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*Artículos Científicos*

## **De viva voz: estudio fenomenológico con agresores primarios de violencia de pareja o conyugal**

*In a Lively Voice: Phenomenological Study with Primary Aggressors of Partner or  
Spousal Violence*

*Voz ao vivo: estudo fenomenológico com agressores primários de violência por  
parceiro ou cônjuge*

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## Resumen

La violencia de género en México es alta. De acuerdo con el Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía [Inegi] (22 de noviembre del 2018), 19.1 millones de mujeres adultas mayores de 15 años han enfrentado violencia conyugal o de pareja. La agresión se genera frecuentemente en escenarios privados: por lo vulnerable que se encuentra la mujer ahí. A sabiendas de que el evento de intimidad y agresión es difícil de investigar, en este estudio se entrevistó a 32 participantes (agresores primarios de la pareja) que requerían ser evaluados psicológicamente en los Centros de Atención de la Casa de la Mujer de los municipios de Atizapán y Ecatepec, Estado de México, México. El objetivo fue conocer las causas a través de la propia voz de los agresores primarios, y así obtener una visión objetiva y amplia de los disparadores que producen el fenómeno social de violencia conyugal. Para ello se recurrió a dos tipos de entrevista. La primera fue cerrada y bajo la guía del *Manual de Diagnóstico y Estadístico de Trastornos Mentales [DSM-5]*, por sus siglas en inglés] (American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2013), con el diagnóstico “Relación conflictiva con el cónyuge o la pareja”; y la segunda fue una entrevista semiestructurada para maltratadores de género. El método utilizado fue el análisis de datos de tipo mixto (cuantitativo y cualitativo) para triangular información y entender el qué y el cómo de la agresión de género. Como parte de los resultados, se encontró que la concepción devaluada de la mujer se ve reflejada en el rechazo constante a las conductas positivas de la pareja (84 %), las conductas de la pareja para obtener un valor y ejercer derechos desencadenan en conflictos difíciles de resolver (72 %), porque el agresor está en la idea de conservar su lugar jerárquico de poder y de protección social al ser débil (física y mentalmente), por lo que reconoce la asunción de responsabilidad (66 %). Esta ambivalencia entre deseo y acción, “querer y no poder”, produce tristeza, apatía o rabia crónicas hacia la pareja. Por lo que se recomienda que el agresor primario de la pareja ingrese a pláticas o psicoterapia, donde obtenga justicia terapéutica para que reaprenda cómo relacionarse con su pareja o cónyuge y finalmente cambie sus ideas y rompa con el estereotipo social de machismo.

**Palabras claves:** agresividad, ciencias sociales, violencia conyugal.

## Abstract



Gender violence in Mexico is high. According to the Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía [Inegi] (November 22, 2018), 19.1 million adult women over age 15 have faced conjugal o couple violence. Aggression is frequently in private settings because of how vulnerable women are there. Knowing that the intimacy and aggression event is difficult to investigate, 32 participants (primary aggressors of the couple) who required to be evaluated psychologically in the care centers of the Casa de la Mujer in the municipalities of Atizapán and Ecatepec, Estado de México, Mexico, were interviewed. The objective was to obtain an objective and broad vision of the social phenomenon of conjugal violence with the loud voice of the primary aggressors. The objective was to know the causes through the voice of the primary aggressors, and thus obtain an objective and broad vision of the triggers that produce the social phenomenon of conjugal violence. For this, two types of interviews were used. The first one was closed and under the guidance of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders [DSM-5]* (American Psychiatric Association, 2013), with the diagnosis "Conflictive relationship with spouse or partner"; and the second was a semi-structured interview for gender abusers. The method used was the analysis of mixed-type data (quantitative and qualitative) to triangulate information and understand the what and how of gender aggression. As part of the results, it was found that the devalued conception of women is reflected in the constant rejection of the positive behaviors of the couple (84%), the couple's behaviors to obtain value and exercise rights trigger in difficult conflicts to resolve (72%), because the aggressor is in the idea of preserving his hierarchical place of power and social protection, so he recognizes the assumption of responsibility (66%). This ambivalence between desire and action, "wanting and not being able", produces chronic sadness, apathy or anger towards the couple. Therefore, it is recommended that the couple's primary aggressor enter into talks or psychotherapy, where he obtains therapeutic justice so that he can re-learn how to interact with his partner or spouse and finally change his ideas and break with the social stereotype of *machismo*.

**Keywords:** aggression, social sciences, spousal violence.

## Resumo



A violência de gênero no México é alta. De acordo com o Instituto Nacional de Estatística e Geografía [Inegi] (22 de novembro de 2018), 19,1 milhões de mulheres adultas com mais de 15 anos enfrentaram violência conjugal ou conjugal. A agressão é frequentemente gerada em ambientes privados: por causa da vulnerabilidade das mulheres. Sabendo que o evento de intimidade e agressão é difícil de investigar, neste estudo foram entrevistados 32 participantes (agressores primários do casal) que precisavam ser avaliados psicologicamente nos Centros de Atendimento da Casa das Mulheres dos municípios de Atizapán e Ecatepec, Estado do México, México. O objetivo era conhecer as causas pela voz dos agressores primários e, assim, obter uma visão ampla e objetiva dos gatilhos que produzem o fenômeno social da violência conjugal. Para isso, foram utilizados dois tipos de entrevistas. O primeiro foi encerrado e sob a orientação do Manual Diagnóstico e Estatístico de Transtornos Mentais [DSM-5] (Associação Americana de Psiquiatria [APA], 2013), com o diagnóstico "Relação conflitante com o cônjuge ou casal"; e o segundo foi uma entrevista semiestruturada para abusadores de gênero. O método utilizado foi a análise de dados do tipo misto (quantitativa e qualitativa) para triangular informações e entender o que e como da agressão de gênero. Como parte dos resultados, verificou-se que a concepção desvalorizada da mulher se reflete na constante rejeição do comportamento positivo do casal (84%), os comportamentos do casal para obter valor e exercer direitos desencadeiam conflitos difíceis resolver (72%), porque o agressor tem a idéia de preservar seu lugar hierárquico de poder e proteção social por ser fraco (físico e mentalmente), e assim reconhece a assunção de responsabilidade (66%). Essa ambivalência entre desejo e ação, "querer e não poder", produz tristeza crônica, apatia ou raiva em relação ao casal. Portanto, recomenda-se que o agressor primário do casal entre em conversas ou psicoterapia, onde obtém justiça terapêutica para que ele possa reaprender a interagir com seu parceiro ou cônjuge e, finalmente, mudar suas idéias e romper com o estereótipo social do machismo.

**Palavras-chave:** agressividade, ciências sociais, violência conjugal.

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## Introduction



This is a mixed quantitative and qualitative investigation to fully understand the social phenomenon of gender violence from the perspective of the actors (primary aggressors of gender violence) and understand how violence develops in the relationship between the couple from the story of the aggressor

The quantitative descriptive analysis was carried out in three stages: 1) the socioeconomic characteristics of the sample; 2) the frequency and percentage of the main symptoms of the diagnosis “Conflictive relationship with the spouse or partner”, belonging to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) of the American Psychiatric Association (2013), and 3) the frequency and percentage of the characteristics of the psychosocial area and episodes of abuse stipulated in the semi-structured interview for gender abusers with multiple choice response (Arce and Fariña, unpublished manuscript).

The qualitative analysis, of phenomenological type and ethnomethodological approach, based on the recordings of the interviews, was carried out to analyze the content of the aggression against the couple, expressed from the story made by perpetrators (primary aggressors in gender violence), and to understand the phenomenon of gender-based violence of the actors, taking into account the circumstantial aspects. The mixed analysis of triangulation of information will shed light on the what and how of this social phenomenon so prevalent in Mexico.

In Mexico, most gender violence is caused by the couple. According to the National Institute of Statistics and Geography [Inegi] (November 22, 2018), 19.1 million adult women over the age of 15 have faced conjugal or couple violence, equivalent to 64.0% of the surveys carried out. The cases registered are severe and very severe violence, according to these statistics disseminated by the Inegi (November 22, 2018) regarding the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (November 25). So the couple is considered as the primary aggressor because of the level of vulnerability that the woman manifests in that situation. Likewise, the couple occupies second place as a cause of femicide, according to the results of the National Survey on the Dynamics of Household Relationships (Endireh) (Inegi, 2016).

Machismo and misogynist rooted in Mexico in a cultural way violate all the rights of women to the extreme of endangering their integrity and causing their death. Discrimination based on gender, impunity, social status, age, ethnicity and criminality are also aspects to consider.

This investigation is based on the last reform of April 13, 2018 to the General Law of Access of Women to a Life Free of Violence, which, in its article 1, on the letter says:

Prevent, punish and eradicate violence against women, as well as the principles and modalities to guarantee their access to a life free of violence that favors their development and well-being in accordance with the principles of equality and non-discrimination (H. Consejo de la Unión, 13 de abril del 2018, p. 1).

In addition, in its article 5, subsection V, it defines the modalities of violence as “the forms, manifestations or areas of occurrence in which violence against women occurs” (H. Council of the Union, April 13, 2018 , p. 2). This is to inform the different manifestations and the frequency with which women live them.

Regarding the interest of applying comprehensive programs for aggressors, the director of the National Institute of Women (Inmujeres), Nadine Gassman, during a presentation before the media in March 2019, spoke about the problem and the eminent need to eradicate the problem: on the one hand, protecting women from abuse and, on the other, changing the way of thinking of the Mexican, including programs to work masculinity (Valle, 2019). Today, more than ever, it is time to provide scientifically proven and executed treatment alternatives for several years in other Mexican-like societies and with acceptable success rates, such as the Galicia Program for the Reeducation of Gender Aggressors (Arce, Fariña, Vázquez, Novo y Seijo, 2015).

### **Background to the problem, gender violence and femicide in Mexico**

Salvatierra (2007) mentions that femicide is as old as patriarchy. Femicide is executed by men to ensure male dominance. These practices have been configured due to social and political arrangements in cultures and in different periods.

The issue emerged against criminals of the Second War in the East, which brought to light the massacre of civilians, mostly women harassed and murdered with cruelty during the Japanese occupation in southern China in 1937. Although the feminist complaint in These events included the mass rapes of girls and young women in Bangladesh (1971) and the killing of university students in Montreal. After this panorama, Diana Russell (cited in Romero, 2014) defines feminicides as “the crimes committed against women for the simple fact of being so” (para. 22).

As for Mexico, the evidences and the registry on femicide have been carried out subsequently since 1993, when this phenomenon emerged in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, as a recurring problem. The information also indicates geographical displacements and regional features of the phenomenon, which would point towards the existence of social, cultural, normative contexts, favoring violence against women in their most aggressive modalities. The greater outrage

to which these events are associated points to the authorities responsible for prosecuting and punishing these crimes, whose action accuses in most cases not only omission, but even lack of sensitivity and contempt (Romero, 2014).

In the case of the State of Mexico, the data contained in the previous inquiries allow us to affirm that little more than half of the victims (51%) are concentrated in the age range that goes from 16 to 40 years, so This is the population sector with the highest risk. It is therefore a wide age range that includes women in one of their most social and sexually active stages. The rest of the victims (the other half) are distributed as follows: 15% are women aged 0 to 15 years, and 34% are 40 years old or older. With regard to their marital status, the majority of women killed are listed, by statements of relatives, friends and witnesses, within some type of relationship, whether formal or informal (married, divorced, separated or in free Union). In this situation is 55% of the victims. While women reported simply as single cover 28% of the ministerial records reviewed. Of the rest of the victims, no information is indicated in this regard. It should be noted that 58% of women who have been subjected to murderous violence have children, while 27% have no offspring. Of those women known to have children, 93% had one to four children. Of this universe, 57% had one to two children, while 33% had three to four children, as reported. The rest (10%) more than four children (Salvatierra, 2007).

There are several sources that yield this type of figures, so it is not entirely possible to present accurate data. The data collected will be in accordance with the objectives of the different investigations carried out, which are derived from public institutions in social services, health, police, justice system, etc., which account for the cases attended with fundamentally administrative purposes, but which can be used for statistical purposes (Ramírez and Echarri, 2010).

There is another source of systematically collected data: the book *Ni una más. Femicide in Mexico hurts*, from the journalist Frida Guerrero (2018), who reports the femicide of 1559 women only in 2016: women “highlighted, burned, raped, shot to death, abandoned in: canals, rivers, land, roads. Missing, stripped, denigrated, forgotten, disqualified” (Guerrera, 2018, p. 21)

Likewise, the journalist Guerrero (2018) comments that it is a phenomenon not taken at its level of importance by the authorities and society. And estimate the following:

Only 18.79% of feminicides in the country were "investigated"; 1155 of these have neither responsible nor detained; 76 alleged culprits are fugitives and 35 committed suicide after killing their partners or ex-partners about the murdered women (Guerra, 2018 pp. 22).

On the other hand, we have the records of government institutions. The Endireh (Inegi, 2003, 2006, 2011, 2016) is a representative source on violence against women; collects data from public and academic institutions, international organizations and civil society, where different objectives and perspectives are added, which provides a panoramic view of the social problem and its connotations. The objective was to survey women over 15 who were single “without a partner” (widows, divorced and separated) and married “with a partner” (union with one or more couples). Therefore, all women are included regardless of their recognized social status.

The most recent survey was conducted with a sample of 142,363 homes, and was built from October 3 to November 18, 2016, with a response rate of 85.7%, and a national geographic coverage in urban and rural areas. The survey indicates that the group to be studied are women assaulted by their partners for emotional, physical and sexual violence in the last 12 months.

There, couple violence occurred in 43.9%, one of the highest percentages, after having suffered violence throughout life, which is 66.1%. The worrying thing is that the main aggressor is the woman's partner because of the closeness and dominion that is culturally exercised. Emotional aggression is up with 40.1%, followed by economic or economic with 20.9%, physical aggression with 17.9% and sexual assault with 6.5%.

### **International boost for the treatment of femicide in Mexico**

The United Nations (UN) committee has urged the Government of Mexico to make it a priority issue to properly investigate and prosecute the perpetrators of murders against women. Recommendations also include the definition of femicide as a crime in all Mexican states. In addition, the implementation of policies to mitigate trafficking in women and girls for sexual exploitation and forced labor is advised. The international organization indicates that campaigns should be implemented to sensitize women themselves about their rights and the importance of denouncing any gender violence.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO):

What is the best method to end femicide? Strengthen the surveillance and detection of femicide and violence by the couple.

It is necessary to intensify the collection and analysis of mortality data, disaggregate these data by sex and, in the case of murder, ensure documentation of the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator. (...)





Measures should also be taken to develop and strengthen research methods that improve knowledge of the social context of femicide, including gender inequalities (OPS, 2013, p. 4).

International institutions and organizations are on alert and suggest to Mexico different alternatives to femicide, as it is the last step in the aggression of gender violence. As it has been seen, it is an event that occurs daily and often goes unpunished because of the little control that exists, which produces a vicious circle: on the one hand, there are few complaints of gender violence and, on the other, when there are, few punishments. This causes the population to be indifferent to the situation or find it as something everyday.

Precisely, knowing that femicide is an event with high frequency in Mexico, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (Cedaw) has asked that this nation “take urgent measures” to prevent violent deaths, homicides and forced disappearances of women (Martínez, August 3, 2018). In fact, Mexico is among the first five countries in Latin America with more femicides. The executive coordinator of the National Citizen Observatory of Femicide, who collaborates with UN Women, María de la Luz Estrada, comments on the matter: “The violence we live from daily discrimination you have there or domestic violence that the authority could not prevent, in that there may be more control” (Martínez, 3 de agosto de 2018, párr. 7).

### **The accepted and intimate vulnerability**

There are different types of femicide - because, although the general premise does not change, namely, for reasons of gender, the circumstances in which these crimes occur change from modus operandi. Thus, taking into account the research of Julia Monárrez (2009, cited in Olamendi, 2016) in Ciudad Juárez, and other studies on the phenomenon of violence against women, specifically its most extreme form as violence, femicide, have been cataloged 11 modalities. And among them this study has selected one: The vulnerability accepted intimately.

It is the death of a woman committed by a man with whom the victim had or had an intimate relationship or relationship: husband, ex-husband, partner, boyfriend, ex-boyfriend or lover. This relationship was accepted at some time or permission was given to be in relationship (Olamendi, 2010, p. 35).

In this sense, crimes of femicide are clearly crimes of power, that is, crimes whose double function is, in this model, simultaneously, the retention or maintenance and reproduction of power (Segato, 2006).

Femicide is not understood as an isolated and closed fact in itself. They are traditional social constructions through which men and women interact and function as a detonator that would largely explain the increase in violence against women. In this way, feminicides, and the violence that accompanies them, are not only the expression of a crisis (social, economic or values), but a response to the process of construction of women as subjects (Rodríguez, 2011).

Femicide is a phenomenon inserted in a particular social scenario, to which the alteration of masculine values and norms is added by the work that women perform on their subjectivity, which allows them to become subjects of desire, with relationships, and consciousness, as well as in engines of integration of the "I" and the world.

It is the result of a masculinity disrupted by the constant consolidation of women's work on themselves, seeking to be subject to cease to be an object.

Murderous violence is a way in which the offender denies the subjectivity of his victim, reifying him to reaffirm his own. Somehow, in the case of femicides, this shows that in action where a man kills a woman, he denies something of her and affirms something of him. (Moscovici, 2002).

### **The profile of the primary victimizer / aggressor of the couple or spouse**

As you can see, there are many studies on victims and the offender is considered the opportunist who abuses the conditions to exercise that domain.

The perpetrator (primary aggressor) is considered a criminal who exercises his dominion over his partner without apparent cause and has been typified many times as a mental patient who does not control his aggressive impulses against the female figure.

It is known that the aggressive instinct has a survival character not only in animals, but also in the human being, but the latter needs to be managed for social adaptation. So, when aggression is not handled, it is considered a pathology, and is stipulated in the DSM-5 within human relationship disorders. Consequently, violent behaviors in animals are not considered negative, but they are negative in humans, although it will be to preserve their identity, social status, economic level or life. For being forms of expression not accepted by society and is objectionable and most of the time condemnable (APA, 2013).

Violence is associated with physical (deformed) or mental (psycho) aspects that are not acceptable to society. The dynamics frequently expressed in couples arises from an expression of aggression coupled with an expression of regret and amendment of the damage caused. What the

violator intends with it is to reconcile with the victim and with society. Then, the perpetrator presents feelings of guilt and self-criticism, which make him act in such a way. At other times he uses self-righteousness, rationalization to justify his aggressiveness against the victim. Because they are aware that their aggressive behavior is bad and socially punished (Espada y Torres, 1996).

Several studies have shown that the violent behavior of the primary aggressors is frequently learned because they have lived in their own flesh the actions of other aggressors or that they have seen the aggressive relationship in pairs, all under the mantle of impunity. It is a double message: aggressive behavior in the private context (home, school, even work) is sometimes censored but not punished, and on other occasions it is even rewarded, because the status of power of the perpetrator is preserved (Sword and Torres, 1996; López, 2004).

Within the intimate or family life a system of power and hierarchy is created that is respected by the dynamics of the members due to beliefs and lifestyles that make the family operate (Espada y Torres, 1996; López, 2004 ).

Aggressive family dynamics against women are generated by inequality (less physical strength, economic dependence, lower academic level, less social relationships, less family support, etc.), which makes women retain their subordinate role within of the family, manifesting behaviors of tolerance, fear and sacrifice in the face of bad treatment for the family to continue operating. These permissive behaviors make the primary aggressor continue with his aggressive behavior and consider it part of his relationship with his partner, and when control leaves his domain he exercises more control so as not to lose the pre-established dynamics. This is when the aggression begins to escalate and may even reach femicide (López, 2010).

### **Legal typification of femicide in Mexico**

In Mexico, Article 325 of the Mexican Federal Criminal Code (Official Gazette of the Federation [DOF], April 12, 2019) provides the following:

He commits the crime of femicide who deprives a woman of life for reasons of gender. Gender reasons are considered to exist when any of the following circumstances occur:

- I. The victim shows signs of sexual violence of any kind.

II. The victim has been inflicted with infamous or degrading injuries or mutilations, before or after the deprivation of life or acts of necrophilia.

III. There is a history or data of any type of violence in the family, work or school environment of the active subject against the victim.

IV. There has been a sentimental, affective or trust relationship between the asset and the victim.

V. There are data that establish that there were threats related to the crime, harassment or injuries of the active subject against the victim.

VI. The victim has been held incommunicado, whatever the time prior to the deprivation of life.

VII. The victim's body is exposed or displayed in a public place.

Whoever commits the crime of femicide will be imposed from forty to sixty years in prison and from five hundred to a thousand days fine. In addition to the sanctions described in this article, the active subject will lose all rights in relation to the victim, including those of inheritance.

In the event that femicide is not accredited, the rules of homicide will apply.

The public servant who delays or obstructs maliciously or through negligence the prosecution or administration of justice shall be imposed a prison sentence of three to eight years and five hundred to one thousand five hundred days fine, in addition he will be dismissed and disabled from three to ten years to perform another public employment, position or commission.

According to the National Citizen Observatory of Femicide [OCNF] (2014), the analysis of its problem and its conceptualization originate from a sociological-anthropological perspective; In Mexico, progress was made towards a legal perspective that allowed it to reach its classification in the criminal field. Experts point out that femicide derives from hatred related to the victim's gender, which is evidenced by the mutilation of the bodies, with signs of sexual rape or torture in them and with the fact of how they try to hide them in land or canals.

Although great progress has been made in Mexico with respect to the adoption of international standards and specific laws for the protection of women's rights in domestic legislation, it remains a pending issue given the high rates of violence against them.

There are actions in the legal framework carried out by Inmujeres. For example, in October 2018 it publishes the creation of the “Gender Violence Against Women Alert” program, a mechanism for the protection of human rights supported by the General Law of Access of Women to a Life Free of Violence generated in 2009 and its latest update in 2018. which contains a set of emergency government actions to address and eradicate feminicidal violence or the existence of a comparative grievance that prevents the full exercise of women's human rights.

The Inegi, through the Endireh, carried out from 2003 to 2016, realizes that the highest incidence of gender aggression is found in households. And to reduce the problem, create the Self-Care Guide for your emotional security (Endireh, 2016), which implies a set of actions intended to control or mitigate internal or external factors that may eventually compromise your health and safety.

### **Psychological and social implications on the phenomenon of femicide**

Russell and Radford (2006) they consider misogyny, the sense of gender superiority and the conception of women as possession as the variables that are transmitted culturally and that favor the violence of men towards women.

According to Arce and Fariña (2010), gender offenders are defined by certain specific socio-legal characteristics, namely:

- They are primary.
- They have committed crimes against people in the private sphere.
- Aggressions are derived from the exercise of power associated with the male gender.
- The violence exercised can be of many different types (physical, psychic, sexual, threats, coercion, deprivation of liberty).
- Violence does not have to be present in other areas.
- They are characterized by a high probability of reprisals (continued violence) and relapse.
- A certain dual pathology index is expected, that is, the combination of gender-based violence with other pathologies such as alcoholism, drug dependence, gambling, damage to neuro-psychological functions or psychopathology.

Bejarano (2014), In his article on "Femicide is only the tip of the iceberg", he mentions that in carrying out this study he combined qualitative and quantitative methods, and resumed some interviews with victims, as well as results of focus groups with experts, to study the particularities

of Situation of violence against women in the northwestern part of Mexico, the general problem of feminic violence, with emphasis on two aspects: 1) manifestations of violence in multiple and continuous ways in the lives of women and 2) progress in the definition of feminicide as an autonomous crime and obstacles in the access to justice for victims, as part of the institutional violence that allows the existence of the phenomenon. This study concludes that feminicide is only the tip of the iceberg, as anticipated in its title: violence against women must be addressed in an integral way, because under it a mortar of violence that prevents their full exercise of rights.

Castañeda, Ravelo and Pérez (2013), on the other hand, expose the constitution of the organizations of mothers of murdered and disappeared women in the fight for justice in Ciudad Juárez and of the Feminicide and Gender Violence Hearing, which has been formed within the framework of the Permanent Peoples' Court, emphasizing the importance of addressing gender-based violence against women in all its expressions, since it is not about “one more social group”, but about half of the national population that Therefore, it is both a specific group that receives particular forms of abuse and cruelty.

The impunity that marks this case responds to a social context that tolerates and reproduces violence against women, maintaining forms of discrimination based not only on gender, but also on ethnic and class origin, the absence of a real commitment on the part of the Mexican State for 17 years, to investigate, punish and offer an effective repair of the damage allows the creation of a context of impunity (Macleod *et al.*, 2012, citado en Castañeda *et al.*, 2013, p. 30).

### Research questions

- Will the narrative of the primary aggressors show the triggers that will help lead conversations or psychotherapeutic treatments?
- Is it possible that the talks or treatments contain the elements that modify concepts and behaviors to reduce aggression towards the female gender?

### Material

The scientific methods to evaluate the primary aggressor of gender violence in Mexico are not very usual. There are structured and semi-structured interviews to evaluate this type of relationship with European or American populations, which show levels of validity and reliability.



The evaluations are usually carried out individually for each of the members of the couple, and a personal diagnosis of interpersonal relationship problems is obtained until the conflict with the couple is reached, because this is considered as a result of their social maladjustment.

One of the instruments that evaluates the chronic couple conflict is the Marital Satisfaction Inventory (MSI-R), prepared by Whisman, Snyder and Beach (2009), which describes the level of chronicity of the condition and the areas where there is a greater conflict to be treated in couples therapy. The instrument is adapted and standardized for the Spanish, English and German speaking population.

Another instrument is the MSI-B, which can be self-applicable and is available from Western Psychological Services. It was prepared with a sample from the United States and two German samples (Klatt, Hahlweg, Job and Foran, unpublished manuscript). Its application and diagnosis is simple; detects how the relationship between the couple and the level of pathology of each of its members.

Both instruments indicate that they are complemented with an integral diagnosis because the conflict of couple is considered as a symptom of social behavioral pathology.

Due to the subtleness of the research and the complexity of the topic to be studied, it was decided to have a mixed analysis (quantitative and qualitative) to triangulate the information and have a complete vision of the phenomenon. Thus, to be able to obtain a diagnosis and a vision of the participant (primary aggressor of gender violence) in relation to their relationship.

1) The first interview was structured, through DSM-5, using the diagnosis “Conflictive relationship with spouse or partner”.

Diagnostic manuals such as DSM-5 contain the V code, which refers to psychosocial problems that are influencing the mental health of the patient. Among these problems is the conflicting description with the spouse or partner, which evaluates the following factors: 1) behavioral problems (difficulties in resolving conflicts, abandonment, emotional distancing and excessive intrusion), 2) cognitive problems (constant negative attributions in relationship to the intentions of the couple and constant rejection of the positive behaviors of the couple) and 3) chronic sadness, apathy or anger towards the couple. Both evaluation versions measure their existence or non-existence for a period of three to six months, considering mild, 6 to 12 months, which is considered as moderate, and more than 12 months, when it is already classified as severe (APA, 2013).

2) The second was a semi-structured interview for gender abusers, as it is a diagnostic tool that evaluates the psychosocial area. This interview involves: 1) assessment of emotional control (existence or non-existence); 2) self-concept (good, regular and bad) and coping strategies (escape or confront); 3) ideas or concept towards the couple (good, regular or bad), and 4) maladaptive behaviors by additions (eventual or frequent). It also refers to the description of the episodes of average abuse through: 1) frequency (times per week, 2) duration (minutes or hours), 3) intensity (mild, moderate and strong), 4) consequences of violent episodes (mild , regular and serious) and 5) assumption of responsibility (existence or non-existence) (Arce and Fariña, unpublished manuscript).

## Method

This is a non-experimental study, with ex post facto, retrospective design, with descriptive quantitative and qualitative mixed phenomenological analysis and with an ethnomethodological approach, for a non-probabilistic sample consisting of 32 participants, evaluated by psychological services with a diagnosis of “Conflictive relationship with the spouse or partner ”(criteria of the DSM-5), referred by the Centers of Attention of the House of the Woman of the municipalities of Atizapán and Ecatepec, State of Mexico, Mexico.

The descriptive statistical analysis (informs the what and its frequency) was applied in the following points: 1) the sociodemographic characteristics of the sample; 2) the diagnostic criteria indicated in the DSM-5 (APA, 2013), in the section “Conflictive relationship with spouse or partner”: structured interview with dichotomous response; 3) the characteristics of the psychosocial area and episodes of abuse stipulated in the semi-structured interview for gender abusers, with multiple choice response (Arce and Fariña, unpublished manuscript).

The qualitative analysis of phenomenological type and ethnomethodological approach was applied to the explanation (information on how) the participants gave their answers, included in the semi-structured interview for gender abusers (Arce and Fariña, unpublished manuscript).

The objective of this study is focused on social phenomena from the perspective of the actors, using two diagnostic interviews, namely, a structured and a semi-structured one, to understand the what and how of social reality, focusing on everyday life. of the subject, circumstances that form the phenomenon (Urban, 2007).



The population and the sample were the same because 32 participants were interviewed because they were issued by the Centers for Attention and Reeducation for Persons Exercising Gender Violence, coming from the municipalities of Atizapán and Ecatepec, as mentioned above. The participants already had a file, where they requested talks or psychological treatment, issued to the State Council of Women and Social Welfare.

### Process

- 1) A documentary investigation of the files of the participants was carried out to investigate the general background of gender violence and the profile of the primary aggressor to understand the dynamics of the intra-family conflict and the participants.
- 2) The informed consent form and responsibility to be signed were provided to the participants. The interview was conducted under the guidelines of the Psychologist's Code of Ethics (Mexican Society of Psychology, 2010).
- 3) The ethnological study was conducted through two interviews. The first is a structured interview supported by the DSM-5 guide (APA, 2013), using the diagnosis of “Conflictive relationship with the spouse or partner. And the second is a semi-structured interview for gender abusers, which measures the assessment of emotional control, self-concept, ideas or concepts towards the couple, maladaptive behaviors and requests a description of the episodes of abuse (Arce and Fariña, unpublished manuscript ).
- 4) Data were collected on a case by case basis and respecting the structure and sequence of each of the interviews. The second interview allowed to obtain dialogues through thematic axes of interest, which were influenced by the particular experiences of the participants. Thus, the data was given an ethnomethodological approach, where each participant could express their family dynamics and daily life.
- 5) The data were analyzed with descriptive statistics of the characteristics of the sample and the items of both interviews.
- 6) A phenomenological analysis of the recordings previously loaded in the Atlas.ti program, in its version 7.5.4; The areas already evaluated were placed as axes to give a guide of hierarchy of the themes according to the experiences of each of the participants.

### Results



The most frequent sociodemographic characteristics in the sample are: male participants between 26 and 35 years old, basic academic level (50%), single marital status (69%) and medium socioeconomic level (47%) (see table 1).

**Tabla 1.** Características sociodemográficas de la muestra

<i>n</i> = 32					
<b>Rango</b>	<b>Edad</b>		<b>Nivel académico</b>		
	Total	%	Básico	Medio	Superior
15-25 años	7	22 %	3	2	2
26-35 años	11	34 %	6	4	3
36-45 años	10	31 %	5	5	0
46-55 años	4	13 %	2	2	0
56-más años	0	0 %	0	0	0
<b>Totales</b>	32	100 %	16	13	5
<b>Porcentajes</b>			50 %	41 %	16 %
	<b>Estado civil</b>		<b>Nivel socioeconómico</b>		

Rango	Casados	Solteros	Bajo	Medio	Alto
15-25 años	2	3	2	3	1
26-35 años	4	3	4	4	0
36-45 años	3	9	4	7	2
46-55 años	1	7	3	1	1
56-más años	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Totales</b>	10	22	13	15	4
<b>Porcentajes</b>	31 %	69 %	41 %	47 %	13 %

Fuente: Elaboración propia

### Quantitative analysis

Structured interviews based on the DSM-5 (APA, 2013) show greater frequency in the criteria set out below: 1) Constant rejection of the couple's positive behaviors (84%) and 2) Difficulties in conflict resolution (72 %), accompanied by a sadness, apathy and / or chronic anger towards the couple, which causes abandonment, emotional distancing from the couple (both with 66%) (see table 2).

**Tabla 2.** DSM-5, Relación Conflictiva con el Cónyuge o Pareja

<i>n</i> = 32				
Criterios de diagnóstico	Sí	%	No	%
<b>Problemas conductuales</b>				
Dificultades en la resolución de conflictos	23	72 %	9	28 %
Abandono, distanciamiento emocional	21	66 %	11	34 %
Intromisión excesiva	12	38 %	20	63 %
<b>Problemas cognitivos</b>				
Atribuciones negativas constantes en relación con las intenciones de la pareja	18	56 %	14	44 %
Rechazo constante a las conductas positivas de la pareja	27	84 %	5	16 %
<b>Problemas afectivos</b>				
Tristeza, apatía y/o rabia crónicas hacia la pareja	21	66 %	11	34 %

Fuente: Elaboración propia

The semi-structured interview for gender abusers helps to understand social phenomena from the perspective of the actors, the how of social reality, focusing on the subject's everyday life, circumstances that form the phenomenon (Urban, 2007). As a result of this section, frequent confrontations (75%) are observed due to their low impulse control (56%) and bad ideas about women and maladaptive behaviors due to addictions (both items with 53%) (see table 3).

**Tabla 3.** Entrevista semiestructurada para maltratadores de género

<i>n</i> = 32						
Área	Existencia	%	No existencia	%		%
<b>Psicosocial</b>						
Control emocional	14	44 %	18	56 %		
	Bueno		Regular		Malo	
Autoconcepto	3	9 %	19	59 %	10	31 %
	Escapa		Enfrenta			
Afrontamiento	8	25 %	24	75 %		
	Buenas		Regular		Malas	

Ideas o concepto hacia la pareja	6	19 %	9	28 %	17	53 %
	Frecuentes		Eventuales			
Comportamientos desadaptados por adiciones	15	47 %	17	53 %		

Fuente: Elaboración propia

The semi-structured interview for gender abusers also helps to understand the social phenomena of abuse to the victim from the description of the actors, how the abuse is exercised (Urban, 2007). Here the non-assumption of responsibility (66%) is observed, with a range of three to four violent episodes per week (44%), with a duration of minutes (88%), mild intensity (75%) and with slight consequences (63%) (see table 4).

**Tabla 4.** Descripción de los episodios de maltrato

<i>n</i> = 32						
Episodios de maltrato	0-2		3 a 4		5 a 7	
Frecuencia de episodios violentos en una semana	5	16 %	14	44 %	13	41 %
	Minutos		Horas		Días	
Duración por episodio	28	88 %	4	13 %	0	
	Leve		Moderado		Fuerte	
Intensidad	24	75 %	5	16 %	3	9 %
	Leve		Regular		Grave	
Consecuencias de los episodios violentos	20	63 %	10	31 %	2	6 %

	Sí		No			
Asunción de responsabilidad	11	34 %	21	66 %		

Fuente: Elaboración propia

### Qualitative, phenomenological analysis

Recordings were made to know in a loud voice how the responses made in the semi-structured interview.

Here are some highlights from these recordings:

- 1) Before the action, it is observed that gender offenders have frequent coping behaviors and comment that they are caused by the situation or by the couple, that they also attack them and are often responses to the previous aggression received, and that their partner or relatives of these mistreat him. Regarding addictions, they comment that if the people around them know that they are not in physical condition to react correctly that they do not bother them.
- 2) Given the non-assumption of responsibility, gender-aggressors had evasive responses; justified their actions with events causing conflict or discharged guilt in their partner.
- 3) Given the frequency and intensity of violent episodes, gender offenders commented that there were ongoing problems with the couple and that many times they did not respond to external aggression, but that the situation or the couple encouraged him to perform verbal impulses or inappropriate physicals Conflicts always lasted minutes and that their response was in proportion to the moment.

### Discussion

The quantitative and qualitative mixed research helped us to know in a triangulated way the social phenomenon of gender violence from the perspective of the actors (primary aggressors of gender violence) and to understand how violence develops in the relationship between couples report of the perpetrator / primary aggressor. The Eastern position is a victim of society and the circumstances that induce it to commit acts of violence.

The primary victimizer / aggressor always had excuses for his violent acts. As students of mental health, we can point out that “no responsibility for violent social acts” is closely linked to



internal conflicts of devaluation of their integrity and decrease of values before their own person and those around them (Espada and Torres, 1996 ; Lila, Gracia and Herrero, 2012).

The sexist and misogynist culture apologizes: the gender aggressor is fulfilling his rights of control, "care" of the couple, because culturally he has learned that women do not have the physical or mental abilities to fend for themselves, considering it "weak and unprotected", thinking that the world always exceeds it. To avoid future conflicts with the external world it is better to prevent by controlling your private or private world (Arce, Fariña, and Novo 2014).

The "care" and control is often so that it is not appropriate for other beings of the masculine gender, who live on the prowl of their partner, which causes scenes of jealousy, so that what the aggressor considers proper is not violated (Lila et al., 2012).

The issue of values is unbalanced, because the "value of having" is greater than the "value of being", so your identity faces a crisis. Its value of being "man" depends on what it possesses and women are considered an object and the more they show society the domain of their possessions will be worth more (Jelev, 2006). This is also related to bigamy: the more women have and dominate "better."

Participants frequently complain about female liberation and gender diversity. Both phenomena are the main triggers of aggression.

Female liberation causes rebelliousness and loss of roles in women (mother, wife, partner and sexual partner). Women do not execute these as tradition and customs say, which causes the family to lose strength, order and hierarchical level (Espada and Torres, 1996).

Gender diversity is considered an aberration of the human being, which should not be allowed, because it is a lack of respect for masculinity and leads to debauchery.

The lack of social adaptation generates nonconformity, which is confronted by aggressiveness or evaded through alcohol or drugs. The latter generates additions that again confronts the family and society (Espada and Torres, 1996).

Their entrenched ideas are a product of their experiences in childhood and culturally learned, so they require talks or psychotherapy to realize that what they consider as true and difficult to change is possible, and that it brings benefit to him, his couple and family (Castillo, 2004).

From the interviews conducted as part of this study, subjects with anxious-depressive mood are observed. Subjects who suffer, afraid of losing control and sad for not being empathic with their partner or with people around them. Negativism drives them to be aggressive, concepts

considered pathological and stipulated in the DSM-5, within human relationship disorders (APA, 2013).

The opportunity to offer gender abusers the therapeutic justice programs for gender offenders, which deal with the core of partner violence, must be specified. In this study it has been shown that the aggressors are not mentally ill who act without responsibility for the act, but subjects who have behavioral problems and human relationships, generated by thoughts learned of disability for the female gender, which prevents gender equity (Maple et al., 2015; Pérez, Giménez and Espinoza, 2012).

The limitations of the study were the assistance forced by legal sentence, which led to justify their actions. In the assigned physical spaces, in addition, sometimes they did not have the required privacy.

The strength is to analyze firsthand what the aggressor thinks and that drives him to commit the crime. This information will help to give an accurate and individualized treatment that supports the early recovery of the primary aggressor of gender violence and diminishes femicide.

Weaknesses are the social beliefs of machismo and power, to which the subject clings to continue with his value of "being a man." Macho society constantly encourages it and by many means, and treatment must be a means that promotes social and gender equality.

## Conclusions

The quantitative and qualitative mixed research gives us the opportunity to triangulate information analyzing the phenomenon of gender aggression in voice of the couple's primary aggressors. Where you can see the "what" and its frequency and the "how" analyzing the thinking and attitude to the event.

In the voice of the aggressor we can observe the triggers contained in the high frequency of devalued conception of women, reflected in the constant rejection of the positive behaviors of the couple (84%). The couple's behaviors to obtain value and exercise rights cause the aggressor difficult to resolve conflicts (72%), because the aggressor is in the idea of preserving his hierarchical place of power and social protection (physically and mentally). This double action of wanting and not being able to produce chronic sadness, apathy or anger towards the couple, which causes escalation of aggression and / or abandonment, emotional distancing from the couple (66%).





The constant struggle of what has been learned and socially allowed, the aggressor maintains coping behaviors (75%), with low impulse control (56%), reinforced by bad ideas about women, generated by his rebellious and aggressive behavior. Intolerance creates maladaptive escape behaviors manifested in addictions (53%).

The non-assumption of responsibility is recurring (66%), because part of the idea that they are exercising their dominant and protective role before the couple because they consider it their property. And a frequency of three to four violent episodes per week was found (44%); a manifestation of its aggressiveness by small lapses (minutes) (88%), of mild intensity (75%) and with equally mild consequences (63%).

In this last statistic, it is observed that the aggressor only wishes to maintain his dominant social role and to protect his property, so that his "being is worthy", that is why his aggressions he considers them "mild", because everything he does is based on preserve, control and protect your relationship. When the couple does not want to be conserved, controlled and protected, the conflict is triggered and the dimensions and consequences can reach femicide, without the perpetrator taking responsibility, since "he has learned so" and has to maintain its value. Remember that these participants are already diagnosed with human relationship disorders, following the DSM-5 (APA, 2013).

The primary aggressor needs to relearn that the woman is not her property and that she has rights to exercise her own life. So the aggressor requires therapeutic justice to change his ideas and ways of relating to his partner, and give him the courage to be independent with abilities of self-control and physical and mental strength.

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