primary organizer. Information on the tribunal can be found in the document entitled *Crime Against Women. Brussels: Proceedings of the International Tribunal on Crimes Against Women* which was produced by Russell and Nicole Van de Ven and is composed of four parts: 1) Testimony and Reports, 2) Solutions, Resolutions, Proposals for Change, 3) Herstory of the International Tribunal, 4) Critique. The document can be accessed at the Women and Social Movements International online archive and on Diana Russell’s web page.⁸⁰

According to the proceedings of the tribunal, this congress was born out of several conversations between feminists, as a follow up to the World Conference on Women held in Mexico City in 1975.⁸¹ The main aim of the 1976 conference was to respond to the naming of the year 1975 as the International Women’s Year by the United Nations. Simone de Beauvoir mentioned that the feminists that organized and attended the tribunal in 1976 conceived the International Women’s Year as an event orchestrated by a men society with the purpose to confuse women.⁸² Thus, the

⁸⁰ “Articles and Books Online,” accessed May 28, 2019, https://www.dianarussell.com/articles_and_books_online.html.

⁸¹ "INTRODUCTION." In *Crimes Against Women: Proceedings of the International Tribunal*, edited by Diana Russell and Nicole Van De Ven, NA. East Palo Alto, CA: Frog in the Well, 1984. https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cdocument%7C1647896.

⁸² "Preface." In *Crimes Against Women*.

tribunal was a reaction that further expropriated the power of discussion about women's issues from patriarchal institutions and nations.

In the re-edition of *Crimes Against Women: Proceedings of the International Tribunal* published in 1984 Russell and Van de Ven claimed that the Tribunal was "an important event in the evolution of feminism globally"⁸³ and it "brought together women from many parts of the world to testify about their experiences of female oppression and violence against women and to denounce the abuse of women in its many forms."⁸⁴ The structure of the groups where radical women conversed about their sexual experiences in the U.S was replicated in the Tribunal where an exchange of experiences served to "argue[d] procedures and politics."⁸⁵

The subject of the tribunal was violence, and the objective was to denounce all forms of violent oppression against women through a rejection of patriarchal definitions of crime.⁸⁶ This feminist proposal of justice argues for the "sharing [of] our personal experiences of oppression as means to become politicized and motivated to struggle against that oppression and the societal conditions producing it, rather than engaging in theoretical debates divorced from [our] personal experiences."⁸⁷

In this platform, violence in the form of crimes against women was to act as the cohesive element that all women in the world endure, and thus would transcend other categories of differences: "[F]or

⁸³ "NEW INTRODUCTION TO THE REPRINT EDITION." In *Crimes Against Women*.

⁸⁴ "NEW INTRODUCTION TO THE REPRINT EDITION."

⁸⁵ "NEW INTRODUCTION TO THE REPRINT EDITION."

⁸⁶ "INTRODUCTION." In *Crimes Against Women*

⁸⁷ "INTRODUCTION."

us to recognize our common interests as women in combating the crimes we are subjected to, should help us more easily transcend differences in nationality, as well as culture, class, race, sexual preference, age, religion, and politics.”⁸⁸ As did the postulates of radical feminism previously mentioned, the recollection of personal experiences allowed their politicizing. Transforming the personal as political it was assumed would then overturn the hegemonic gender order of male oppression in a patriarchal society.

This congress was attended by women of more than 40 countries, where the most attendees came from Germany (300), Spain (60), U.S (50), England (40), France (30), Switzerland (30), and Belgium (100).⁸⁹ The way the four-day congress worked was that there were four hours set aside for spontaneous testimony, and there were workshops where the crimes were analyzed and discussed. The topics of the workshops were: abortion, medical crimes, economic crimes, double oppression of Third World women, wages-for-housework, rape, wife beating, prostitution, pornography, persecution of lesbians, violence towards women political prisoners, medical self-help, elderly women, single mothers, feminist therapy, capitalism and women’s oppression, anti-feminist socialism, the setting up of an international newsletter, the outcome of the Tribunal, and finally a workshop that did a critique of the Tribunal.⁹⁰ All the topics discussed at the tribunal workshops referred to forms of violence perpetrated against women as a global sex class with different backgrounds.

⁸⁸ "INTRODUCTION."

⁸⁹ "Part I: The International Tribunal Begins." In *Crimes Against Women*, p.2

⁹⁰ "Part I: The International Tribunal Begins," p.5

The predominance of feminists of European and U.S American background is evident, as demonstrated by the number of attendees from each country. The voices of Third World women were small in number, but their testimonies were indicative of “the issues and concerns that have emerged in the past few years as feminism has grown more visible in those regions.”⁹¹ In order for women to participate, they had to speak of their experiences through the concepts that were proposed by the Congress itself. *Femicide* is an example of this. Invented by Russell originally to refer to the rising murder of women in the U.S and the capability of denouncing it in this country, for her *femicide* should nevertheless function as the global way to refer to this phenomenon.

In the *Crime Against Women* document, *femicide* is mentioned for the first time as a subsection in Part 1 as a workshop where three women participated: two from the United States and one from Lebanon. The subsection begins with the following preface:

“We must realize that a lot of homicide is in fact *femicide*. We must recognize the sexual politics of murder. From the burning of witches in the past, to the more recent widespread custom of female infanticide in many societies, to the killing of women for “honor,” we realize that *femicide* has been going on a long time. But since it involves mere females, there was no name for it until Carol Orlock invented the word ‘*femicide*.’”⁹²

This description, alongside the definition the witnesses give through their experience to the word, is the original definition of the concept. 1976 is thus the year of the invention of *femicide*, and it is the medium range process of temporal spatiality in which its historicity is inscribed.

⁹¹ "NEW INTRODUCTION TO THE REPRINT EDITION." In *Crimes Against Women*

⁹² "FEMICIDE." In *Crimes Against Women*, p.144

As the previous quote exemplifies, Carol Orlock is who came up with the word for the murder of women.⁹³ Orlock is a U.S fiction author based in the University of Washington, where she teaches creative writing. Russell has always been evident regarding the fact that she did not, indeed, invent the word in its grammatical construction, but that she gave it its first definition. A word without a definition is just a word. Thus, the apparent lack of definition *femicide* had in the hands of Orlock became a concept in those of Russell. In a small text called “The Origin and Importance of the Term Femicide” available in Russell’s website,⁹⁴ she mentions that she heard the concept from a friend, who told her that someone in the U.S was planning on writing a book named ‘*Femicide*.’⁹⁵ In her own words:

I first heard this word 37 years ago in 1974 when a friend in London told me that she had heard that a woman in the United States was planning to write a book titled “*Femicide*”. I immediately became very excited by this new word, seeing it as a substitute for the gender-neutral word ‘homicide.’⁹⁶

After being aware of the word, Russell worked on its definition, which she presented for the first time in 1976 at the International Tribunal, but it was not until the workshops in the Tribunal that *femicide* became a political concept aimed at referring to the shared global experiences of women. The experiences consisted of three prepared testimonies, two from the U.S and one from Lebanon.

According to the report given on workshop and contained in the 1984 re-edition of *Crimes Against Women: Proceedings of the International Tribunal*, the first witness, with a focus on the U.S,

⁹³ In the book chapter “Defining Femicide and Related Concepts” available in *Femicide in Global Perspective*, Russell gives an alternative genealogy of the concept of *femicide*. It will be accounted for in subsection 2.3.1.1.

⁹⁴ Russell’s website was created by AntiPornography.org and is an account for her life as an academic. It holds her CV, a large number of articles, and videos about her conferences and presentations.

⁹⁵ Russell, Diana. 2011. “The Origin and Importance of the Term Femicide.” *Diana E.H. Russell, PhD*. December. Accessed April 19, 2019. http://www.dianarussell.com/origin_of_femicide.html.

⁹⁶ Russell, Diana. 2011. “The Origin and Importance of the Term Femicide”

defines *femicide* both as “violent husband death” and as “rape-murder,” where the former refers to the murder of women in the patriarchal family, while the latter indicates the death of women due to sexual aggression.⁹⁷ After an introduction where Witness #1 presented numbers that accounted for the violence endured by women by the hands of men, Witness #1 read out loud 17 *femicide* cases gathered from San Francisco newspapers and movies by Louise Merrill. She finished her intervention by declaring the following:

The women slaughtered in these [pornographic] movies have no name. The names of those I have read out to you today will soon be obliterated. No demonstrations have accompanied them to the grave, no protests rocked the city, no leaflets were passed out, no committees were formed. But today we have remembered them. And tomorrow we must act to stop *femicide*.⁹⁸

Femicide, as the death of women due to sexual aggression as defined by Witness #1 is a political representation of the power dynamic between the sexes inside the marriage institution. The denunciation of the unequal power dynamics present in the male-female sex relationship with the outcome of death is how this personal experience became political.

The second witness was poet Pat Parker. Parker was an African American lesbian feminist and activist poet. Parker read what at the time was an unpublished poem about the murder of her sister to the hands of her husband. The poem accounts for the violence and the lack of response and effectiveness from the authorities towards conjugal violence, and the death of the wife. In this case, the concept through which Parker accounts for this experience is not *femicide*, is “*womanslaughter*,” as the poem is entitled. Next, a brief excerpt from the poem:

⁹⁷ "FEMICIDE." In *Crimes Against Women*, p.145

⁹⁸ "FEMICIDE," p.146

[...]

“Hello, Hello Police
I am a woman alone
and I am afraid.
My ex-husband means to kill me.”

“Fear not, Lady
He will be sought.”
It was too late,
when he was caught.
One day a quiet man
shot his quiet wife
three times in the back.
He shot her friend as well.
His wife died.

What shall be done with this man?
Is it a murder of first degree?
No, said the men
It is a crime of passion.
He was angry

[...]

I will come with my many sisters
and decorate the streets
with the innards of those
brothers-in-womenslaughter.
No more, can I dull my rage
in alcohol and deference
to men’s courts.
I will come to my sisters,
not dutiful,
I will come strong.⁹⁹

Femicide as *womanslaughter* in Pat Parker’s understanding also refers to the death of the universalized women at the hands of the masculine partner inside the institution of heterosexual marriage. Differently, the testimony of Witness #1, Parker denounces the lack of legal structures

⁹⁹ "FEMICIDE," p.147-150

to protect women, which interpret the sexualized murder as a crime of passion. The experience of the murder of Parker's sister is an example of the basic component of the modern sexual system, where marriage has a predominant role. *Femicide* for Pat Parker is the personal experience of her sister turned into a political struggle.

Finally, Witness #3 testimony was presented from a Lebanese point of view, and it brought forward two examples:

I want to relate to you two extreme examples of deprivation of freedom for women in Lebanon. Last year a brother cut the head off his sister because she married the man she loved. Another brother killed his sister whom he believed to have been unfaithful to the very rich man her family obliged her to marry. Autopsy proved that the girl was still a virgin and that her husband must have been impotent.¹⁰⁰

In this quote, the personal aspect in the sense of its recognition as private regarding the private/public dichotomy is represented by the male brothers, who hold positions of power over women's sexuality in the Lebanese context. *Femicide* for Witness #3 is defined as the murder of a sister by her brother. The difference from the other two examples is clear: not all forms of personal relationships of power and dominance operate the same way. Thus, from the beginning of the history of the concept, the contextual differences produced distinctions and divisions within (radical) feminism because of the meaning produced for the murder of women like the concept of *femicide*.

The next time *femicide* is mentioned in the *Crimes Against Women* document, is in Part 3, Chapter 3: "Herstory of the International Tribunal". This part of the document is included as further

¹⁰⁰ "FEMICIDE," p.150

information about the process of organization of the Tribunal. Chapter 3 accounts for the organizational history of the United States committee. This means that the conceptualization of the herstory of the Tribunal was done through an understanding that this herstory was a U.S American herstory. As a national committee, each country had to choose four crimes that they wanted to present testimony on, and *femicide*, defined as “the killing of females by males”, was the second crime presented. This testimony asserts that: “[...] The relatively high rates of extreme violence in the U.S. implies a high rate of *femicide*, and we suspected that if the U.S. did not present this crime, no other country would, since the sexual politics of murder has not as yet been generally recognized, even by feminists.”¹⁰¹ This statement assumes that the U.S is more advanced than the rest of the world, specifically in making visible women’s rights and status in society.

The herstory section of the Tribunal reflects the character of the specificity of the intersection held by the radical feminists who filled the concept with meaning from a western context, for the U.S Committee which authors this section explicitly says that this was presented as a reference to the high rates of murders of women by men in the U.S. The platform U.S feminists had was open from the beginning to the experiences similarly shared by non-U.S. women, as is shown with the Lebanese testimony. Nevertheless, its U.S radical feminist background alongside the explicit invention of the concept to refer to that particular context must be highlighted as a particularity of the meaning production process of this concept. *Femicide* as a political concept in the way it was defined in the Tribunal is the product of particular political, cultural, economic, and ideological symptoms of the global radical feminism project, with its roots in U.S. radical feminism. In this

¹⁰¹ "CHAPTER 3: Organizing the U.S. Committee." In *Crimes Against Women*, p.237

sense, the future re-conceptualizations of *femicide* would have to produce a decolonial effort of step aside from the preponderant U.S American roots of *femicide*.

2.3 Intellectual history of Diana E.H. Russell

I argue for the importance to study the individual academic production of Diana Russell in means to sketch a brief intellectual history. The intellectual production of Russell is a fundamental element to consider in order to understand the important debates that the concept and the variable definitions have acquired. This is because, through an analysis of her academic production, the radical feminist elements based in U.S America present in the second moment of the definition are made visible. Furthermore, studying Russell as the inventor of the term is valuable since herself asserts she invented it. In her own words:

Just as U.S. Professor Catharine MacKinnon's invention of the new feminist term *sexual harassment* was necessary before laws against these crimes could be formulated, so I believed that inventing a new term for sexist/misogynist killings of females was necessary for feminists to start organizing to combat these heretofore neglected lethal forms of violence against women and girls.¹⁰²

As the quote above shows, Russell calls herself the inventor of the concept. Still, the creation of meaning for the concept was never an individual research and invention process. According to Russell, the first time she defined the concept for academic purposes like the publication of the book *Femicide: The Politics of Women Killing* in 1992 was done with the help of Jane Caputi, a U.S based feminist scholar.¹⁰³ Equated to the expression of sexual politics in the act of rape, Russell and Caputi describe *femicide* as “the most extreme form of sexist terrorism, motivated by hatred,

¹⁰² “Origin of Femicide,” accessed April 19, 2019, http://www.dianarussell.com/origin_of_femicide.html.

¹⁰³ Diana Russell, Roberta A. Harmes (eds.). 2001. *Femicide in Global Perspective*. New York and London: Teachers College Press., p.14

contempt, pleasure, or sense of ownership of women.”¹⁰⁴ This definition goes further than the ones proposed at the Tribunal because it characterizes the practice as “extreme” and includes the *motive* of the killings within the definition.

Accordingly, *femicide* was modified from a) the personal murder of women by husbands/brothers (1976), to b) “the hate killing of women perpetrated by men motivated by hatred, contempt, please, or sense of ownership of women (1990) ” to c) “the misogynous killing of women by men” (1992).¹⁰⁵ Through this alteration in the definition, both authors aimed for further recognition of the difference between the lived experiences lived by women and by men. From definition a) to definition b), the killer changes from the masculine gendered subject personified with familial ties to its more general understanding of men as particular kinds of affective individuals with *motive*. The changes in definition from b) to c) reflect the expansion of individual men to that of the structural system of oppression that operates through men, that of misogyny. Misogyny as a set of sentiments and social practices encompasses the notion of the patriarchy as a metahistorical, overarching category. In other words, when the individual “man” is transformed to the generalized “misogynous,” the perpetrator is recognized as part of a larger symptom of oppression, and all of men are understood as so. In this sense, this is also a universalizing theory. The reference to an oppressive power as the universal perpetrator or killings opens reflects its radical feminist origins and opens the floor for the possibilities of its manifestation. This process created an inseparable association between the individual man and the patriarchal structure.

¹⁰⁴ Diana Russell, Jill Radford. 1992. *Femicide, the politics of woman killing*. Buckingham: Open University Press, pp.15-16

¹⁰⁵ Russell and Radford. *Femicide, the politics of woman killing*, p.6

Russell and Radford argue for *femicide* through the larger concept of *sexual violence*. They do so because of the overarching potential they see in the conception of *sexual violence*, which “enables sexual aggression by men to be seen in the context of the overall oppression of women in a patriarchal society.”¹⁰⁶ *Sexual violence* allows them to inscribe different forms of its representation under a “continuum” that assist in the progress of the installation of patriarchy by individual men. Furthermore, the authors make reference to the negative consequences that can come about due to feminist silence on the subject, visualized in the lack of feminist literature produced about men killing women. The fatal consequences of this silence are the “justification or denial the larger culture.”¹⁰⁷ Thus, in a sense, this installs a personal and political imperative for women in society.

They also appeal to the importance that radical feminism posits in the struggle for the recognition of sexual politics. They do so by pointing to the history of the success in concept invention of radical feminism, especially regarding *patriarchy* and *power relations*. They construct *femicide* as an action with means to control women as a sex-class, action which preserves patriarchal status-quo.¹⁰⁸ Thus, the approach of radical feminist understanding of *femicide* creates a space of opportunity for women to continue challenging sexual violence as a form of patriarchal oppression.¹⁰⁹ Thus, *femicide* prioritizes the category of difference of gender over that of class and race inasmuch as it understands women as a global sex-class. The radical feminist understanding of women as a universal category is considered as a problem in this form of feminism,¹¹⁰ and it became a problem in the history of *f/f/f* as will be accounted for in Chapter 3.

¹⁰⁶ Russell and Radford, p.3

¹⁰⁷ Russell and Radford, p.5

¹⁰⁸ Russell and Radford, p.6

¹⁰⁹ Russell and Radford, p.7

¹¹⁰ Crow, Barbara A. “Introduction,” p.3

This book is very important for the history of the development of the concept of *femicide* because it was the first time that a cooperative transnational feminist knowledge production practice came together to work under the concept of *femicide*, thus working towards the stabilization of its definition. The book focuses on the experiences of women from the United States, the United Kingdom, and India. The inclusion of Indian experiences in such a volume, which was produced by what the authors call “Western women,” was a stand against a “shallow and voyeuristic” analysis that claimed globality but focused solely on the experience of First World women.¹¹¹ The global character of the concept was thus acknowledged once more by including theorizations of Indian women. As it happened in the Tribunal, the book did not stabilize the concept but showed the differences in defining it.

The book is divided into six parts and recollects more than 30 authors, who speak under the following clusters of analysis: 1) Femicide is as Old as Patriarchy, 2) The Patriarchal Home: The Most Lethal Place for Women, 3) Femicide as Racism, 4) The Mass Media, Pornography and Gorenography, 5) Femicide and Travesties for Justice, 6) Women Fighting Back Against Femicide. As can be seen, by the topics, *femicide's* nature is that it changes its direction: it can be a lens of the study of historical ways of killing women, as it can work as a platform to denounce violence inside the patriarchal home. The concept is accepting of different definitions by nature, as is demonstrated by the malleability of the meanings that the authors give them in correlation to different time spaces, geolocations, institutions, and categories of difference. This natural malleability gives it its global dimension and its unstable character, forbidding its universalization

¹¹¹ Russell and Radford. *Femicide, the politics of woman killing*, p.9

from the beginning. The open definition character of *femicide* would soon after be used as an open invitation to modify the concept to fit different spaces of experience, and its first stop would be Ciudad Juárez, as will be demonstrated in the next chapter.

Eleven years after the publication of *Femicide: The Politics of Women Killing*, Russell and Roberta A. Harmes co-edited a entitled *Femicide in Global Perspective* Here the editors also included experiences from the U.S, U.K, and India, but added the experiences of the African continent and to what are referred as “other nations,” which include Israel, China, Canada, and Australia. The book “aims to demonstrate the value of conceptualizing *femicide*” through a “demonstration of the usefulness of the concept, the prevalence, and severity of *femicide*, its global dimensions, and the need to put it on the action agenda.”¹¹² The book was published in order to bring about more feminist interest to *femicide* and its value in regards to sexual politics. In the Introduction, Russell argues that *femicide* wasn’t as popularized in feminist circles as the gravity of the events of women being murdered called for. She outlines three reasons for this: 1) no survivors of *femicide* for whom feminists can be advocates, 2) finality and extremity of *femicide*, 3) ultimate form of male violence as too terrifying to think about.¹¹³ She further argues that the definition of *femicide* in this 2001 book suffered an expansion through which the concept become applicable to *all forms of sexist killing*.¹¹⁴ This conceptual and geographical expansion brought about new political implications for the concept, as this exercise proves that it was suitable for application in all sorts of contexts, where it meant different things.

¹¹² Russell and Harmes, *Femicide in Global Perspective*, p.4

¹¹³ Russell and Harmes, p.8

¹¹⁴ Russell and Harmes, p.13

In this book, Russell substituted the category of *women* for *females* as the victims of *femicide*, as the obtention of data that was collected in the decade of research showed that girls and baby girls are also victims of *femicide* and should thus be accounted for.¹¹⁵ In this sense, the different usage of the category of gender demonstrates the variable understandings of the category of gender in the invention of feminist socio-political concepts,¹¹⁶ which in this case included an intersection with age.

2.4 Space of experience and horizon of expectation

One of the most important stands of feminism is that it proposes different ways of perceiving the world, of being in the world. Much like standpoint theory argues, “human knowledge of the empirical world is grounded in human experience.”¹¹⁷ In this sense, the invention of concepts is an indispensable condition of possibility for the materialization of these worlds. Hence, the feminist project is in tune with Koselleck’s understanding of the co-original societal existence between human and language,¹¹⁸ as with De Certeau’s understanding of history as a product of particular topographies of interest.

In order for societal existence to be possible, language in the form of concepts that refer to said worlds is created in synchronicity. Feminism is a radical move proposing different kinds of worlds that derive from the production of concepts that define and signal a world that considers gender as a category of difference. An important part of the process of making these worlds visible has to do with the signaling of women’s experience in the case of *femicide*, the word accounts for the

¹¹⁵ Russell and Harmes, p.13

¹¹⁶ Scott, “Gender.”, p.1075

¹¹⁷ Harding, “Introduction”, p.7

¹¹⁸ Koselleck, Reinhart. *The Practice of Conceptual History*, p.24

experience of the murder of women and denounces it as a crime and for the specific naming of women's oppression. This accusation hopes to achieve the typification of this form of murder, and thus gain further grounds on the acknowledgment of the oppression of women in society. Russell and Radford name this "women's right to name our experience."¹¹⁹

Historical time in a Koselleckian understanding is an entanglement between the "space of experience" and the "horizon of expectation." The "space of experience" is constructed through "accumulated social experiences that produce social identification and thus take part in the definition of the collective at hand."¹²⁰ The "horizon of expectation" is the complementary future to the present, it is that which "encourages us to propel ourselves towards the future based on present experience, without locking ourselves into a pre-established trajectory."¹²¹ This theoretical presupposition on how time functions are easily distinguishable in the testimony of Witness #1 at the First International Tribunal on Crimes Against Women. The U.S Witness said the following: "[...], But today we have remembered them. And tomorrow we must act to stop *femicide*."¹²² Even though this is a very small quote, I believe in the importance to sketch out how this proclamation defines the space of experience and the horizon of expectation as it illustrates how *f/f/f* concept(s) are historical from this particular understanding of history.

This proclamation is defined by the space of experience as a present-in-battle, and by the horizon of expectation as a *femicide*-less future. Understanding the present as a historical time defined by the conception of time as structured by both these historical categories, the invitation Witness #1

¹¹⁹ Russell and Radford. *Femicide, the politics of woman killing*, p.3

¹²⁰ Fazio and Fazio, "El tiempo y el presente en la historia global y su época.", p.14

¹²¹ Fazio and Fazio., p.14

¹²² "FEMICIDE." In *Crimes Against Women*, p.146

makes the elementary unit that determines the experience of women regarding murder. This experience is encapsulated within the concept of *femicide* and is governed by the previously indicated conceptualization of time.

Understanding *femicide* as a political concept with variable definitions and with the potential to change reality invariably means that it must be understood as a historical concept that has its own temporality and its own approach to the space of experience and the horizon of expectation. These historical categories and its representation in the testimony of Witness #1 further demonstrate the deep contemporary transformations that the global world is experiencing. In addition, the statement advanced by this Witness is a factual confirmation of the orientation towards the future that the concept holds in itself. This orientation, this entanglement between the space of experience and the horizon of expectation is what enables *fff* in general and *femicide* in particular to be a political concept(s) produced in the present as historical time, meaning that it is their historicity which makes them political. As a moment of inception, Witness 1 coined the temporality of *femicide*, rendering it historical.

The concept at this particular stage gained its political character through a global conversation and conscious raising international conference, where U.S and Lebanese experiences were shared. In this manner, the attendees, the witnesses, and the inventors of the concept turned the personal into political. It was further expanded by the intellectual production on the subject by Diana Russell and the women she collaborated with. All of them advanced a different understanding of what the murder of women due to gender reasons meant, and they did under the syntaxes of *femicide*. The sociopolitical and intellectual context that filled with meaning the concept of *femicide* in this setting aimed to be stabilized in its further definition in Russell's co-edited books. In this sense, the concept

was heavily related to its roots in U.S American feminism and Radical Feminism, as has been discussed in section 2.1. The universal aims of the concept and the Radical Feminist understanding of patriarchy as an ahistorical structure of oppression is the particular feminist knowledge trajectory that was inscribed inside the concept. The existent power relations within sexuality as a hierarchical form of oppression of women by men was thus understood as the origin of the murder of women since *femicide* is a sexualized crime. The feminist trajectory of the meaning inscribed to the concept would later change with the modification in spelling and meaning of *femicide* to *feminicidio* done by Marcela Lagarde y de los Ríos, which will be analyzed in the next chapter.

This chapter historicized the context in which *femicide* was initially invented. *Femicide* was established/invented as a political radical feminist concept and referred to the broader scope of sexual politics of murder.¹²³ Its definition was given in a global radical feminist platform of discussion and sharing, namely the 1976 First Tribunal on Crimes Against Women, and was later expanded through the production of cooperative feminist literature. Both books edited and compiled by Russell are another form of a feminist conversational platform, with the difference that it has another audience and purpose. The work these feminists did by giving a definition to the concept was the transformation of the personal into the political, and the initial focus with husband and brother murder is a reflection of it.

The conceptual history of *femicide* shows that the feminist concern with violence was inaugurated as an overarching category of analysis of women as a global gender, where the category of difference of gender was prioritized over other categories of difference. This history also

¹²³ "FEMICIDE." In *Crimes Against Women*, p.144

demonstrates the three temporal spaces that englobe *fff* concept(s), thus proving its possibilities for historization as a subject of history under the theory of periodization of the history of the present time. The long-term process was demonstrated to be the broader history of the transnationally interconnected women's activisms and activist scholarly discourses. The medium-range process regards the 1970s radical feminism formulations, and the immediate process begins in the 1990s, with the first academic publication of the subject.

In the following chapter, I will analyze the further modification of the concept from *femicide* to *feminicidio*. The alteration of the spelling and definition of the concept account for contextual forms of murder of females, specifically those that regard the systematicity of violence in a particular geopolitical space, that of the industrial borderland town of Ciudad Juárez in México. *Feminicidio* as a concept was coined by Marcela Lagarde y de los Ríos, and its inclusion as the next phase for this analysis is fundamental as the intellectual and activist work of Mexican feminism, alongside that of the transnationally interconnected women's activisms and activist scholarly discourses, typified *feminicidio* as a crime for the first time as it is regarded as the most successful case of application and definition of *fff* concept(s) by *fff* literature, including Diana Russell.¹²⁴

¹²⁴ "A Global Struggle Against Femicide," accessed May 29, 2019, <https://www.dianarussell.com/against-femicide.html>.

Chapter 3 - It all began in Ciudad Juárez

In 1993, soon after the publication of *Femicide: The Politics of Women Killing*, *femicide* was translated and grammatically modified to its Spanish language understanding as *feminicidio*. In this chapter, I argue that this translation and modification functions as an invention process in the same way that Russell invented the concept but for different purposes, as its meaning and objective is different. *Feminicidio* was originally invented to signal the events in Ciudad Juárez: from 1993 to 2006, where more than 400 women were murdered using the pervasive use of sexual violence in the Mexican northern borderland town of Ciudad Juárez.¹²⁵ This phenomenon is known in Mexican history as “las muertas de Juárez” (“the dead women of Juárez”), “los feminicidios de Ciudad Juárez” (“the *feminicidios* of Ciudad Juárez”), “Ciudad Juárez,” or just “Juárez.”¹²⁶ In words written by Marcela Lagarde y de los Ríos in 2010 referring to *feminicidio*, “[I]t all began over the alarm sounded to bring attention to the crimes against girls and women in Ciudad Juárez more than fifteen years ago.”¹²⁷

I argue that the modification to the concept of *femicide* to *feminicidio* accounts for the global interconnection and dialogue that represents the paths of travel that this U.S American radical feminism concept took. I understand the travel of the concept in the same way as Kathy Davis has outlined feminist knowledge travels across borders in her book *The Making of Our Bodies*,

¹²⁵ Lagarde y de los Ríos, Marcela. 2012. *El feminismo en mi vida. Hitos, claves y topías*. México, D.F: Instituto de las Mujeres del Distrito Federal, Gobierno del Distrito Federal., p.197

¹²⁶ The rise of violence in Ciudad Juárez does not only refer to the case of violence against women. Many sectors of this society were affected by the violent outburst in this town. Nevertheless, in this chapter I only make reference to the *feminicidio* aspect of this social phenomena, and I do so by referring to it as *the feminicidios of Ciudad Juárez* as a historical event.

¹²⁷ Lagarde y de los Ríos, Marcela. 2010. "Preface: Feminist Keys for Understanding Femicide. Theoretical, Political and Legal Construction," in *Terrorizing Women. Femicide in the Américas.*, by Cynthia Bejarano Rosa Linda Fregoso, xi-xxviii. United States of America: Duke University Press., pp.xv

Ourselves: How Feminism Travels Across Borders, published in 2007. Studying the paths different forms of feminist knowledge takes is a fundamental part in producing a historical analysis of feminist concepts and feminist knowledge as the places these paths arrive to shape the meaning of the concepts produced. The study of these variable meanings is a vital aspect of the study of concepts in a historical way. This is because the particularities of the feminist movements and the meanings it produces viewed through a global perspective of analysis is determined by the temporal inscription in particular socio-political systems of operation.

In this chapter, I analyze the Mexican understanding of *femicide* as *feminicidio*. The change was produced by feminist Mexican anthropologist and former political representative Marcela Lagarde y de los Ríos. She is one of the biggest names in Latin American feminism as she has advocated for the rights of women and was a central figure in the typification and criminalization process of *feminicidio*. Here, I study Lagarde's intellectual work because of its contribution and relevance for the fate and fortune of *f/f/f* concept(s). Thus, for the case of *feminicidio* I use Lagarde's own academic production as well as the critiques and uses given to her work by other feminist thinkers and activists as my primary sources.

Furthermore, I analyze *the feminicidios of Ciudad Juárez* as a historical event in and of itself as this event is a key aspect in understanding the categorical presentness character of *f/f/f* and its diachronic relationship with the argued new global order inaugurated by the end of the 20th century. The magnitude of Ciudad Juárez's violence against women and the denomination of the events as *feminicidio* is a fundamental aspect of the history of the development of *f/f/f*. Agreeing with Hugo Fazio, I argue that the events that occurred in Ciudad Juárez between 1993 and 2006 are the result

of the social development particular to the time-period inaugurated as a new global order in 1989.¹²⁸ In this sense, the understanding of the *feminicidios* of Ciudad Juárez as a product of the present as a historical time is the result of the global international process of interconnection manifested in three ways. First, through the increase of violence in general and violence against women in particular associated “with the changing power dynamics inherent to the shifting geopolitics of illicit drug flows”¹²⁹ where the “presence and augmented the power of criminal organizations in the region functions as a mechanism for increased gender violence.”¹³⁰ Second, through the international feminist dialogue in which Lagarde and Russell with regard of *f/f/f* played a crucial role where the outcome was a cultural oppositional translation practice¹³¹ of *femicide* into *feminicidio*. This dialogue occurred both in print and in conferences, as Lagarde translated Russell’s books and invited her to speak at an international seminar in 2005 in Mexico City. And third, through the broader history of women’s human right theorization and history of the United Nations, associated with the long-term historical process of the transnationally interconnected women’s activisms and activist scholarly discourses in a post-1989 interconnected world.

The feminicidios of Ciudad Juárez as a socio-historical event was signaled as a gendered political problem, and the magnitude of the crimes and the difficulty to understand the phenomenon gained substantial international attention. Naming the murders of women as *feminicidios* concluded in its

¹²⁸ According to Hugo Fazio, this new global order began in the year-event of 1989 with the fall of the Berlin Wall, which serves as sustenance to think the global world as a unity, as a historical category. See: Fazio Vengoa, Hugo. 2010. “El lugar de 1989 en el presente histórico contemporáneo” in *La historia del tiempo presente: historiografía, problemas y métodos*. Bogotá: Universidad de los Andes., pp.149-169

¹²⁹ Heather Robin Agnew, “Reframing ‘Femicide’: Making Room for the Balloon Effect of Drug War Violence in Studying Female Homicides in Mexico and Central America,” *Territory, Politics, Governance* 3, no. 4 (October 2, 2015): 428–45, <https://doi.org/10.1080/21622671.2015.1064826>, p.430

¹³⁰ Agnew, “Reframing ‘Femicide,’” p.442

¹³¹ Davis, Kathy. 2007. *The Making of Our Bodies, Ourselves. How Feminism Travels Across Borders*. Durham and London: Duke University Press., p.192

typification and further criminalization by the Mexican state as the first country in the world to do so. Thus, the meaning production of *feminicidio* done through Lagarde's particular intellectual trajectory and the definition it produced is a fundamental aspect of studying in order to understand the historicity of the concept of *feminicidio* and the broader history of *f/f/f* concept(s).

3.1 Geopolitical globality of Ciudad Juárez as a historical event

To understand the concept of *feminicidio*, one first has to understand what the case of *the feminicidios of Ciudad Juárez* meant as a historical event which filled the word of *feminicidio* with sociopolitical meaning, thus rendering it a concept. Agreeing with Hugo Fazio's theory of periodization of the present, I argue that the presentness of *the feminicidios of Ciudad Juárez* as a historical event is the product of the global interconnection process that began in 1989. Fazio theorizes 1989 as a year overloaded with significance in historical terms since geopolitical changes accelerated and the global order was modified due, in great part, to the collapse of the Soviet Union.¹³² In this sense, the collapse of the Soviet Union resulted in the fact that "the bipolar and intersystemic competition scheme that had dominated a good stretch of history of the twentieth-century was definitely behind."¹³³ 1989 as a year-event created a closure of the historical chapter formed by the bipolarity of the world in the Cold War era.

After 1989, the world and its intrinsic international character as it is represented in our immediate presentness became a set of variable constellations shaped mainly by intense globalization in different social areas.¹³⁴ One of these areas is historical globality "where diachronic experiences converge with synchronic ones, which shows that we are facing a global time made by different

¹³² Fazio, Hugo, "El lugar de 1989," pp.155-159

¹³³ Fazio, p.159

¹³⁴ Fazio, p.167

temporalities, which, sometimes, converge and synchronize and in others collide with each other”.¹³⁵ The collapse of the Soviet bloc and the variable social and political changes that happened all around the world¹³⁶ generated a new global era where interconnection became more viable than ever, for the constellations of global connection changed, producing new forms of globalized social phenomena.

Understanding 1989 in this fashion, I argue that *the feminicidios of Ciudad Juárez* of 1993 as a historical event cannot be understood under the diachronicity of local/regional and that they have to be studied under the light of this new global order inaugurated. This is as such because the signalization of the particularities of violence against women as *feminicidio* and thus as a product of *feminicidal violence*¹³⁷ are both a product of geopolitical reconfigurations, and of the international travel of feminist knowledge production. Thus, what happened in Juárez is more easily understood under the light of a global process of changes.

The violent and sexualized killings of women in the industrial borderland town of Ciudad Juárez became a subject of interest of various national and international actors, and a considerable amount of literature has been written on the subject, both with and without a feminist perspective.¹³⁸ The

¹³⁵ Fazio, p.167

¹³⁶ See: Fazio, pp.155-159

¹³⁷ *Feminicidal violence* is defined by the 2007 Federal Criminal Code and the General Law on Women’s Access to a Life Free of Violence as “the extreme form of gender-based violence against women as a result of the violation of their human rights, in the public and private spheres, defined by the set of behaviors that lead to misogyny, impunity, social and state tolerance, and that may culminate in homicide and other forms of violent death of women.” See: ONU Mujeres/SEGOB/INMUJERES, “La Violencia Feminicida En México, Aproximaciones y Tendencias 1985-2016” (Entidad de las Naciones Unidas para la Igualdad de Género y el Empoderamiento de las Mujeres, 2017).

¹³⁸ The high number in production on the subject can be accounted for with advance research mechanisms in academic data bases. For example, searching for the conjunct kew words “Ciudad Juárez” and “violence” in JSTOR account for 1185 results, in Web of Science 88 articles come up, and in the general CEU available databases, for 574. Typing the same words in Spanish in Redalyc (Network of Scientific Journals of Latin America and the Caribbean, Spain and Portugal), there are 59,716 results.

violence that erupted in Ciudad Juárez is a product of several individual aspects represented in a generalized increase of violence. Even though the violence was present in the entire society, the female-body subjects, mostly women, are perhaps the most identifiable victims of this contingent and spatialized violence, and this has to do with the popularization of the concept of *feminicidio* to frame and define these deaths. Russell's *femicide* inspired the use of *feminicidio* to frame the gender-based violence in Ciudad Juárez by Marcela Lagarde. In her words:

This text (*Femicide: The Politics of Women Killing*) allowed me to specify that what happened in Ciudad Juárez was *feminicidio* and not crimes against women. And really, a book can change the life; a concept, a category, a look, a vision allows us to advance a lot.¹³⁹

In this way, the violent murder of women was understood as the consequence of the exclusion and oppression of women due to gender reasons.

The conceptualization of the events in Ciudad Juárez as *feminicidio* in particular gained international attention and many academics and politicians have tried to give answers as to why violence raised in Ciudad Juárez and the Mexican territory during the 1990s. Knowing the available literature, Lagarde proposed three ways in which this phenomenon has been studied, 1) through psychoanalytic and semiotic approaches that see the crimes and the criminals as part of system of communication and power based on belonging to fraternities and forms of totalitarian control over bodies and territories; 2), through a sociological and anthropological: emphasis on *maquilas*, uneven and disorganized development, marginalization, and poverty; and 3), through a culturalist

¹³⁹ Marcela Lagarde y de los Ríos, "Del femicidio al feminicidio," *Desde el jardín de Freud: revista de psicoanálisis*, no. 6 (2006): 216–25, <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=2923333>, p.217

perspective that combines prior explanations and emphasize the *machista* and misogynist culture that is supposedly a core trait of Mexican identity.¹⁴⁰

These forms of categorization have their problems, and I agree with Heather Robin Agnew's on them. Agnew states that the second form of analysis "requires an uncomfortable leap of faith to bridge acts of violence and geo-economic processes, which seems a bit disjointed,"¹⁴¹ and that the third is an "oversimplification that Latinizes the gender power relations, universalizes machismo as a cultural attribute and maps this as a value endemic to Mexican culture, which is an attribute that may or may not be shared among Latino individuals, or present in certain subcultures, but should not be ascribed as a whole."¹⁴²

In Lagarde's categorization of the literature about *the feminicidios of Ciudad Juárez*, only the sociological and anthropological approach has a global lens of analysis inasmuch as it bases its study on the unequal power relations between Mexico and the United States that were further implemented through the signature of the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994. The new regulations of commerce allowed cheap female labor to work for multinational corporations in the *maquila* industry, which are "export-processing facilities located alongside the U.S.-Mexico border."¹⁴³ Thus, I locate my understanding of *the feminicidios of Ciudad Juárez* alongside Agnew's analysis that argues that the rise of violence in the borderland town of Ciudad

¹⁴⁰ Lagarde y de los Ríos, Marcela., "Preface," p.xxiii-xiv

¹⁴¹ Agnew, "Reframing 'Femicide,'" p.432

¹⁴² Agnew., p.442

¹⁴³ Melissa W. Wright, "A Manifesto against Femicide," *Antipode* 33, no. 3 (2001): 550–66, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8330.00198>.

Juárez, requires a balloon effect analysis that considers the larger international geopolitical operation of the War on Drugs.¹⁴⁴

Agnew links the *feminicidios* in Ciudad Juárez to “the violence associated with the changing power dynamics inherent to the shifting geopolitics of illicit drug flows.”¹⁴⁵ For her, the timeline of *feminicidio* goes hand in hand with the timeline of the changing focus of operations of drug gangs and trafficking groups. In her analysis, she demonstrates how these criminal organizations create roots in particular places through the “use of violence and violence and bribery as a territorial strategy.”¹⁴⁶ She asserts that the U.S and Colombia counternarcotic operations shifted the drug flow to Mexico, which was furthermore established, and its flow facilitated by NAFTA. So, the increase in violence and *femicidal violence* in the borderland town of Ciudad Juárez is directly related to geopolitical operations that regard the territorial disputes of international criminal organizations. The conjunction of the increase in violence due to an international operation of the War on Drugs and the precarity of labor present at the *maquiladoras* created favorable conditions for the proliferation for the hundreds of murders of women.

I agree with Paulina García-Del Moral’s analysis on the shaming practices organized by domestic and international activist agencies as it helps elucidate the international feminist activist that went into the demand for justice for the victims. García studies the mobilization of activists through the concept of *feminicidio* as it was central to the Mexican state as the perpetrator of the crimes, which

¹⁴⁴ Agnew, “Reframing ‘Femicide,’” p.430

¹⁴⁵ Agnew., p.430

¹⁴⁶ Agnew., p.435

resulted in the typification and criminalization of the practice.¹⁴⁷ The case of the *feminicidio* of Ciudad Juárez was so poignant that between 1998 and 2007, more than 24 reports and a total of 200 recommendations were issued to the Mexican state regarding the gravity of *feminicidio*, and the urgency for this phenomenon to be resolved.¹⁴⁸ This powerful international effort to shame the Mexican state, which places Mexico and gender-based violence on the international arena as an urgent matter that had to be addressed quickly had everything to do with the conceptualization of *femicide* as *feminicidio*. Understanding *the feminicidios of Ciudad Juárez* as a historical event through an international lens of analysis aids in the visualization of the sociopolitical meaning that was invoked to fill the word of *feminicidio* with particular sociopolitical meaning.

3.2 From femicide to feminicidio: a feminist international dialogue

In the 2007 book *The Making of Our Bodies, Ourselves: How Feminism Travels Across Borders*, Kathy Davis studies how the self-help feminist classic *Our Bodies, Ourselves* (OBOS) traveled the world since its first publication during the 1970s. The book was translated into 30 languages,¹⁴⁹ and the translation dialogues are now an essential part in understanding the history of *Our Bodies, Ourselves*. Still, these were never literal translations. In some cases, new language was invented because “[T]here was no language in which women could articulate their experiences of pain and pleasure regarding sexuality.”¹⁵⁰ In others, the innovation had to be contextual in order for it to speak to people outside the United States,¹⁵¹ as women is a variable category. Davis encompasses

¹⁴⁷ Paulina García-Del Moral, “Transforming *Feminicidio*: Framing, Institutionalization and Social Change,” *Current Sociology* 64, no. 7 (November 2016): 1017–35, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011392115618731>, p.1018

¹⁴⁸ García-Del Moral, “Transforming *Feminicidio*”, p.1023

¹⁴⁹ “Our Story,” *Our Bodies Ourselves* (blog), accessed May 1, 2019, <https://www.ourbodiesourselves.org/our-story/>.

¹⁵⁰ Davis, *The Making of Our Bodies, Ourselves*, p.170

¹⁵¹ In the book, Davis focuses on two particular cases: that of the Spanish translation for the Latina community, and that of the Bulgarian case. See: Davis, Kathy, *The Making of Our Bodies, Ourselves*, p.192

this idea under Gyatri Spivak's understanding of translation as an "oppositional translation practice."¹⁵²

Agreeing with Davis's use of oppositional translation practices analysis, I argue that *f/f/f* in the debate regarding *femicide* and *feminicidio* is a successful oppositional translation practice in the sense that could generate communication across social and cultural boundaries. As much as it happened with the translations of OBOS, the translation of *feminicidio* from *femicide* has to recognize the difference in the context where it was being used in order to have it "make sense and be relevant in the local context."¹⁵³ Besides the sociopolitical filling of the particularities of the events which occurred in Ciudad Juárez, the conception of *feminicidio* was framed under an Inter-American understanding of Human Rights that signaled *the feminicidios of Ciudad Juárez*. In this sense, *feminicidio* is a subversive oppositional translation practice that demonstrates that feminist political concepts "need to be constantly rearticulated in order to 'work' under difference historical, social, and political circumstances," for they are not "universally empowering."¹⁵⁴

The definition set forward by Russell in both her books as the misogynist murder or other forms of killing of women by men¹⁵⁵ was changed by Lagarde to define *feminicidio* in the following way:

"*Feminicidio* is one of the extreme forms of gender violence; it is constituted by the whole set of violent misogynist acts against women that involve a violation of their human rights, represent an attack on their safety, and endanger their lives. It culminates in the murder of girls and women. *Feminicidio* is able to occur because the authorities who are omissive, negligent, or acting in collusion with the assailants perpetrate institutional violence against women by blocking their access to justice and thereby contributing to impunity.

¹⁵² Davis, p.192.

¹⁵³ Davis, p.193

¹⁵⁴ Davis, p.194

¹⁵⁵ Russell, op.cit, p.40-45

Feminicidio entails a partial breakdown of the rule of law because the state is incapable of guaranteeing respect for women's lives or human rights and because it is incapable of acting in keeping with the law and to uphold the law, to prosecute and administer justice, and to prevent and eradicate the violence that causes it. *Feminicidio* is a state crime.”¹⁵⁶

Understanding the travel the concept made and the cultural translation practices that changed its definition has many aspects to it, and it is not possible to study this without taking into consideration Lagarde and Russell’s intellectual exchange. The study of this international dialogue sheds light on the transnational circulation of feminist knowledge and politics into sociopolitical contexts that the concept reflects and represents. As previously states, Lagarde was originally inspired by Diana Russel’s book *Femicide: The Politics of Women Killing* and she has argued that framing the murders of women in Juárez under the feminist understanding of sexual violence facilitated means to resolve it in the social realm.¹⁵⁷ Furthermore, both feminists have continuously referenced each other in their academic production of *femicide/feminicidio*. Russell talks of Lagarde as the translator of *femicide*,¹⁵⁸ and in her academic production, Lagarde always states that *feminicidio* owes its definition to Russell’s *femicide*.¹⁵⁹

In “The Origin and Importance of the Term Femicide”, Russell states that:

“Lagarde specifically asked my permission to translate my term femicide into *feminicidio*. She also requested my permission to arrange for Spanish translations of both of my co-edited books on femicide -- the second one of which was published in 2001, and which is titled *Femicide in Global Perspective*. I was delighted at that time to grant Lagarde's requests.”¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁶ Lagarde "Preface.," pp.xxiii

¹⁵⁷ Lagarde, p.198

¹⁵⁸ Russell, Diana. "The Origin and Importance of the Term Femicide."

¹⁵⁹ See for example: Ríos, “Del femicidio al feminicidio.”

¹⁶⁰ Russell, "The Origin and Importance of the Term Femicide."

As Lagarde mentions in her article “Del femicidio al feminicidio” that:

“When I translated the text of Diana Russell, I took the liberty to modify the concept, she calls it femicide and then I translated it for several years as feminicide, precisely so that it would not be confused in Spanish as femicide or female homicide; no, I wanted it to be a clear, distinct concept, so that it would then come together with all the content of the concept, which is, as I explained, very complex. Diana Russell gave me permission to use it like that, translated as feminicide.”¹⁶¹

Initially, the spelling change was proposed by Lagarde as an effort to differentiate between the Spanish word for homicide: *homicidio* (homicide) in the context of the publication in Spanish of both *Feminicidio: La política del asesinato de mujeres* (*Femicide: The Politics of Woman Killing*) and *Feminicidio: Una Perspectiva Global* (*Femicide: A Global Perspective*).¹⁶² In Spanish, *Homicidio* and *femicidio* are so close in spelling that using *femicidio* would be understood just as the feminization of *homicidio*.¹⁶³ For Lagarde, what would’ve been at risk if the concept was understood as such was its particular characterization of the patriarchy as a structural system of oppression. In brief, the original translation was done because of audible reasons, what Russell calls a “sound definition.”¹⁶⁴ For Russell, this has become a problem as:

“[...] it's not legitimate to consider the redefinition of a term as constituting coining it. Furthermore, a sound definition must avoid making the definition of the phenomenon being defined, conditional on the reaction to it. So, for example, if a wife-batterer finally kills his wife because she wants a divorce, he would be guilty of femicide. However, if he is arrested and found guilty of this crime, then by Lagarde's definition, he is no longer guilty of feminicide because the case wasn't

¹⁶¹ Lagarde, “Del femicidio al feminicidio.”, p.221

¹⁶² These books were published as part of a larger collection named “Debates Feministas” (“Feminist Debates”) in charge of the Centro de Investigaciones Interdisciplinarias en Ciencias y Humanidades (Center for Interdisciplinary Research in Sciences and Humanities) of the national Mexican university, UNAM. See: Lagarde, *El feminismo en mi vida*, p.582

¹⁶³ Lagarde, “Del femicidio al feminicidio.”, p.221

¹⁶⁴ Russell, Diana. 2011. “Defining Femicide.” *Diana E.H. Russell, PhD*. December. Accessed April 19, 2019. <http://www.dianarussell.com/defining-femicide-.html>

treated with impunity. This demonstrates why Lagarde's revised definition of femicide doesn't meet the criterion of a sound definition.”¹⁶⁵

Furthermore, Russell was also invited to Mexico City in 2005 to speak at the international seminar *Feminicidio, Justicia y Derecho* held as part of the debates surrounding the typification of *feminicidio* in the LIX Legislature of the Mexican Congress through the “Comisión Especial para Conocer y dar Seguimiento a las Investigaciones sobre los Feminicidios en la República Mexicana,” (“Special Commission to Know and Follow Up on the Investigations on Feminicides in the Mexican Republic”). This commission produced the investigation entitled “Investigación Diagnóstica Sobre la Violencia Feminicida” (“Diagnostic Investigation on Feminicidal Violence”) which indicates that *feminicidal violence* is a form of gender-based violence. This was fundamental to the genealogy of the conceptualization of *feminicidio* as a crime that could be typified and criminalized, resulting in the creation of the 2007 “Código Federal y Ley General de Acceso a las Mujeres a Una Vida Sin Violencia” (“Federal Criminal Code and the General Law on Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence.”) This law contains both a gender perspective and a women’s human right perspective, and it defines *femicidal violence* as form of gender-based violence.

In Russell writings we can see that she was grown defensive on the concept of *femicide* in contraposition with Lagarde’s *feminicidio* as she sees it as she has written:

“Ever since this disappointing experience [the translation], I have become distressed when the term femicide is used rather than femicide. And I become even *more* distressed when Lagard claims that *she* coined the term. If I hadn't used and decimated the term femicide by speaking and publishing books about it, there would be no such term, including femicide!”¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁵ Russell, "Defining Femicide."

¹⁶⁶ Russell, "The Origin and Importance of the Term Femicide."

Russell argues that the change in definition has created a breach between academic conceptual practices which is produced due to the cultural character of the translation of the concept.¹⁶⁷ From her perspective, this differentiation has created a division in the overarching character that *femicide* had in its original conception as a radical feminist concept as “[I]t is preferable to define femicide or feminicide in a way that can be used globally.”¹⁶⁸ Differently and in a critical fashion, I would argue that Russell’s defensiveness regarding intellectual property can tell us a lot about the relationships of power between Global North and Global South and space that Latin America in particular generally holds as a place to be studied, and not as a geographic area that produces its theory, which is in itself a colonialist formulation.¹⁶⁹ In this sense, the example of the intellectual dialogue and exchange held between Lagarde and Russell and its outcome as coveted property of intellectual invention sheds light over colonial and decolonial power relations in knowledge production, which is a fundamental aspect of the argument of this thesis.

Thus, I argue that the definition of *feminicidio* drifted away from its original modification as a sound definition because of oppositional translation practices since the concept needed to be translated culturally and contextually for it to make sense to the particularities the concept needed to refer to. In this sense, I agree with García-Del Moral in the sense that the fundamental aspect of

¹⁶⁷ Russell, "Defining Femicide."

¹⁶⁸ Russell, "The Origin and Importance of the Term Femicide."

¹⁶⁹ Rosa-Linda Fregoso, Cynthia Bejarano. 2010. "Introduction. A Cartography of Feminicide in the Americas" in *Terrorizing Women. Feminicide in the Américas.*, by Cynthia Bejarano Rosa Linda Fregoso, United States of America: Duke University Press., p.4

the difference between *femicide* and *feminicidio* is that the latter has a more “intersectional framework and a structural focus on the state as a gendered institution complicit in this violence.”¹⁷⁰

3.3 The transformation from an academic concept to a legal concept

In Lagarde’s definition of *feminicidio*, the conjunction between this academic concept and the human rights system discourse is an international effort to incorporate women as subjects with the right to human rights.¹⁷¹ Lagarde’s success in the typification and criminalization of *feminicidio* came in great part because she was a political representative between 2003 and 2006 as a delegate for the Partido de la Revolución Democrática (PRD). As previously states, in this time period Lagarde created and directed the “Special Commission,” through which she and her team were able to produce the “General Law on Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence.” This General Law is the first law in the world to typify *feminicidio*, and is the first law in the country to recognize equal status of men and women in regards to the legal system.¹⁷² In this sense, the Law is a historical event which inaugurates the inclusion of women to the Mexican legal system as subjects of law with the right to have rights.

The “Special Commission” was set in motion following a similar commission that had been launched previously for the specific case of Ciudad Juárez. The latter concluded that there was a grave problem in this borderland town that needed to be dealt with.¹⁷³ With this precedent, Lagarde

¹⁷⁰ Paulina García-Del Moral, “The Murders of Indigenous Women in Canada as Feminicides: Toward a Decolonial Intersectional Reconceptualization of Femicide,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 43, no. 4 (June 2018): 929–54, <https://doi.org/10.1086/696692>, p.936

¹⁷¹ See: Lagarde *El feminismo en mi vida*.p.27

¹⁷² Marcela Lagarde y de los Ríos, “Por los derechos humanos de las mujeres: la Ley General de Acceso de las Mujeres a una Vida Libre de Violencia,” *Revista Mexicana de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales* XLIX, no. 200 (2007): 143–65, <http://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=42120009>, p.149

¹⁷³ Ríos, “Del femicidio al feminicidio,” p.216

pushed for the nation-wide “Special Commission” to investigate *feminicidio* in the entire Mexican Republic. This investigation produced the necessary data which recognizes the particularities of every one of the 32 states of the country in regard to the murder of women and girls. This was the first time that a nation-wide process of documentation of violence against women was produced in the country.

The “Special Commission” found that between 1999 and 2005, more than 6,000 women and girls had been murdered in Mexico. In 2004 alone, 1205 women were killed. This meant that a woman or girl was killed in the Mexican territory every 6 hours. Furthermore, the data demonstrated that women in Mexico are held grave victims of patriarchal structures of oppression both in private and in the public sphere. This structure is maintained through the implementation of violence as an intimidation tactic, which preserves women in a disadvantaged position. The Special Commission and the Federal Law were groundbreaking both for Mexico and for the InterAmerican context since it was the first example of a law that typified violence against women.

Since, in the Latin-American context, this experience would result in the implementation of similar laws in Argentina (2012), Bolivia (2013), Brazil (2105), Chile (2010), Colombia (2014), Costa Rica (2007), Ecuador (2013), El Salvador (2010), Guatemala (2008), Honduras (2013), Nicaragua (2012), Panama (2013), Peru (2011), and Venezuela (2007).¹⁷⁴ The question that arises is what is the particular historicity of human rights and human rights of women from an international perspective that was included in the theorization of *feminicidio* as a legal concept. In order to do so, I will analyze the third point at hand, that of the global international process of the

¹⁷⁴ Joseph Janice, “Victims of Femicide in Latin America: Legal and Criminal Justice Responses,” *Temida*, Vol 20, Iss 1, Pp 3-21 (2017), no. 1 (2017): 3, <https://doi.org/10.2298/TEM1701003J.>, pp.11-12

interconnection of the broader history of women's human right theorization and history of the United Nations, associated with the long-term historical process of the transnationally interconnected women's activisms and activist scholarly discourses.

Understanding the typification and criminalization of *feminicidio* as the effect of domestic and international shaming practices through the lens of analysis developed by critical feminist scholarship on international law and international studies, we can broader contextualize the global interaction this particular process had. The post-Cold War paradigm regarding human rights underwent a revitalization of the Security Council and "its role in maintaining international peace and security."¹⁷⁵ Furthermore, feminist theorization argument that sexual violence was an inevitable side of war became subsumed under a broader security agenda,¹⁷⁶ as security problems were understood to be existential threats.¹⁷⁷ In this way, the event of *the feminicidios of Ciudad Juárez* was understood the product of sexual violence and as a threat to the Mexican society as a whole where the signaled responsibly was the State. Thus, international activist shaming was made possible.

These changes in definition happened all too quickly. *F/f/f* as an emerging neologism(s) responding to societal demands regarding the increase of violence and sexual violence discourse and practices in the world adapt quickly to the context it is used in. Overlooking the dialogue and exchange held between Russell and Lagarde, despite the conflicts that emerged thereupon, would be a grave

¹⁷⁵ Orford, Anne. 2003. *Reading Humanitarian Intervention. Human Rights and the Use of Force in International Law*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, p.2

¹⁷⁶ Meger, Sara. 2016. "The Fetishization of Sexual Violence in International Security." In *International Studies Quarterly* 149-159, p.150

¹⁷⁷ Meger, "The Fetishization of Sexual Violence," p.151

omission in this conceptual history as Lagarde *re-invented* an academic concept and turned it into a frame that encompasses political struggle as an institutionalized legal category.¹⁷⁸ Both these reasons show how multiple meanings are produced and changed through the emerging debates surrounding these meanings.

3.4: The United Nations, women, and human rights

The oppositional translation practice that Lagarde made to adapt *femicide* in the Mexican context is related to the broader history of the United Nations and the recognition of women as subjects of human rights law. In this sense, the historicity of the concept is formed by a particular history of human rights theorization and by the relationship between international feminist organizations and activism with the United Nations outlined by Lagarde herself. The use of the various conventions and conferences that I reference in this section have all been mentioned by Lagarde as part of the international human rights background that was theorized in the definition of *feminicidio* and its further typification. Lagarde used the responsibilities and compromised the Mexican state had made by signing the international implementations that follow in her conceptualization of *feminicidio* as a typeable crime by signaling the Mexican state as uncomplacent to them.

The historicity of this relationship begins in 1976 with the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) by the UN General Assembly. This convention determined what constitutes discrimination against women and outlines an agenda to eradicate it.¹⁷⁹ Discrimination is defined by the Convention as “[...] any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of

¹⁷⁸ Paulina Garcia-Del Moral, “Transforming Femicidio”, p.1018

¹⁷⁹ “Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,” accessed May 2, 2019, <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/>.

impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field."¹⁸⁰ This convention outlined gender equality implementation responsibilities to the participant states, which had to incorporate principles of equality between men and women, establish tribunals and public institutions to protect women against discrimination, and to ensure elimination of discrimination.¹⁸¹

The use of the convention by Lagarde in her conception of *feminicidio* was that Lagarde framed *feminicidio* as “a social problem that attributes responsibility to the state in the hope that international pressure will push forward their agenda at the domestic level.”¹⁸² Lagarde used the lack of implementation of the responsibilities outlined in the CEDAW to which Mexico had signed as one of the main conditions of possibility for both *the feminicidios of Ciudad Juárez* and for *feminicidio* as a social problem. By 1993, seventeen years after Mexico had signed the convention, Mexico still hadn’t incorporated the equality between sexes and hadn’t established the relevant institutions to the elimination of discrimination for women.

In 1993 Vienna was the host country for the World Conference on Human Rights. This conference was the first international conference on human rights held after the culmination of the Cold War. The objective of the conference was to strengthen the state of the question of human rights.¹⁸³ The importance of this conference is double. First, the conference was a global response to the

¹⁸⁰ “Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.”

¹⁸¹ “Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.”

¹⁸² García-Del Moral, “Transforming *Feminicidio*,” p.1019

¹⁸³ “OHCHR | World Conference on Human Rights,” accessed May 2, 2019, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/aboutus/pages/viennawc.aspx>.

reunification of the world after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, and thus was one of the efforts set forward by the international community in order to reconfigure this new global order.

Second, the conference is historically the first United Nations convention to promote and protect women alongside children and indigenous people, by creating a “Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences.” The rapporteur *condemns* all acts of violence against women, *calls* for their elimination of GBV, and *emphasizes* the duty of governments to take actions against it.¹⁸⁴ The rapporteur affirms that “violence against women constitutes a violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of women and that violence against women impairs or nullifies their enjoyment of those rights and freedoms.”¹⁸⁵ Lagarde used this conference in the development of the meaning of *feminicidio* by enunciating the indispensable character of women’s rights as a fundamental aspect of human rights, without which latter would cease to exist.¹⁸⁶ She used this understanding of the importance of the rights of women to human rights as a unity by endowing *feminicidio* as a legal concept with a transversal gender perspective.¹⁸⁷ This transversal gender character implicit in *feminicidio* as a legal concept made possible the visualization of violence against women, and thus facilitated the creation of mechanisms to fight against it.

In the same year, the United Nation’s General Assembly adopted without a vote the “Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women” which “recognizes the urgent need for the universal application to women of their rights and principles with regard to equality, security,

¹⁸⁴ “OHCHR | World Conference on Human Rights.”

¹⁸⁵ “OHCHR | World Conference on Human Rights.”

¹⁸⁶ Ríos, “Por los derechos humanos de las mujeres.”, p.149

¹⁸⁷ Ríos., p.162

liberty, integrity and dignity of all human beings.”¹⁸⁸ This declaration defines violence against women, encompasses it in its place of occurrence, specifies the rights women are entitled to, and refers to the duties of the States through which they should condemn and pursue the elimination of violence against women.¹⁸⁹ The Declaration outlines 16 actions that States should do to achieve this goal. These actions are self-reflective, in the sense that the State has to ratify how it has done wrong in order to change the order of things.

The Declaration was relevant for Lagarde inasmuch as it established the need to fight against violence against women as an urgent topic in order to ensure the universal application of human rights to women. This convention strengthened the resolutions outlined in the conference in Vienna. As with the two previous conventions and conferences, the Mexican state was also adherent to this Declaration. *The feminicidios of Ciudad Juárez* and the consequential nation-wide review of the state of the order of violence against women in Mexico is what allows Lagarde to expand her definition of *feminicidio* as one that signals the state as “incapable of guaranteeing respect for women's lives or human rights and because it is incapable of acting in keeping with the law and to uphold the law, to prosecute and administer justice, and to prevent and eradicate the violence that causes it.”¹⁹⁰

As for the context of the American continent, the “InterAmerican Convention to Prevent, Punish and Eradicate Violence Against Women” was held in Belem do Pará, Brazil in 1994. This convention is an international human’s right instrument proposed and carried out by the

¹⁸⁸ “A/RES/48/104. Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women,” accessed May 2, 2019, <https://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/48/a48r104.htm>.

¹⁸⁹ “A/RES/48/104. Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women.”

¹⁹⁰ Lagarde, “Preface,” p.xxiii

Organization of the American States (OAS). This convention establishes the mechanisms to protect and defend violence against women in the American continent, and it declares that is the responsibility of each one of the states involved to combat violence against women.¹⁹¹ The convention drafted by the OAS establishes duties to the states who are part of the organization, which are all 35 independent states of the American continent, thus excluding Puerto Rico, French Guyana, and Greenland. The status of Venezuela as a member of the OAS is at the moment in precarity.

The duties are instituted through three articles: Article 7, Article 8, Article 9. Much like the previous declaration, conventions, the states that signed the convention of Belem do Pará condemned violence against women, agreed to undertake processive measures to observe and guarantee the right of women to a life free of violence, and acknowledge the vulnerability of women to violence by reason of their class, ethnicity, and race, in addition to their gender. The difference between this convention and the previous ones is that this was created in the context of the American continent, and thus is understood as more pertinent for the Mexican case. Inasmuch as the previous conferences and declarations had mostly the same objectives, the particularity of the case of the American context to fight this social phenomenon has more pertinence for its implementation in the context of the American states. Furthermore, the Law adheres specifically to the mechanisms of this convention and to those established by the CEDAW.

Finally, the last link in the genealogy of international conventions relevant for the history of *f/f/f* produced under the mechanisms implemented by the United Nations with aims to ensure both the

¹⁹¹ All of the states of the American continent integrate the OAS. Only Puerto Rico, the French Guyana, and Greenland aren't members as they are dependent of other states.

implementation of women's rights as well as the right of women to live a life free of violence is the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing, China. This conference Beijing reaffirmed the statement that women's rights are human rights and called for the implementation of strategies to further advance the status of women in the world. As with Belem do Pará and the 1993 Declaration, the Beijing Declaration, and the States participant in the conference declared to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls. The international urgency to implement mechanisms to prevent violence against women and to ensure the right of women to human rights facilitated Lagarde's conceptualization of *feminicidio* as a category that signaled the Mexican state as the main culprit in both the historical event of *the feminicidios of Ciudad Juárez* and that of the Mexican-wide *feminicidios* due to its inability to comply to all these conventions and international human right mechanisms.

The complexity of this concept is evident, as is the difference with the original radical feminist framework proposed by Diana Russel with *femicide*. The urgency to resolve the violence against women in the Mexican context, alongside the history of international and Inter-American conventions and conferences is what allowed Lagarde to create a definition for the most extreme form of violence, that *feminicidal violence* and to transform the academic category of *feminicidio* into a legal framework which could be prosecutable.

In this chapter, I have traced the conceptual history of the change from *femicide* to *feminicidio* as the result of "how feminism travels across borders."¹⁹² As an oppositional translation, *feminicidio* is a variable in meaning that speaks to different people in different spatiotemporal locations.

¹⁹² Davis, *The Making of Our Bodies, Ourselves*.

Feminicidio is a concept that initially referred explicitly to the historical presentness event of *the feminicidios of Ciudad Juárez*,¹⁹³ whose aim was to create justice for these victims and consequentially to those murdered in the entirety of the country. The concept changed rapidly from an academic concept to a legal concept through the creation of the Special Commission and the production of the Federal Law. Furthermore, this change was done through the particular historical genealogy of the long history of feminist activism regarding human right discourse and the implementation of laws and international declarations which regard women as subjects of the law and of human rights.

The conceptual development of the meaning of *feminicidio*, as well as its typification and further criminalization, is a result of a global paradigm change in interconnection inaugurated with the collapse of the Soviet Union as the point of distancing from the dichotomic character of the history of the 20th-century. The new form of globalization that came about this year is the product of the dismantling of the previous geopolitical regime,¹⁹⁴ which had the world divided into two spheres. These changes can be seen in the 1995 Pekin Fourth World Conference on Women in the field of the international history of the human rights of women, as they can also be perceived in the particular Inter-American regional economic and political processes of reconfiguration with economic treaties such as NAFTA and political changes such as the War on Drugs. In this sense, the violence that came about in Ciudad Juárez and *the feminicidios of Ciudad Juárez* as a historical event is the product of the new global order and must be analyzed under a global perspective that accounts for the presentness character of the event.

¹⁹³ This has since changed, and is now used to refer to variable contexts, as will be analyzed in the following chapter.

¹⁹⁴ Fazio Vengoa, Hugo. "El lugar de 1989 en el presente histórico contemporáneo," p.163

Furthermore, I have analyzed the concept of *feminicidio* under the light of the historical event of the *feminicidios of Ciudad Juárez* as a product of the present as a historical time as a global international process of interconnection manifested through 1) the increase of violence against women associated with shifting geopolitics, 2) the international feminist dialogue held between Lagarde and Russell and the cultural translation of feminist concepts, and 3) through the broader international history of human right theorization and history of the United Nations which is part of the long-term historical process of the transnationally interconnected women's activisms and activist scholarly discourses.

Finally, I have argued that the change in the definition from *femicide* to *feminicide* makes visible the variable meanings that have been produced and which have changed regarding the concept(s) of *f/f/f*. This global perspective on history shows us how feminist dialogues travel across borders and shows the debates around their definitions. Furthermore, the typification of the concept and its consequential criminalization demonstrate the power concepts have to change reality. Through this analysis, I have studied in a different way that in the previous chapter, how the historicity of the creation of definitions of concepts is contextual. This chapter also analyzed *feminicidio* under the theoretical periodization of the present as a historical time since I studied the invention of the concept under as part of the particular circumstances lived in the Mexican territory, which I argued are respond to the new global interconnection order inaugurated in 1989.

Chapter 4 - Where to next? General conclusions and possible research paths

As has been made clear by the research I have presented, *f/f/f* is not a singular or a stable concept, and it is the outcome of a global feminist process of conceptual imagination understood in historical terms. The consequence of this process is the invention of variable words susceptible to differential contextual definitions. Much like the research carried out by Kathy Davis, in this research I have showed how the contextual definitions of the concept(s) respond to oppositional translations, which demonstrates that “feminist perspectives are neither universally shared nor universally empowering but need to be constantly rearticulated in order to ‘work’ under different historical, social, cultural, and political circumstances.”¹⁹⁵

Studying this phenomenon under the light of the analysis of Joan Scott’s seminal article “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” the conceptual historical study of *f/f/f* demonstrates that feminist socio-political concepts use differential understandings of the category of gender. Thus, the visible change in the usage of gender propelled by the increase in feminist and *f/f/f* literature alongside the fluctuating usages of “women” and “gender” as socio-political categories inside the concept(s) are an example of the “redefinition and restructuring in conjunction with a vision of political and social equality that includes not only sex, but class and race.”¹⁹⁶ This means that the use of the category of women or gender that the variable *inventions* give to the concept(s) is also historically contingent and reflects the particular historicity of the studied geo-temporal location of the feminist movement alongside the particular sociopolitical context where it is invented.

¹⁹⁵ Davis, *The Making of Our Bodies, Ourselves*, p.194

¹⁹⁶ Scott., “Gender.” p.1075

Radical feminist understood and outlined the category of gender under the premises of women as a global sex-class, with aims to enable international sisterhood against patriarchal forms of oppression and deprivation of life. The criticism made to *femicide* in its radical feminist tradition is that it “naturalizes sexism by abstracting it from historical, sociocultural, and political contexts in which it operates.”¹⁹⁷ From a decolonial intersectional perspective of *feminicidio*, García-Del Moral argues that the *femicide* in this tradition “portrays race, class, and sexual orientation as layers of difference that can be added onto women’s oppression on the basis of gender,” which became a theoretical problem “as the concept traveled more globally.”¹⁹⁸

The analytical primacy to gender in the conceptualization of *feminicidio* is as present as it was in *femicide*, but it changes as it has been understood as a group of people of social organization at the core of *femicidal violence*.¹⁹⁹ The change can be located by the “structural focus of the state as a gendered institution” complicit with *femicidal violence*²⁰⁰ existent inside the concept of *feminicidio*. This modification came about due to the differentiated historical trajectories of the feminist movements with differential definitions of the relationship between laws about women and the power of the state.²⁰¹ In this sense, what *femicide* turned political was the traditional patriarchal private space, that of the family. What *feminicidio* politicized was no longer the murder of husbands-brothers, but the systematized one of the Mexican patriarchal state.

¹⁹⁷ Paulina García-Del Moral, “The Murders of Indigenous Women in Canada as Feminicides”, p.935

¹⁹⁸ García-Del Moral., p.935

¹⁹⁹ García-Del Moral., p.937

²⁰⁰ García-Del Moral. p.937

²⁰¹ Scott, “Gender.”, p.1074

Kathy Davis argues that the travel of feminist knowledge is *reworked* and *rearticulated* in each place. Similarly, in this research I have aimed to show that the modification of the radical feminist U.S American *femicide* to the Mexican context of *feminicidio* shows how feminist knowledge travels and readapts, thus allowing *re-invention* and *reallocations*. I have thus rearticulated Davis's statement by changing the feminist action of *reworked* to that of *re-invented*. I have done so as it is my understanding that *f/f/f* literature demonstrates that whenever either *femicide*, *feminicidio*, or *feminicide* arrive at a new region in the world, it must undergo a *re-invention* of its definition, which allows it to come into play with the socio-political actors in play. I have thus argued that this *re-invention* is articulated through the particular characteristics of the feminist movement in the geo-temporal location of its arrival as by the historical and sociopolitical context of the region.

In this sense, the study of the intellectual history of the inventors, which in this case are Diana Russell and Marcela Lagarde y de los Ríos is pertinent since it demonstrates the development of both their thought processes for the creation of the definition of *femicide* and *feminicidio*. This exercise shows their thought processes and thus their strategies for the (re)invention of the concept(s) as words shaped by the “plenitude of the politico-social context of meaning and experience in and for which a word is used can be condensed into one word.”²⁰² In this sense, the particular histories of the intellectual trajectories of the authors-inventors bring light into the thought processes that went into the definition of concepts. This form of analysis enables the historian to unfold the layers of feminist political significance contained within concepts.

²⁰² Koselleck, *Futures Past*, p.84

The research that I have outlined in this thesis only demonstrates the original invention of the concept (*femicide*) and the first moment of destabilization, that of the creation of *feminicidio*. Nevertheless, this type of research has the potential to investigate a significant number of *re-inventions* and *reallocations*.

An example of *re-invention* is a fourth word: *femigenocide*. *Femigenocide* is a concept invented by Brazilian anthropologist Rita Segato defined as the impersonal and massive crimes against women, similar to genocidal practices, a product of informal conflicts in geo-national entities.²⁰³ She developed this concept because she argues that the general confusion regarding violence against women makes use of *feminicidio* a reference to both private and political forms of violence. She sees this as a problem because she argues that there should be a specific concept which refers to the particularity of this murder of women in order to create the appropriate criminal investigation strategies, as it is a different crime, in order to typify it and change the system.²⁰⁴ Segato's aim with *femigenocide* is to have it included in the international law system that deals with crimes against humanity and genocide.²⁰⁵

As the debate that Segato references clarify, this *re-invention* produces different concepts which I would argue can be studied in the genealogical line of analysis of *f/f/f*. In a global spectrum of the debate, the uses academic feminists give to the concept(s) change according to the specificities of the women who are murdered, and the words and definitions given to those usages. In this sense,

²⁰³ Segato, Rita. 2016. "Femigenocidio como crimen en el fuero internacional de los Derechos Humanos." In *La guerra contra las mujeres*, 109-126. Madrid: Traficante de sueños. Mapas.

²⁰⁴ Rita Laura Segato, "Femigenocidio y Feminicidio: Una Propuesta de Tipificación," *Herramienta (Buenos Aires)*, no. 49 (2012), <https://biblat.unam.mx/es/revista/herramienta-buenos-aires/articulo/femigenocidio-y-feminicidio-una-propuesta-de-tipificacion.>, p.4

²⁰⁵ Segato., "Femigenocidio y Feminicidio", p.7

the murder of indigenous women in Canada²⁰⁶ is not the same as the murder of Palestinian women in occupied territories.²⁰⁷ As with the debate regarding *femigenocide*, the difference between these two examples is that the former used *feminicide* and “views gender as a necessary but not definitive condition and pays attention to structural and representational processes that shape and are shaped by the historical material realities of specific groups of women;”²⁰⁸ and the latter uses *femicide* in order to reveal “crime empowered by the wider context of colonization and the increasing spatial segregation of Palestinian communities.”²⁰⁹ Thus, the ontological status of the word is located as a process of *re-invention* done by the representation of the socio-political contextual specificities of the personal positionalities and intellectual trajectories of the *re-inventors* and the space in which they use the concept.

This form of work enables historians to outline the conditions of possibilities of histories,²¹⁰ to confirm that the experience and interpretation of history are “impossible without the societal formations and concepts by which they define and seek to meet their challenges,”²¹¹ and to prove that the synchronicity and diachronicity inherent in political concepts are also present in feminist knowledge production inasmuch as it is directed towards acts of speech, writing, and action, as well as towards a diachronic presupposition and their long-term changes.²¹² Likewise, the history of the present time as the necessary theory of periodization required for a viable conceptual history for this research served the purpose of defining the historical temporalities inscribed inside *f/f/f*

²⁰⁶ See: García-Del Moral, “The Murders of Indigenous Women in Canada as Feminicides.”

²⁰⁷ See: Nadera Shalhoub-Kervorkian and Suhad Daher-Nashif, “Femicide and Colonization: Between the Politics of Exclusion and the Culture of Control,” *Violence Against Women* 19, no. 3 (March 2013): 295–315, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801213485548>.

²⁰⁸ García-Del Moral, “The Murders of Indigenous Women in Canada as Feminicides.”, p.930

²⁰⁹ Shalhoub-Kervorkian and Daher-Nashif, “Femicide and Colonization.”

²¹⁰ Koselleck, Reinhart, *The Practice of Conceptual History*, p.3

²¹¹ Koselleck, p.23

²¹² Koselleck, p.31

concept(s). This was thus a vital part of the analysis for it determined the temporality processes that have ignited the variable definitions of the concept(s): that of immediacy (the multiple definitions of *f/f/f* from 1992 onwards), the broader period of time where the event is encompassed (1970s radical feminism), and the third space is that of the long-term process²¹³ (the history of the transnationally interconnected women's activisms and activist scholarly discourses.)

The limitations of this research are, ironically, those of time and space. This is the product of the work of 1 year of research I did in order to obtain the Master of Arts degree in Gender Studies, and there is a word count limit for the research. Thus, I was not able to do the analysis of the conditions of possibility of the temporal space of immediacy (the concepts that have emerged with their difference since the destabilization produced by *feminicidio*), but I have outlined some of its characteristics in the present chapter, and I have referred to its analytical importance throughout this dissertation. Research on the emergence of feminist concepts in history through a conceptual history approach can be implemented to other feminist concepts, while the expansion of the study of *f/f/f* is still pending.

It is of utmost importance to study *f/f/f* through a historical perspective “because words, like ideas and things, are meant to signify, they have a history.”²¹⁴ The leap from word to concept exists because of what Koselleck calls the “plenitude of politico-social context of meaning and experience in and for which a word is used can be condensed into one word.”²¹⁵ In this research, I have outlined the historical context of the feminist meaning production existent in the history of the concept of

²¹³ Hugo Fazio Vengoa, “La historia del tiempo presente: una historia en construcción,” p.55

²¹⁴ Scott, “Gender”, p.1053

²¹⁵ Koselleck, *Futures Past*, p.84

femicide, feminicidio, and feminicide. I have done this through the practice of history, which I understood as a human practice product of the place where it is produced, by the product of procedures of analysis, and by the production of a text.²¹⁶ Thus, the creation of this historical work has been a process of pressure, privileges, and particularities through which I developed a topography of interests.²¹⁷ My personal positionality outlines these pressures and privileges as I am a white Mexican female historian doing a Master of Arts in Gender Studies in Budapest, Hungary, at a private American university.

The interest I hold for studying these subjects relates directly to the life I live in a place where *feminicidio* in its non-specialized, public use and understanding has become an everyday concept, present in all forms of mass media. The importance of focusing my work towards the present as a historical time responds to the concerns I have personally regarding the potential to engage politically with the lived times, with the lives at stake, and with the communities affected by violence which have become contemporary urgencies.²¹⁸ In this sense, I hope I this research proves to be fruitful in its original aim, which was to introduce the discipline of history to the conversation with *f/f/f* literature and to fill the gap in this literature regarding the particular historical processes embedded in the creation of feminist sociopolitical concepts. Furthermore, I hope this research was able to demonstrate how history can study the present as a historical time, which was an exercise done in order to engage with pressing concerns regarding the increase of violence and the lives of those whose lives are or have been disrupted due to gender-based violence.

#NiUnaMás

²¹⁶ Certeau, op cit, p.10

²¹⁷ Certeau, op cit, p.10

²¹⁸ Eugenia Allier Montaña, op cit, p.10

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