

Online Newspaper Coverage of Femicide in Chile and the US  
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### **Abstract**

The present study explored the portrayal and frames that the U.S. online news media and Chilean online news media use when covering femicide/IPV fatalities news. Associations among a Femicide Law enactment and changes in the use of labels to portray the cases were examined. Content analysis was conducted, comparing data from 46 *U.S.* online news articles and 138 Chilean news articles. Results suggest that the enactment of a law that recognizes femicide as a crime has an effect on how the cases are labeled in the news. Results also support previous findings, showing stereotyped news coverage that isolates cases of violence against women and indirectly excuses the perpetrator.

*Keywords:* Femicide, Intimate Partner Violence, Domestic Violence, Content analysis.

Contents	
CHAPTER ONE .....	1
Introduction.....	1
CHAPTER TWO .....	6
Literature Review.....	6
The Social Construction of Violence against Women .....	7
IPV and Consequences of Violence.....	9
Femicide.....	11
Violence against Women, the Chilean Case .....	15
Femicide as a criminal form.....	17
Framing.....	18
News on Violence .....	21
Newsworthiness and crime news. ....	21
The social value of IPV coverage: violence in the media.....	22
News coverage: the Chilean context.....	25
Research Questions.....	28
CHAPTER THREE .....	32
Method .....	32
Population and Sample Design .....	33
Unit of Analysis and Categories .....	35
Coder Training.....	37
CHAPTER FOUR.....	38
Results.....	38
Sample Description.....	38
Results.....	39
CHAPTER FIVE .....	45
Discussion.....	45
Use of Labels and Terminology.....	45
Features in the Coverage of Femicide Cases .....	48
Frames and Themes from Chilean News Coverage.....	50
Frames and Themes from U.S. News Coverage .....	53
Summary.....	54

Conclusions.....	56
References.....	59
Appendices.....	69
Appendix A.....	69
Appendix B.....	71
Appendix C.....	72
Tables.....	84
Table 1.....	84
Table 2.....	85
Table 2.1.....	86
Table 3.....	87
Table 4.....	88
Table 5.....	89
Table 6.....	90

## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

Research has shown that violence against women is a global problem that constitutes a violation of human rights; in essence, it prevents women and their families to have a dignified life, free of violence and the suffering caused by it. As this fundamental right is being violated, advocates are working to decrease rates of victimization. The systematic increase of violence against women and its pervasiveness has led it to become not only a human rights issue but also a worldwide public health problem (Ellsberg & Heise, 2005). *Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)* – defined as any kind of sexually, psychologically, and or physically coercive act committed by a current or former partner – is the most frequent type of aggression against women (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). In the US, 35% of the women who reported being raped, physically assaulted, and/or stalked were victimized by a current or former husband, partner, boyfriend, or date (Black, et al., 2011).

Violence against women began gaining notoriety in Chile in the 1990's. It is a relatively new concern, which has positioned itself as a prominent health and social issue. The Chilean numbers are consistent with the American data. For the year 2011, female victims accounted for 80.25% of the total number of the reports of family violence (Servicio Nacional de la Mujer [Sernam], 2008). From a prevalence perspective, 35.7% of surveyed women experience IPV at least once in their lives and 32.6% of victimized women declared that they had experienced physical, emotional, and sexual violence (Sernam, 2008). Therefore, the home environment represents an unsafe place for Chilean women; as in America, women are the main victims of domestic violence in the family context and the most probable perpetrator is an intimate partner.

Fortunately in Chile authorities have noted the issue of IPV and local agencies are working to prevent it (Toledo, 2008).

Chile and other countries in Latin America such as Costa Rica, Guatemala, and Peru have taken part in preventing and ending all forms of violence against women. All of these countries have incorporated some modification in their criminal system to acknowledge the crime of *femicide* and to make visible the violence against women. As a generic definition, *femicide*<sup>1</sup> is the killing of women for misogynous reasons (Radford, 1992). The femicide law in Chile typifies femicide as a crime committed in the context of domestic violence (Toledo, 2008); therefore femicide is the most extreme form of IPV.

However, the US and Chile both differ in their approach to legally and socially addressing violence against women. For instance, although Chile does have a law that acknowledges the crime of femicide, to date the US does not have a law that identifies or defines femicide specifically as a crime. Moreover, only feminist scholars recognize IPV female fatalities within the frame of femicide. It is worth noting, however, that although a law does exist in Chile, the Chilean public agencies advocating for victims of domestic violence do not recognize the label IPV as a separate category and instead any violent act committed by a partner against a woman is framed under the domestic violence frame. Although violence against women has become a source of concern to advocates and policy makers in both the US and Chile, this paper proposes that the fact that governmental agencies treat violence against women differently from a legal perspective does not influence how the mainstream media frames it. Analyzing how the media in each country frame this form of violence – and therefore potentially normalize extreme violence against women – is the purpose of this research project.

Mass media are important agents in society's reinforcement of values and stereotypes,

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<sup>1</sup> Translated by the author from the Spanish word femicidio

media provides general pictures about distant events (Meyers, 1997). They shape perceptions, reinforce accepted behaviors, and condemn actions against society's morals (Consalvo, 1998; Meyers, 1997). Reporters and editors construct a news discourse in accordance to society's values but also in terms of newsworthiness, evaluating the profitable market value of crime news (Benedict, 1992; Meyers, 1997). IPV news coverage has drawn increasing attention during the recent years (Maxwell & Huxford, 2000). Media and feminist research have focused their analyses on the portrayal of victims and perpetrators and the type of frames used by news media to report IPV cases (e.g., Bullock, 2007; Bullock & Cubert, 2002; Consalvo, 1998; Maxwell & Huxford, 2000). The feminist perspective suggests that news media are institutions of social control; they serve to maintain, reinforce, and perpetuate a patriarchal structure, where sexism normalizes gender role stereotypes, and violence against women (Hook, 2000). News reports of gendered crimes show a systematic exculpation of perpetrators by employing victim-blaming language and supporting the victim-vamp dichotomy. This victim-vamp dichotomy creates a frame wherein victims are the ones to blame according to their acknowledgment to traditional gender roles (Benedict, 1992). Overgeneralizations manifested in stereotyped coverage rely on the social class and race of victims to describe who the victims are and why IPV occurs only in certain families, neighborhoods, and within certain classes (Consalvo, 1998; Meyers, 1997). Therefore, if mass media address IPV from a stereotyped perspective they are reinforcing skewed views on femicide and IPV crimes; these views do not reflect reality and, moreover, they influence viewers' perceptions regarding the severity of these news reports (Sotirovic, 2003). In the end, this perspective would argue that the media through frames are creators of perceptions on IPV and attitudes enhancers.

Researchers on IPV news coverage have approached their analysis from two primary

perspectives: the feminist perspective and the media perspective. First, the feminist perspective examines aspects about the relationship between women and stereotyped coverage, highlighting that sexism is the main cause to sustain dominant values and gender roles within society. Second, from a media perspective, the framing analysis provides information about how schemas in the presentation of a news story guide an audience's perceptions and ideas by highlighting certain content over other content and facilitating the process by which an audience remembers a story (Valkenmurg, Semetko, & De Vreese, 1999). Third, the social construction of violence against women that provides information on how these labels have varied over time (Muehlenhard & Kimes, 1999). The present study is built on the feminist perspective to understand the femicide definition and struggles of women in a society that supports predominantly male perspectives and promotes male control. The study draws on definitions of violence against women to support the importance of language and labels in accounting for the variety of sex-based violence. The study uses framing analysis as a general framework to address how schemas as organizational tools can emulate the mainstream and reinforce social stereotypes.

My main purpose of study is to analyze how the media cover gendered violence. Specifically, the present research project wanted to address what are the frames and themes that the U.S. print news media and Chilean print news media use when covering femicide/IPV fatalities news. Through content analysis I will analyze the frames most commonly used in both contexts and compare their approaches when covering the topic of extreme violence against women. Although the U.S. news media's coverage of IPV has received some attention from scholars (e.g., Bullock, 2007; Bullock & Cubert, 2002; Taylor, 2008) there is no project that analyses the use of alternative labels such as femicide. For the Chilean context, there is no study that systematically analyzes the print news media coverage on femicide and IPV. Previous

research addressing cases of femicide in the media have focused on themes and narrative descriptions of victim and perpetrator (e.g., Acuña, Castelleti, Lathrop, Maturana, Olea, & Toledo, 2011; Lagos, 2008). The present study will extend previous work by identifying how femicide cases are labeled, the misconceptions regarding femicide cases, and the sources used in reporting the information. As a first comparison study this project will also reveal whether a law recognizing gendered violence, in the case of Chile, does in fact change practices in the news media when covering femicide news or whether the coverage continues to reinforce accepted social values through which the media re-victimizes and normalizes violence against women.

In the following chapters, chapter two will provide a review of the relevant literature and will examine the social construction of violence against women, current definitions, and statistics regarding prevalence and impact on population. This chapter also includes a discussion of framing as a form of analysis as well as how it functions as a tool for editors and journalists during the news construction process, along with an overview of the status of violence against women in Chile. A final division will link the concept of framing, violence against women, and previous news coverage research findings with the purpose of examining the structures that reinforce and foster violence against women. Chapter Three discusses the methodology used for this study, a description of variables coded, sampling procedure, and units of analysis. Chapter Four will provide the results of the content analysis, showing trends in both the Chilean and U.S. coverage while also revealing the differences in their approaches. A discussion section, Chapter Five, will provide an analysis of the major findings related to the research questions. Finally, a last section will provide general conclusions addressing the limitations, implications and future directions for research on the topic.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Literature Review

Feminist movements advocating for violence against women have served as the spark for creating greater awareness of this issue. Feminist views challenged previous definitions of private life placing domestic violence in the public eye, and allowed women and advocates to fight back against gendered violence. Marital rape, wife beating, and stalking were behaviors that, before feminist activism, remained silenced (Estrich, 1987; Mullen, Pathé, & Purcell, 2009). The feminist movement reformulated gendered crimes such as rape and less known forms of victimization such as acquaintance rape (Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987), stalking (Mullen et al., 2009), and sexual harassment (Fitzgerald, Swan, & Magley, 1997; Wood, 1992). Therefore, domestic violence shifted from being considered a private issue, to be reframed as a social problem. Awareness of violence against women was in and of itself a feminist triumph, but ending the violence is a task that involves advocates, policy makers, authorities and society in general.

The varied stakeholders in the process have framed the issue of violence against women from their own perspective. As a consequence, there are as many frames addressing gendered violence as parties interested in treating it. Stakeholders use mass media to expand and gain support on their views. Therefore, the social construction and definition of violence against women are fundamental to understand the type of news coverage in gendered violence cases. Labels will determine the victims, how valuable are the news pieces, and to what extent the topic will affect the audience (Benedict, 1992). Because my thesis examines online news coverage on violence against women, the focus of the present literature review is on IPV and femicide as they represent the most extreme type of violence against women (Caputi, 1992). News sources that

cover IPV and femicide are the most relevant to the present work because they reflect how stakeholders and mainstream media outlets frame gendered violence. Moreover, news representations of IPV and femicide prime the general understanding on violence issues and normalize and overgeneralize violence against women. Who is a victim and how is portrayed in the news serve as the organizing principles for my literature review.

### **The Social Construction of Violence against Women**

To label a social problem is the first step in trying to address its causes and consequences. To name a phenomenon is to identify it and to make it noticeable, while also more open to challenge and negotiation (Wood, 1992). Labels allow people to recognize the origin of the problem and to design tentative solutions in order to treat it and promote further prevention. The diagnostic process is not objective and implies negotiations among people involved or affected by the given issue (Loseke, 1992). Violence against women is a social problem; in consequence, it has created a discussion around who should define what constitutes domestic violence and who is a victim. Definitions of violence against women have depended generally on the historical context but specifically on the groups in power in each circumstance (Muehlenhard & Kimes, 1999). The labeling process has standardized experiences within the category of domestic violence and collective representations have guided social support to victims who ascribe to prototypical representations (Loseke, 1992). Legal, feminist, and governmental definitions all are highly dependent on the perceived extent of the social problem of violence against women. Labels will define general solutions and social perceptions of violence; in consequence, the accuracy of current labels and representations of violence against women are important in order to prevent subsequent normalization of gendered violence.

In an attempt to account for same sex victimization within the couple, current definitions

of violence against women are showing an inclusive trend in terms of gender. Historical categorizations to define violence against women were focused exclusively on male/female victimization and were limited to the context of intimacy. There is no unique definition to address violence against women, and struggles to label the ways people think about gendered violence are still present (Muehlenhard & Kimes, 1999). The term IPV emerged as an attempt to unify criteria and to categorize violent behaviors. IPV refers to the “victimization committed by spouses or ex-spouses, boyfriends or girlfriends, and ex-boyfriends or ex-girlfriends” (CDC, 2011). Although its scope is gender neutral and addresses both heterosexual and same sex relationships, women constitute the main victims for this type of aggressions and men are more likely to be the perpetrators (Black et al., 2011; Catalano, 2012; Catalano, Smith, Snyder, & Rand, 2009)

All IPV can occur in a context of domestic violence but not all domestic violence episodes constitute IPV. IPV is a technical term to acknowledge gender-neutral intimate violence. On the contrary, domestic violence is a popular term that people use as a meta-category to define all types of male/female victimization in a private context. While both IPV and domestic violence share the intimacy context in their definition, they are not synonymous and differ principally in the nature of the relationship between implicates. While IPV involves current or former spouses, couples, and boyfriends or girlfriends, domestic violence refers to acts of violence perpetrated against and between family members not restricted to spouses or romantic couples (Catalano, 2007). Therefore, there is a distinction between terms and IPV is a more limited label. Consistency of definitions allows stakeholders to frame, to address and to resolve problems. If consistency is not stressed, tentative solutions will never resolve the real issue.

Because of its definition, IPV is a label that allows health agencies to collect data and draw estimates in terms of prevalence and incidence. The IPV label has provided a frame to unify criteria according to the type of violent behavior. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2012) defines four types of behaviors within the label of IPV: sexual violence, physical violence, threats, and emotional abuse. Sexual violence is defined as any coercive act that forces a partner to take part in a sex act without his/her consent. Physical violence is considered as any act that hurts a partner by using physical force. Threats are defined as the expression of any intention to produce physical or sexual harm, this include the use of words, gestures, weapons, or other means (CDC, 2012). Finally, emotional abuse includes a wide range of behaviors such as name calling, insulting or humiliating. Coercive control exercise, such as monitoring an intimate partner, is also included in the previous type of abuse (CDC, 2012, p.2). With accurate definitions is easier to classify, to measure and to recognize abuse for victims, and treatments for perpetrators. Prevalence data provide a standpoint to address the violence and to measure real advances in the topic on general population.

### **IPV and Consequences of Violence**

Domestic violence fosters IPV episodes and in extreme situations women are the most probable victims of fatal IPV. Consequently the effects on victims become more serious as the violence is regularly perpetuated within the romantic couple (CDC, 2012). In 2007 IPV murderers accounted for 14% of all homicides committed in the United States (Catalano et al., 2009). In the context of fatal IPV, females were killed at twice the rate of males (Catalano, 2009). Researchers' and policy makers' work to search and reduce the number of victims and the effects from the exposure to violence have not been enough. Data suggest that IPV rates have diminished during the past 20 years, however the likelihood of becoming a victim is higher for

women (Black, et al., 2011; Catalano et al., 2009). In the US more than one in three women (35.6%) compared with one in four men (28.5%) have experienced rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by a current or intimate partner at some point in their lives (Black et al., 2011). In consequence, IPV is detrimental to women well-being and a threat to their lives. Health, economic, and family consequences highlight the preponderant place that occupies IPV research. Statistics, however, suggest that conscious awareness of IPV is not enough and modifications in other social aspects need to be addressed.

Exposure to IPV can be detrimental to the victim's physical and psychological wellbeing, leading to short-term and long-term health outcomes. Frequent headaches, chronic pain, sleeping problems, anxiety, and depression are some of the problems more likely to be reported by female victims of IPV (Black et al., 2011). In addition, victims are more likely to engage in substance abuse as an outlet to cope with the effects of the attack (CDC, 2012). The dose-response effect of violence is a consistent pattern; as the frequency and severity of violence increases the likelihood of experiencing severe physical and psychological outcomes rises as well (Black et al., 2011; Campbell et al., 2003).

IPV can also create long term effects, such as the manifestation of violent attitudes in children during childhood and later in adulthood. Thus, violence affects not only parents as victims and as the perpetrators of violence but also children as witnesses. Children exposed to violent episodes are more likely to engage later in irresponsible sexual behavior, bondless parenthood, and are more likely to continue the cycle of violence (Ellsberg & Heise, 2005). Data also reveals that of all female victims of IPV episodes registered during 2008, 38% reported having children under the age of 12 at the time of the aggression (Catalano et al., 2009). IPV also affects children by modeling their family memories. Addressing the problem of violence as a

prevention measure seems an urgent target for societies in order to stop the ongoing cycle of violence in the family environment.

IPV also has detrimental results in terms of family income and total productivity. For example, because of injuries and subsequent lost days of work, victims who are also employed in the labor force often face a decrease in salary due to the victimization. One in ten women (10%) missed at least one day of work or school as a result of IPV (Black et al., 2011), while nearly one in 25 men (3.9%) missed at least one day of work or school for same reasons. In the US the cost of IPV in terms of medical care, mental health services, and loss of productivity was estimated as \$5.8 billion in 1995 and approximately \$8.3 billion for the year 2003 (CDC, 2003). A family's economic vulnerability increases further by each IPV episode and the economic outcomes are serious, especially when depending on an income to last until the end of the month. Given all the previous evidence, IPV is a worldwide health problem with serious and long-term consequences. The documented increase of victims clearly highlights the need to more directly account for the multitude of consequences in order to tackle and end the cycle of violence.

### **Femicide**

As has been identified, feminists have taken the lead in gaining recognition for and defining domestic violence as a social problem. Since the 1970's activists have worked to address the problem of violence against women and to make violence visible. According to Bell Hooks (2000) the feminist movement's initial focus on domestic violence framed it solely in terms of male violence against women. The term domestic violence suggests that the aggressions occur in an intimate sphere, which originally inferred a less cruel and less frightening form of violence than that which could occur outside the home (Hooks, 2000). But unfortunately for women who are beaten and killed, the intimate sphere is the most likely context for those crimes

to occur (Black et al., 2011; Stout, 1992).

While scholars have identified the various acts of violence against women, others have sought to label and identify the specific act of a man killing a woman. Arguably, this form of homicide is an expression of the most extreme form of violence against women (. The feminist perspective argues this act of violence occurs in a context of hate and unequal access to power, and further proposes that it results from an escalation of violence fostered by the mainstream perspective. First coined by Carol Orlock (1974) and popularized by Diana Russell (1992), the term *femicide* has been developed to specifically refer to and uniquely identify the misogynous killing of women by men. According to Jill Radford (1992) femicide has political significance because it reflects how women remain controlled as a sex class within the context of a patriarchal society. The notion of femicide has many forms: racist femicide, marital femicide, homophobic femicide, and mass femicide. Furthermore, femicide goes beyond the legal definition of murder to include situations in which women die as a result of cultural and misogynous practices (Radford, 1992. p.7). Overall, femicide represents the ultimate expression of anti-female terrorism being “motivated by hatred, contempt, pleasure or a sense of ownership of women” (Caputti & Russell, 1992, p 15).

Reasons for femicide crimes relate to our forms of socialization and the institutions that promote control and violence (Yodanis, 2004). Media, as a social institution insert within the frame of western patriarchal cultures, promotes and reinforces male interest, perspectives, and experiences. Media discourse shows men’s and women’s roles in society, how they should behave, and the results of not respecting social conventions (Benedict, 1992; Meyers, 1997). In these conventions, power and the use of violence equal masculinity and violence symbolize the way to maintain the dominance within the intimacy context (Anderson & Doherty, 2007; Hook,

2000). To connect with traditional values the media promotes misogyny, which in turn stimulates sexist violence. When violence is tolerated, the social order remains unchallenged (Yodanis, 2004).

Therefore, the media perpetuates a patriarchal structure and in doing so ignores the feminist approach to violence against women. For instance, in their portrayals of gendered violence the media uses direct and indirect language to blame the victims of intimate violence (Caputti & Russell, 1992; Richards, Kirkland, & Smith, 2011). The media obscures the violence against women by degendering the problem and engendering the blame (Berns, 2001). Moreover, by portraying women in a stereotypical ways, such as jezebels who provoke male violence through their own behavior (Meyers, 2004), stereotypes become internalized as part of the viewers' perception of what reality is (Carll, 2003). Therefore, mass media perpetuate myths of violence against women (Cuklanz, 2000; Greenberg & Hofschire, 2000). As socialization occurs in a system that allows men and women to maintain and reinforce negative attitudes toward women, femicide will still occur.

As posed earlier the term femicide originally reflects a wide range of woman killing contexts (Radford, 1992). However, for the purpose of the present study, and because of the context of research, femicide will be restricted to the killing of a woman by a current or former husband, or boyfriend.

According to the feminist perspective, in patriarchal cultures women represent a subordinate group and, as a consequence, some experiences that are that are unique to, or more typical of women are not represented in accurate ways (Woods, 2005). Women experiences deserve credit and voice in order to reach a full and equate inclusion in social life. Therefore, in using general labels, such as domestic violence, to point experiences that are unique to women,

such as femicide, prevent a comprehensive understanding, addressing, and effective prevention of the crime.

In the US, official data reported by agencies does not provide information accounting for killings of women by intimates as femicide. IPV, a more accurate label, has emerged to that purpose, describing cases of violence within the context of intimate relations and making a distinction from general cases of domestic violence. However, IPV label does not discriminate between the sexes of the victim, which in the end represents an advance in awareness of the violence between intimates but does not acknowledge for the women's unique experience facing extreme cases of violence.

Research addressing violence against women coverage has consistently reported on cases of domestic violence and domestic violence fatalities (e.g., Bullock and Cubert, 2002; Taylor, 2008). However, there is no research examining the use of term femicide in the U.S. news coverage of men killing women who were current or former intimate partners. Moreover, as new labels have emerged to describe violent behavior in the context of intimate relationships research addressing the potential use of those labels is needed in order to examine media's role in a patriarchal society

Conversely, as IPV has emerge as a term to officially report for cases of violence within the context of intimacy, the present study wants to address to what extent, if any, U.S. media reports on cases of femicide using the category of IPV related fatality. It is also a concern of the present study to examine accuracy of the labels that are commonly used to report cases of femicide in the U.S. context. Specifically, is a purpose of the present study to examine whether the U.S. news media uses the label domestic violence to describe femicide cases.

## **Violence against Women, the Chilean Case**

In Chile the issue of violence against women has shifted from the awareness stage to the stages of seeking treatment and prevention. Governmental and non-governmental institutions have oriented their policies to treat female concerns regarding her domestic life and her insertion in public spheres. In 1991, advocates placed private and public violence against women at the center of their agenda and since then solutions, prevention, and security for the victims have been widely covered topics (Fernandez, 2008). Despite the progress, gender violence remains an unsolved issue (Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe [CEPAL], 2011); as evidence, 40 women were reported to have died at hands of their current or former intimate partner during 2011. In sum, violence against women is still a problematic feature in Chile. After 12 years of prevention campaigns and diagnosis of the problem, there are aspects that have delayed a better social approach to the topic. An overview of those aspects discussed below include: early approaches to the issue of violence against women, current state of penalties for perpetrators and future approaches.

Historically, the creation of the Chilean National Service for Women<sup>2</sup> (Sernam), and the enactment of the three subsequent laws of *Family Violence* are the four events that highlight general and institutional awareness of violence against women in Chile but at the same time, they reduce the female violence experience to the domestic and private sphere only. These events reflect the compromise of the Chilean state in protecting the female basic human right to a life without violence but only in terms of family and in the context of the home (Sernam, 2013). Particularly, Sernam emerges as an endorsement to the United Nations convention for eliminating all forms of violence against women (Fernandez, 2008); Sernam obligations back then were intended to draw attention to issues involving women and family, and to promote

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<sup>2</sup> In its Spanish translation Servicio Nacional de la Mujer (Sernam)

policies, which ensured equality of rights and opportunities among men and women (Sernam, 2013). Although Sernam represents a will of the State to protect women and provide them some dignity, its creation as an agency concerned with the domestic life of women represented a limitation. Indirectly, Sernam frames women in the sphere of family and therefore family as her main concern. The three laws that followed the creation of Sernam, enacted in 1994, 2005 and 2010, shared the family orientation and complimented Sernam's main policies (Toledo, 2008).

The three laws differ significantly in their penalization of violence against women, their funding, and consequently outcomes. The first and more basic was the *Family Violence Law*<sup>3</sup> (1994). It was a civil code, therefore cases of battering were classified only as misdemeanor and no penal punishment was associated with them. As a result, civil courts collapsed and most of the claims ended in mediations with no real solution or protection for the victims (Toledo, 2008). Advocates questioned the law's efficiency and its funding sources (Fernandez, 2008). Finally as prevalence rates remained constant and the state updated its judicial system, the need for a new law became more and more evident as extreme cases of family violence were being reported (Toledo, 2008). Consequently, the first law provided a frame to work with during a first stage of awareness of violence against women. However, it was soon determined to be insufficient in actually correcting violent behaviors within the family and efforts toward a new phase of reform emerged.

The second Family Violence Law<sup>4</sup> (2005) maintained the family approach. It continued to address gender violence only in terms of domestic abuse. Its approach minimized violence against women by not accounting for the unequal context of power and access to resources in both the family and social contexts. Theoretically it represented an advance by specifying

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<sup>3</sup> In Spanish, *Ley de Violencia Intrafamiliar*, 19.325.

<sup>4</sup> In Spanish, *Ley de Violencia Intrafamiliar*, 20.066.

criminal punishment for violence against women and recognizing that the State had an obligation in prevention and protective measures. In terms of content, the law separated civil and criminal matters (Fernandez, 2008). From a civil standpoint, the law provided to family courts the duties of regulating and intervening in domestic disputes and dictating protection orders for victims (Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile [BCN], 2011). From a criminal perspective, the Public Ministry was the entity in charge of domestic violence felonies. The law incorporated and penalized the figure of *constant abuse*<sup>5</sup> as the consistent abuse, either physical or emotional against family members and relatives (BCN, 2011). One important contribution of the new law was its recognition of family violence as a felony (Fernandez, 2008). The structure of the law however, resulted in a new way in which society could obscure the range of female violence experiences. For the Chilean legal system, domestic violence, IPV, and violence against women were synonymous with family violence, a sustained approach that was also demonstrated in the Sernam's functioning.

### **Femicide as a criminal form.**

In 2010, the second Family Violence Law was modified to incorporate the criminal form of femicide in the Chilean Penal Code. Although the term femicide implies that the state and by extent the society acknowledges a criminal case differentiated by gender, it does not provide an aggravated punitive charge.

By its fundamental definition, the term femicide accounts for the gender differences in the access to power in a patriarchal context (Russell, 1992). To typify femicide in the Chilean context is to abandon gender neutrality in term of the law and by extent it helps to make visible the experience of gendered violence for victimized women (Mera, 2008; Toledo, 2008). The integration of femicide as a criminal form into the Penal Code appears as a theoretical

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<sup>5</sup> Translated by the author from the Spanish expression *maltrato habitual*

vindication to the traditional orientation addressing violence against women. However in reality, the term itself only makes a gender distinction when applied to the more extreme form of violence, a murder. Again in cases of physical or emotional abuse the context recognized by the law is still the domestic, and the gendered violence is once again obscure.

Currently, there are still some concerns related to the description provided by the law and what constitutes a femicide. As written, the regulation of femicide is restricted to fatal violence against a woman in the context of intimacy, but excludes violence occurring outside the formal tie between a man and a woman, such as the femicide during the courtship. In 2010, 49 cases of femicide were listed; in 18.4% of the cases they were girlfriend and boyfriend, or ex- girlfriend and boyfriend or ex-couples (Sernam, 2011). Arguably, concerns regarding the definition of femicide are well founded.

Little research has been conducted in Chile to analyze news coverage of violence against women (e.g., Acuña et al., 2011; Lagos, 2008) and specifically since the criminal term femicide was enacted. To frame femicide is to acknowledge the differences between men and woman in their relationships and in their access to power; on the contrary, to treat femicide as simply homicide tends to obscure the roots of gendered inequities (Radford, 1992).

## **Framing**

The mass media industry embodies powerful institutions, presumably independent, and active agents in the creation of public opinion. They set the agenda, prime topics of interest and provide information of general interest. Scholarly research elucidates media effects on its audience (e.g., Iyengar & Kinder, 2010; McCombs, 2004). Consequently, the power of the media relies on their influence in social reality and context. Capacity to create opinions and reinforce ideas exemplifies the features that embed the media with power. How media orient the

public and the subsequent effects on audiences form the main topics in the present section.

Framing analysis has served as a model to explain media effects on the audiences, the model assumes that the relevance of a topic depends on the language used to describe the issue (Iyengar & Kinder, 2010). Framing, therefore, is a process through which certain aspects of an issue are selected and made more relevant in order to promote certain definitions, interpretations, and tentative solutions for the particular topic (Entman, 2004). Framing considers the mechanism underlying how people think about an issue in particular.

In general terms, frames organize information, whether at an individual and/or at a societal level. At an individual level, frames organize particular information in unique contexts, which allows for certain elements of the general data to remain salient and more accessible to the individual's cognitive resources (Kahneman & Tversky, 1984). Meanwhile, at a societal level our perceptions and daily life experiences are guided by social norms and cultural values, which are components of our collectively held frames (Entman, 1993). Thus, frames categorize behaviors, information, and daily experiences into cognitive schemas to facilitate our functioning as individuals in society (Scheufele, 1999). Therefore, framing and frames depend at a micro level on the individual's process of categorization and at a macro level on the social norms and values that the individual ascribes.

Frames work as organizational tools during the entire mass mediated communication process whether at the production of the news piece or at the audiences' reception of the news (Entman, 1993). Frames allow journalists and editors to highlight some content and in turn omit other. These omissions are critical cues that guide audiences' perceptions (Pan & Kosiki, 1993).

Frames are not universal, they are culturally driven. Their strength and consequently their effects on audiences will vary depending on individuals' acceptance of the values projected by

those frames. Frames in news reports can influence negative perceptions and emotional responses of audiences regarding criminal justice preferences by highlighting negative features of perpetrators (Palazzolo & Roberto, 2011). Likewise, individuals' reasoning and their recall process can be triggered by the type of frame and featured position within the text (Valkenmurg et al., 1999). The power of the news lies in the frame that the reports use to portray the facts. As the frame contains cultural symbols, the perceptions of the audience will be oriented to inform a particular judgment. The frame is therefore the key to understanding what values society cares about the most.

In consequence, the power of frames in the news construction process is a relevant aspect to study as the presentation of the news serves as a tool of social control (Taylor & Sorenson, 2002) and frames serve as a mirror where our values are reflect and reinforced. As social problems are constructed through news and news media, their perceived importance will depend directly on how the problem is portrayed on that news. Importantly, the portrayal of IPV crimes against women could influence how readers perceive the severity of those crimes and the reality constructed around domestic violence (e.g., Salazar, Baker, Price & Carlin, 2003). Moreover, how news media frames IPV and femicide could promote social change to influence the policy making process (Carll, 2003). Given the scope of the present research, framing analysis is the appropriate model to address how print news media cover IPV fatalities news. Framing analysis would provide evidence about mainstream portrayal of victims, perpetrator and the extent of violence against women; framing analysis could detail sources, features, and stereotypes highlighted to report the facts in the news coverage of these crimes.

## **News on Violence**

### **Newsworthiness and crime news.**

As any social product, news discourse reflects shared beliefs and values about society, values that are well known, widely accepted, and taken for granted. News discourse promotes and reinforces beliefs sustain by the mainstream. These beliefs “set the parameters of a broad framework within which news discourse is constructed, transmitted, and developed” (Pan & Kosicki, 1993, p. 3). Cultural values set the framework where news reports take shape and compete with each other to define their newsworthiness, an essential feature for the media industry. In the end, newsworthiness defines what and how much will be told about a story (Meyers, 1997). Therefore, reporters during the news construction process have to consider two main factors: the social value and newsworthiness of their story. Both aspects will define the prominence of the story and the commercial values.

Generally speaking, journalists and editors agree on the dependence between newsworthiness and social context. Features of news and their implied value may vary among societies and according to the orientation of the media industries. Scholars have agreed on the social construction process of newsworthiness and therefore, they define newsworthiness as a reflection of western society’s values (Berns, 2001; Taylor & Sorenson, 2002). Classical components of newsworthiness are: the immediacy factor, the conflict element, the unexpected issue, and the implications for people (Tuchman, 1978). Recent trends to consider newsworthiness ad two components to the previous list: the unusualness and the level of sensationalism surrounding the story, both of which reflect a larger societal prejudice (Meyers, 1997). Ultimately, the cultural context will restrict the features highlighted in the news content according to the media orientation.

Regarding cases of IPV news, as news is placed within the crime news category such stories are perceived as inherently newsworthy and, therefore, the story receives increased coverage. Crime news are the most frequently reported stories for news media (Nikunen, 2011); they execute social control by infusing morals in the story, which reinforces accepted behavior while warning about consequences of violation (Benedict, 1992; Meyers, 1997; Nikunen, 2011). However, in terms of quality, IPV fatalities news coverage addresses the cases superficially. Specifically, by stereotyping the portrayal of female victims and only focusing on the sensational stories and/or aspects of the stories (Benedict, 1992; Bullock, 2007; Meyers, 1997; Nettleton, 2011; Nikunen, 2011). Therefore, the sensational facts highlighted by media make invisible important aspects of the crime. Moreover, overgeneralizations manifested through stereotypes promote audience desensitization and further normalization of violence.

#### **The social value of IPV coverage: violence in the media.**

Violence against women has remained traditionally treated as a private and isolated topic. It has been understood mainly in terms of family concerns and therefore, media coverage of violence against women has reinforced this popular cultural perception through frames. Research on wife abuse and violence against women, has demonstrated a sustained tendency by the media to re-victimize the protagonist of domestic violence (Benedict, 1992; Berns, 1999, 2001; Bullock & Cubert, 2002; Bullock, 2003; Meyers; 1997). Strategies are oriented to highlight the spectacular aspects of the story (Benedict, 1992; Bullock & Cubert, 2002; Bullock, 2003; Consalvo, 1998; Meyers; 1997); and by default, victims remain directly or indirectly responsible for the violence. In terms of news construction, strategies used to blame the victim directly or indirectly, are found within the frames.

Certain frames sustain a male dominance perspective (Bern, 1999; Benedict, 1992;

Bullock & Cubert, 2002; Bullock, 2007; Meyers, 1997; Nettleton, 2011; Nikunen, 2011).

Bullock and Cubert (2002) suggested four primary frames that tend to obscure intimate violence against women: a police oriented frame, a frame suggesting that people involved in IPV differ significantly from the majority, a frame that blames the victim and/or exonerates the perpetrator, and a frame suggesting that abusers are abnormal (Bullock & Cubert, 2002). As a general feature, frames recurrently blame the victim for the violence (Bullock & Cubert, 2002, p. 493). Frames in the news help to organize elements that highlight specific content regarding female victims' direct or indirect guilt in the crime. By using stereotyped coverage, the media normalizes and obscures the violence, portraying violence against women as a remote matter.

Under a police oriented frame legitimate sources provide the information with neutral and thus official views. Reporters want to appear objective and therefore rely mostly on sources of authority, such as police and judges, with the most common source cited being the police (Taylor, 2008). The official source uses technical language to construct the reality about the crime (Meyers, 1997), and this type of frame, according to Bullock and Cubert (2002), seldom labels a killing as IPV and by extent ignores the social causes of violence. The relationship between victim and perpetrator remain poorly described and open to the readers' conclusions. The story is constructed only in terms of physical violence and ignores patterns of psychological abuse (Bullock & Cubert, 2002). Furthermore, in only one third of the cases (34%) the crime is presented in a broader context of domestic violence. Objectivity as a way to present the information overcomes accuracy of the news. As a result, the real issue of violence remains neglected and unexplored by the news.

Exceptional features of people involved in IPV fatalities constitute a second type of frame. The approach also isolates cases of violence but by treating the IPV crimes and their

protagonist as unique, as exceptions to the rule. This frame allows news media gain control of preferable audiences by reinforcing socially accepted behaviors and by suggesting that domestic violence only occurs in certain social groups (Bullock, 2007). This news treatment, works with ethnic, racial, geographical, and social features (Meyers, 1997). Aspects such as criminal records and substance abuse stay commonly highlighted (Bullock & Cubert, 2002). Moreover, news reporters usually do not protect identities of involved couples when informing about the crime (Meyers, 1997). In general terms, through the exceptional features frame the media constructs victim and perpetrator as others. People portrayed through this type of frame have notoriety regarding only their class, race, and social membership; victim and perpetrator are not individuals but members of larger groups of others.

A third frame works through victim blaming and/or excusing the perpetrator's attitudes. Both orientations do not represent mutually exclusive categories but in most cases function as complementary categories. When the female victim is blamed, aspects that reveal her inappropriate portrayal of gender roles are highlighted; when the male perpetrator is blamed, mental or physical traits are highlighted. Victim blaming attitudes are manifested through negative adjectives used to describe her behavior and personal problems (Taylor, 2008), to reinforce the dichotomy good girl- bad girl (Benedict, 1992; Meyers, 1997; Richards et al., 2011), and to support the idea that only some victims are really innocent (Consalvo, 1998). Most newspaper articles frame the victim as specifically responsible for ending violence or leaving the abusive relationship (Maxwell & Huxford, 2000). Moreover, the omission of IPV supporting resources in the victim blaming and/ or excusing the perpetrator frame exacerbates the perception of isolation for victims (Carlyle, Slater, & Chakroff, 2008). Perpetrators are excused for their actions by virtue of their portrayal as physically or mentally sick (Taylor, 2008). In sum,

through the victim blaming and/ or excusing the perpetrator frame it is the woman's responsibility to ask for help if she is abused, to denounce and/or leave her abuser, or to be someone's subject of desire. According to the news portrayal of the victim, she deserved the violence by being a bad girl. Thus media plays an important role in defining meanings around images of guilt.

Deviant serves as the word to classify a last frame, which relies mostly on descriptions of perpetrators as unusual people. Media usually portrays perpetrators and their victims as eccentric and socially awkward. Media treat men who batter as deviant and sick (Consalvo, 1998). Thus, the frame is constructed on perpetrators' abnormal attitudes, which makes them an easily identifiable group (Bullock & Cubert, 2002). Sensationalized common sense explanations are predominant in the portrayal of crime and criminals in this type of frame (Noh, Lee, & Feltey, 2010). Men that perform extreme violence on women are abnormal, and therefore represent only a few men. Cases of violence therefore are represented as isolated, and because perpetrators are abnormal and only a small part of the male population, real concern for treating and preventing violence is not necessary. Once again, media obscures the real impact of violence against women.

#### **News coverage: the Chilean context**

As for the Chilean case, Lagos (2008) has postulated three main typologies of femicide according to media coverage; femicide as a drama and tragedy, femicide as love madness, and femicide as a bloody event. Although this analysis does not provide specific frames, there are some features that overlap with the previously presented news frames in the American press. Specifically, an overlap is evident in strategies used to exonerate the perpetrator.

The first type of frame represents the femicide as a drama and tragedy (Lagos, 2008), and shares some features with the police frame described by Bullock and Cubert (2002). Both perspectives present mainly official sources to report facts and, to some extent, the murder reported is indicated as an isolated fact. However, the Chilean case differs in their narrative elements; the crime is described as somehow inevitable and external to the implicates' wills. According to Lagos (2008), to externalize the crimes is to exculpate the perpetrator and, therefore, to legitimize violence against women. Police jargon in these approaches allows reporters to provide neutral descriptions, and in consequence objectivity at readers' views.

Like the third frame proposed by Bullock and Cubert (2002), the femicide as love madness (Lagos, 2008) legitimizes violence against women by exonerating the perpetrator. The Chilean approach however, relies on positive adjectives to describe perpetrators and highlight their acceptable social position, lessening their guilt. As Lagos (2008) describes, this approach supports the stereotypes of women as passive subjects while men as protectors. It fosters ideas of women as property and as the ones to blame for the homicide. Apparently, men confronted with women who do not respect a passive-controlling relationship are entitled to kill their female companion in order to regain control of *their* women.

Finally, the femicide as a bloody event (Lagos, 2008) uses the sensational as its main feature. The sense of spectacular is constructed through the use of theatrical words and implies the environment of a scene. Its foundations are the sensational and as Lagos (2008) proposes, the identities of victim and perpetrator are blurred. Just as Meyers (1997) indicates, the value of this news report lies exclusively in its sensationalism.

Various studies have found that news coverage can be framed to guide audiences' understanding of reality (Salazar et al., 2003; Valkenmurg et al., 1999). Hence, this review is

built on the idea that the media, the editors, and the journalists can construct different schemes of IPV, and/or femicide by selecting elements that serve to reinforce gender roles, stereotypes, and myths that maintain a patriarchal culture and its values.

According to Meyers (1997), men cannot be the victims of sexist violence while they constitute the dominant class, thus their victimization can only occur far from a context that implies gendered violence. With this in mind, an analysis of media coverage of femicide and IPV is a suitable form to analyze female re-victimization by the news media as they serve and work within the context of a male dominant culture. In particular, and since little research has been directed toward this matter (Acuña et al., 2011; Lagos, 2008), it would be of general interest to strengthen the available literature on femicide and IPV cases in the Chilean coverage context of violence against women, especially to discover common frames used by newspapers and, if by using them, the violence is being recognized.

Literature available for the American news coverage on femicide/ IPV fatality cases (Bullock & Cubert, 2002; Bullock, 2007; Carlyle et al., 2008; Richards et al., 2011; Taylor, 2008) is consistent among the features described for framing: victim blaming attitudes (Bullock & Cubert, 2002; Bullock, 2007; Carlyle et al., 2008; Richards et al., 2011; Taylor, 2008), categorization of victims as others (Bullock & Cubert, 2002; Bullock, 2007; Consalvo, 1998), and primarily citation of official sources (Bullock & Cubert, 2002; Bullock, 2007; Meyers, 1997). Moreover, since research in violence against women has a respectable tradition in the United States, it would be of general interest to compare, as an exploratory initiative, if Chilean press differ significantly from its American counterpart on the news approach used to cover femicide/IPV fatality cases.

## Research Questions

Little research has been conducted to evaluate newspaper coverage in the Chilean context (e.g., Lagos, 2008). Therefore, in order to deepen research in this topic and from an exploratory perspective, it would be of general interest to determine to what extent, if any, Chilean newspapers address femicide reports as such. I would like to determine whether Chilean newspapers treat female fatal domestic violence as femicide or instead, media decide to provide gender neutral coverage. Therefore, this study seeks to respond to the following research question:

**RQ<sub>1</sub>:** Does Chilean newspaper coverage use the label femicide when reporting cases of women killed at hands of current or former intimate partners?

No research addressing femicide news media coverage has been conducted since the Femicide Law (2010) was enacted in Chile. Previous research supported media reluctance towards covering and label cases of woman killed by intimate partners as femicides (Lagos, 2008). However, there is no analysis as to whether the new law that officially recognizes such crimes within the frame of femicide has changed the labels, frames, and presentation of these crimes in the media. Therefore, the following research question is posed:

**RQ<sub>1a</sub>:** Is there a significant change in the ways Chilean news coverage addresses femicide cases before and after the Femicide Law (2010)?

Research addressing violence against women coverage has consistently reported on cases of domestic violence and domestic violence fatalities (e.g., Bullock and Cubert, 2002; Taylor, 2008). Yet, no studies have examined the use of term femicide in the U.S. news coverage of men killing women who were current or former intimate partners. Thus, this study asks the following:

**RQ<sub>2</sub>:** Does the U.S. media use the term femicide to describe cases of men killing women under the context of a current or former intimate relationship?

**RQ<sub>2a</sub>:** Is there a significant difference between Chilean news coverage and U.S. news coverage use of the term femicide?

As new labels have emerged to describe violent behavior in the context of intimate relationships research addressing the potential use of those labels is needed in order to examine the media's role as social agents and promoters of change. As IPV has emerged as a term for officially identifying cases of violence within the context of intimacy, the present study seeks to address the extent to which, if any, news media reports on cases of femicide use the terminology of IPV related fatality. Therefore, the following research questions are presented:

**RQ<sub>3</sub>:** Do the Chilean news media and U.S. news media use the term IPV fatality to describe cases of men killing women under the context of a current or former intimate relationship?

**RQ<sub>3a</sub>:** Do Chilean news media and U.S. news media differ in their use of the term IPV fatality?

As has been previously reviewed in the literature, a question remains as to the accuracy of the labels that are commonly used to report cases of femicide in the U.S. and Chilean context. Specifically, this study seeks to examine whether the U.S. news media uses the label domestic violence to describe femicide cases with the following research questions:

**RQ<sub>4</sub>:** Do the Chilean news media and U.S. news media use the label domestic violence to describe cases of men killing women under the context of a current or former intimate relationship?

**RQ<sub>4a</sub>:** Do Chilean news media and U.S. news media differ in their use of the label domestic violence?

Femicide has been described as the ultimate act of violence against women (Stout, 1992), and past research finds that IPV behaviors precede extreme cases of violence such as femicide (Campbell et al., 2003). While IPV encompasses a variety of forms of victimization, certain IPV behaviors (i.e., emotional abuse) are harder to conceptualize and uncover than others (Black et al., 2011). Therefore, as news media coverage of femicide crimes describes stories, it would be of general interest to analyze if reports on those crimes acknowledge the existence of previous violent patterns between victim and perpetrator and others forms of violence beyond physical. In order to identify if and how those patterns are presented I pose the following research questions:

**RQ<sub>5</sub>:** Do the Chilean news media and U.S. news media differ in how they address previous patterns of violence between the victim and perpetrator?

**RQ<sub>6</sub>:** Do the Chilean news media and U.S. news media differ in how they recognize other types of violence beyond physical?

The power of frames in the news construction process is a relevant aspect to study as the presentation of the news serves as a tool of social control (Taylor & Sorenson, 2002) and frames serve as a mirror through which our values are reflect and reinforced. Moreover, frames are powerful tools to organize and promote ideas (Entman, 2004). As social problems are constructed through news and news media, their perceived importance will depend directly on how the problem is portrayed on that news and how much change is promoted as solution. To expand prior research and capture a snapshot of how frames are treated by news coverage in different countries, the following research question is posed:

**RQ<sub>7</sub>:** What are the frames used in the Chilean news media coverage and U.S. news media coverage of femicide cases?

Finally, prior research reveals that news coverage tends to isolate cases of femicide

(Bullock, 2007; Bullock & Cubert, 2001). As a consequence, crimes are depicted as rare events, and victims' feelings of isolation are in turn exacerbated. Therefore, to further expand the research on framing patterns employed by news coverage of IPV fatalities, this study asks the following question to determine if event-based coverage is still present in U.S. news articles and if the same patterns of coverage exist in Chilean news articles:

**RQ<sub>8</sub>:** Do the Chilean news media coverage and U.S. news media coverage differ in how they address femicide cases as isolated cases, or are they recognized as a part of a larger societal problem?

## CHAPTER THREE

### Method

This research project focused on online news coverage of IPV fatalities in the U.S. and in Chile, and it analyzed and compared the coverage provided by the two most popular nationally delivered newspapers in each country. Specifically the analysis was focused on three main aspects: actual labeling of the issue as femicide/ fatal IPV, misconceptions regarding IPV cases, and type of sources.

This study used content analysis to examine the articles portraying IPV news. Content analysis is

a summarizing, quantitative analysis of messages that relies on scientific method (including attention to objectivity- intersubjectivity, a priori design, reliability, validity, generalizability, replicability, and hypothesis testing) and is not limited as to the types of variables that may be measured or the context in which the message are created or presented. (Neuendorf, 2002, p. 10)

In general terms, the purpose of content analysis is to learn about those who constructed the message and about the content of the message itself (Rubin, Rubin, & Piele, 2005). Overall, content analysis allows learning empirically how a source's message is designed to influence a specific receiver.

Content analysis can be applied to test a wide range of messages; it can be conducted on writing text, images, and nonverbal behavior. From an academic perspective, the mass communication field has relied increasingly on content analysis as a research tool (Riffe & Freitag, 1997; Riffe, Lacy & Fico, 2005). Content analysis has three major uses: descriptive, hypothesis testing, and facilitating inference (Carney, 1971 in Neuendorf, 2002, p. 52).

Therefore, clarity, parsimony, and its bivariate descriptive feature, make a descriptive content analysis the best method to address IPV newspaper coverage (Neuendorf, 2002). Content analysis allows summarizing the content of messages that report IPV episodes, to establish relationships between content and type of frames used by the newspaper, to establish relations between preferred frames used by particular newspaper, and finally, it facilitates the inference process regarding implications of the media products.

### **Population and Sample Design**

A population is the set of units from which researchers draw their generalizations and serves as the basis for sample selection (Neuendorf, 2002). The present study worked with nationally distributed newspapers as the population in the U.S. and Chilean context. For the purpose of the present study, a *nationally distributed newspaper* was defined as a newspaper daily distributed across the entire country, which was oriented to general news topics, and had a print and digital version. As population, articles from *USA Today* and *The New York Times* were analyzed because these two papers are prominent national media in terms of daily circulation (Alliance for the Audited Media [AAM], 2012). As Chilean counterparts, *El Mercurio* and *La Tercera* were analyzed, respectively (Asociacion Chilena de Agencias de Publicidad, [ACHAP], 2011).

By narrowing the population with preset criterion selection, I responded to comparison concerns, establishing a control for subsequent sample and data evaluation. First, by narrowing the concept of nationally distributed newspaper, I balanced the difference between both countries in terms of total amount of nationally distributed newspaper; the U.S has a total of three nationally newspaper that met the preset criterion and Chile has five. Second, circulation average operates as an objective indicator of the newspaper's national prominence, which is a major

feature of the mainstream definition. Data showed that the nationally distributed newspapers with highest rates of circulation by the time of the research took place were in the US *The USA Today* and *The New York Times* (AAM, 2012), while in Chile were *El Mercurio* and *La Tercera*, respectively (ACHAP, 2011)

To collect the data, a review of the digital website version of the four newspapers from 2009 to 2012 was conducted. Both U.S. newspapers were searched using *The New York Times* and *USA Today* online database, while Chilean newspapers were searched using *El Mercurio* and *La Tercera* online databases, respectively. For the search process a set of key words, such as wife killed, femicide, and domestic violence fatality was elaborated (for the full list see Appendix B). Of the articles collected through this search process, each had to meet four criteria to be included in the study. First, the reports had to be published in the four years' timeframe. Second, the individuals involved in the report had to be romantically involved, as the definition of intimate partner describes (CDC, 2012). Third, the case covered in the article had to involve a death or a clear attempt to kill. As for the cases when attempted killings were considered, the classification criterion to be included in the sample was the one provided by the police or official sources cited in the news. Therefore, cases in which the perpetrator had not yet been identified but a current or former partner was implicated were included. Likewise, because the work was conducted with past news, articles in which a "person of interest" was syndicated were included only when follow up news pieces named him as facing a trial for murder. Fourth, the victim or attempted victim in the report had to be a woman. All news articles, feature articles, complementary pieces such as short articles providing domestic violence statistics, and opinion columns treating domestic violence-related deaths were included.

## **Unit of Analysis and Categories**

To analyze the data, the selected articles were considered as units of analysis. Articles were also broken down into units for coding. Headlines and leads were coded as separate units. A code book (Appendix C) was created using Bullock's (2007) framing study as a guide. Coding is the process of grouping the variable of research in a consistent manner (Wrench, Thomas-Maddox, Peck, & McCroskey, 2008). Therefore, since the purpose of the present study was to analyze the type of coverage on femicide/ IPV/ IPV fatality news cases, The research was focused on three main aspects of the type of coverage: actual label of the issue as femicide/ IPV fatality, the used of misconceptions regarding IPV cases, and type of sources used to describe the facts.

Actual labeling of the issue as femicide/IPV fatality was defined as the explicit use of the word femicide and/or IPV fatality as terms to describe the murder or attempted murder of a woman in hands of a current or former husband, romantic partner, or boyfriend. The examination was conducted by searching for both words within the units of analysis, and by the description of the victim and perpetrator relationship. Coders also reported when the article included evidence of being a case of femicide/ IPV fatality but the coverage did not address it with the actual terms. Overall, coders looked for clues within the units that could make evident that the story was about femicide/ IPV fatality.

Misconceptions regarding IPV fatality cases were defined as descriptions and features used by the media to negatively skew the portrayal of victim and perpetrator. Skewed portrayal was measured from four perspectives: isolated vs. contextualized recognition of the problem of violence, aggressive behavior patterns and features of victim and perpetrator, motivation for the crime, and victim-blaming language. For the first indicator coders analyzed if the article isolated

the cases of femicide/ IPV fatality by providing an episodic coverage, or on the contrary, they contextualized the cases by providing information about femicide/ IPV fatality-related deaths in the community, lists of IPV hotlines, femicide/ IPV agencies support, description of IPV work in the community, statistics, etc. For the second indicator, coders coded for information that provided evidence of past violence and domestic problems between victim and perpetrator, such as the police being called to the residence to deal with a domestic dispute, previous arrest, neighbors or friends testimonies that they heard arguments, previous signs of physical abuse in the victim, lost contact because of the abusive situation, protection order for the victim, etc. For the second indicator, coders also coded for descriptions of the couples, such as if they were *normal people*, if their social status or occupation is mentioned, if their academic training is described, if they have a church affiliation, etc. The third indicator focuses on the perpetrator by coding descriptions indicating infidelity, drugs or alcohol abuse, mental health problems, money or income problems, divorce; coding for those descriptions captured portrayals that are provided to decode a perpetrator's intention to commit the crime. The final indicator coded for references to the victim's unacceptable behavior such as the using drugs, being unfaithful, or nagging the perpetrator.

Finally, types of sources were defined as the place/person/agent from where or whom the reporter obtained their information. Sources were classified into a list of thirty one possibilities in order to determine the type of frame and the overall tone of the story. Examples of sources are official sources such as police, Carabineros<sup>6</sup>, FBI agents, and police records; femicide/IPV experts such as a victim's advocate, medical professional, survivor, women's group policy Sernam representatives; relatives of the victim such as mother, father, siblings, and cousins.

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<sup>6</sup> Official name of the Police Force in Chile

## Coder Training

Two bi-lingual Chilean coders were selected and trained on the code sheet. In content analysis intercoder reliability reflects the amount of agreement or correspondence among coders, which translates into the validation of the coding scheme (Neuendorf, 2002). For the present study, Cohen's kappa were calculated to address intercoder reliability. Cohen's kappa seems an accurate coefficient since this statistics accounts for agreement beyond chance. Cohen's kappa assumes a nominal-level data with a normal range from .00 (agreement at a chance level) to 1.00 (perfect agreement).

After the coder training, 20% of the sample was randomly selected to be coded for intercoder reliability. Items with initial low Cohen's kappa were jointly addressed by the coders and the researcher to define further agreement criteria. Finally, the coding scheme was divided in three sections and Cohen's kappa were calculated. For the first section of the coding scheme—which included items 1 through 36 Cohen's kappa ranged from .70 to 1.00 ( $M = .89$ ); for the headlines section—items 37 through 66 only as they relate to the analysis of headlines—Cohen's kappa ranged from .71 to 1.00 ( $M = .91$ ); whereas for the paragraphs section—as they only relate to the analysis of paragraphs—Cohen's kappa ranged from .71 to 1.00 ( $M = .92$ ). Intercoder reliability on all items was acceptable. Once intercoder reliability was achieved, each coder was randomly assigned half of the Chilean and half of the U.S. news sample to be coded.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Results

#### Sample Description

In all, the sample from the Chilean newspapers consisted of 138 articles that covered a total of 104 criminal cases. As shown in Table, the majority of the articles (58%) were originally produced by the newspaper from which they were sampled and the remainder (43%) was produced by a news agency. In 73.9% of the sample the sex of the writer was unknown, whereas 11.6% and 10.9% were authored by male and female journalists, respectively. In 74.6% of the articles, the victim and perpetrator's relationship was described as current spouses or romantically involved; in 21% of the cases victim and perpetrator were described as having a previous romantic relationship (i.e., former spouses, former romantic companions). In 76.8% of the cases the articles covered crimes that happened in Chile, in which a woman was killed by her current or previous intimate partner (see Table 1).

As for the US, 46 articles met the sample selection criteria and they covered 25 criminal cases. Most of the articles were originally produced by the newspaper from which they were sampled (89.1%), with 10.9% produced by a news agency. Female reporters wrote 47.8% of the articles, 28.3% were written by male journalists, and the sex of the writer was unknown in 15.2% of the articles. In 91.3% of the articles the victim and perpetrator were current spouses or romantically involved at the time of the crime; in 8.7% of the cases victim and perpetrator previously had a romantic relationship that had ended by the time of the crime (i.e., former spouses, former romantic companions). In 97.8% of the cases the articles covered crimes in the U.S. in which the woman was killed by a current or former intimate partner (see Table 1).

## Results

Research question one asked whether Chilean newspaper coverage use the label *femicide* when reporting cases of men killing women who were their former or current intimate partner. In order to answer this research question a 2x2 contingency table was conducted to analyze the frequency of use of the label femicide in headlines and leads before and after 2010. From 2009-2010 the term femicide was used in 15.4 % of the headline articles covering cases of men killing women who were their current or former intimate partner, whereas the term was used in 45.2% of articles written from 2011-2012,  $\chi^2 (1, N = 138) = 14.25, p < .05$ , Cramér's V = .32. Thus, the term femicide was used significantly more often in the Chilean news' headlines after the Femicide Law went into effect. Considering the leads as units of analysis, in 2009-2010 the label femicide was used in 6.2 % of the articles, whereas the label was used in 38.4 % of the leads written between 2011 and 2012,  $\chi^2 (1, N = 138) = 20.02, p < .05$ , Cramér's V = .38. Results were significant showing that the label femicide appeared more often in the news leads after the femicide law enactment (see Table 2).

Research Question 1a asked if there was a significant change in the way Chilean news coverage labeled *evident femicide* cases before and after the Femicide Law enacted in December 2010. To define a case as *evident femicide* information that was only presented in the headline about the relationship between victim and perpetrator was considered. A 2 x 2 contingency table was created selecting for the cases that constituted evident femicides before and after 2010. Chilean news articles were significantly more likely to label evident femicide cases as a femicide after the Femicide Law was enacted, with 16% of evident femicide cases labeled as femicide from 2009-2010 and 46.4% labeled as such from 2011-2012,  $\chi^2 (1, N = 131) = 13.72, p < .05$ , Cramér's V = .32. As for the leads, a 2 x 2 contingency table was run selecting for those cases,

which constituted evident femicides. From 2009-2010 evident femicides were significantly less likely to be labeled as such in the lead of 6.7% of articles, whereas from 2011-2012 femicide was used in the lead of 40% of articles covering evident femicides,  $\chi^2 (1, N = 130) = 19.35, p < .05$ , Cramér's  $V = .39$  (See Table 2.1).

To further analyze research question 1a, multiple 2x2 contingency tables were conducted to analyze the difference in the frequency of misconceptions appearances in the news such as: isolated versus contextualized recognition of the problem of violence, aggressive behavior patterns between victim and perpetrator, motivation and excuses for the crimes, and victim blaming language (See Table 3). Because of more than 25% of the cells had an expected frequency less than 5, Fisher's exact tests were run. The only theme for which a significant difference emerged was social status,  $p = .00$ .

The second research question asked whether the U.S. media uses the term femicide to describe cases of men killing women who were their former or current intimate partner, and research question 2a asked whether there was a significant difference between Chilean newspaper and U.S. newspapers in the use of the term femicide. In order to answer each question, a 2 x 2 contingency table was conducted to evaluate whether the term femicide was used significantly more often by the Chilean media in comparison with the U.S. news media. The first variable was the newspaper's country of origin, which had two levels: Chile and US. The second variable was the use of the label femicide in the article's headline and lead, which had two levels: present and not present. In the Chilean sample the label femicide was used in 31.2% of the units compared to 0% in the US,  $\chi^2 (1, N = 184) = 18.70, p < .05$ , Cramér's  $V = .32$ . Results were significant, showing that the Chilean sample used the label femicide in the headlines significantly more often than the U.S. sample (see Table 4).

As for the use of the term femicide in the lead of the article, in the Chilean sample the label was used in 23% of the units, whereas in the U.S. sample the term was used in 0% of the units,  $\chi^2 (1, N = 184) = 12.91, p < .05$ , Cramér's  $V = .27$ . Results were significant, showing that there is a significant difference in the frequency of the use of the femicide label in the leads of a news piece depending on the newspaper's country of origin (see Table 4).

Research question number three asked whether the Chilean news media and U.S. news media use the term *IPV/ IPV fatality* to describe cases of men killing women who were their former or current intimate partner. Research question 3a, in the meantime, asked whether the Chilean news media and U.S. news media differ in their frequency of use of the term IPV fatality. To answer both questions a 2 x 2 contingency table was conducted to evaluate the frequency of use of the term IPV/IPV fatality, comparing the Chilean and U.S. sample. In the Chilean sample the label of IPV/IPV fatality was used in .70% of the headlines, whereas in the U.S. sample the label was used in 0% of the headlines. Because of more than 25% of the cells had an expected frequency count less than 5, Fisher's exact tests were run. Fisher's exact test revealed no significant difference between samples,  $p = 1.00$ . As for the leads, in the Chilean sample IPV/IPV fatality was used in 1.4 % of the units, whereas in the U.S. sample was used in 2.2% of the units. Fisher's exact test revealed no significant difference between samples,  $p = 1.00$  (see Table 4).

Research question four asked whether the Chilean and U.S. newspapers use the label *domestic violence* to describe cases of men killing women who were their current or former intimate partner. To address question four, a 2 x 2 contingency table was conducted to evaluate the frequency of use of the label domestic violence comparing the Chilean and the U.S. sample. In the Chilean sample the label domestic violence was used in 1.4% of the headlines, whereas in

the U.S. sample the label was used in 2.2% of the units. Because of more than 25% of the cells had an expected frequency count less than 5, Fisher's exact tests were run. Fisher's exact test revealed no significant difference,  $p = 1.00$ . As for the leads, in the Chilean sample the label domestic violence was used in 2.9% of the units, whereas in the U.S. sample the label was used in 6.5% of the cases. Fisher's exact test revealed no significant difference between samples,  $p = .37$  (see Table 4)

Research question five asked whether the Chilean news media and U.S. news media differ in how they address previous patterns of violence between the victim and perpetrator. To address the question, a 2 x 2 contingency table was conducted to evaluate the frequency of references to restriction orders against the perpetrator and past problems between the victim and perpetrator, comparing the Chilean and the U.S. sample. In the Chilean sample, references to restriction orders against the perpetrator were made in 8.0% of the news, while in the U.S. sample references were made in 15.2%,  $\chi^2 (1, N = 184) = 2.05, p = .15$ , Cramér's  $V = .10$ . Results were not significant showing that the Chilean and the U.S. sample did not differ significantly in their frequency of references to restriction orders against the perpetrator. As for references to past problems in the relationship of victim and perpetrator, in the Chilean sample references were made in 26.8% of the sample, whereas in the U.S. sample references were made in 34.8% of sample,  $\chi^2 (1, N = 184) = 1.07, p = .30$ , Cramér's  $V = .08$ . Results were not significant, showing that the Chilean and the U.S. sample did not differ significantly in their frequency of descriptions of past problems between the victim and perpetrator.

Research question six asked whether the Chilean news media and U.S. news media differ in how they recognize other types of violence beyond physical. To address research question six, a 2 x 2 contingency table was conducted to evaluate the frequency of references about emotional

abuse, comparing the Chilean and U.S. sample. In the Chilean sample, verbal or emotional abuse was mentioned in 3.6% of the units, whereas in the U.S. sample was mentioned in 4.3%. Because of more than 25% of the cells had an expected frequency count less than 5, a Fisher's exact test was run. Fisher's exact test was not significant,  $p = 1.00$ , showing that there is no significant difference between the Chilean and U.S. newspaper and their recognition of other type of violence beyond physical.

Research question seven asked about what type of frames were used by the Chilean news media and by the U.S. news media when covering cases of women killed by their current or former intimate partner. In order to address research question seven, multiple 2 x 2 contingency tables were run to test the frequency of specific topics that appeared consistently in the samples. As shown in Table 5, seven themes emerged: the perpetrator as an abuser to others besides the victim, the perpetrator as having criminal records not tied to femicide, victim and perpetrator described as normal people involved in a normal romantic relationship, victim's and perpetrator's social status highlighted, motivation for the crime related to drugs or alcohol use, victim's unacceptable behavior, and society as generally violent. In order to address the frame of the story, the general tone was considered, along with the combination of sources (see Table 6) and themes (see Table 5) that emerged as patterns of descriptions. Finally, two main frames emerged in the Chilean sample: the police frame and the victim's and perpetrator's social status frame. The former frame provided technical and basic information but when it deepened to a more detailed description it was accompanied by the victim's unacceptable behavior theme, the perpetrator as a person with criminal records theme, and the motivation/excuse theme that detailed drugs or alcohol as facilitators of the crime. The later frame was mostly determined by the description of the social status of the victim and perpetrator whereas detailed information

about the crime was accredited by official sources. As for the U.S. sample, four main frames emerged: the police frame, the normal people/normal relationship frame, the perpetrator as someone abusive frame, and the society as generally violent frame.

Finally, research question eight asked whether the Chilean news media coverage and U.S. news media coverage differ in how they address cases in which men killed women who were their former or current intimate partner. Particularly, research question eight asked whether Chilean and U.S. news media isolated the crimes or they recognized the crimes as a part of a larger societal problem. To answer research question eight a 2 x 2 contingency table was conducted to evaluate the frequency of appearance of femicide/IPV/IPV fatality statistics, consequences, protection, support, and advocacy as reference of contextualization, comparing the Chilean sample and U.S. sample. In the Chilean sample, references to femicide/IPV/IPV fatality statistics, consequences, protection, support, and advocacy were made in 8.0% of the units whereas in the U.S. sample were mentioned in 13.0% of the units,  $\chi^2 (1, N = 184) = 1.06, p = .30$ , Cramér's  $V = .08$ . Results were not significant showing that the Chilean and the U.S. sample did not differ significantly in their contextualization of crimes as part of a larger societal problem.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Discussion

The purpose of this study was to analyze how the media cover gendered violence. Specifically, the present research project wanted to address what are the frames and themes that the U.S. online news media and Chilean online news media use when covering femicide/IPV fatalities news. Results showed that since the Femicide Law enactment in 2010, the Chilean newspapers labeled crimes as femicide on a more regular basis. However, in terms of development of the news articles, no much description of the crimes is generally provided. General tone of the story used to portray victim and perpetrator is characterized as official since information comes mostly from official and police based sources such as Carabineros, Fiscalía, etc. Stories are focused mostly on the perpetrator's excuses and motivations to commit the crime. In the U.S. newspapers, crimes are presented in neutral tone as simple homicides but key information is provided in the body of the article. When themes emerged, they were oriented to describe deviant behaviors of the perpetrator, apparent normal features of victim and perpetrator, and society as generally violent. In all, the current study contributes to the body of literature addressing violence against women and media in the U.S. context. As for the Chilean counterpart, original contributions of the current research are oriented first to deepen findings about media analysis and treatment of violence against women. Second, it examines how the implementation of public policies affects structures, which create and replicate reality. Present research also represents a contribution to cross-cultural research in media.

### Use of Labels and Terminology

In general, the results of this study are consistent with previous findings (Consalvo, 1998; Bullock, 2007; Bullock & Cubert, 2002) that indicate female victims of violence are re-

victimized through newspaper coverage. Before 2010 the label *femicide* was seldom used in Chilean news coverage to refer cases of men killing women who were their current or former intimate partner (Lagos, 2008). Furthermore, prior to 2010 describing a crime as femicide was considered an editorial decision (Lagos, 2008). However, this practice changed after the Femicide Law enactment in December 2010. For instance, there is a significant change across both timeframes studied (2009-2010 and 2011-2012) in how *El Mercurio* and *La Tercera* used the label femicide in both the header and the leads. In the practice of media writing the lead paragraph is structured to provide the most important piece of the news story, and the headline is written to capture the reader's attention. When, as is evidenced by the findings in this study, the term femicide is used and repeated in both the headline and the lead paragraph the repetition reinforces the importance of the nature of the crime, and in particular, that a man killed a woman to whom he was somehow related. The newspapers' use of the label femicide on a more regular basis implies, to some extent, an acknowledgement of the uniqueness of women experiences when facing gender-based crimes. As the feminist perspective suggests, giving voice to those experiences facilitates an understanding of diverse experiences and promotes further inclusion in social life (Woods, 2005). Ultimately, the use of this term recognizes that femicide is something that can only be experienced by women, and further, that the crime was perpetrated by someone in whom she had placed trust as an intimate partner.

Further, changing the manner in which femicides are labeled and how that label is presented within the news article not only speaks in terms of inclusion—incorporating women's unique experiences into the normative discussions of the social culture—but also in terms of cultural syndromes. As has been presented by scholarly research, collectivistic cultures rank the norm as an important feature in modeling behaviors (Lustig & Koester, 2005). In that sense,

since the increased use of the label femicide coincides with the Femicide Law enactment, linkages between patterns of coverage and the law that seeks to recognize femicides as deviant behavior could be attributed to a collectivistic cultural syndrome emerging within the Chilean society. Moreover, the enactment of a specific law that typifies femicide could be interpreted not only in terms of a will for recognizing and making noticeable violence against women but also could imply features of a society that has a low tolerance for ambiguity. In that sense, the necessity of having all behaviors regulated under a legal frame and the importance that the norm has shaping social behavior are elements defining the current Chilean society.

The U.S. newspaper's sample analyzed in this study did not reveal any use of the femicide label when describing cases of men killing women who were their former or current intimate partners. Moreover, U.S. news coverage before and after 2010 showed no difference in how newspapers labeled the crimes. In general terms, headlines and leads from the U.S. newspapers were generic and not even necessarily related—or provided any description of—the crime itself. This finding is consistent with previous research that indicates news coverage in the US equalizes—does not call particular or unique attention to—patterns of violence against women, along with obscuring the real impact and consequences of this form of intimate violence (Bullock & Cubert, 2002; Consalvo, 1998; Meyers, 1997).

Exploratory results on the use of the label IPV/IPV fatality showed that both Chilean and U.S. newspapers do not use either of those terms to refer to crimes in which men killed women under the context of a current or former intimate relationship. As mentioned before, in the Chilean sample the term femicide is specifically preferred for definitional purposes whereas in the US such labels are not used. This claim is reinforced when measuring for the frequency of use of the *domestic violence* label. As explained in the review of literature, the label of domestic

violence represents a category that encompasses a broader focus on violent behaviors perpetrated against and between family members not restricted to spouses or intimate partners (Catalano, 2007). Because of the broader focus, a more frequent use of this label could be expected; however, results showed that in general, the label is seldom used to refer cases of extreme violence between spouses or intimate partners either in Chile or the US. Consequently, in terms of how headers and leads are presented in the Chilean and U.S. newspapers, domestic violence or IPV/IPV fatality are not labels consistently used to prime or call attention when presenting news articles, which is in line with previous findings (Bullock & Cubert, 2002).

### **Features in the Coverage of Femicide Cases**

When addressing misconceptions about femicide cases, previous patterns of victimization (e.g., past charges filed by the woman against the man, restriction orders, etc.) between victim and perpetrator are seldom used to provide an accurate description of the relationship or of the crime. Low frequencies of portrayals regarding past problems in the relationship between victim and perpetrator and the existence of previous restriction orders reflect that, in general, femicide news are elaborated on an episodic basis, which means the cases are interpreted to be an isolated event. Moreover, in the case of the Chilean sample, a consistent lack of elaboration about previous details about the victim and perpetrator implies that the femicide crime is the result of a perpetrator's moment of snap, something that just happened and an action that no one could ever predict or prevent (Lagos, 2008). This pattern hides a pervasiveness of violence against women and suggests there is no need for attention or commitment to prevention of this violence.

Regarding the description of psychological abuse, results are consistent with previous findings (Bullock & Cubert, 2002), which indicates that while verbal and psychological abuse may occur without physical violence, physical abuse is rarely unaccompanied by other types of

abuse such as psychological. Therefore if news coverage does not address, mention, or discuss a past history of psychological abuse, this form of abuse goes unnoticed and unrecognized. Based on previous research, psychological victimization is practically nonexistent in news coverage and, if some description is provided, the information comes from sources that belong to the close social network of the victim and perpetrator. This, too, can be problematic because it may reinforce that this form of victimization is a private matter and should not be part of the public discussion. In this study cases of femicide in Chilean sample seldom mention any aspects of emotional or psychological abuse. Key terms relating cases of femicide to emotional victimization were *threats*, *psychological abuse*, and *stalking*. As for the U.S. sample, descriptions about psychological abuse were completely absent, and cases were typically described in terms of physical violence only.

Failure to provide background on psychological abuse may be due to several factors. For example, in the Chilean sample it may be related to the type of coverage, which is mostly based on factual statements and lacks details. However, considering the types of sources cited when describing patterns of psychological victimization and because in general, emotional victimization is difficult to measure (Black et al., 2011), results may imply that psychological victimization within romantic relationships still is considered as belonging to the private sphere. Furthermore, the failure to acknowledge psychological victimization may be interpreted as a normalization of this type of violence or, as a cultural perception that psychological abuse is not a form of serious violence. However, this does not excuse the lack of coverage within the U.S. sample. Berns (1999) reports that before the battered women's movement in the US domestic violence was considered a private matter. Although psychological victimization may be hard to measure, the results of this study indeed suggest that the news media is unwilling to take risks in

reporting on this aspect of the case, and therefore perpetuates this form of violence against women.

As mentioned earlier, during both time frames (2009-2010, 2011-2012) the Chilean and U.S. samples primarily provided episodic coverage of the cases. Because femicides were rarely contextualized with additional information such as statistics regarding violence against women, contact information for social support groups or agencies, etc., this type of coverage tends to isolate crimes and portray them as rare and a remote matter (Bullock & Cubert, 2002). This type of coverage further place the major responsibility on the victim for letting the violence go that far and consequently suggests she was solely responsible for ending the cycle of violence (Berns, 2001; Maxwell et al., 2000). Moreover, omission of information about resources available for current victims of violence against women exacerbates the perception of isolation for them (Carlyle et al., 2008). According to the feminist perspective accounting for the uniqueness of women's experiences facilitates and promotes cultural changes (Wood, 2006). Therefore, as a low percentage of the total sample acknowledged violence against women as part of a larger societal problem challenges to current ways of thinking about gendered violence still need to be promoted.

### **Frames and Themes from Chilean News Coverage**

Regarding frames used in both contexts, results are consistent. In the Chilean sample, because a majority of articles were sustained in factual statements and seldom provided further information, the majority of news portrayed a case in which the profile corresponded to a regular case of homicide. Whereas in those articles from which some topics emerged to describe and add information of the crime, the cases were basically referred to in technical language and supported mostly by police-based sources. The latter is consistent with previous research that has reported a

trend to cite official sources as a way to project objective coverage (Lagos, 2008; Taylor & Sorenson, 2008). When the police framed emerged, some patterns or themes accompanied it. For example, when motivations for the crime were given, the blame was indirectly extended onto the victim by providing details about her socially unacceptable behavior. Consistent with previous findings, the descriptions are made as insinuations of the victim as being unfaithful or unattached to her proper female duties (Benedict, 1992; Bullock & Cubert, 2002; Consalvo, 1998). A second theme that accompanied the police frame provided descriptions of the perpetrator as someone deviant, an individual who has criminal records not precisely related to IPV. A final pattern that added information to the police frame provided excuses for the crime by detailing that the perpetrator had acted under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

While the police frame was the most common frame used, the second most common frame that emerged indicated the social status of the victim or perpetrator as a feature that should have somehow prevented them from being involved in crimes of such magnitude. The victim and especially the perpetrator were recurrently portrayed in terms of their professions or occupations, which was featured as the most prominent part of their identity as individuals. For example, in the US case of the producer of the television show, *Survivor*, he was mentioned by his name in the first few paragraphs of every article but after that he was referred to with labels such as, “the legendary producer,” “the ex-producer,” or simply, “the producer.” By highlighting the successful career of the man, the media not only exacerbates the prominence of the perpetrator, but also calls the attention to the unusual of the situation. And, because it is so newsworthy due to the status of the protagonist, it receives more coverage than that of an unknown perpetrator or victim.

In general, topics that emerged from the Chilean sample were mostly negative and

contributed to the suggestion that femicide is an isolated type of crime by accounting for extreme features to describe the crimes. Articles were mostly perpetrator-oriented either by providing motivations or excuses for committing the crimes. This pattern only contributes toward making the victim invisible (Consalvo, 1998; Meyers, 1997). As a side note, it is worthy of notice that main themes portraying victim and perpetrator remained constant during both time frames, before and after 2010. However, descriptions of the social status or occupation of victim and perpetrator were a feature mostly presented only before the femicide law enactment.

Interpretation of these results may reflect several options. First, the fact that in general the portrayal of victim and perpetrator remained stable may reflect the depth and how rooted our forms of socialization are, particularly regarding how codes of femininity and masculinity are viewed and maintained. Codes of manhood that portray men as naturally dominant and controlling of their women are still accepted. Moreover, women, who no matter what, remain by their man's side are still considered legitimate. In that sense, culturally speaking, men have been allowed to express violence as a form of regaining their power and control, whereas women have been allowed to think of themselves as weak, as needing a man to be whole, and as responsible for pleasing their man (Woods, 2006). Therefore, as cases emerged where alcohol and drugs were described as motivators for the crime, the man is once again not held accountable and even excused, and considered as exercising his masculinity. In the meantime, when features of the news highlight possible infidelity by the victim, this reflects a woman who is not acting according to the femininity standards and in consequence she brought the crime on herself.

Second, the highlighting of the exceptional social status of victim and perpetrator occurred only during the first time frame (i.e., before the Femicide Law enactment), and could be related to news media editorial decision. This interpretation would suggest a true will to provide

an accurate portrayal of the crimes, beyond stereotypical views, weighing other components of the story, and not only relying on the unusual factor—someone of high social status committing the crime versus someone of low social status—to present the crimes. Another interpretation of the results could be related to a normalization of the label. In effect, by having a law that officially recognizes the crime, femicides have become more visible but also they gradually and indirectly become normalized. Therefore, as the novelty of the label has lost its value in time, less space, less detail, and less resources are directed to call attention to them.

### **Frames and Themes from U.S. News Coverage**

In the U.S. sample, consulted sources were more varied, which counterbalanced the general information of the article. As a result, official sources such as police, sheriffs, and judges were combined with IPV experts, family members, and acquaintances of the victim or perpetrator. In that sense, the narratives provided by the stories were balanced in most of the cases to provide a sense of a story being told. Consistent with previous research, the first frame is defined by official sources. Cases in this type of frame were fairly descriptive and information was provided in a technical language that projects objectivity and constructs the reality of the crime (Meyers, 1997). The second frame reflects a perpetrator who is violent to others besides the victim. Coinciding with the use of this frame was a theme that the victim chose not to leave him and instead tried to work things out. Responsibility, therefore, is jointly accounted for according to the news narrative. The pattern is consistent with research that has highlighted how women are framed as specifically responsible for ending the violence or responsible for being the one who leaves—or doesn't leave—the abusive relationship (Maxwell et al., 2000).

Because the Belcher-Perkins criminal case accounted for a disproportionate amount of coverage, the most consistent patterns that emerged were basically concentrated on news that

addressed the mentioned femicide. News describing the Belcher-Perkins case portrayed victim and perpetrator under three clear patterns. The first two usually were combined under a frame of normal people/normal relationship, describing victim and perpetrator as a nice couple that never showed signs of something wrong going on between them. When this theme emerged, it was usually accompanied with descriptions about the perpetrator's social environment, which was oriented to attribute violence to the type of job he performed. The third theme, which by itself constitutes a frame, was oriented to portray society as generally violent. Therefore, crimes such as femicide just happen because people are prompted by a pervasive stimulus. To place blame on society tends to normalize femicide by promoting a sense of helplessness but also by not establishing someone—such as the perpetrator—as accountable for the crime. Again, codes of masculinity are a plausible explanation.

In all, a side note should be made in order to support previous findings. As with the O.J. Simpson case, the Belcher-Perkins femicide-suicide was extensively covered. Research has pointed that the spectacular nature of the crime is directly related to the amount and the extension of coverage (Benedict, 1992; Meyers, 1997). Moreover, celebrity involvement may act as a factor that places events such as femicides as social problems in the public sphere and increases the amount of coverage they receive (Maxwell et al., 2000). As a consequence, the attention received by the Belcher-Perkins case was not only remarkable in terms of the amount of coverage but also in terms of perspectives and problems addressed. Suddenly, the issue was no longer about domestic violence but about football players, a culture of substance abuse and violence, and about gun possession.

## **Summary**

Overall, based on specific (i.e., headers and leads) and general aspects (frames), the

Chilean and U.S sample present some differences in how they portray gender-based news but also share similar trends. In terms of headers and leads, the Chilean sample relies on specific labels (i.e., femicide) to call attention of the readers and imply information about the nature of the crime, whereas within the body of the article no much detail is provided. In the U.S. sample, an inverse trend is observed. In headers and leads, labels to categorize the crimes are seldom used but details about the crime are provided in order to situate the reader and provide him with the information to acknowledge the IPV nature of the crime.

## Conclusions

This research examined and compared online newspaper coverage of femicide cases in Chile and the U.S. Specifically, the present study examined whether the label femicide was used in Chilean news coverage as function of the Femicide Law enactment, and if labels such as femicide, IPV/IPV fatality, and domestic violence were used in Chilean and U.S. newspapers to classify crimes in which men killed women who were their former or current intimate partners. Further, the study was designed to build on past research analyzing how misconceptions related to femicide cases and prominent frames were used to portray both the victim and perpetrator.

The present study has certain limitations that should be noted. First, in terms of articles collected, sample size of the U.S. sample was considerable smaller than the Chilean sample. Moreover, the comparison between countries only sampled from two newspapers per country. Granted, the newspapers were qualified as the outlets with the greatest circulation, however further analysis should include a wider range of newspapers in order to account for individual newspaper's editorial orientations. Second, only news articles from the newspapers' webpages were captured for analysis. Future analyses should include the printed version of the news in order to determine if there is a difference in how the crime is portrayed between the paper versions and online as well as placement in both the paper version and online. Time constraint is a variable that online newspapers in particular have to manage and certainly it may affect the extended discussion of as well as quality of the coverage given to a story.

The findings of this study also offer suggestions for future research in the topic of femicide coverage. First, in order to examine the newsworthiness of femicide crimes in Chile, future research could examine coverage of femicides and compare them with statistics of femicide crimes throughout the country. Moreover, comparison between locally distributed

versus nationally distributed newspapers could provide strong support for newsworthiness parameters and recognition of news cycles. Second, future research could explore the impact of the label femicide on audiences' perceptions of the crime when priming a case with that term.

Practical implications for the present research may be related to initiating changes in news coverage. In light of the results, directions to provide an accurate and thoughtful representation of femicide cases could ultimately be designed to help improve coverage of such cases. As such, journalists and editors could then be trained in how to apply those directions to further assess accuracy in the coverage of news of this nature. Considering the Chilean coverage in particular, as features of a collectivistic culture have emerged and as the results of this study support that the enactment of a law has an effect on how news stories are portrayed, efforts should now be directed to increase the penalty for femicide crimes. Collectivistic cultures place greater importance in the social norm than it does in individual attitudes to change behaviors; thus if norms increase their degree of severity regarding punishment in femicide crimes it is possible to consider a reduction of attitudes towards women that reinforce gendered violence and that prompt femicides.

Regarding scholarly implications, the present study is a contribution to cross-cultural studies in media. The present research is both a contribution to the existing body of research on violence against women and additional evidence that victims of femicide are still invisible and re-victimized by the media. I argue that victims are invisible because in the U.S. there are not accurate labels to name and give voice to the unique experience of extreme gendered violence, such as femicides. In turn, victims are also targets of re-victimization because the media inherently place blame on the victim for her murder, provide excuses for the perpetrator's behavior, ignore emotional abuse as a real form of victimization, and still portray cases of

femicides as isolated events. Researchers consistently claim that one of the important reasons for studying the media coverage of violence against women is that media represents the main source of information about and understanding of social reality (Bullock & Cubert, 2002; Carll, 2003; Consalvo, 1998; Meyers, 1997; Taylor and Sorenson, 2002). Therefore as the media is able to shape perceptions about violence against women it must also be studied for its potential as a powerful resource for challenging current views and promoting change.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A

#### **National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS, Black et al, 2011)**

The National Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS) is a nationally representative survey, launched by the CDC's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control with the support of the National Institute of Justice and the Department of Defense. The principal goals of the survey were to describe the prevalence and characteristics of sexual violence, stalking, and intimate partner violence (IPV); to define who is most likely to experience these forms of violence; to label patterns and impact of the violence on the victims when the violence is committed by specific perpetrators; and to recognize health consequences of these forms of violence (NISVS, 2011).

The NISVS is a national random digit dial telephone survey of the U.S. population aged 18 and older. The survey used dual-frame sampling strategy including both landline and cell phones. The interviews were conducted during 2010 reaching a total of 16, 507 completed interviews and 1,542 partially completed interviews. From the totally completed interviews, a 55.04 % corresponded to female participants whereas a 44.96% corresponded to male participants. The median length of the interviews was 24.7 minutes. Prior to taking the survey, participants received a graduated inform of consent. Interviewers were previously instructed, establishing distress protocols to assess the respondent emotional state. A safety plan was also developed in order to secure participants' integrity in case it was compromised.

The NISVS measures lifetime victimization of IPV, sexual violence, and stalking, among respondents as well as victimization in the 12 months prior to taking the survey. IPV related questions assessed psychological aggression (expressive aggression and coercive control), control of reproductive or sexual health, physical violence, sexual violence, and stalking. As for

sexual violence, five forms of victimization were measured: rape (forced penetration, attempted penetration, alcohol or drug facilitated penetration completed penetration), being made to penetrate another person, sexual coercion, unwanted sexual contact, and non-contact unwanted sexual experiences. As for stalking, questions were directed to determine patterns of unwanted harassing or threatening tactics used by a perpetrator, such as unwanted contact, unwanted tracking, following, intrusion, and technology-assisted tactics.

To be included in the prevalence estimates, the respondent must have had experienced at least one behavior/type of victimization during the timeframe offered, which means during the lifetime or 12 months prior to taking the survey. Participants could have experienced each type of violence more than once so prevalence estimates should be interpreted as the percentage of the population who experienced each type of violence at least once. The prevalence of psychologically aggressive behaviors was reported but was not included in the overall prevalence estimates of IPV given the lack of consensus in the field about psychological victimization's boundaries to be considered part of IPV behavior.

## Appendix B

Words to conduct the articles search (Bullock & Cubert, 2002; Taylor, 2008)

Murder and wife	Murder and husband
Murder and girlfriend	Murder and boyfriend
Murder and spouse	Murder and intimate partner
Homicide and wife	Homicide and husband
Homicide and girlfriend	Homicide and boyfriend
Homicide and spouse	Homicide and intimate partner
Domestic homicide	Domestic murder
Domestic violence	Domestic abuse
Intimate partner homicide	Intimate partner murder
Femicide	Wife and death
Wife battered	Husband and death
Girlfriend and death	Boyfriend and death
Intimate partner and death	Spouse and death
Wife and kill	Husband and kill
Girlfriend and kill	Boyfriend and kill
Spouse and kill	Intimate partner and kill

## Appendix C

### CODE BOOK

#### Chilean and US Femicide Coverage Project USA Newspaper Coverage

**Femicide** Woman killed by her former or current husband, intimate couple, or boyfriend

**Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)** physical, emotional or sexual violence that occurs between former or current spouse, romantic couple, boyfriend and girlfriend.

**Intimate Partner Fatality** Woman killed by her former or current husband, intimate couple, or boyfriend.

**Domestic Violence** abuse (physical or emotional) occurred between spouses, siblings, mother-child, father-child

**1.) Fatality case ID.** (Each IPV/femicide case receives a number. You'll find the preassigned number on the top of each page of articles.)

100, 101, etc.

**2.) Article number.** (Articles within each IPV case receive consecutive numbers from earliest to latest publication date. You'll find the preassigned number next to each article.)

**3.) Newspaper name.** (The newspaper's name will usually be given near start of the article. If the article runs more than one page, you will sometimes find the newspaper's name on a later page.)

101 USA Today

102 The New York Times

103 El Mercurio

104 La Tercera

**4.) Format.**

1 Article (news, news-feature, feature)

2 Editorial or opinion piece other than letter to editor

3 Letter to editor

4 Other. Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

**5.a) Authorship: Sex of the writer.**

1. Male

2. Female

3. Unknown

4. Other, Please specify \_\_\_\_\_

**5.b) Authorship: newspaper or agencies**

1. Newspaper

2. Agencies, Please specify \_\_\_\_\_ (Examples are EFE, AP, Reuters, Orbe, etc.)

**6.) Date of article.** Use the following format, which includes no slashes, dashes, or spaces:

XXXXXX (month, date, year).

092312 = September 23, 2012

Unknown: 999999

**7.) Date of crime.** When did the crime itself take place? (Code the date when the victim was stabbed, shot, beaten, etc. Do not code based on when the victim died. If the article says investigators think the shooting took place on September 2, 2012, code for that date.)

XXXXXX (month, date, year)

Unknown: 999999 (Code date of crime “unknown” if it is not clear when the shooting, stabbing, etc., took place.)

Not applicable: 888888 (No specific crime is covered. For example, the article deals with Femicide/IPV in general or covers several DV fatalities as part of a general story about DV.

Also, code “888888” if the perpetrator solicits someone else to commit the crime but is caught before crime is committed.)

**8.) Total number of paragraphs.** (Please count title, subhead and deck as one paragraph)

**9a.) Headline package: femicide/IPV.** Does the news in the headline (main headline, subhead/s, deck—all the material that precedes the lead) use the word femicide/IPV/IPV fatality?

1 Yes            2 No            3 Unsure            8 Not applicable (Use “8” if the piece has no headline.)

**9b.) Headline package: femicide?/IPV.** Is it evident from the headline package (main headline, subhead/s, deck—all the material that precedes the lead) that this story is about femicide/IPV/IPV fatality? (Code “yes” if the headline package does not specifically mentions femicide/IPV/IPV fatality **but** if the victim’s current or former romantic partner is implicated in the crime. “Man killed wife” would be coded “1.” “local woman killed; Husband attempts suicide” would be coded “2.”)

1 Yes            2 No            3 Unsure            8 Not applicable (Use “8” if the piece has no headline.)

**9c.) Headline package: femicide/ IPV** Does the unit specifically mention domestic violence? (For example, does it use terms such as “domestic violence,” “domestic abuse,” “domestic dispute,” “no domestic-violence history,” “domestic problems,” “domestic situation,” “violent history,” “abusive history,” “abusive relationship,” “physical violence,” “violent confrontation,” “battered women’s syndrome,” “batterer,” etc.?)

1 Yes. Please specify (use exact wording): \_\_\_\_\_

2 No

3 Unsure. Please specify (use exact wording): \_\_\_\_\_

**10a.) Lead: femicide/IPV** does the news in the lead (main headline, subhead/s, deck—all the material that precedes the lead) use the word femicide/IPV/IPV fatality?

1 Yes            2 No            3 Unsure            8 Not applicable (Use “8” if the piece has no lead.)

**10b.) Lead: femicide/IPV** is it evident from the lead that this story is about femicide/IPV/ IPV fatality? (The lead will already be marked for you. In news stories, the lead should be the first paragraph. In feature and news-feature stories, the lead should be all opening paragraphs up to and including the nut graph.) Consider only the lead; do not consider the headline package or anything that follows the lead.

1 Yes            2 No (If unsure, code “no.”)            8 Not applicable (Use “8” if there is no lead marked.)

**10c.) Lead: femicide/IPV** Does the unit specifically mention domestic violence? (For example, does it use terms such as “domestic violence,” “domestic abuse,” “domestic dispute,” “no domestic-violence history,” “domestic problems,” “domestic situation,” “violent history,” “abusive history,” “abusive relationship,” “physical violence,” “violent confrontation,” “battered women’s syndrome,” “batterer,” etc.?)

1 Yes. Please specify (use exact wording): \_\_\_\_\_

2 No

3 Unsure. Please specify (use exact wording): \_\_\_\_\_

**11a.) USA connection** did the case discussed in this article have any connection to the US?

1 Yes. Case or some portion of it took place in the US, involved U.S. law-enforcement personnel,

involved people who live or have lived in the US, etc. If the article covers femicide/IPV/ IPV fatality statistics instead of focusing on one case, does it discuss numbers for the US? If so, code it “1.”

2. No. Case took place outside the US, the participants were not from the US and had no U.S. connection, etc. If no U.S. connection is made clear in the article, code it “2.” Code it “2” even if the article doesn’t say where the participants were from or where all phases of the crime were committed. If the article covers femicide/IPV/ IPV fatality statistics instead of focusing on one case and does not mention the numbers for the US code it “2.”

**11b.) Dateline.** Does the story include a dateline (city and sometimes region mentioned before the lead)?

1 Yes, the story used a dateline for someplace outside the US

2 Yes, the story used a dateline for someplace within the US

3 No, the story used no dateline

**12.) Murder/Suicide.** Was this case a murder/suicide? (If the perpetrator kills himself, code it “1.” If the perpetrator tries to commit suicide but lives, code it “2.” If the perpetrator shot himself and survived but the coverage specifically says he is not expected to live, code it “3.”)

1 Yes            2 No            3 Unsure            8 Not applicable (Some articles deal with DV in general rather than a specific

case.)

**Notes about victim coding:** Remember that the victims are a.) those killed by someone else or b.) those someone else clearly tried to kill. If a pregnant woman is killed, code it as one victim—the unborn child is not coded separately even if the legal system brings separate charges related to that child’s death. Finally, we are coding the victim/s and perpetrator/s for the main criminal case covered in the article. If the article mentions additional cases involving other victims and perpetrators, we count these people as “others” and they do not become the main victim and perpetrator.

**13.) Victim #1: Sex.** What was the sex of the first victim mentioned?

- 1 Female      2 Male      9 Unknown      8 Not applicable (Some articles deal with DV in general rather than a specific case.)

**14.) Victim #1: Age.** How old was the first victim mentioned? If the article does not give a specific age code it 9

\_\_\_\_\_ 9 Unknown

**15.) Victim #1: Relationship to perpetrator.** What was this victim’s relationship to the perpetrator? (Consider the victim’s relationship to the main perpetrator—the romantic partner involved in the crime. For example, a woman is killed by her ex-husband and his friend. The ex-husband would be the main perpetrator.) The victim is:

- 1 the current partner or spouse  
 2 an ex-partner or ex-spouse (this includes an estranged husband/wife to whom the perpetrator is still legally married)  
 3 a relative other than spouse (natural, adopted, or foster child of perpetrator; parent; sibling; etc.); inlaw. (If the perpetrator and his/her partner are living together but not married, count the partner’s family as inlaws.)  
 4 a child of perpetrator’s partner or ex-partner (not the perpetrator’s child)  
 5 a friend of perpetrator’s current partner or spouse  
 6 a friend, partner, spouse, or family member (other than child) of perpetrator’s previous partner  
 7 other. Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_  
 9 Relationship unknown  
 8 Not applicable

**16.) Victim #2: Sex.** What was the sex of the second victim mentioned?

- 1 Female  
 2 Male  
 9 Unknown  
 8 Not applicable ( Code 8 when there is only one victim)

**17.) Victim #2: Age.** How old was the second victim mentioned?

- \_\_\_\_\_ 8 Not applicable (there is no second victim)  
 9 Unknown

**18.) Victim #2: Relationship to perpetrator.** What was this victim’s relationship to the

perpetrator? Victim is:

- 1 the current partner or spouse
- 2 an ex-partner or ex-spouse (this includes an estranged husband/wife to whom the perpetrator is still legally married)
- 3 a relative other than spouse (natural, adopted, or foster child of perpetrator; parent; sibling; etc.); inlaw. (If the perpetrator and his/her partner are living together but not married, count the partner's family as inlaws.)
- 4 a child of perpetrator's partner or ex-partner (not the perpetrator's child)
- 5 a friend of perpetrator's current partner or spouse
- 6 a friend, partner, spouse, or family member (other than child) of perpetrator's previous partner
- 7 other. Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
- 9 Relationship unknown
- 8 Not applicable

**19.) Victim #3: Sex.** What was the sex of the third victim mentioned?  
(Categories same as for victim #2.)

**20.) Victim #3: Age.** How old was the third victim mentioned?  
(Categories same as for victim #2.)

**21.) Victim #3: Relationship to perpetrator.** What was this victim's relationship to the perpetrator? (Categories same as for victim #2.)

**22.) Victim #4: Sex.** What was the sex of the third victim mentioned?  
(Categories same as for victim #2.)

**23.) Victim #4: Age.** How old was the third victim mentioned?  
(Categories same as for victim #2.)

**24.) Victim #4: Relationship to perpetrator.** What was this victim's relationship to the perpetrator? (Categories same as for victim #2.)

**25.) Perpetrator #1: Sex.** What was the sex of the first perpetrator mentioned?

- 1 Female
- 2 Male
- 7 Perpetrator not yet identified
- 9 Perpetrator identified but sex unknown
- 8 Not applicable

**26.) Perpetrator #1: Age.** How old was the first perpetrator mentioned?

\_\_\_\_\_ 9 Unknown (there is no description of the perpetrator's age)

**27.) Perpetrator #2: Sex.** What was the sex of the second perpetrator mentioned?

- 1 Female

- 2 Male
- 7 Perpetrator not yet identified
- 9 Perpetrator identified but sex unknown
- 8 Not applicable

**28.) Perpetrator #2: Age.** How old was the second perpetrator mentioned?

8 Not applicable (there is no second perpetrator)

9 Unknown

**29.) Perpetrator #3: Sex.** What was the sex of the third perpetrator mentioned?

(Categories same as for perpetrator #2.)

**30.) Perpetrator #3: Age.** How old was the third perpetrator mentioned?

(Categories same as for perpetrator #2.)

**Topics specifically mentioned.** Were the following topics specifically mentioned in this unit?

**31.) Trauma.** Does the unit specifically use the term “trauma” (meaning either physical or emotional trauma) or a related term or phrase, such as “traumatized” or “post-traumatic stress disorder”? (“Shock” may be included here if it is used as an informal way of talking about trauma.)

1 Yes. Please specify (use exact wording): \_\_\_\_\_

2 No

3 Unsure. Please specify (use exact wording): \_\_\_\_\_

**32.) Physical abuse.** Is physical abuse specifically mentioned in this unit? (The unit may mention examples of physical abuse, but does it specifically label them “abuse”? If the unit says something like “physical abuse,” “being physically abused,” or “abusive man who beat his wife,” code it “1.” A form of the word “abuse” must be used and it must be clear the abuse was physical.)

1 Yes. Please specify (use exact wording): \_\_\_\_\_

2 No

3 Unsure. Please specify (use exact wording): \_\_\_\_\_

**33.) Verbal or emotional abuse.** Is verbal or emotional abuse specifically mentioned in this unit? (If the unit says something like “verbal abuse,” “psychological abuse,” “emotionally abusive,” or “abusive man who threatened his wife,” code it “1.” A form of the word “abuse” must be used and it must be clear the abuse was verbal or emotional. If the unit says something more generic, as suggested above, code it “3” here and under item 64.)

1 Yes. Please specify (use exact wording): \_\_\_\_\_

2 No

3 Unsure. Please specify (use exact wording): \_\_\_\_\_

**34.) Labeling of victim/s (source).** What words are used to describe the victim/s (for example, “addict,” “professional woman,” “nice guy,” etc.)? If the label is attributed to a source, put the source in parentheses after the label. \_\_\_\_\_

**35.) Labeling of perpetrator/s (source).** What words are used to describe the perpetrator/s? If the label is attributed to a source, put the source in parentheses after the label. \_\_\_\_\_

**36.) Anything else of interest?** Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

**37.) Source.** Where does the information in the unit come from?

01 Factual statement not attributed to a source; unattributed opinion of the reporter or writer. In general, if there is a verb or phrase (said, noted, described, testified, told, according to, etc.) attributing the statement to a source, do not code it “01.” Statements such as the following include a verb such as “told” but are statements of fact rather than statements attributed to a source and should be coded “01”:

- “Sommerville phoned police and later told investigators he was in a trance.”
- “Doctors diagnosed him as suffering what they described as . . . .”
- “Manuel always carried a .22, the woman told Johnson.”
- “Un homicidio ocurrió esta mañana en San Antonio”

The main questions here are: Who did the reporter get the information from? Is it evident that the reporter obtained the information directly from the source? If so, code for that source.

Statements such as the following should be coded for a specific source (police, family members, etc.) rather than “01”:

- “She says she’s giving her dad a second chance.”
- “Jones has said he did not commit the crime.”
- “The circumstances of a woman’s death are being called ‘suspicious’ by the Grant County Sheriff’s Department.”

02 News accounts (In the case of something like “According to news accounts, Jones said . . . .” code news accounts as the source.)

03 Police, sheriff, investigators, the FBI, police records, Investigaciones, Carabineros, PDI, etc.

04 Court documents or other official documents other than police records.

05 Firefighter, EMT, medical examiner, coroner, or other such worker

06 Neighbor, acquaintance, or friend

07 Relative of victim but not perpetrator (Inlaws are relatives of one but not both people.)

08 Relative of perpetrator but not victim (Inlaws are relatives of one but not both people.)

09 Relative of victim and perpetrator (this includes stepchildren of either if the victim and perpetrator were in a domestic relationship)

10 Defendant

11 Jailmate of defendant

12 Prosecutor or other member of prosecution team; district attorney, fiscalia, fiscal, etc.

13 Defense lawyer or other member of defense team (other than defendant).

14 Judge, magistrate, superior court commissioner

15 Jury or member of jury (This category does not exist in Chilean cases)

16 Victim’s religious adviser

17 Perpetrator’s religious adviser

18 Victim’s employer, co-worker, business associate/adviser

19 Perpetrator’s employer, co-worker, business associate/adviser

- 20 Victim's psychiatrist/therapist
- 21 Perpetrator's psychiatrist/therapist
- 22 DV expert: medical professional (psychiatrist, psychologist, doctor, trauma specialist)
- 23 DV expert: victim advocate (court- or community-based , YWCA, Sernam, etc)
- 24 DV expert: survivor
- 25 DV expert: batterer treatment, shelter's representative.
- 26 DV expert: women's support group/policy
- 27 DV expert: sociologist, anthropologist.
- 28 Anonymous source
- 29 Other. Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_(For example, a letter from the defendant would go under "other.")
- 30 More than one source used in the unit. Specify: \_\_\_\_\_
- 31 Generic authorities ("authorities," "officials," "court officials," etc.)

**Topics.** Are the following topics included in this unit? (For these items, code as though the perpetrator is the one who killed or tried to kill the others and the victim is the perpetrator's current or former romantic partner related to this crime.) Code as follows:

**1 Yes            2 No            3 Unsure**

**38.) IPV/femicide contextualized: Cases of IPV not involving this perpetrator and these victims.** (This category doesn't include femicide/IPV/ IPV fatality history involving these people directly. It does include femicide/IPV/ IPV cases involving other people, femicide/IPV/ IPV - related deaths in the community, femicide/IPV/ IPV statistics for the country, lists of DV hotlines, agencies and their purpose, descriptions of DV/ IPV work in the community, etc.

**39.) IPV/femicide history: Past problems in this relationship.** Any evidence of past domestic problems between this perpetrator and victim (other than a protection order). This category includes things that indicate this femicide/IPV/ IPV fatality -related incident between these people was not an isolated one—that there were past problems in this relationship. Thus, it does not include events that are part of the current incident. (Category does include police record; prior arrests; convictions; police being called to the residence to deal with a domestic dispute; neighbors' or friends' testimony that they heard arguments, saw abuse or signs of abuse, lost contact because of the abusive situation; physical signs of abuse specifically attributed to the perpetrator [not including the fatal wounds]; signs of abuse sustained by a battered partner who kills the abuser; verbal or emotional abuse, including examples not labeled IPV, abuse, etc. If an article talks about the perpetrator having "a history of domestic violence" but doesn't make it clear that it was with this victim, code it "unsure.")

**40.) IPV/femicide history: Protection order.** The victim had obtained or had tried to obtain a protection order against this perpetrator. (Sometimes articles note that others have obtained protection orders against this perpetrator. Don't count that here. Here, look only at the relationship between this victim and this perpetrator.)

**41.) Description of verbal and/or emotional abuse between this perpetrator and this victim.** (Includes abuse related to finances; psychological abuse [humiliation, manipulation, guilt, shame]; harassment [stalking, obsessive phone calls or e-mails, etc.]; using the rest of the family against the victim [for example, killing the children to punish the spouse]; one person yelling at

the other; one person isolating the other from friends or family; killing pets to punish the victim. Does not have to be labeled “abuse.”)

**42.) Perpetrator an abuser of people other than this victim.** This category deals with past abuse of people other than these victims by this perpetrator—the idea that he or she has a history of abusive behavior. (Includes perpetrator verbally, emotionally, or physically harming partners, family members, etc., other than the victims in this current case. Also includes IPV and/ or domestic violence-related charges, convictions, protection orders not related to this victim. If the article says the perpetrator had a history of mistreating women, code it “1.” If it says he had a history of domestic abuse and doesn’t make it clear whether that history involved the current victim or people in his past, code it “3.”)

**43.) Perpetrator has a criminal record not specifically tied to DV.** This item deals with criminal acts committed in the past and not committed as part of this DV incident. So, if the perpetrator kills his wife and sets the house on fire, the arson is part of this domestic violence-related incident and would be coded “2.” (This category does include any charges, convictions, parole violations, probation, pending cases, etc., not specifically related to domestic violence, such as drug charges, convictions for assaulting a business partner, etc. Also includes mention of a criminal record that does not specify what the charges and/or convictions were for, such as “Jones has an extensive criminal record.”)

**44.) Shouldn’t have happened to these people: Normal people.** These people (victim, perpetrator, or family as a whole) seemed normal, happy, sociable, loving. (Includes the ideas that this shouldn’t have happened to them or that there were no signs that anything was wrong. Also includes someone expressing surprise that this happened to these people.)

**45a.) Shouldn’t have happened to these people: Social status or occupation.** This shouldn’t happen to people with the social standing, income level, or occupation these people have. (Is a person’s occupation or status mentioned in a way that would seem to exclude them from IPV behavior?)

**45b.) Shouldn’t have happened to these people: Church affiliation.** These people (victim, perpetrator, or family as a whole) were affiliated with a specific Church. (Includes mention of the victim and/or perpetrator’s beliefs, their conversion to or membership in any particular creed; mention of the victim and/or perpetrator’s pastor, priest, rabbi; their conversion to or membership in a church; and other mentions of the victim and/or perpetrator being devoutly religious, active church-goers, etc.)

**46.) These people were different: Unsociable, quiet.** These people (victim, perpetrator, or family as a whole) were antisocial or unusually quiet.

**47.) These people were different: Eccentric.** These people (victim, perpetrator, or family as a whole) were eccentric in some way (weird, bizarre, strange).

**1 Yes**

**2 No**

**3 Unsure**

**48.) These people were different: Different culture.** These people (the victim, perpetrator, or family as a whole) are from a different culture. (The article does not have to make a judgment about that culture. Examples that would be coded “1”: “Muslim woman” Coded as “1” if features descriptions are made in a way that suggests these people are from a different culture.)

**49.) Motivation/Excuse: Death was or may have been accidental.** (Examples: “He reported that he accidentally shot his wife in the chest.” “He said the injuries might have been sustained when his wife tripped and fell down the stairs earlier in the week.”)

**50.) Motivation/Excuse: Separation or divorce.** Separation, divorce, or any breakup of the perpetrator’s relationship implicated as a reason for abuse (including the femicide/IPV/ IPV fatality). This could include a custody battle. Mere mention of the fact that the couple was estranged is not enough to code the unit “1.”

**51.) Motivation/Excuse: Perpetrator grew up in abusive home.** (The article does not have to make a judgment about what that background means; it is enough that the abusive past is mentioned. For example, the article does not have to say something like this: “Jones grew up in an abusive home, learning the patterns he later inflicted on his wife.”)

**52a.) Motivation/Excuse: Perpetrator used drugs and/or alcohol.** (This item specifically addresses drug use by the perpetrator.)

**52b.) Perpetrator involved with drugs other than as a user.** (This item does not cover drug use by the perpetrator but includes other involvement with drugs. For example, code the unit “1” if the perpetrator was involved with a meth lab or sold illegal drugs whether or not he/she is called a user.)

**53.) Motivation/Excuse: Perpetrator had mental health problems.** (Includes depression, mental illness, psychopathology, etc. Also includes perpetrator being suicidal. If the perpetrator killed [or tried to kill] himself/herself but is not specifically labeled suicidal, code the unit “2.”)

**54.) Motivation/Excuse: Perpetrator had physical health problems.** (Includes life-threatening illness, upcoming surgery, chronic pain, etc.)

**55.) Motivation/Excuse: Perpetrator had occupational problems.** (Includes loss of job, threat of bankruptcy, investigation by federal authorities, etc. Statements that simply refer to someone as an “ex-cop” or that say the perpetrator “left his job at the jail” don’t give us enough to be coded “1.” Code them “2.” However, if the sentence says the perpetrator was fired from his job at the jail or left his job under duress, code it “1.”)

**56.) Motivation/Excuse: Money.** (Includes perpetrator killing for insurance money, to avoid a costly divorce, or to avoid paying child support; because he or she had money problems and was under stress; etc.)

**1 Yes            2 No            3 Unsure**

**57.) Perpetrator was a victim.** The perpetrator was specifically called a victim in this femicide case. Code as “1” if a.) perpetrator is specifically called “victim” or b.) perpetrator is clearly described as a victim but not called “victim.” Add a note next to your coding number to tell whether it’s a. or b.

**58.) Motivation/Excuse: Past abuse.** The perpetrator killed the victim because the victim abused him, or the children, etc. (Example: The wife has been abusing the husband for a long time. The husband thinks she’s going to kill him this time, so he shoots her.)

**59.) Victim deserved it/brought it on self: Victim’s unacceptable behavior.** (Remember that the victim is the person who is dead.) The victim’s unacceptable behavior includes the victim’s inappropriate clothing, misbehavior such as partying alone, using drugs or alcohol, being unfaithful, nagging, being clingy, not being willing to give the perpetrator a divorce when he/she asked for it, hiding the perpetrator’s drugs, not letting the perpetrator view pornography when he/she wanted to,. This involves more than a statement that the crime was committed in self-defense.

**60.) Victim deserved it/brought it on self: Health problems (mental or physical).** The victim was infirm or ill to such an extent that she was unable to care for herself.

**61.) Victim deserved it/brought it on self: Past abuse.** The victim grew up in an abusive home or had been involved in abusive relationships in the past. (The article does not have to make a judgment about this; it does not have to say this means she chooses abusers because that’s what she saw as a child.)

**62.) Victim deserved it/brought it on self: Victim to blame.** The victim was specifically blamed for bringing about her death or the attempt on her life. This includes the claim that the perpetrator committed the crime in self-defense.

**63.) Society’s fault: Perpetrator had easy access to guns, weapons.** (The unit must specifically say or strongly imply that the perpetrator had easy access to weapons.)

**64.) Society’s fault: Society in general is violent.** (Includes ideas that community, state, or society is violent; that media content is violent; that the victim/perpetrator’s neighborhood was unsafe. Also includes statements that lump femicide/IPV/IPV fatality with other crime, such as “This Santiago’s fifth death this year.” Do not code as “1” if such statements emphasize that the community is safe, rather than unsafe. For example, code it “2” if the unit says “This is only the second homicide in Lake City in 2002.”)

**65.) IPV/femicide only happens in certain places: This shouldn’t have happened here.** (Includes statements about the place where the perpetrator and/or victim lived or where the crime took place as being safe, rural, quiet, and upscale. The emphasis here is on the location—for example, the neighborhood—rather than the people.)

**66.) IP/femicide only happens in certain places/IPV equated with street crime: Someone (other than the victim) moved here to avoid this kind of problem.**

**1 Yes**

**2 No**

**3 Unsure**

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## Tables

**Table 1**  
Sample Description

	<u>Chile</u> ( <i>n</i> = 138)		<u>US</u> ( <i>n</i> = 46)	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Authorship				
Newspaper	80	58	41	89.1
Agencies	58	43	5	10.9
Sex of the Writer				
Male	16	11.6	22	28.3
Female	15	10.9	13	47.8
Unknown	102	73.9	7	15.2
Other	5	3.6	4	
Victim- perpetrator relationship				
Current spouses or romantic partners	103	74.6	42	91.3
Former romantic partners	29	21	4	8.7
Crime's country of origin				
Local	106	76.8	45	97.8
Foreign	32	23.2	1	2.2

**Table 2**  
Presence of Term Femicide in Chilean News

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	<u>2009-2010</u>		<u>2011-2012</u>	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Headlines	10	15.4	33	45.2
Leads	4	6.2	28	38.4

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**Table 2.1**  
Presence of Term Femicide in Evident Cases of Femicide in Chilean News

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	<u>2009-2010</u>		<u>2011-2012</u>	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Headlines	10	16.1	32	46.4
Leads	4	6.7	28	40.0

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**Table 3**  
Themes in Chilean News' Portrayal of Femicide Cases

	<u>2009-2010</u>		<u>2011-2012</u>		<i>Cramér's</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%		
Femicide contextualized	4	6.2	7	9.6	.06	.54
Past problems	21	32.3	16	21.9	.17	.18
Protection order against the perpetrator	6	9.2	5	6.8	.04	.76
Description of verbal or emotional abuse	4	6.2	1	1.4	.13	.18
Perpetrator as an abuser to others	2	3.1	0	0	.13	.22
Perpetrator has criminal records not tied to IPV	6	9.2	5	6.8	.04	.76
Social status *	12	18.5	0	0	.33	.00
Motivation: Separation or divorce	2	3.1	3	4.1	.03	1.00
Motivation: Perpetrator used drugs or alcohol	4	6.2	5	6.8	.01	1.00
Victim deserved/brought it on herself: Victim's unacceptable behavior	4	6.2	6	9.2	.04	.75

\*Significant differences between time frames are marked (\*) and are significant at  $p < .05$  two-tailed

**Table 4**  
Presence of Terms in Chilean and US News

Terms	<u>Chile</u>		<u>US</u>	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Femicide				
Headline	43	31.2	0	0
Lead	32	23.2	0	0
IPV				
Headline	1	.70	0	0
Lead	2	1.4	1	2.2
Domestic Violence				
Headline	2	1.4	1	2.2
Lead	4	2.9	3	6.5

**Table 5**  
Frequency of Themes by Country.

Themes	<u>Chile</u>		<u>US</u>		<i>Cramér's</i>	<i>P</i>
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%		
Social status	12	8.7	2	4.3	.07	.52
Victim deserved/brought it on herself:						
victim's unacceptable behavior	10	7.2	1	2.2	.09	.29
Perpetrator has criminal records not tied to IPV	11	8.0	2	4.3	.06	.52
Motivation: perpetrator used drugs or alcohol	9	6.5	0	0	.13	.11
Perpetrator as an abuser to others*	2	1.4	8	17.4	.31	.00
Normal people/Normal relationship*	2	1.4	7	15.2	.28	.00
Society's fault*	0	0	5	2.7	.29	.00

\*Significant differences between countries are marked (\*) and are significant at  $p < .05$  two-tailed

**Table 6**  
Frequency of Sources Cited by Country.

Source	<u>Chile</u>		<u>US</u>	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Factual statement	524	66.1	321	42.2
Court documents or other official documents other than police records	13	1.6	5	0.7
Defendant	5	0.6	9	1.2
Defense lawyer or other member of defense team	4	0.5	8	1.1
Domestic Violence expert: survivor	0	0	8	1.1
Domestic Violence expert: victim advocate	23	2.9	21	2.8
Generic authorities	16	2	37	4.9
Jury or member of jury	0	0	11	1.4
Neighbor, acquaintance, or friend	16	2	70	9.2
News accounts	27	3.4	27	3.6
Perpetrator's employer, co-worker, business associate/adviser	1	0.1	36	4.7
Police, the FBI, police records, Investigaciones, Carabineros, PDI, etc.	81	10.2	55	7.2
Prosecutor or other member of prosecution team; district attorney, fiscalía, fiscal, etc.	53	6.7	24	3.2
Relative of perpetrator but not victim	1	0.1	12	1.6
Relative of victim but not perpetrator	3	0.4	13	1.7
Others	8	1	83	10.9