

Mexico's Anti-Femicide Movement:

Comparing Subnational Political Opportunity Structures in Chihuahua, Yucatán and Mexico City

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Abstract

This paper explores femicide and social movements impact on politics, a phenomenon where national, international and transnational politics overlap. The Mexican anti-femicide movement belongs to the global justice movement and struggle for women's right to life. This study highlights the differences the movement faces even within a state, on the subnational level, through a comparative and theory developing case study. The variables of mobilization structure and political opportunity are examined in the three cases of the Mexican states Chihuahua, Yucatán and the Federal District. The study indicates the movement's alliances and its connection between the local and international level in the post-2007 context. The hypothesis which connects the anti-femicide movement as part of the political opportunity on subnational level and varying rates of femicide is explored. The study concludes that the aspects of repression, threats of violence and impunity, aspect most prominent in Chihuahua, impact the anti-femicide movement and consequently femicide rates to some extent.

Keywords: femicide, political opportunity structures, global justice movements, Mexico

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1. Introduction: Research problem

In Mexico as in all of Latin America, femicide is a current, however overlooked, phenomenon. Of the Latin American countries Mexico is among the most developed and economically successful (e.g. it is a member to the OECD). Its commitment to gender equality has increased recently; Mexico is working with UN Women, has signed CEDAW (the UN convention on women's rights) and the OAS Convention of Belém do Pará (the inter-American convention on women's rights) as a part of preventing violence against women and additionally has a national law for women's right to a life free of violence (GLAWLFV) since ten years. There is an administrative authority which specifically deals with women's issues in the Mexican society (Inmujeres) and a national commission dedicated to prevent and eradicate violence against women (CONAVIM). Yet the statistics of deadly gendered violence is high and cases of femicide is frequently reported in the media. The statal initiatives and efforts are not enough and there is even indications that deadly violence against women is increasing (SEGOB, Inmujeres and UN Women 2016). When there is a lack of action by the state, international actors and local activists have come together to work for women's human rights. The Ni Una Menos¹-movement, originated in Argentina, has spread across Latin America, thereby showing transnational and regional connectivity worthy of investigation.

The question on researchers' minds has been why women's right to life is disproportionately threatened in Mexico and Latin America, how these crimes are facilitated and which mechanisms lie behind the killings of women. Previous research on femicide and feminicide has been carried out by lawyers, sociologists and gender studies researchers. They have pointed out how neoliberal policies (Olivera and Furio 2006), multisided violence (Drysdale Walsh and Menjivar 2016a), impunity (Drysdale Walsh and Menjivar 2016a, 2016b, Prieto-Carron, Thomson and Macdonald 2007, García 2010) and the asymmetry of rights due to federalism (Smulovitz 2015) are variables often at the root of the lack of justice for women, related to gendered violence, in Latin America.

¹ 'Not one (girl or woman) less'

Since previous research has been dedicated to the juridical system, the political regime and sociological sources for femicide, I see the need to examine the work done by organizations on the local level and their role in fighting impunity and patriarchal violence. This importance of the social movement for women's rights in Latin America connects to the global justice movement, that increasingly has proved its relevance in international politics. I have decided to focus on the social movement concerned with femicide in Mexico. I also find it relevant to compare the variation that occurs on the subnational level, since some states in Mexico experience more gendered violence than others.

1.1 Aim

The aim for my study is to consider the dimensions of political opportunity structures and mobilizing structures related to the issue of femicide and to investigate an issue that strongly connects to global politics and women's human rights. My focus will be to analyze the strategies of Mexican women's organizations and compare the political opportunity in the states of Chihuahua, Yucatán and the Federal District. By studying organizations working to prevent and eradicate femicide I will hopefully cover an area of the politics of gender policies from a new angle and deepen the understanding of the Mexican case. Additionally, I hope to contribute to the study of the global justice movements, politics from below (see Della Porta and Diani 2006: 2). I will aim to describe the organization of local actors and the interplay between international organizations for women's rights and local initiatives, based in McAdam's and McCarthy's work on social movements. One of the central questions for social movement organization research is what form organizations take "to maximize the strength of collective challenges and their outcomes" (Della Porta and Diani 2006: 6).

1.2 Research questions

Connecting this to my aim, I have formulated the following questions with subcategories:

- Which opportunity structures do women's rights organizations face when working with femicide (*feminicidio*) in Mexico? Which mobilizing structures can be identified 1) locally 2) regionally and 3) in cooperation with UN Women?
- How does the opportunity structures differ in the state of Chihuahua (where the frequency of femicide is highest), the Federal District Mexico City (where many

feminist organizations are active and numbers of femicide are closest to the national average) and Yucatán (where femicide numbers are relatively low compared to the national average)?

- Can subnational political opportunities explain the outcome of higher or lower femicide rates in these states?

2. Theoretical framework

2.1 Defining femicide

Conceptualizing the act of femicide has been developed and reconceptualised by many feminist scholars. In *Femicide: The Politics of Woman Killing* Jill Radford and Diana Russell describe the phenomenon as “the misogynist killing of women by men” (1992: 3) and deem it necessary that there is a name for this deadly form of violence against women. In the anthology *Femicide in Global Perspective* (2001) Russell reframes the concept as the killing of women because they are women. Furthermore, femicide in Mexico and Latin America can be understood in several ways. Femicide, the Spanish *femicidio*, is understood as a legal term, where gendered violence results in death. Feminicide, or *feminicidio*, on the other hand corresponds with the state’s responsibility in connection with brutality, omission and impunity (Walsh, Menjívar 2016: 35). Marcela Lagarde means that feminicide results from a given social and historical context that allows femicide to occur (ibid.). In the article “From Femicide to Feminicide” Lagarde (2006) reformulated the definition of femicide to feminicide, after the events in Ciudad Juárez (Chihuahua) in 2004 as to include the inaction of the state, that allows impunity, in the concept. In the material of this study, femicide and feminicide are frequently used interchangeably by journalists and activists.

The definition of femicide by the National Mexican Criminal Code is as follows:

1. The victim shows signs of violence of any kind;
2. The victim was inflicted infamous or degrading injuries or mutilations;
3. There is a history of any type of violence in the family, school or work against the victim;
4. A sentimental, affective or trusting relationship between the perpetrator and the victim;
5. Prior threats related to the crime, harassment or injury;
6. The victim was isolated;
7. The body of the victim is exposed or displayed in a public space (CDD, CMPDDH 2012: 15).

I understand femicide as gendered violence resulting in a woman's death and conceptually as a useful tool to categorize the disproportionate deadly violence committed against women globally, because of patriarchal power relations.

2.2 Previous research

Previous research on the women's movement, or anti-femicide movement, has been done by Melissa W. Wright (2007). She describes the transition of the movement in Chihuahua, from the 1990's initial efforts by the Coalition² to early 2000's mother-activism. Her conclusion is that the political discourse has affected the movement as to engage in mother-activism, framing the issue in a non-threatening demand based in radical conservatism by the activists to have their daughters returned (Wright 2007). The possibility for the movement to grow then is limited to motherhood and authentic testimony, something that simultaneously deprives the mother-activist's organizing of the status of work (Wright 2007: 415- 420). Fernando Bosco (2007) responded to the paper and contributed by arguing that mother-activism has succeeded elsewhere in Latin America and does not necessarily mean restraints for the movement. His example is Madres de Plaza de Mayo where mothers demanded their disappeared children back from the repressive Argentinian state, which developed into a broader movement that is not determined by essentialist mother-activist methods (Bosco 2007: 428-429). Donatella della Porta is another scholar that has researched the global justice movement. However her focus has been anti-austerity movements which made a comeback after the global financial crisis in 2008 (e.g. della Porta 2015).

2.3 Political opportunity structures for social movements

One scholar who has researched social movements in international relations is Doug McAdam. He stresses that "Rather than assuming difference, we need to treat movement type as a variable and seek to account for variation in type on the basis of particular combinations of opportunities, mobilizing structures, and collective action." (McAdam et al 1996: 9) To understand why social movements emerge, achieve their goals or fail to do so, he believes that this success is determined by how these three aspects work together. This means social movements act within a structure of potential opportunities but their success is also

² 'The Coalition of NGOs for Women's Rights'

determined by their own potential to mobilize and act toward their goals. He argues that “...both (in) the timing and form social movements bear the imprint of specific opportunities that give them life.” (McAdam et al 1996: 11) Political opportunity is understood by McAdam through synthesizing the concept across four previous conceptions by Brockett (1991), Kriesi (1992), Rucht (1996) and Tarrow (1994). By integrating them and interpreting them himself, McAdam then defines political opportunity as:

1. The relative openness or closure of the institutionalized political system
2. The stability or instability of that broad set of elite alignments that typically undergird a polity
3. The presence of elite allies
4. The state’s capacity and propensity for repression (McAdam et al 1996: 10, 27).

However, in my study I want to contribute to the broader understanding of opportunity structure. In addition to the state as a repressive actor, criminal transnational actors such as cartels should be seen as actors capable of shaping the opportunity structure as well as other threats of violence to a movement. I would like to note that ‘allies’ can be interpreted to include actors within the movement and the relationship to other social movements, not merely the traditional elite, namely the state and political parties. The critique that has been directed toward opportunity structures as an analytical tool concerns how the term risks including all circumstances surrounding mobilization (McAdam 1996: 25) consequently eroding the scientific analysis of the possibility to conclude anything substantial. McAdam counters these remarks with emphasizing the importance of operationalization and *political* opportunity as the interest of the field (McAdam 1996: 26).

Having this in mind, the theory presented by McAdam, McCarthy and Zald withholds that the fate of movements is shaped by said movement’s action (McAdam et al 1996: 15). This makes it relevant to study social movements and the organizations belonging to them, to begin to understand why a movement is successful in achieving its goal or not.

2.4 Strategies for social movements

John McCarthy further describes the meaning of mobilizing structures. He expresses that mobilizing structures surface under shorter cycles, historical time periods and cultural spaces in varyingly intelligible forms. McCarthy upholds the importance of agency of the activists

themselves, in how they form their action and how those choices have an impact on the outcome of the success of collective mobilization, entailing both its shape and effectiveness (McAdam et al 1996: 147) In framing their goals, social movements have to consider internal and external targets, meaning actors belonging to the movement *and* opponents to the movement and the authorities (McAdam et al 1996: 149).

McCarthy’s dimensions of movement-mobilizing structures (McAdam et al 1996: 145):

	Nonmovement	Movement
Informal	Friendship networks Neighbourhoods Work networks	Activist networks Affinity groups Memory communities
Formal	Churches Unions Professional associations	SMOs* Protest committees Movement schools

*Social Movement Organizations

My study will be concerned with the informal and formal dimensions of the anti-femicide movement. The interplay between informal and formal actors, both within and outside of the movement, will give a more coherent understanding of the opportunity structure for the movement. SMOs are organizations with a dedication to to movement, with the same goals as the movement, and additionally have a more complex organizational form than e.g. an activist group (McCarthy 1996:143-44). The theories proposed by McAdam and McCarthy implies that a social movement can affect politics and achieve their goals, in this case the anti-femicide movement should be able to impact the politics of gendered violence and ultimately femicide, in the context of a political opportunity structure.

3. Methodology

Through a small-n case study I will examine the political opportunity structures in relation to the strategies that women’s rights organizations have in Mexico. As mentioned in the beginning of this paper, Mexico is one of the countries in the world with the highest rates of femicide. Compared to other countries with similar results such as Guatemala and Nicaragua, Mexico is a more developed country with higher life standards. I find it relevant to investigate the anti-femicide movement at the subnational level, in a case where Mexico has

many international and state commitments to the eradication of femicide, and identify the possibilities and constraints for the anti-femicide movement to act from below in a comparative approach to subnational variation.

This comparative study will investigate Chihuahua, Yucatán and the Federal District where femicide rates differ, and look at the opportunity structures the organizations face in each case. Grounded in a most similar system design the dependent variable of the study is thus higher or lower femicide as an outcome. The deviant variable across the three cases is the political opportunity structure. Ideally, when choosing the cases, one would want to compare a state that has successfully lowered the number of femicides with another, to see how the conditions for the anti-femicide movement acted within the opportunity structure. However, looking at the evidence, the numbers of femicide are rising in all parts of Mexico. I have chosen Chihuahua since the rates of femicide there are the highest in the country, the Federal District Mexico City where femicide rates are close to the national average and because of it being the capital, where many civil rights organizations are active. I have also chosen Yucatán where the femicide rates are among the lowest in the country. Mexico is a case of high rates of femicide with a more or less successful social movement due to political opportunity structures in combination with mobilizing structures. Previously Mexico has been dealt with as a single case when studying femicide and I therefore categorize Chihuahua, Yucatán and the Federal District as most similar. By analyzing the three cases on subnational level I will investigate how different opportunity structures and mobilizing structures give different outcomes in the three cases. I do this, aware that the three cases cannot completely be isolated from one another and in some ways intertwine and influence each other, through cross-national cooperation on the issue.

By using the concepts of McAdam and McCarthy, this is a theory developing case study. Theory developing cases searches for new explanations and seeks to uncover causal paths and hypotheses which have not yet been tested theoretically (George and Bennett 2004: 109). Timewise the study is limited to events post-2007 when the General Law passed, with focus on recent years. The women's rights organizations that I will examine have been chosen based on accessibility to their material and if they have an online-presence, due to time constraints.

3.1 Operationalization

To evaluate the political opportunity in the three states, the concepts must be measurable. The four criteria conceptualized by McAdam will be analyzed in the three cases:

1. The relative openness or closure of the institutionalized political system; meaning the possibility of political participation, access to dialogue with the political elites in the state and civil society participation.
2. The stability or instability of that broad set of elite alignments that typically undergird a polity: what are the degrees of corruption and is there occurrence of clientelism? Is there a previous movement to build from?
3. The presence of elite allies: does the organizations have help in form of connection with political elites? Are there elites with the same goals?
4. The state's capacity and propensity for repression: do the anti-femicide organizations face a countermovement, is there active undermining of activity such as detention and arrests or threats of violence?

To analyze the mobilizing structure of the movement in the three states, we must categorize what *type* of organizations are active in the states. I will define the different organizations as informal or formal and the allies they interact with as internal or external targets based on McCarthy, as referred to in the theoretical framework. I will look at the strategies toward internal targets, mainly which other organizations an organization cooperates with locally (in their state) and the organization's relation to UN Women. Regarding strategies toward external targets I will examine the relationship with the authorities, which overlaps with 1, 3 and 4 of McAdam's criteria. Regionally, I look at the allies of the organizations and describe the initiative Ni Una Menos. These mobilizing structures should be seen as part of the political opportunity. The aim for coordinating these concepts and broadening the understanding of political opportunity, to relations within the movement and other actors than the state having shaping agency, is to contribute to theory developing within the study of social movements. It suggests that the anti-femicide movement, as a political force in society, has an impact on the political opportunity and can come to affect the rates of femicide.

4. Material

Primary sources

I use websites and social media of *Nuestras Hijas de Regreso a Casa*, *Mesa de Mujeres Ciudad Juárez*, *Kóokay: Ciencia Social Alternativa*, *Yucatán Feminicida*, *Ni Una Más Yucatán*, *Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir* and the *National Network of Human Rights Defenders*. I primarily analyze organizations belonging to the national network *The National Citizen Femicide Observatory* (OCNF). Unfortunately I could not access sufficient material on *Justicia Para Nuestras Hijas*, an important SMO in Chihuahua. I use annual reports from the state Commission on Human Rights in all three states and Inmujeres. In the reports each body inform which organizations they have cooperated with and in which projects. The study also uses material from IOs UN Women Mexico, OHCHR³, Amnesty International and Transparency International. I use data on civil society organizations from Cemefi⁴. Additionally, Las Connectas has together with an anti-corruption organization and international journalist organization put together the investigation and website “Las muertas que no se ven: el limbo de los feminicidios”⁵ which collected statistics on the matter and stories of injustice related to femicide in Mexico is referenced. I have used reliable online newspapers El Universal and BBC. The Periódico Vanguardia, a leftist workers’ paper, is used when referencing speculations in media.

Secondary sources

Central to my study is the report from Segob, Inmujeres and UN Women 2016, with statistics on quantity of deaths, type of murder weapons and placement of bodies and a table on development in 2007-2014 in the 32 states, by year, entities of 100,000 women and real numbers. I have consulted Britannica Academic, an academic online encyclopedia, a case from the Inter-American Court on Human Rights and The Swedish Institute of International Affairs’ magazine on contemporary global politics, for historical facts as well as academic books and peer reviewed articles.

³ The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

⁴ The Mexican Center for Philanthropy

⁵ ‘The invisible dead: the limbo of feminicides’

Due to limited time a field study is not possible, therefore my research will be limited to previously published material. This has consequences for the findings, since I can only cover parts of the anti-femicide movement I might miss certain data that could have been obtained through e.g. interviews. I will primarily use the organizations' websites and social media outlets as material, to map their alliances and purpose. By triangulating this with reports from institutions that they have cooperated with, such as Inmujeres, the Human Rights Commissions and UN Women my study should meet the requirements for reliability. I have reached out to CONAVIM and Inmujeres directly to ask for the most recent reports on the progress in the area of femicide and documentation on which organization they cooperate with, however my attempts were unsuccessful. Therefore my material from the official institutions has been accessed through each institution's website and search motors. When using online resources, there can be two purposes for doing so, either to measure the online activity of a social movement or to summarize information of the organization's background, beliefs and strategy (Mosca 2014: 2). I have chosen to use the latter tactic which connects to the aim of my study. Using internet sources can be problematic, due to the fact that posts can be removed and website information changed (Mosca 2014: 4). Aware of these risks, I have downloaded PDFs and documents when possible and systematically documented when a source has been accessed and presented it in the reference list. My material somewhat restricts the possibility to get the whole picture and situation for the anti-femicide movement due to it being through online access only and a majority of the sources being the organizations themselves. Aware that another method, such as interviews and a longer field study could bring a deeper understanding to my research questions and aim, my analysis still holds academic relevance and the comparative aspect of the study is an attempt of theoretical contribution to international relations studies on social movements.

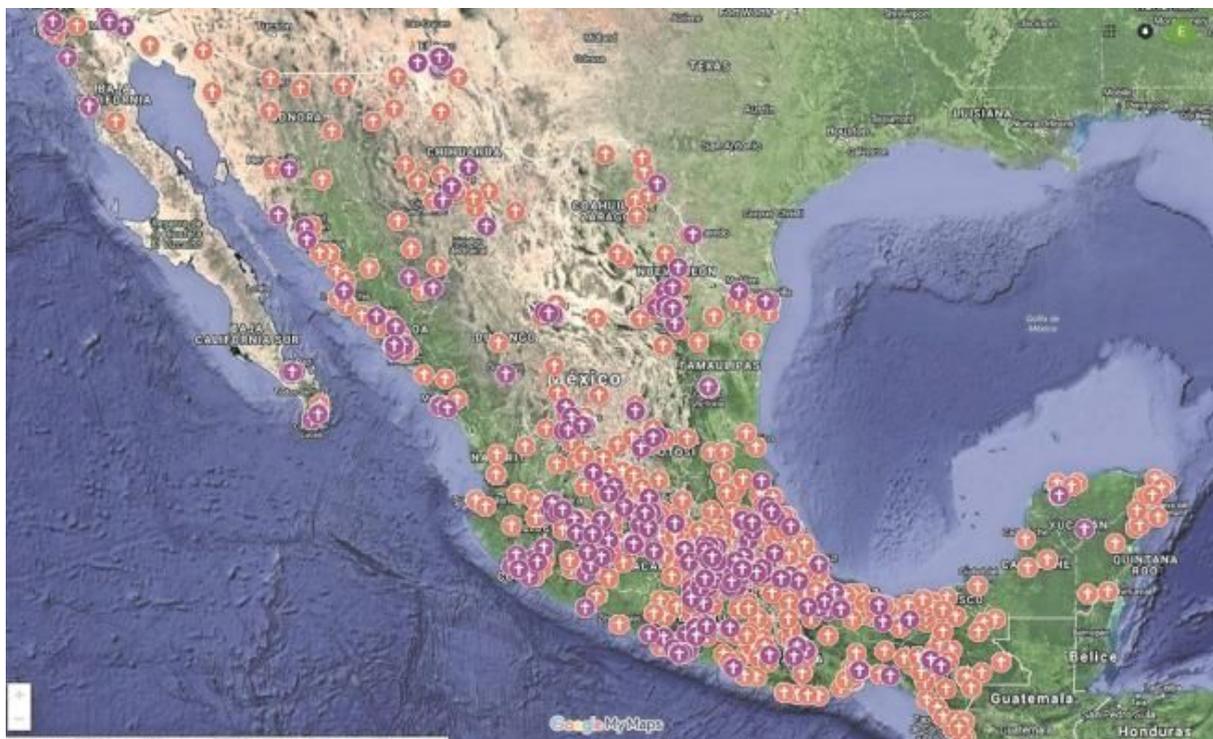
5. Analysis

The analysis will display the data related to the research question and dimensions of analysis that have been classified earlier under the operationalization. First, the national opportunity structure is presented with the aspects of gender policy framework, the history of the political system in Mexico and its consequences for the contemporary political opportunity structure. Secondly each state is analyzed through the aspects of political opportunity, including

mobilizing structure and the anti-femicide organizations presented in separate sections. The regional mobilization around Ni Una Menos is then analyzed in its own section. Finally the comparison between the cases is presented together with my conclusions.

5.1.1 Mexican gender policies

An international report put together by the UN and the Mexican authorities indicates developments in the area of femicide and calculated the frequency related to female deaths with presumed homicide per 100,000 women between the years of 2007-2014 (Segob, Inmujeres, UN Women 2016). In 2014 the states of Chihuahua (from 2.9 to 9.0 deaths), Guerrero (from 4.5 to 9.0 deaths), Oaxaca (from 3.6 to 6.4 deaths) and Sinaloa (from 2.4 to 5.9 deaths) had the highest percentage of femicide in 100,000 women (SEGOB, Inmujeres and UN Women 2016: 12-13). The report also showed low and slightly decreasing numbers in Aguascalientes (from 1.0 to 0.6 deaths), Quintana Roo (from 3.3 to 2.9 deaths) and Yucatán (from 1.4 to 0.8 deaths) (ibid.). According to the Mexican Center for Philanthropy there were 10,7 million civil society organizations registered nationally in 2009 (Cemefi 2017).



Femicides reported by the media in Mexico. Orange crosses: 2016 Purple crosses: 2017 (Zeltzin Sánchez 2017)

The General Law of Access for Women to a Life Free of Violence (GLAWLFV) today has a broad approach to promote the protection of women nationally, the creation of the national institute Inmujeres for the welfare of women and the obligation of all states of the republic to regard the remarks of the resolution (Poder Ejecutivo 2015a). The most recent updates to the law were made in 2015. In December of that year the scope of the law broadened to incorporate the change of perception of men's and women's roles and positions and the promotion of women's human rights, in education and at "all levels of the institution" after considering the input by the Cultural Secretariat. The changes are regulated under article 36 and 45 (Poder Ejecutivo 2015b: 7). The law has been interpreted in each state and at first was asymmetrical, however the states are approaching a more standardized juridical framework. Due to the federal system and lack of solid standardizing mechanisms there is still variation on state level.

Gender Alerts is a mechanism of GLAWLFV which delegates the observation of high levels of femicide to civil society organizations which then report to the state authorities to declare an intense occurrence of gendered violence (OCNF 2009-2012). Formal organs who also have a commitment to femicide are the State Commissions on Human Rights, the National Commission on Violence Against Women (CONAVIM) and Inmujeres, the national organ with the mission to ensure gender equality over the entire political spectrum (culturally, economically and physically). The organizations within the anti-femicide movement in some cases work together with these institution simultaneously as they try to influence them based in their goal to end femicide and impunity.

The network of the *National Civil Femicide Observatory* is a coalition of 36 women's rights organizations that collects data on injustice regarding femicide and gender discrimination. They have issued 'Gender Alerts', where civil society draws attention to an abnormal quantity of femicides in an area (OCNF 2009-2012). *OCFN* has a regional campaign for women's access to justice in Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador (OCNF 2017b). In 2011 the Observatory participated in a national campaign for the typification of femicide, with focus on the state Morelos. The campaign started with the aim to learn and see to that the authorities follow the actions in relation to the femicides registered in Mexico before the Chamber of Deputies (OCNF 2011). The *OCNF* cooperated with a

women's rights network, a women's collective and a Special Commission (ibid.). *OCNF* is important to the anti-femicide movement since it coordinates local activism with national goals. Many of the organizations analyzed on subnational level are part of the Femicide Observatory.

5.1.2 Political context

To analyze the features of the opportunity structures in Mexico related to the state authorities, we must start by recognizing the political heritage that have led up to the current system. This feature of the political opportunity structure integrates with all four aspects of McAdam's conceptualization, affecting the institutional structure, elite alignments, possible allies and the propensity of repression.

Mexico is a young democracy, marked by its colonial history. The result of the Mexican revolution in 1910 was the one party state system and 71 year rule by *Partido Revolucionario Industrial* (PRI)⁶. Under the rule of PRI, the president elected his own successor. Electoral fraud was combined with a patronage system where the political elite ensured their spot in power by buying votes (Britannica Academic 2017a). During this time, the bigger drug cartels had agreements with politicians in their territory and had financial support, however, after the powershift in 2000 it was unclear whether these clientelistic arrangements would continue (Schmidt 2012: 13). In the 1980's and 1990's PRI was losing ground and lost its electoral hold on some states. In 1999 president Ernesto Zedillo broke tradition and did not elect the new candidate (Britannica Academic 2017a). Instead, in 2000 *Partido Acción Nacional* (PAN)⁷ won its first election with Vicente Fox as their presidential candidate, who was followed by Felipe Calderón in 2006. Current president Enrique Peña Nieto, former governor of the state of Mexico, was elected in 2012 which marked the return of PRI. Mexico face new presidential elections in 2018. Evidently, PRI holds an important role in the Mexican political system, and the Party continues to impact aspects of political participation. Regarding social movements, the Mexican labour movement and labour unions are historically tied to PRI (Schmidt 2012: 23).

⁶ the Revolutionary Industrial Party

⁷ the National Action Party

An important phenomenon in the contemporary Mexican political context is the development of the Mexican war on drugs initiated in 2006-2007. “The Mérida Initiative” was a bilateral cooperation with the United States to strike against the drug cartels. In national political terms this meant president Felipe Calderón expanded military actions and executed direct operations to rid the country of the top cartel leaders. Structural reforms were put aside, and hindered in parliament by PRI, in favour of hunting down the cartels (Schmidt 2012: 9). Some argue that the confrontations and removals of cartel leaders have triggered a sovereignty crisis in the Northern states due to the multiplying cartels. Simultaneously, femicides in public carried out with firearms rose dramatically after 2007 as well as death by firearms in the domestic sphere (SEGOB, Inmujeres, UN Women 2016: 11).

The anti-femicide movement is not the lone active social movement in contemporary Mexico. Other human rights activism regarding the disappeared teachers’ students of Ayotzinapa (“The 43”) has gained worldwide attention and critique aimed at the Peña Nieto Administration. On their way travelling by bus to a protest, the students disappeared in Guerrero state and are since assumed dead. The official version of the government is that they were handed by municipal police to local gangs, who murder them and burned the corpses. Independent investigators claim it to be scientifically impossible (Amnesty International 2016) leaving the case yet unsolved. In 2016 the teacher’s marches against the new regulations and demands on qualifications arose, successfully blocking highways to draw the attention of the politicians in the Federal District. A counter-movement called The National Front for the Family also gained momentum, where the Catholic church and conservatives have mobilized against the propositions for marriage equality.

Corruption is an important aspect to the Mexican political system and political culture, within which the anti-femicide movement acts. Clientelism has long been tied to PRI, today however it is a common practice over the entire political spectrum, although studies on the 2012 electoral campaign shows that clientelistic practices was more common amongst PRI than other parties (Nichter and Palmer-Rubin 2015: 222). Concern has been raised that cliental-patron like practices will spread to NGOs (Miraftab 1997). In 2016 Transparency International reported that Mexico had become slightly more corrupt, scoring a 30 compared to 34-35 in the four previous years (Transparency International 2016). The research analyzes

countries on a scale from Highly Corrupt (0) to Very Clean (100). Mexico ranked place number 123 of 176 internationally (Transparency International 2016). To contrast, Somalia ranks as number 176 with a score of 10.

There are indications that corruption not only is expressed in official politics and governance but also integrates with political participation. News media outlets report how so-called ‘*acarreados*’ attend political events such as the Independence Day celebrations at Mexico City’s main square in 2016 (El Universal 2016, Vanguardia 2016). Mexican politicians, in cooperation with large businesses, are suspected to use ‘*acarreados*’, people who are brought with buses to a protest, event or rally to make the popular support appear more significant. The term, accusing politicians of clientelistic practices, comes from the Spanish verb *acarrear* which means to transport by bus or vehicle. The suspicion that politicians and movements use this practice to enhance the perception of how extensive their support is further complicates the legitimacy of political participation in Mexico.

The reporting and observation from many social organizations is the lack of documentation and shifting numbers reported by judges and state entities, by and to the authorities. For example, *Las Conectas* showed how judges and prosecutors in 26 out of 32 states gave different information on femicide when reporting to INEGI⁸ and to the National Institute for Transparency (Las Conectas 2017). In Yucatán one case of femicide was reported by the attorney’s office however no investigations, in the Federal District the same authorities reported 45 cases of femicide and 55 investigations (ibid). This indicates the lack of systematic methods within the authorities and that official statistics can be unreliable. Therefore the numbers presented are usually estimations which complicates the search for patterns in change, for researchers and activists.

5.2 Chihuahua

Chihuahua is one of the Northern border states to the US, also bordering to the Mexican states of Sonora, Sinaloa, Durango and Coahuila. It is the state with the highest registered cases of femicide, with 9 deaths in 100,000 women in 2014 and as many as 32.2 in 2010

⁸ The national institution of statistics

(Segob, Inmujeres, UN Women 2016: 13). Chihuahua was governed by PRI 1950-1992, and was then one of the states that broke the one party rule in the 1990's when PAN governed 1992-98. PRI came back into power 1998-2016, however PAN won the most recent election in 2016. Chihuahua, because of its geographical location and strategic position in the drug business, as well as being an important migration route, experienced the increase in military and police activity under the Calderón Administration.

5.2.2 Relation to previous movement

In 2009 the United States of Mexico was sentenced before the Inter-American Court on Human Rights for the disappearances and brutal killings due to gendered violence of three Chihuahuan women in 1993. *The Coalition of NGOs for Women's Rights* was active in bringing international attention to the killings (Wright 2007: 409) and was the forbearer of the anti-femicide movement active in Chihuahua today. The killings and the sentencing has come to be known as 'Cotton Field' after the place where the victims of femicide were found. The anti-femicide movement gained momentum with the media's and international community's attention and some organizations earned the special position of observing the compliance of the government after the sentencing (The Inter-American Court on Human Rights 2009). According to the Inter-American Court 2009 Inmujeres designed public policies, arranged campaigns and arranged a socio-economic diagnosis of the city after the case in Ciudad Juárez (The Inter-American Court on Human Rights 2009: 119). This points to how the authorities have had to adapt to the 'Cotton Field' case and act preventively against gendered violence and femicide.

5.2.3 Elite alignments and repression

Among Sinaloa, Coahuila, Tamaulipas, Durango and Nuevo León (five other Northern states), Chihuahua is one of the states most affected by the violence resulting from cartel confrontations (Schmidt 2012: 12) that have increased since the Mérida Initiative. Amnesty International reports that the government sent over 50, 000 military officials to the areas most affected by organized crime, and thousands of policemen (2011: 2). The Juárez cartel is a branch which was given the territory by the ex-policeman Miguel Ángel Félix Gallardo, head of the 1980's Guadalajara cartel. At the time, the Guadalajara cartel coordinated the narcotics

business between Mexican and Colombian cartels (Schmidt 2012: 10). As mentioned in previous sections, these cartels had agreements with the police and military during the rule of PRI. Even after the power shift, the cartels strike deals with police officers and infiltrate the authorities which results in the need to exchange the state security structure repeatedly due to narco-corruption (Olivera, Furio 2006: 111). The aspect of cartels is important to the opportunity structure in the Mexican case, since it affects elite alignments and poses a possible threat to the safety of the social movement.

5.2.4 Local organization

According to the most recent data from 2009, there are 439 civil society organizations in Chihuahua (Cemefi 2017). The most action by the anti-femicide movement has been seen in Ciudad Juárez, the highest populated city in the state and border town to El Paso, and Chihuahua City. Recently, two organizations profiling themselves as mother-activists (Wright 2007) *Nuestras Hijas de Regreso a Casa*⁹ and *Justicia Para Nuestras Hijas*¹⁰ have been the main social movement actors in the state. Additionally, there is a network of women's organizations concerned with femicide amongst other issues, of which *Nuestras Hijas de Regreso a Casa* are a part of.

Nuestras Hijas de Regreso a Casa was a result of the mother-activism emerging in the early 2000's (Wright 2007: 413) where women demand back their lost daughters who have become victims to kidnapping and often femicide. The focus of the organization is multi-level. Locally, they help the families of disappeared daughters and bringing justice for the families of victims. They promote rehabilitation programs and bring attention to the human rights violations committed in the state. They aim to use national and international help to bring attention to femicide in Chihuahua, demanding that national and international actors oblige the local and state authorities to prioritize the issue of femicide. Finally, *Nuestras Hijas de Regreso a Casa* provide knowledge and shares it with national and international actors (Nuestras Hijas de Regreso a Casa 2017). The organization identifies femicide as the product of international organized crime and involvement of state authorities.

⁹ 'Our Daughters Returning Home'

¹⁰ 'Justice for Our Daughters'. This organization is not part of my study due to material shortage.

The SMO seemingly has many allies within the movement, consisting of 3 regional networks active across Latin America, one network with Italian background, *Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir*¹¹ and a newspaper reporting with a gender perspective (Nuestras Hijas de Regreso a Casa 2017). Some are focused on reuniting families (*Sin ellas no somos todas*), others documenting femicide (*Banco Datos Femicidio América Latina*) and one is an anti-capitalist and revolutionary organization (Pan y Rosas 2013). Several of these, besides CDD and the newspaper *Cimas Noticias*, are however inactive or have not updated their websites in the last four years.

*Mesa de Mujeres de Ciudad Juárez*¹² is a network of 10 organizations with focus on women's rights that was formed in 2001 after the Cotton Fields. The focus of the network is develop alternatives for public policy to ensure women's human rights and a culture of gender equality. They also commit to help children, teenagers and adults in situations of violence, poverty and/or at high risk. The network specifically helps women in highly vulnerable conditions (Mesa de Mujeres 2017a).

Regarding the network's strategies toward external target of the movement, *Mesa de Mujeres de Ciudad Juárez* observes the aftermath and the state compliance since the Inter American Court on Human Rights sentencing. They are part of the Justice Centers in Chihuahua and seek to form a Justice Center for women's rights (Mesa de Mujeres 2017b). The social movement network is allied with *OCNF* as well as organizations that deal with women's human rights, refugees and electoral analysis (Mesa de Mujeres 2017c). *Mesa de Mujeres* were one of the three organizations who took the initiative to start the network for women activists for human rights, *La Red Nacional de Defensoras de Derechos Humanos en México* (RNDDHM) which is the Mexican branch of *Iniciativa Mesoamericana de Mujeres Defensoras de Derechos Humanos*, a network for female human rights defenders in the Mesoamerican region.

Mesa de Mujeres promote the global march for women and present information to institutions such as CEDAW, the EU parliament, the International Commission of Lawyers and Amnesty

¹¹ 'Catholics for the Right to Decide/Catholics for Choice'

¹² 'Table of Women of Ciudad Juárez'

International (Mesa de Mujeres 2017c). Due to the sentencing in the Inter-American Court and the attention Cotton Field brought, the network has elite allies in the international community. Additionally, the *Mesa de Mujeres* have local elite allies (the Human Rights Commission). Simultaneously they have the role of observing the state, which could potentially put them in conflict with the state. The network also has internal target allies, through the Latin American regional network of female human rights activist defenders.

5.2.5 International mobilizing strategy

In 2014 an access group for the civil society was created at UN Women Mexico, consisting of 15 groups. Amongst them were Centro de Atención de la Mujer Trabajadora de Chihuahua (UN Women Mexico 2014). New organizations were added to the group as of April 2017, however none were from Chihuahua (UN Women 2017).

5.2.6 Repression

According to the UN, Chihuahua is among the five state where human rights activists are most vulnerable to threats and arbitrary interferences (OHCHR Mexico 2013: 10). In 2011 Norma Andrade, a high profile within *Nuestras Hijas de Regreso a Casa*, was attacked with a firearm outside her home, her family received threats and the perpetrators showed up at her workplace. In 2012 she was attacked again, this time in Mexico City (OHCHR Mexico 2013: 12). María Luisa García Andrade and Marisela Ortiz Rivera, the founder of *Neuestras Hijas de Regreso a Casa*, have experienced several threats and attempts on their lives, at times in front of underaged children (OHCHR Mexico 2013: 49-50). Amnesty reported that the two activist fled their homes after continued threats in 2011, displayed publicly on a banner, which is a known method used by Mexican gangs (Amnesty International 2011). One mother-activist, Marisela Escobedo, was assassinated in 2010 while outside the government building protesting for justice for the femicide of her daughter (El Universal 2010, OHCHR Mexico 2012: 49, RNDDHM 2015: 2, Amnesty International 2011: 1). Susana Chavéz, another anti-femicide activist, was found dead in Juárez in 2011 (Amnesty International 2011). In none of the cases have the authorities made sure to protect the activists, although they were informed of their vulnerable situations.

5.2.7 Openness and elite allies

In 2016, the State Commission on Human Rights in Chihuahua (CEDHCH) worked with 72 civil society organizations. 7 of these were organizations which deal with violence and/or women's rights: the *Documentación y Estudios de Mujeres (DEMAC A.C.)*, *Centro de Atención de la Mujer Trabajadora*, *Sociedad Sin Violencia ISAP*, *Mujeres por México*, *Justicia Para Nuestras Hijas*, *Red Mesa de Mujeres* and *Sin Violencia A.C.*¹³ (CEDHCH Annual Report 2016: 21-23). This shows that the women's movement as a whole has connections to formal state actors as well as the anti-femicide movement to some extent.

5.3 Yucatán

The statistics show that Yucatán is one of the states with the lowest rates of femicide with 1.4 victims in a 100,00 women in 2007 and 0.8 in 2014 (Segob, Inmujeres, Un Women 2016: 13). There are two women's organizations active in the area with direct connection to the national network *OCNF* (OCNF 2017). The state is located in the East, between the states of Campeche and Quintana Roo. Yucatán has a rich Mayan heritage and many indigenous inhabitants still speak their native language. In 2012 femicide became a typified crime in the state, but was not categorized as a severe crime. The status of a severe crime was achieved in 2014 (Yucatán Femicida 2017a). Since then there is only one sentencing of femicide and there is no state database on cases of violence against women, even though the authorities are obliged to have one since 2008, which is the responsibility of the Institute for Equality between Men and Women (Yucatán Femicida 2017e). Yucatán had a PRI governor 1942-2001. During one mandate lasting 2001-2007 PAN took over the rule. PRI was reelected in 2007 and the Party has since had political power in the state.

5.3.1 Relation to previous movement

In 1916 during the Mexican revolution there was a feminist gathering named "The First Feminist Congress" in Mérida where 620 delegates participated¹⁴ (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores 2016). The First Feminist Congress was a socialist initiative, however the

¹³ 'Documentation and Studies of Women', 'Attention Center for the Working Woman', 'Society Without Violence ISAP', 'Women for Mexico', 'Justice for Our Daughters', 'Network Table of Women' and 'Without Violence'.

¹⁴ According to scholar Francesca Miller over 700 persons attended the Congress (Miller 1991).

participants were from a wide range of beliefs, some were conservative Catholics, and many participants were teachers. The Congress is seen as part of building Mexican nationalism (Miller 1991: 75-77). The consequent year, women in Yucatán gained the right to vote, which was not accomplished until 30 years later in the rest of the country (Britannica Academic 2017b). Evidently Yucatán holds an important part in the Mexican feminist history.

5.3.2 Local organization

245 civil society organizations were active in 2009 in Yucatán (Cemefi 2017), which is less than in Chihuahua or the Federal District. The organizations tied to the anti-femicide movement active in Yucatán believe in an integrative stance towards human rights and are connected to the Mayan movement. *Ciencia Social Alternativa* is part of *OCNF* and has also joined together with other local groups to form the multimedia project Yucatán Femicida to communicate information about femicide and to take action against the state policymakers.

*Kóokay: Ciencia Social Alternativa*¹⁵ is an established SMO with a variety of issue areas, with their headquarters located in Mérida, the capital of Yucatán. Their vision is to participate in the construction of an inclusive society that promotes the communal development alongside equality, justice and respect for everyone's human rights. Part of the community building is to have good relations with the Mayan population and movement. They want to bring attention to and affect public policy on their issue areas, through networks and collectives of other civil society organizations and municipal or state councils (*Ciencia Social Alternativa* 2017a). These issue areas regard gender equality, promoting a life free of violence, supporting sexual diversity, respect for identity and cultural heritage, influence in life education, environmental sustainability and access to information about sustainable technology (ibid). They also have a commitment to working with masculinities as part of their gender equality agenda. *Ciencia Social Alternativa* works with their own groups for men in changing 'hegemonic masculinities' (*Ciencia Social Alternativa* 2017b).

Ciencia Social Alternativa is part of two local networks; *Por Nuestros Derechos, Mujeres en Red*¹⁶ and *Colectivo Ciudadano por el Matrimonio para todas y todos en Yucatán*¹⁷. The first

¹⁵ 'Firefly: Alternative Social Science'

¹⁶ 'For Our Rights, Women in Network'

is a local network for civil society organizations in Yucatán with a feminist focus, where part of the issues have been violence against women and observing the rates of femicide (Ciencia Social Alternativa 2017c). The second is a local network in Yucatán for the fight to change the state matrimonial law into a gender neutral one (ibid). On a national level, apart from *OCNF*, *Kóokay* is affiliated to a national human rights network, *Todos los Derechos Para Todas y Todos*¹⁸, consisting of 74 party politically independent NGOs active in 20 Mexican states. *Ciencia Social Alternativa* works with the network to coordinate strategies and share the view that the fight for human rights needs to be integrative (ibid).

The organization has contact with the authorities, not only through protest. In the last six years the organization has participated in municipal and state councils on the issues of women's human rights, the prevention of violence against women and marriage equality (Ciencia Social Alternativa 2017c). Additionally, on their website the SMO presents how they have collaborated with the government in Mérida on a project started in 2008, on the impact of groups working with masculinity and violence in the family (Ciencia Social Alternativa 2017b). This SMO does not appear to have any exchange with UN Women besides through their connection to *OCNF*. The organization is affiliated with other movements, such as the LGBTQ rights movement and indigenous rights movement. It has some presence in the official politics. The organization has both local and national ties to other actors in the anti-femicide movement.

Yucatán Femicida is a civil society organization with the aim to investigate, monitor, communicate and influence public policy related to the “prevention, attention, sanction and elimination of femicide violence” in Yucatán (Yucatán Femicida 2017b). Their website mainly displays the result of a multimedia project with data collected from 2008-2016. The focus of the SMO is legal justice for the victims of femicide through changing legal framework. They state that the penal code in the state has grave deficiencies that should be adjusted and the legal measures of femicide should be standardized (Yucatán Femicida 2017c). In the informative and promotional videos made by *Yucatán Femicida* individual storytelling is used to bring attention to femicide (Yucatán Femicida 2017d). The SMO

¹⁷ ‘Citizens’ Collective for Marriage for all in Yucatán’

¹⁸ ‘All Rights for Everyone’

encourages internet activism and for visitors to their website to tweet at five politicians, one from each political party, and to use the organization's hashtag (Yucatán Femicida 2017c).

The apparent cooperating organizations of the project are *Reflexión y Acción Feminista*, *El Muelle Media*, *Heinrich Böll Stiftung (México, Centroamérica y el Caribe)*, *Kóokay: Ciencia Social Alternativa* and *OCNF Yucatán*. *Reflexión y Acción Feminista* is a feminist collective, an organization with focus on community building based in feminist ideologies. Femicide, violence and harassment are some of their issues (RF 2017). *El Muelle* is a producer of journalistic multimedia projects, which hosts the videos for *Yucatan Femicida* on YouTube (El Muelle Media 2017a, Yucatán Femicida 2017d). *Heinrich Böll Stiftung* is an international foundation and green think tank, with ties to the German Green Party (Heinrich Böll Stiftung 2017). Consequently, the organization has a strong local attachment with support from global justice actors such as the German NGO. They have an offensive strategy to impact their external targets; the politicians in the state and the juridical legislatures. The organization/project is a result of several anti-femicide movement actors coming together.

Indignación is a SMO in Chablekal that promotes and defends human rights in Yucatán from an integrative, pluricultural and gender perspective (Indignación 2017a). They have existed since 1991 (Indignación 2017a, 2017b). Their focus lies on the issues of indigenous rights, femicide, impunity, torture and environmental issues. *Indignación* have participated in the *Yucatán Femicida* project, speaking up about impunity in the state in regards to femicide (El Muelle Media 2017b, Yucatán Femicida 2016). In the period 2011-2015 they arranged 20 activities including public presentations, occupation of public spaces, manifestations and protests (Indignación 2017c). To summarize, the organization is a visible and important actor for the anti-femicide movement in the state. They have cooperation with other internal target of the movement within the state. Just as *Kóokay*, they are also a part of the Mayan/indigenous rights movement.

*Ni Una Más Yucatán*¹⁹ is a young organization located in Mérida and is also known online as *Ni Una Menos* 2015. I do not have enough data to determine whether it is a formal or informal actor in the movement, as has been done with the other organizations described as

¹⁹ 'Not One More' (implicit: femicide)

SMOs. As becomes evident under the aspect of repression and threats to the movement, *Ni Una Más Yucatán* has a significant role in the state and is therefore included in the comparison. The anti-femicide organization uses social media to spread articles and fast information on current femicides in the state (Ni Una Más Yucatán 2017a). They have also hosted manifestations and marches of silence for victims of femicide in the state (Ni Una Más Yucatán 2017b). The organization participates in *La Red de Mujeres de Mérida*²⁰. There *Ni Una Más Yucatán* has connection to *OCNF Yucatán* through the activist Adelaida Sadas (RNDDHM 2015: 1). The actor has existed for at least two years, springing from the part of the anti-femicide movement *Ni Una Menos* that spread from Argentina across Latin America. *Ni Una Mas Yucatán* has a local connection with internal targets of the movement and some national connection, although not very prominent.

5.3.3 Openness and elite allies

When it comes to political participation and connection to formal (national) actors the Yucatán anti-femicide movement does not seem to have very strong ties to Inmujeres. According to Inmujeres' annual report on civil society participation, *Asociación de Universitarias y Académicas de Yucatán* was represented in the social council and *Joven es Yucatán* in the consultative council (Inmujeres 2016), the other two states did not have a representative present in the councils. *Kóokay* on the other hand is evidence of where the formal politics have reached out a hand in questions of violence against women and factors leading to femicide. The Commission on Human Rights (CODHEY) does not announce if they have had contact with civil society organizations in their annual report but has its own action plan on the issue of femicide and women's human rights violations (CODHEY 2016).

5.3.4 Repression

There are some threats of repression in Yucatán. The organization *Ni Una Más Yucatán* received death threats over the phone on 3 October 2015, which resulted in the National Network of Human Rights Defenders to issue a complaint to the governor of Yucatán (RNDDHM 2015: 1). Nancy Walker, *Kóokay*, witnesses that the understanding of the politicians in Yucatán that violence against women belongs to the private sphere, an issue

²⁰ 'The Network of Women in Mérida'

between couples, and that there is a lack of political will to fulfill the requirements of creating databases and evaluations (El Muelle Media 2017b). The movement's perception of hindrances to their cause is consequently the inaction of state representatives.

5.4 Federal District Mexico City

Mexico City has a special status in the Republic as Federal District and borders to the state of Mexico and Puebla. Femicide has kept around the same average between 2007-2014, reporting 3 deaths in 100,000 women, which is close to the national average (Segob, Inmujeres, UN Women 2016). Being the capital, there are many institutions working with women's rights and a closeness to international politics and organizations. The Federal District was governed by PRI in 1946-1997. *Partido de la Revolución Democrática*, PRD²¹, has been in power since 1997.

5.4.1 Local organization

In 2009 there were 2851 registered civil society organizations in the Federal District (Cemefi 2017) which surpasses the activity in both Chihuahua and Yucatán²². The SMOs in the Federal District are generally more professionalized and have a closer bond with international actors and are closer to the national politics, since the federal state is run from the capital. Formal actors such as Inmujeres, CONAVIM and UN Women Mexico have their headquarters in Mexico City.

Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir was formed in 1994 (CDD 2014). It is a SMO connected to *OCNF* which contributes to the documentation of femicide (OCNF 2017a). Its focus is women's and children's human rights, women's sexual and reproductive health, violence against women and politically the organization strives for the decriminalization of abortion in Mexico (CDD 2014a, 2014b). The organization is part of the Latin American network *CDD* which also operates in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Paraguay (CDD 2014d). The network has an affinity group in Spain and an NGO active in Washington DC, USA, *Catholics for Choice* which is the English equivalent to its name

²¹ The Party of the Democratic Revolution

²² However, the population of Mexico City surpasses the other two states by many millions.

(CDD 2014d). *CDD* wrote an evaluation of Mexico, impunity and femicide together with the Mexican Commission on Human Rights in 2012, which they presented before CEDAW (CDD and CMPDDH 2012). The organization has connections to formal actors internationally and key actors in the international community. The organization has its base in Catholic values, an important aspect for the Latin American region, and simultaneously acts for women's right over their bodies and their right to life.

5.4.2 International mobilizing strategy

In 2014 an access group for the civil society was created at UN Women Mexico, consisting of 15 groups. Amongst them were *CDD* (UN Women Mexico 2014). When UN Women reported that they were adding new organizations to the access group in March 2017, *CDD* were no longer stated as part of the group (UN Women Mexico 2017). *CDD* has been an important actor at the international level earlier, now their position might have shifted with the exclusion from the access group.

5.4.3 Elite allies

The anti-femicide movement took its goal to inform the public and raise awareness further in January 2017 when an exhibition at the Museum of Memory and Tolerance, which aims to inform the public about femicide and prevent impunity, was opened in Mexico City in the presence of scholars, activists and artists. Amongst others, representatives from the *OCNF*, UN Women Mexico and *Nuestras Hijas de Regreso a Casa* attended the opening (Museo Memoria y Tolerancia 2017). In 2016 three organizations received an honorary prize for their work against violence against women and girl by the State Commission on Human Rights in the Federal District. Only one of the winners resides in the Federal District, one was a safehouse for women in Zacatecas and the thirds winner was the Independent Commission of Human Rights in Morelos (CDHDF Annual Report 2016: 31). The commission also gave an honorary mention to a youth group in Puebla (ibid). This shows that the anti-femicide organizations have good relations with an important cultural actor. The formal actor (CDHDF) has symbolic interaction with anti-femicide actors.

5.4.4 Repression

According to the UN, the Federal District is among the five state where human rights activists are most vulnerable to threats and arbitrary interferences (UHCHR Mexico 2013: 10). Between 2014-2016 RNDHHM²³ wrote six public letter in protest of slander, death threats, hostile acts towards and arbitrary arrests of female human rights activists in the Federal District (Iniciativa Mesoamericana de Mujeres Defensoras de Derechos Humanos 2017). As human rights activists, actors of the anti-femicide movement in Mexico City have to endure several obstacles in their work. This comes from a varying range of perpetrators and occasionally from the state, as shown by the arbitrary arrests. These constrictions for the movement connects to the fourth aspect of opportunity structures; repression by the state and violent countermovement actors.

5.5 Regional level: Ni Una Menos

The Ni Una Menos-movement is a social mobilization that has spread over Latin America, through social media and public demonstrations. It originated in Argentina in 2015 and connects to the famous slogans ‘Ni una más, ni una menos, vivas nos queremos’.²⁴

The Argentinian movement spread across social media with its hashtags and inspired protests in October 2016 in Chile, Guatemala, Bolivia and Uruguay after the death of Lucía Pérez (BBC Mundo 2016). The manifestation in Mexico took place in Mexico City, by the Angel of Independence (BBC Mundo 2016). Although the most visible action took place in the Federal District, anti-femicide organizations in the other states took part in the protests in their own manner. *Nuestras Hijas de Regreso a Casa* called for a strike in solidarity between Argentina and Mexico, as a protest against femicide, under the hashtag #VivasNosQueremos connected to Ni Una Menos (Nuestros Hijas de Regreso a Casa 2016a, 2016b). *Indignación* used the hashtags #NiUnaMenos #YABASTA²⁵ #Vivasnosqueremos on 19 October 2016 in an action post on their Facebook page (Indignación 2016a) and the following day on their Twitter account (Indignación 2016b). UN Women Mexico issued an official declaration against the increasing violence against women in Latin America after the rape, torture and murder of the young girl (Lucía) in Argentina. The message ended with the slogans “Hagámosla valer”²⁶

²³ The National Network of Human Rights Defenders

²⁴ In this context meaning ‘not one more (femicide), nor one (woman or girl) less, we want to live, to be alive’.

²⁵ ‘Enough’

²⁶ ‘We’ll make it/her count’

and “Ni una menos” (UN Women 2016). Ni Una Menos shows the importance of social media as part of the movement structure, facilitating transnational activism and regional movements. It could be an indicator of a re-emerging social movement or the anti-femicide movement gaining momentum in the political sphere. It draws attention to how femicide can be identified as a regional problem, a Latin American political issue, resulting in solidarity mobilized across borders. I found that Ni Una Menos was recognized in all three states by SMOs.

6. Comparison of political opportunity structures

Summarizing my analysis, I would like to highlight my findings when comparing the cases of Chihuahua, Yucatán and Mexico City. Again, the cases can only to some extent be seen as completely separate or isolated from each other; it must also be acknowledged that the organization's influence each other. Transregional and transnational activism is also a tendency in the globalized world, which is evident by movements within the movement such as Ni Una Menos.

6.1 The relative openness or closure of the institutionalized political system

As presented in the previous chapter I have analyzed the access to dialogue with the political elites in the state, civil society participation and the political structure of the states. The heritage from PRI continues to characterize Mexico as a whole but local politics vary due to the federal state system. All three states have some interaction between the state's political institutions and the civil society. In Chihuahua the anti-femicide organizations that interact with the Commission on Human Rights also have connections to UN Women. Still, impunity pervades all three states. To draw further conclusions on how they differ I would need data on the corruption levels in each state. I have not been able to find reliable sources on corruption and impunity to compare and therefore reserve myself against saying too much about this aspect of the openness of the system.

6.2 The stability or instability of elite alignments that undergird a polity

Corruption, clientelism and patronage is evidently most prominent in Chihuahua, with gang-police alignments. Impunity is one of the biggest struggles for the anti-femicide

movement and part of what the activists themselves have identified. All three states have experienced party political transfer of power since the PRI 71-year reign ended, however the party has returned to power in both Chihuahua and Yucatán.

6.3 The presence of elite allies

The Chihuahuan part of the movement has had a special position due to international attention, which has attracted international actors to support and interact with the anti-femicide movement in Ciudad Juárez and Chihuahua City. This attention is due to the severity of femicides in the state. The Yucatán movement has some collaborative projects with the government on issues of violence against women. In all three cases it appears that there are official institutions, formal actors, working with femicide that at times consult the SMOs. We see that the anti-femicide movement in Mexico City has a geographical closeness to many formal actors and external targets. My study shows that the organizations in Mexico seem to have alliances with these actors similar to the anti-femicide organizations in the other two states and I do not have enough data to support that the geographical closeness to women's rights NGOs and national gender policy authorities gives them an advantage or a stronger bond to elite allies. Whether IGOs and international human rights organizations can be seen as external or internal target is a complex line to draw. Actors such as UN Women are connected to the state by international agreements, at the same time as it is supposed to surveil the state in cooperation with its civil society representatives on women's rights issues. To view these actors as elite allies the same way as political parties are needs to be discussed further, a discussion that reaches beyond this thesis. It is clear that the existence of institutions such as Inmujeres and CONAVIM are important to the politics of femicide, since they bring national attention to the movement's cause, however, the implementation effectiveness can be questioned. Therefore, the presence of elite allies must be considered in relation to both the political system and elite alignments, since the quality of the mechanisms working against femicide are more relevant than the quantity of the same.

6.4 The state's capacity and propensity for repression

In all three states anti-femicide activist live under the threat of political and gendered violence. The threat of violence towards human rights activists has an extra layer in the

anti-femicide movement. Not only are they subject to threats of violence when defending human rights, but women active in this particular movement are under the threat of becoming victims to the crime they are protesting. A parallel can be drawn to black protesters' vulnerability before the police in the Black Lives Matter-movement. Police brutality and the murder of black people in America was the reason protesters came together and at the same time they were put in danger of that same violence while attending protests, guarded by the police. In Mexico, a pattern of who is behind these hostile acts and murders of human rights activists is not always clear but it is evident that anti-femicide activists experience political counteraction as well as gendered violence. In my study I have gathered that the state is more prone to repressive measures in Chihuahua and the Federal District.

6.5 Mobilizing structures

I have identified that the mobilizing structure is similar between the three states regarding internal targets. The anti-femicide movement operated through networks, and have both national and regional connections. On the other hand they interact with varying external allies. In Chihuahua the broad problem of disappeared people connects to the search for lost or murdered daughters. In Yucatán the Mayan movement and indigenous rights are prominent and there is connection to the LGBTQ-movement. In Mexico City the largest organization is progressive Catholic, concerned with women's reproductive rights. The politicizing strategy of the issue of femicide also looks different across the three cases. Organizations vary in strategy, from mother activism in the North, to preventive programmes in the East and manifestations catching the attention of the media in the capital. Ultimately, there is a struggle for legal justice in all three states. A majority of organizations have the characters of an SMO which is due to my choice of material and because SMOs are easily found online.

7. Conclusions

- Can subnational political opportunities explain the outcome of higher or lower femicide rates in the states?

It is evident that the anti-femicide movement faces both similar problems, such as impunity, and on the other hand experiences repression asymmetrically. To draw a direct line between

movement activity and femicide rates as the only explanatory variable is not sustainable (mainly due to the restrictions of my study discussed in the material-section). However, aspects such as repression and openness of the system can begin to explain why the anti-femicide movement does not reach its goal. In Chihuahua, where femicide rates are highest, the gang-related violence and the clashes between military and cartels is a significant factor that does not exist in the other states. It should be taken into account regarding both femicide and the anti-femicide movement's success or lack thereof. What I have observed is that the subnational political opportunity structures affect the movement's possibilities which leads to subnational variation for the movement. The mobilizing structure of the movement is similar in the three cases but their context differs and this hindrance can be pointed out as one of the explanations for varying femicide rates.

My contribution has been to research variation on subnational level in the Mexican case of femicide, where international relations of social movements and national politics intertwine. For future research I suggest examining the connection between femicide and politicicide, and how this affects social movements. Further, to study Ni Una Menos as the single object, as a transnational movement, could contribute to understand the contemporary women's rights movement in Latin America and its struggles.

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