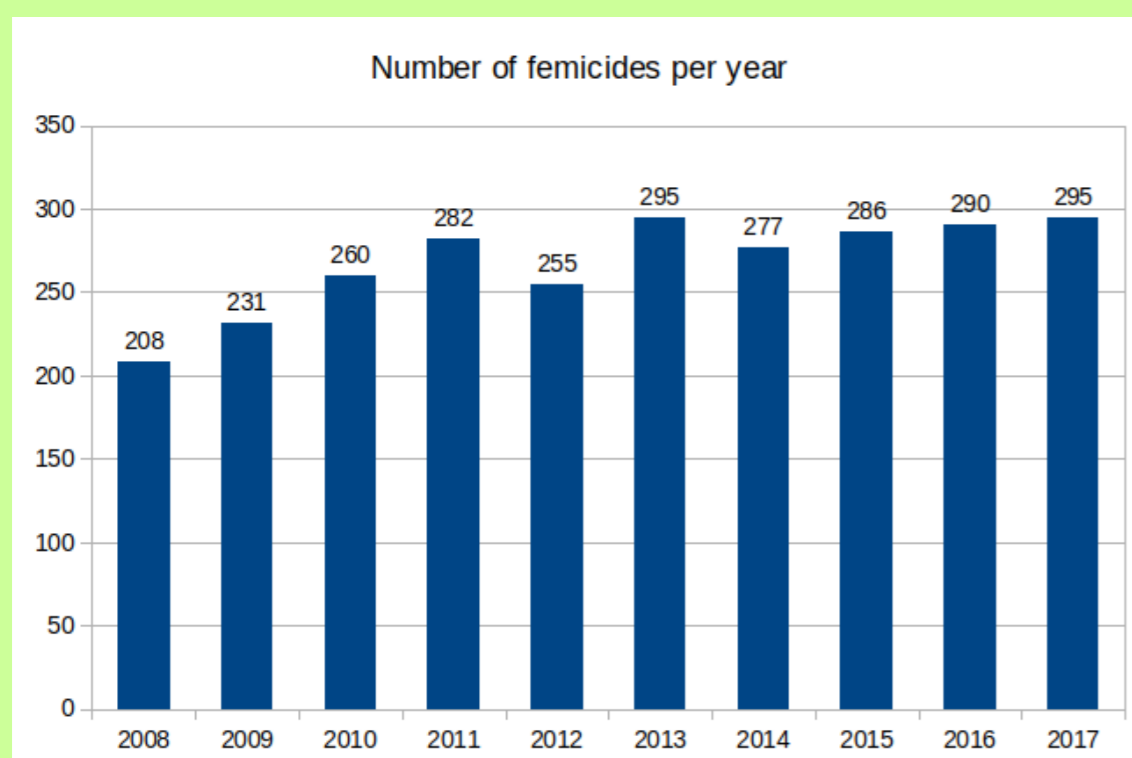


Violence Against Women in Argentina: How does it relate to the economic system?

Facts and Definitions

Violence Against Women (VAW) in Argentina:

- Femicides/feminicides
 - The murder of women because they are women in a context of structural inequality and impunity/inactivity by the state (see Ciudad Juárez) (Lagarde 2006)
- Law against femicide since 2012



Source: Casa del Encuentro 2018

Women's Economic Situation:

- Gender Pay Gap: 27.6% (2015)
- Women in informal employment: 39% (2017)
- 92% of women work in the service sector (2017)
- In Buenos Aires: 13% of women are domestic workers, 39% of those are migrants (2014)
- 76% of unpaid domestic labor is carried out by women (2013)

Sources: D'Alessandro 2016, World Bank 2017, Ministerio de Hacienda 2016, INDEC 2013

Research Question and Starting Point

Starting points:

- Femicides as „main scandal resulting from the crisis in the region“ (True 2012)
- Movement „Ni Una Menos“
 - Against violence, especially femicides
 - Active since 2015 with massive mobilizations
 - Latest slogan: „We want to be alive, free and without debt“
 - Strike as a tool, linking the question of work and violence
- Economic crisis, structural adjustment: context of a crisis of social reproduction (Vogel 2013)
- Interdisciplinary Approach

Research question:

How do women in the Argentinean women's movement understand the relationship between the economic system and VAW?

Method and Goal:

Generate theses on a (sometimes implicit) theory with guided expert interviews/literature research, compare those to existing theory/test hypotheses.

Theoretical Background

Theoretical considerations:

- Instrumental violence
 - used as a means to control and enforce certain behaviors (e.g. Hughes et al. 2015; they also cite empirical evidence)
- Expressive violence
 - used to express frustration, e.g. with the erosion of the male-breadwinner-model (e.g. Kabeer 2015)
 - Empirical evidence (MacMillan/Gartner 1999)
- Violence in bargaining settings
 - Violence is only accepted when the outside option (leaving) is too costly
 - Empirical evidence from Uruguay (Munyo/Rossi 2015)
- Violence as being rooted in the functioning of capitalism
 - Social relations shape the conditions of possibilities/expectations/emotions that lead to violence (e.g. Smith 1998)
 - Violence secures specific gender and class relations (e.g. v. Werlhof 1977)
 - Violence as rooted in the history of colonialism as a specific mode of capitalism (e.g. Segato 2016)
 - Violence as mechanism in the continued process of so called primitive accumulation (e.g. Federici 2012)

Qualitative Interviews and Literature from the Movement

Some exemplary material from field research, conducted in February and March 2018 in Buenos Aires:

Document 8M 2018: „We strike because we say stop to femicides and travesticides [the murder of trans persons], and to the economic and state violence that sustain them.“

Candelaria Botto (interview): „The majority of women are victims of economic violence, because they all participate in a social and economic system that does not allow them to have the same opportunities or conditions as men, leaving them in a situation of greater vulnerability.“

Andrea D'Atri (interview): „We say femicide is the ultimate link in a long chain of violences. [...] Capitalism needs *machista* culture to reproduce and therefore legitimizes this violence that sometimes culminates in a femicide, when a man thinks he is the owner of a woman's life.“

Theses derived from Field Research

1. VAW takes **multiple forms** including economic violence. These forms are linked with each other (chains, network). They strengthen and sustain each other.
2. **Economic inequality** leaves women in a more vulnerable situation and stops them from escaping violent situations.
3. Austerity policies affect the possibilities of women to escape violent situations. **Austerity** is therefore **in itself violence**.
4. Supposed **ownership over women's bodies** is expressed in acts of VAW.
5. VAW is a mechanism that ensures the working of the **capitalist mode of production and reproduction**.

Literature

D'Alessandro, Mercedes (2016), *Economía feminista*. Buenos Aires: Penguin Random House.
Federici, Silvia (2012), *Caliban und die Hexe*. Wien: Mandelbaum Verlag.
Hughes, Christine, Bolis, Maria, Fries, Rebecca, Finigan, Stephanie (2015), „Women's economic inequality and domestic violence: exploring the links and empowering women“, *Gender & Development* 23:2, 279-297.
Kabber, Naila (2015), „Gender, poverty, and inequality: a brief history of feminist contributions in the field of international development“, *Gender & Development* 23:2, 189-205.
MacMillan, Ross, Gärtner, Rosemary (1999), „When She Brings Home the Bacon: Labor-force Participation and the Risk of Spousal Violence against Women“, *Journal of Marriage and Family* 61:4, 947-958.
Munyo, Ignacio, Rossi, Martín (2015), „The Effects of Real Exchange Rate Fluctuations on the Gender Wage Gap and Domestic Violence in Uruguay“, IDB Working Paper Series N. IDB_WP-618.
Segato, Rita (2016), *La guerra contra las mujeres*. Madrid: Traficantes de sueños.
Smith, Dorothy (1998), *Der aktive Text. Eine Soziologie für Frauen*. Hamburg: Argument Verlag.
True, Jacqui (2012), *The Political Economy of Violence Against Women*. New York: Oxford University Press.
Vogel, Lise (2013), *Marxism and the Oppression of Women: Towards a Unitary Theory*. Chicago: Haymarket Books.
von Werlhof, Claudia (1977), „Sexualität und Ökonomie“, in: Kerscher, Ignatz (Hg.), *Konfliktfeld Sexualität*. Neuwied/Darmstadt: Luchterhand.

Next steps?

- Compare to theoretical and empirical literature: Are there new theoretical contributions? Is there empirical evidence in similar cases?
- Operationalization of (some of the) theses to test empirically.
- But: Problem of data availability. Search for appropriate method.

Lilly Schön
lilly.schoen@
htw-berlin.de