

# Violence against women in an environment of social inequity: deceitful homicides in Tijuana, Baja California

David F. Fuentes Romero, Margarita Barajas  
Tinoco and Silvia Figueroa Ramírez  
*Universidad Autónoma de Baja California*

## Resumen

En este artículo analizamos información correspondiente a homicidios dolosos cometidos contra mujeres residentes de Tijuana, Baja California, durante el periodo 2000-2005. Además de presentar el perfil social de víctimas y victimarios, se amplía el análisis hacia el móvil y *modus operandi* del hecho. Lo anterior es mediado con la riqueza que proporciona la teoría de género. La información utilizada corresponde a la base de datos generada dentro del proyecto de investigación denominado *Caracterización social de la muerte violenta en la frontera norte de México: el caso de Baja California*, del Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales de la Universidad Autónoma de Baja California.

**Palabras clave:** homicidios dolosos, violencia, víctima, victimario, Tijuana.

## Abstract

*Violence against women in an environment of social inequity: deceitful homicides in Tijuana, Baja California*

In this work, information corresponding to committed deceitful homicides against resident women of Tijuana Baja California is analyzed for the period 2000-2005. Besides the socioeconomic profile of both victims and murderers, the analysis is extended towards the motivation and *modus operandi* of the deeds. All is supported on gender theory. The used information corresponds to the database of Ph D. Romero sources, whose project title is: *Social characterization of the violence in the North border of Mexico: the case of the city of Tijuana, B. C.*

**Key words:** Violence, social violence, deceitful homicides, women, social inequity, Tijuana, Baja California.

## Introduction

In this work information corresponding to deceitful homicides committed against women who live in Tijuana, Baja California, in the 2000-2005 period, with intention of outline the social profile of victims and murderers, and learn the motivations and *modus operandi* of the deeds. Deceitful homicide is referred to the crime of depriving someone else of life in an aforethought,

advantageous, treacherous or deceitful manner. There is premeditation when there is reflection on the crime to be committed and the injuries caused are intentional; in premeditation is also found the torment, depraved motivations and brutal ferocity. The advantage appears when the attacker's strength overcomes that of the victim, and they are unarmed. Likewise, when the murderer uses any means that weakens victims' defense or when the latter is fallen and the former armed or standing, and when the number of attackers is superior to one. In respect to treachery, the murderer uses the surprise factor or that of stalking; and finally, deceit is referred to the use of perfidy, "violating the trust or security explicitly promised to the victim, or the tacit security the attacker should provide the victim with due to their kinship, gratitude, friendship or any other relationship of trust" (Penal Code for the State of Baja California, articles: 123, 147-151: 24, 26-27; *Código penal para el Estado de Baja California, artículos: 123, 147-151: 24, 26-27*).<sup>1</sup>

The aforementioned places this analysis in the context of the most extreme violence which ends up in the death of women, where the relation victim-murderer is totally uneven in terms of physical force, for in all the analyzed cases, murderers were men.

The analysis is supported on information from the Social Characterization of violent death in the Northern Border of Mexico: the case of Baja California Project (*Caracterización social de la muerte violenta en la Frontera Norte de México: el caso de Baja California*) (Fuentes, 2006), which was codified and systematized in SPSS and analyzed for this article's ends.<sup>2</sup> The universe of deceitful homicides against women, corresponds to 63 cases which occurred between 2000 and 2005, and represent 24 percent of a total of 258 which took place in Tijuana, Baja California, between 1999 and 2005. In order to configure the social inequality environment of the people involved, the cartographic location of the neighborhoods where the victims and murderers abode was related to the marginalization indexes elaborated by Conapo (2002) for the City of Tijuana.

<sup>1</sup> Apart from this, there is unintentional murder, which occurs when without the intention of performing the forbidden behavior the juridical good —life— is injured, even though there is the will to do it or, when in the lack of a attention to a duty the juridical good is injured; this is to say, the negligence in the behavior becomes the performance of a forbidden deed (Federal Penal Code, *Código Penal Federal*).

<sup>2</sup> The marginalization index by Conapo (2002) incorporates five dimensions: access to health, access to decent and decorous housing; the earning of sufficient monetary incomes and gender inequalities. In order to estimate this index information from the XII General Census of Population (*XII Censo General de Población*) was used as source, considering the AGEB. The geographic location of neighborhoods and residences was realized with the support from Guillermo Álvarez De la Torre; and Judith Ley García supported us providing the information corresponding to marginalization indexes.

In addition to this introduction, this work contains four sections. In the first one, we present conceptual approaches to violence, retaking definitions of violence in general, as well as those of gender, domestic and sexual; in the second section, we incorporate statistics on homicides in Baja California which come from diverse sources, locating the State's position at national level. In the third section, the profiles of victims and murderers involved in deceitful homicides in Baja California in the period from 2000 to 2005 are outlined. And finally in the fourth section, the *modus operandi* of the homicides in the region is analyzed. The article closes stating some considerations.

## **Conceptual approaches to violence**

Violence in its etymologic root remits to the concept of force, being centered on a form of power exercise by means of the use of force to solve interpersonal conflicts. This exercise is performed at an iniquity level which leads to one of the involved parts to impose their will upon the other (Corsi, 1994).

Violence "is everywhere, omnipresent and multiform" (Helder Cámara, in Fernández de Juan, 2001: 9). For authors such as Julio Barreiro, it is the "natural result of an unjust and oppressive situation of some human being upon others, or the State on the individuals, collectivities or social groups when acting in illegitimate exercise..." (Barreiro, in Fernández de Juan, 2001: 9). Some expressions of violence correspond to: robberies, corruption, bribery, organized crime, vandalism, drug dealing, suicides, kidnappings, general threats to social security, rapes, injuries and homicides (Ilescas, 2001: 135). Pérez Robledo (2004) retakes the concept of symbolic violence by Pierre Bourdieu (1995), understood as such exercised upon a social agent with this one's accord, as long as it is not recognized as violence: the agents consider the world as self-evident and find it natural because of the almost perfect agreement established, on the one side by social structures as those expressed in the social organization of time and space and labor gender division, and on the other, the cognitive structures inscribed in bodies and minds (Pérez Robledo in Fernández de Juan, 2004: 53).

Bourdieu (1999) affirms that symbolic violence cannot be explained without the intervention of *habitus*, which is the fruit of the incorporation of a social structure in the form of an almost natural disposition, and that is the potential energy, the dormant force and the place where symbolic violence draws its

efficacy from. This author states (1996) that in order to understand *habitus* it is necessary to evoke the formation work that is carried out, either through the familiarity with a symbolically structured world, a work of collective inculcation, more implicit than explicit, which the large collective rituals are part of, and by means of which a durable transformation of the bodies and the usual way to use them is operated (Bourdieu in Pérez Robledo in Fernández de Juan 2004: 54).

Assuming violence is fundamentally practiced at an inequality level and power, we consider pertinent to incorporate the meanings of gender, domestic, and sexual violence against women.

### *Gender violence*

The theory of gender states that differences between men and women, their functions and roles, do not really come from their sexual nature, but they are social constructions, artificially created through sets of practices, symbols, representations, regulations and values the societies elaborate from the sexual anatomic-physiologic difference and which are the cause of discrimination women have suffered from (Gayle Rubin in Hernández, 1996: 11; De Barbieri in Hernández, 1996: 12; Cervantes de Julián, 2004). In violence “the incapability to identify oneself in the other”, a woman in this case, and feel empathy for her, is seen (Butterfield, 1996: 103, in Ruiz in Fernández de Juan, 2004: 90). In the opinion of Olivia Ruiz (2004), the aforementioned indicates that men do not have identification with women as their peers, nor empathy when they suffer (Ruiz, in Fernández de Juan, 2004: 90). Violence occurs in both the public and private spheres. “it is mainly manifested as a control situation, where [...] abusive relations became the cultivation field to satisfy the needs originated in power disequilibrium” (Corsi, 1998, in Fernández de Juan, 2004: 7-8).

World Health Organization (WHO) defines as gender violence any act that results or can turn out into physical, sexual or psychological harm of suffering for women, including threats of such deeds, coercion, or arbitrary privations of freedom, which occur both in public and private life (García y Saavedra in Ilescas, 2001: 138). As a consequence of this gender violence, WHO points out sexually transmitted diseases, injuries, pelvic swollenness, unwanted pregnancy, spontaneous miscarriages, chronic pelvic ache, headaches, gynecologic problems, drug and alcohol abuse, asthma, intestine or irritable colon syndromes, behaviors noxious for health (nicotinism, unprotected sexual intercours), permanent or

partial disabilities; and adds, for mental health, posttraumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety, sexual dysfunction, eating disorders, multiple personality disorders, compulsive-obsessive disorder (Ilescas, 2001: 138).

The extreme form of gender violence against women has been called femicide violence that is the result of women's human rights violation in the public and private spheres. It is composed by the set of misogynist behaviors — mistreatment and physical, psychological, sexual, educational, economic, patrimonial, familial, institutional, communal violence— which social and State's impunity carry and when putting women in risk and defenselessness can end up in homicide or its tentative, and in other forms of violent death of girls and women: accidents, suicides, avoidable deaths derived from insecurity, disregard and exclusion from development and democracy.<sup>3</sup>

## **Domestic violence**

Domestic violence refers to

Every form of abuse —physical, verbal and / or psychological— which takes place among the family members' relationships, where the dynamics of power is one of its common characteristics. It supposes the use of physical force to control the relationship and usually exercised from the strongest to the weakest. However, its manifestations also comprehend child mistreatment [...] elderly and disabled people mistreatment, marital violence is the one with the greatest impact—and with growing characteristics— within the community's conscience (Corsi, 1994 in Fernández de Juan, 2004: 158).

In these situations of abuse cyclically and increasingly produced between couples, 74 percent of the cases correspond to mistreatment against women, and its damage intensity varies from insult to homicide (Corsi, 1994 in Fernández de Juan, 2004: 158).

<sup>3</sup> The femicide category was developed from the work by Diana Russell and Jill Radford, showed in their text *Femicide/The politics of woman killing*, Prentice Hall International, New York, 1992. In Spanish Femicide (feminicidio) is a homologous voice and only identifies the assassination of women. Conversely, femicide —as defined by Russell and Radford— is a hate crime against women, it is the set of forms of violence that on occasions concludes in the assassination and even suicides of women (Representatives' Chamber of the Honorable Congress of the Union LIX Legislature, 2006: 36, *Cámara de Diputados del H. Congreso de la Unión LIX Legislatura*).

With the exception of some minor indigenous tribes, domestic violence exists in almost all of the world's cultures. A larger number of these cases has been found in societies where social structure is patriarchal, i.e., the men heads of family and men in general exercise more power and authority than women (Campbell, 1992 in Welland-Akong, 2001: 168). Although it is true there are women who are primary aggressors, it is 13 times more probable that man injures women than the contrary, except in the cases where weapons are involved (American Psychological Association, 1996, in Welland-Akong, 2001: 165). Even if power relations are related to a large extent with those of gender, these are not their single component. There is also the power of mothers and mothers-in-law upon their underage people and their husbands; likewise, fathers and fathers-in-law power upon children (Pérez Robledo, in Fernández de Juan, 2004: 55).

Three phases in the cycle of domestic violence in urban zones have been proposed: firstly, an accumulation of violence with minor blows, which the wife responds to by means of soothing her partner and the denial that it is an aggression; the second stage is characterized by the acute incident of blows, and the third by the man's repented behavior with apology and greater affective attention toward the wife attitudes (Walker, 1979, in Fernández de Juan, 2004: 42).

Three risk factors which stress domestic violence, which are correspondent, have been identified: a) history of familial violence; b) low socio-economic (poverty) and academic levels and unemployment; and c) alcohol use and abuse (and illegal drugs) (Welland-Akong, in Fernández de Juan, 2001: 171). Studies by Ferreira, 1989, and Lima Malvido, 1995, carried out in urban zones have demonstrated that domestic violence also occurs in the mid and upper strata and between couples of independent professionals (Alberti, in Fernández de Juan, 2004: 27).

## *Sexual violence*

Sexual violence is an act of both material and symbolical nature (blows and blow threats, for instance), directed to women's sexuality which attacks their physical, psychic, emotional and spiritual integrity (Ruiz, in Fernández de Juan (coord.), 2004: 85). This violence has five characteristics:

1. It is a physical or verbal deed recognized by women as an aggression or threat to their sexuality. A woman can identify an experience as sexual violence or not, depending among other factors, on what the culture of origin has defined as such.

2. It is referred to the violation of their genitalia and breasts and the threat they will be raped.

3. Aggressions that transcend the regulations in respect to feminine body treatment, especially of her sexuality. Regulations configure, for instance, that a man or men can or cannot approach a woman's body and regulate how and when these approaches are possible.

4. They reflect the inequalities in the gender-sex relations. In sexual violation 'a man appropriates a woman's sexuality, as it is mediated by her body' and through this action proclaims her sexuality "belongs to him, it is subordinated to him" (Mckinnon, 1982, in Fernández de Juan, 2004: 87-88). Nevertheless, these are also aggressions that reflect inequalities between men [and against minors]. Sexual violation has been strategically employed to humiliate and demoralize the 'other', either man or woman (Ruiz, in Fernández de Juan, 2004: 87-88).

5. Sexual violence is explained through socio-cultural characteristics which correspond to: the culture of gender, formal regulation of the culture of gender and the role of violence in society (Scully, 1990; Segal, 1990, in Ruiz in Fernández de Juan 2004: 89).

Mexican juridical system is limited in the defense of women's rights in relation to their sexual integrity, as before an accusation of this nature, most of the times said system does not facilitate the apprehension, judgment and punishment of the culprits (Scully, in Fernández de Juan, 2004: 92). Moreover, in the analysis of violence specific social and cultural contexts must be considered, since it can take particularities and concrete forms in accordance with each context, within which are previously defined the approved and socially tolerated forms of violence (Pérez, in Fernández de Juan, 2004: 53).

## Violence and deceitful homicides against women in Baja California

According to the National Survey on Violence against Women (*Encuesta Nacional de Violencia Contra las Mujeres, Envim*), Baja California with 37.2 percent is above the national level of women who have been victims of violence (34.5 percent) in relation to women who suffered violence from their partner for life (women with a violent relation with their partners for life, or those who have experienced violent relations with their boyfriend, partner or husband once in their life). In the first place one finds the State of Oaxaca, with 45.2 percent (Envim, in Representatives' Chamber, 2006: 90). Likewise, Baja California appears in the 12<sup>th</sup> place (62.9 percent) in respect to "some sort of violence ever in life", which corresponds to women who had experienced violence with their partner once in their life or had been beaten or mistreated by their father or stepfather, mother or stepmother, father- or mother-in-law, or any other family member or person (National Institute of Public Health and Envim, in Representatives' Chamber, 2006: 90). In relation to sexual violence for life — which includes women who had suffered once sexual violence from their boyfriend, husband, partner, former couple or any other person during pregnancy or before being 15 years of age—, Baja California held the third place in the country, with 23.4 percent, six percentage points above national average (17.3 percent) (Envim, Representatives' Chamber, 2006: 91). According to INEGI, Baja California registered a rate of feminine homicides [deceitful and in first degree] of 2.9 per 100 thousand inhabitants, so it had the eighth place among the States with the highest rates in the country for this entry (INEGI, in Representatives' Chamber, 2006: 94). According to official information disclosed by the Attorney General of the State of Baja California in May 2005, and published in an electronic document in 2006, in the State there were 191 femicide cases of girls and women assassinated between 2000 and 2004 (Representatives' Chamber, 2006: 99). Nonetheless, the statistics generated by the project source of this project finds 182 cases of deceitful homicides only in Tijuana in said period. Our statistical source and that of the Attorney General coincide that it is Tijuana the municipality where the largest number of deceitful homicides against women take place.

## Deceitful homicides against women in Tijuana (2000-2005)

In this section we will describe and relate variables relative to the profiles of the victim and murderer involved in deceitful homicides against women in Tijuana, considering a 24-percent sample which corresponds to 63 cases out of a total of 258.<sup>4</sup> Likewise, the *modus operandi* and the relation victim-murderer are analyzed.

We found that in deceitful homicides' distribution by year between 2003 and 2001 the highest frequency is concentrated, for during these years 55.6 percent of the total of assassinations in the 2000-2005 period took place. Conversely to the expected, the time of homicide occurrence was concentrated between 12:01 and 19:00 hours (42.9 percent) and in May and June the greater number of assassinations was registered (30.2 percent).

### *Victim's profile*

The universe of deceitful homicides committed against women is constituted by a total of 63 cases. The victims' nationality is fundamentally Mexican, even though there is not information for 17.5 percent of the cases. Only one of them was a foreigner (North American) and the murderer was also North American. In relation to the place of origin of the victims, there is information that 75 percent of them comes from other States of the country, whereas 21.2 percent were registered as inhabitants of Tijuana; only 1.9 percent from other municipalities of Baja California, and in the same proportion from outside the country. As for the victims' years of residence in Tijuana, there was only information in 4.8 percent, corresponding to three cases whose residence dates back to 4, 26 and 28 years. The victims' average age is 30.9 years of age, with a median of 28.5 and a mode of 21. The age is principally concentrated between 15 and 44 years of age (83.3 percent), which indicates that women who are being assassinated in deceitful homicides are in productive and reproductive ages. Ten percent of the victims were women of 55 years of age and older. It is noteworthy that the age group from 45 to 54 does not reach two percent of occurrences. The victims' marital status is known in 53 of the 63 cases (84.1 percent); out of this available

<sup>4</sup> Let us clarify this analysis does not incorporate 1999 cases as we had not access to the respective files.

information, single women have the highest percentage: 43.4 percent; 22.6 percent lived in free union and 20.8 percent was married. If those married are added to those in free union, the percentage is 43.3 percent. The marital status of divorcees and separated corresponds to six cases (11.3 percent) and one (1.9 percent) refers to the case of widowhood. The association marital status – victim-murderer demonstrates that, independently from the marital status of the victims, there was a victim-murderer relation that was in a context of acquaintance (neighbor, friends), family (boyfriend, husband or concubine), former partner, sexual client and other integrants of the family. The only case where there was not a victim-murderer relation was in the case of theft. In relation to education, we obtained information for 39 cases (62 percent); from these, 17 (43.6 percent) correspond to null and elementary schooling; next, 14 (36 percent) with secondary schooling; whereas upper intermediate schooling (high school or technical career) we found eight cases (20.5 percent). As for the occupation profile, there is information for 76.2 percent of the cases. From these, the most frequent occupation is that of a housewife (35.4 percent), followed by employees (22.9 percent), in the third place, no occupation, and in the fourth place, prostitutes; fifth and sixth places are declared for merchants (8.3 percent) and only one case of a student. For the victims' addictions we found information in 42 cases out of the total 63 (66.7 percent), this indicates that most of them were not addicted (45.2 percent); nevertheless, 12 (28.6 percent) used illegal drugs, among which one finds, in descending order: crystal, amphetamines, methamphetamines, benzodiazepines, cocaine and not specified addictions; victims addicted to alcohol were 10 (23.8 percent); addictions do not apply for the case of a girl under one year of age. The association of the victim's age with addictions is known for 42 cases (66.7) and indicates that 12 were addicted to illegal drugs. From them, the age group with the highest consumption is that of 15 to 24 years of age, with 8 (66.7); in descending order we find the age group from 25 to 34 years of age, with three (25 percent), and finally the age group from 35 to 44 years of age with one (8.3 percent) victims of addiction to illegal drugs. Illegal drugs consumed by the victims in descending order correspond to: crystal (five victims), amphetamines (five victims), cocaine (one victim) and unspecified addictions (one victim). In relation to alcohol, there are ten victims who consumed it and—as with illegal drugs—the group with the most concentration is that of 15-24 years of age, with four addict victims (40 percent), and in a descending order next is the group of 25-44 years of age with three (30 percent); that of 55 years of age and older with two (20 percent), and one (10 percent) in

the 25-44 years of age group. One of the cases does not count toward this statistics as it is the one year old victim and 19 (45.2 percent) of the total of 42 cases with information had not any addiction. In illegal drugs consumption and alcohol, it is seen the groups in productive and reproductive ages are those which these consumptions are concentrated. As for the association of the victim's occupation and addictions, there is information on 36 cases. Out of them, 10 victims consumed illegal drugs. Statistics indicate 6 (60 percent) of the unoccupied victims concentrate the most use of illegal drugs, followed by housewives and prostitutes, with 2 (20 percent), respectively. Considering the occupations, only the employed ones and merchants did not take drugs. As for alcohol consumption, 10 out 36 known cases consumed it. Housewives concentrate the highest consumption, five cases (50 percent); in descending order are the employees, with 2 (20 percent) and the prostitute (10 percent), respectively. Only one victim (10 percent), registered as unoccupied, consumed alcohol. In relation with the aforementioned, it is distinguishable that housewives concentrate alcohol consumption, and in all of the victims, employed and unemployed, said consumption is found. Well now, 16 victims did not have addictions, among them 6 housewives (37.5 percent), six employees (37.5 percent), two merchants (12.5 percent) and two unoccupied women (12.5 percent) are notorious.

In relation to the marginalization indexes<sup>5</sup> of the victims' neighborhoods, there is information for 45 cases, and 22 neighborhoods were found to have marginalization indexes, 8 high and 14 very high. An average index is found in the neighborhoods where 13 victims resided. If we add the previous indexes (very high, high, average) we find a set of 35 neighborhoods with these indexes (77.8 percent). Separately, the very low and low marginalization indexes correspond to seven and three neighborhoods, which altogether sum up 10 (22.2 percent). Well now, there were neighborhoods where two and three victims abode. These neighborhoods corresponded to Mariano Matamoros and Playas de Tijuana, with three victims each; the former with high and mid marginalization indexes, the latter with very low, low and high marginalization indexes. The neighborhoods which had two victims are San Luis del Cañón de Sáenz, La Morita I and II, Fraccionamiento Emperadores and Mesa de Otay northern zone, which have very high, high and medium marginalization levels. In respect to the neighborhoods called Grupo México and San Diego it was not possible to locate

<sup>5</sup> Let us remember that Conapo's marginalization index (2002) incorporates five dimensions: access to health, access to decent and decorous housing; the earning of sufficient monetary incomes and gender inequalities.

the respective marginalization indexes. Despite a neighborhood can internally have different marginalization indexes, we observe the tendency that neighborhoods with very high, high and medium marginalization indexes, do not have very low and low indexes, and vice versa, except for Playas de Tijuana, which has marginalization indexes from very low and low to high.

### *Murderers' profile*

In the 63 women's homicides hereby analyzed 73 murderers were involved. Their nationality is known for 53 percent, from which 81.8 percent are Mexican and 18.2 foreigners, among them we can find two North American and one Guatemalan citizens; the former killed because of familial quarrels and the latter in order to rob. In relation to the place of origin, 50 percent come from different States of the country, 31.8 percent was born in Tijuana and four (18.2 percent) are foreigners; there is not information on the residence years in Tijuana for the murderers. From the available information (47.6 percent), the age of the murderers<sup>6</sup> is on average 30.77 years, with a standard deviation of 8.67 and a variance of 75.15; the age groups which contain the highest percentages are that of 25 to 34 (43.3 percent) and that of 35 to 44 (33.3) which altogether add 76.6 percent. In descending order they are followed by the 15-24 years of age group (16.7 percent). We only found one murderer in the group of 0-14 years of age and another in the group of 55 years of age and older. The murderers' gender is masculine in 47.6 percent of the documented cases; their marital status is known in 36.5 percent of the cases, from which 69.6 percent are married and in free union and 30.4 percent are single. In the relation to the murderers' education, there is only information for 28.6 percent of the cases. From this percentage, 50 percent is found in complete / incomplete secondary school; 22.2 percent in complete / incomplete high school and 16.7 in complete / incomplete elementary school and one (5.6 percent) without any schooling. As for the murderers' occupation profile, there is information on 38.1 percent of the cases. From these, the greatest number of people is found in employees, not further specified, and self-employed people with 25 percent, followed by builders with 20.8 percent; and unoccupied with 16.7 percent and one factory worker, a drug dealer and a student, which corresponds to 4.2 percent in each case. On addictions there is

<sup>6</sup> It is important to point out that in the cases of multiple homicide, the ages of the murderers were averaged, which was the age analyzed.

information for 19 murderers (30.2 percent). From them, 13 (68.4 percent) take illegal drugs, among them in descending order of use we find: crystal, amphetamines, methamphetamines, benzodiazepines and marijuana. Likewise, six (31.6 percent) murderers take alcohol. There is information on the association of the murderer's age with addictions for 18 cases out of the total, and it indicates that 12 (66.7) of them are addicted to illegal drugs. From them the group which holds the most drug intake is that of 25 to 34 years of age, with eight (66.7 percent), followed by that of 15 to 24 years of age with three (25 percent) and the one of 35 to 44 years of age with one (8.3 percent). We observe the absence of illegal drugs intake in the group of 55 years of age and older. In relation to alcohol consumption, there are registrations for six cases, from which three are between 35 and 44 years of age (50 percent), two (33.3 percent) are between 15 and 24 and one (16.7 percent) is 55 years of age or older. We observe no alcohol consumption in the age group from 25 to 34 years of age. In respect to the association of the murderers' occupation with addictions, there is information on 18 cases. From these, 12 murderers take illegal drugs, four of them (33.3 percent) work in construction, three (25 percent) are self-employed, two (16.7 percent) are unspecified employees, two (16.7 percent) with no occupation and one (8.3 percent) factory worker. As for alcohol consumption, six murderers consume it; from them, three (50 percent) are unspecified employees, and one person in each case (16.7 percent) self-employed, builder, unoccupied.

There are only conviction antecedents for 17 (27 percent) of the murderers. From these, 8 (47.1 percent) already had a conviction background and nine (52.9 percent) did not.

In relation to the marginalization indexes in the neighborhoods in Tijuana where the murderers live, 30 of the cases with information, eight neighborhoods with a 'medium' index, seven with a 'high' index and six with a 'very high' index were found. If we add up this marginalization indexes, we will find a concentration of 21 (70 percent). Separately, the 'very low' and 'low' marginalization indexes correspond to five and four neighborhoods respectively.

## Homicides' *modus operandi* and victim-murderer relation

In this section the *modus operandi*<sup>7</sup> of the 63 cases of deceitful homicides committed in Tijuana, Baja California, is described. Likewise, the victim-murderer relation is analyzed in association with some elements of this *modus*; we will use information on the motivation, manner of committing the crime, utilized weapon, place where the corpse was found and number of victims and murderers (individual or multiple).

The motivation of the 63 deceitful murders is known in 39 cases. From these, the motivation with the most frequency corresponds to love or domestic quarrel with a frequency of 25 (64.1 percent). In descending order we found: robbery, in five (12.8 percent), and vengeance, with four (10.3 percent). There were two cases (5.1 percent) where the motivation was punishment and the same proportion for rape. There was a single case (2.6 percent) with payback as motivation. The way the homicide was committed, which implies the object used, is very particular in each case, nevertheless, some proceedings manners are similar. In the majority of cases, 30 (47 percent), armory, puncturing objects, contusive and constrictor objects were used, and in eight of the cases (12.7 percent), weapons and blows were combined. Seven homicides were performed only by means of the use of physical force where the victims, after being murdered, were also partially burnt; two (3.17 percent) in which the victim was tied in order to commit the crime; in one (1.58) case there were blows and rape; and in another (1.58) mutilation. In four cases (6.35 percent) the women and her partner were simultaneously murdered and in three cases (4.76 percent) the murderer committed suicide. There are registrations that one of the victims was pregnant. In four cases (6.3 percent) the *modus operandi* is not known and there are only registrations for the finding of the corpses. The aforementioned must be taken cautiously, as there could be more cases of blows and sexual violation, which are not described in the description of the *modus operandi*. In relation to the number of victims in each case, 79.4 percent is individual cases, whereas in the rest (20.6 percent) two or three were the victims. In this group of multiple homicides, the victims were never two women; it was always women-man (men). As for the number of murderers, from 34 with available information

<sup>7</sup> Expression fundamentally used in criminology and it is referred to a person's characteristic way of acting in the consecution of a crime.

(54 percent), in 29 (85.3 percent) a single person committed the crime, and in five, several people took part, as it is described here: two people committed the crime in a case; three in two and four people took part in two cases. In the association of the homicide committed by several people and their age, there is information on 30 cases. From them, five homicides were committed by people from the 25 to 34 years of age group, and the rest by individual murderers corresponding to all of the age groups. The victims' causes of death are known in 55 homicides (87.3 percent). From these, the majority, 25 (45.5 percent) were caused by firearm wounds, followed by strangulation in 14 cases (25.5 percent) and nine (16.4 percent) by puncture wounds. In seven homicides (12.7 percent) the cause of death was blows. About the place where the bodies were found — corresponding or not to the place where the crime was committed—, there is information for all of the cases. In 28 cases (44.4 percent) the body was found in public spaces, and 26 (41.3 percent) in a household. The rest of the cases were found in hotel rooms, health clinics, or another places (automobile, wreck yards) in the same proportion of three cases (4.8 percent), respectively. In relation to the Acts in the Ministry of Justice, we found 34 acts (54 percent) integrated to the previous inquiries on the cases and 28 consigned acts (44.4 percent), which were sent to a judge. From this, 27 apprehension orders (42.9 percent) were issued.

The relation victim-murderer is known in 30 of the 63 analyzed cases (47.6 percent). The highest proportion corresponds to partners (boyfriend, husband, and concubine) with 12 (40 percent). In descending order we found acquaintances (neighbors, friends) with 11 (36.7 percent); three former partners (10 percent) and three (10 percent) other family members. If we add the percentages of partners and former partners with other family members we have that 56.7 percent of the cases of deceitful homicide was committed by partners and former partners and victims' other family members. If we add the percentage of the victims' acquaintances, we obtain 93.4 percent in which the murderers are partners, former partners, family members and acquaintances of the victims. Only in one case (3.3 percent), the murderer was a prostitute's sexual client and in another (3.3 percent) there was no relation with the victim as robbery was the motivation. The victim-murderer relation with the place where the corpse was found indicates: in the cases of partner, former partners and other family members' relations, the victims' bodies were found in households in 12 cases (40 percent), four (13.33 percent) in public spaces and one (3.33) in a health center. In the relation of the victim with acquaintances (neighbors or friends), the body

was found in seven cases (23.3 percent) in public spaces, three (10 percent) in households and one in a closed space (3.3 percent). In the cases of the victim-sexual client relation, the body was found in a hotel room, and in the case of no relation between the victim and murderer, the victim's body was found in her household. This indicates that in partners, former partners and family members of the victims and in relation to themselves, most of the corpses were left in the household. Nonetheless, in the cases of the victim's acquaintances (neighbors and friends), the victim was found in public spaces, in a closed space outside the household in eight of the eleven cases (71.7 percent), and only in three cases (27.3 percent) the body was found in the victim's household. The aforementioned data indicate that, either the murderers committed the crime in the victim's household and later removed her body (possibly in order not to be seen as suspects), or the homicides, from the start, were committed in public spaces or another closed space. From the 29 cases with available information on the victim-murderer and homicide motivation relation, 20 cases (68.9 percent) the motivation was love or domestic quarrel. In the victim-murderer and vengeance relation we found, in descending order, acquaintances (neighbors or friends) three cases (75 percent) and other family members one case (25 percent) of a total of four cases. There were two cases where the motivation was rape and the relation with the victim was that of acquaintances (neighbors or friends). Another motivation was 'punishment because of behavior' where the murderer was an acquaintance of the victim. In respect to the association of the murderer's addictions, we found information for 16 cases, where in nine cases (56.3 percent) the victim did not registered addictions, whereas her murderers in seven cases took illegal drugs and alcohol in two cases. In five cases (31.1 percent), the victims consumed alcohol, whereas their murderers in three out of five cases also did and in two they took illegal drugs. Only in two cases, both the victim and murderer took illegal drugs.

## Final considerations

Despite the intense trans-border demographic mobility between Tijuana and Southern California, it is noteworthy that in the registered homicides in the sample of the analysis there is only one North American woman killed by her partner, with the same nationality. This shows us that the pattern of deceitful homicides, foreign woman —visitor or residing in Tijuana—, at least thus far has not been the specific target of Mexican murderers. As for the victims' origin, the intense internal immigration of Tijuana is verified, as 75 percent of the victims come from other States of the country. In respect to the ages of the assassinated women, they are preponderantly at productive and reproductive ages. The cost this implies is a very grave social and economic problem for the collective, since it impacts on familial disintegration, emotional repercussions for close relatives given the social stigmatization they are object of and the environment of violence they have experienced;<sup>8</sup> the pressure on health services and needs of education of the orphans; interruption of economic contribution to households. The marital status of the victims is diversified, being similar the proportion of victimized women who were united (married or in free union) and single. In reality, women's vulnerability is in direct relation with their partners and, to a lesser extent, with other family members and when there is not a direct relation, with the murderer. This is coherent with the homicide's motivation, for domestic and love quarrels appear as the most frequent motivation, situation that reflects the domestic violence which cyclically and growingly occurs between the couple's members and in 75 percent of the cases corresponds to women's mistreatment (Corsi, 1994 in Fernández de Juan, 2004: 158). The domestic and love quarrels motivation remits us to gender violence where "men do not have an identification with women as their peers or equals nor empathy when they suffer" (Ruiz, in Fernández de Juan, 2004: 90), so it is pertinent to propose the murderers felt the right to take violence to their last consequences as it is the case of deceitful homicides. In the same sense, domestic violence coincides with the contribution by Gelles and Strauss, for who: "it is more probable that you are robbed, beaten and assassinated at your own household and by some of their beloved relatives, than in another place and by any other people" (Gelles and Strauss, in Fernández

<sup>8</sup> There is polemic in relation to the fact that if children observe violence against their mothers, at their adult ages they will be violent adults. This is affirmed by Corsi, 1994; Ferreira, 1989, and Nátera, 1994b; however, Alberti found that this is not always confirmed (Alberti, in Fernández de Juan, 2004: 38).

de Juan, 2004: 157). As for the victims' schooling, homicides took place in women with no formal education, upper intermediate schooling or technical career, nevertheless, it is observed that, the lesser education, the greater the homicides' concentration, which agrees with the information on women with incidents of violence in their life (Envim, in Representatives' Chamber, 2006: 94). In respect to the victims' occupation, the highest concentration was located in the housewives<sup>9</sup> and in unoccupied women; this coincides with the affirmation that women devoted to house chores are more exposed to economic and sexual violence, where it was also found that among economically active women there is a greater prevalence of emotional and physical violence (Envim, in Representatives' Chamber, 2006: 94). As for the income-generator occupations, it is observed that they correspond to activities whose remunerations are supposed to be low, as they are to be found in factories, offices, stores and sexual services. We consider that the prostitute condition reveals a situation of gender violence where men do not feel identification with women as their peers — as already mentioned— and take the right to finish with a woman's life who for most of men, socially have a weak or void valuation. The victims' addictions to illegal drugs and alcohol reveal the lifestyle of the victimized women and somehow send us to scenarios of violence propitiated and made acute by this sort of consumptions. The aforementioned could constitute an element of nuance in relation to qualify deceitful homicides in these particular cases, as the mere product of gender violence, for, moreover, the information of these addictions suggests us an environment of deterioration in the relation and interaction of victim-murderer prior to the deceitful homicides. This is verified mainly in the cases when both protagonists in the homicide take drugs or alcohol, as in fact occurs. It is worth mentioning that the victims addicted to illegal drugs, who are concentrated at productive and reproductive ages, are at the time an economic and social problem, principally because their offspring could represent ailments and propensity to similar addictions. In relation to marginalization indexes in the victims' neighborhoods, we consider they allow us to show the environment of social inequality where most of the people involved in deceitful homicides lived. This has its counterpart in the profile of assassinated women in Ciudad Juárez,

<sup>9</sup> In this category of occupation it is information registered in the acts of expedients of deceitful homicides of the General Court of Justice of the State of Baja California, nonetheless, in the official information on occupations, housewives are part of the economically active population, who does not generate economic incomes, despite that socially these women take the social responsibility of generational reproduction and present and future workforce, which is a dimension of the gender problematic.

corresponding to poor women who lived in high-risk places (Fernández de Juan, 2004: 9). It necessary to pinpoint that there were deceitful homicides in neighborhoods where there are not high marginalization indexes, which supposes domestic and gender violence is present in diverse economic environments.

Men murderers are predominantly Mexican who victimized Mexican women; as for those of foreign nationality, we observe that two, out of three, victimized Mexican women. In a case the feature is that the motivation was burglary in the victims' residence. This indicates that the constant arrival and presence of immigrants into Tijuana contributes to the environment of insecurity for the population. In respect to the murderers' place of origin, it is observed that more than the half reinforces the internal immigration phenomenon Tijuana has undergone through time, however, there is local population who is taking part as murderer, to a lesser extent though. Referring to the concentration of the murderers at productive and reproductive ages, the social and economic cost is very important, since it impacts on family disintegration; social valuing and emotional repercussions for the murderers' close relatives, given the social stigmatization they are object of; interruption of economic contributions to the household, as well as the unfolding of the juridical apparatus and sanctioning and the support of the murderers in prisons, which is maintained through taxes, in the exception of the cases when the murderers commit suicide in the place of the homicide. Most of the murderers are united to a partner, a situation that reinforces the social and economic cost just mentioned. The information on the murderers' schooling expresses less low levels than those of the victims, which remits us to a gender particularity associated to feminine schooling delays, in relation to better social options and opportunities for men. Related to occupations, these send us to activities proper to salaried, self-employed people and unoccupied people, drug dealers and the case of one student; this reveals that it is not between differenced social strata where deceitful homicides occur, for even if there is less information on the murderer than on the victim, there is a profile of the former whose socio-economic condition is comparable to that of the latter, this considering that schooling, occupation and neighborhood variables that in general were spaces with high and very high levels of marginalization.<sup>10</sup> Referring to the intake of illegal drugs, murderers become a social and economic problem, mainly

<sup>10</sup> There are those levels, in spite the State of Baja California holds the third highest position at national level (0.8401) and is above the national IDH (0.8014), which can provide a picture of a State where environments of social inequality are difficulty observed. IDH is a figure obtained from the conjunction of three indexes that include: life expectancy, education index, and gross domestic product (GDP) per capita (Representatives' Chamber, 2006: 86).

because their offspring could have similar addictions or physical-biological ailments in their progeny, for instance, alcoholism syndrome.

The fact that the deceitful homicide's motivation is fundamentally concentrated in passion or domestic quarrels and at the time it is committed by partners or former partners makes the crime graver, for besides the disadvantage in physical force and treachery involved, the murderer is a traitor as transgresses what is expected from him due to his kinship, gratitude, friendship or any other that implies trust from the victim. In a juridical manner, deceitful homicide is aggravated by familial and non-familial relations, having the former heavier punishments. Apparently, rape homicide is low, nonetheless, due to the difficulty to register this deed, this is underestimated by the General Court of Justice of the State—the source of information used for this work—. We are aware of greater registrations of rape from coroners, on the cases we analyzed. Even if firearm is the most used weapon to commit homicides, in a similar proportion we find the murderer drawing to a variety of objects at reach in order to commit the crime, all of them in a framework of violence, taken to the extreme when physical force is used as the only means to commit the crime and its crude expression in the case of body mutilations. It is noteworthy that other means to murder are absent, such as poisoning that does not imply physical force. The cases of multiple homicides are especially explainable in the light of domestic and passion quarrels. Apart from this, the place where the corpses were found is largely associated to the relation of kinship between the victims and murderers, which refers to situations of extreme emotional violence for the rest of the relatives. Information on addictions present in both victims and murderers allows us to glimpse quotidian relations deteriorated by domestic violence,<sup>11</sup> recrudesced when addictions are present in the protagonists and culminate with the death of young women. As other authors have proposed we believe that any attempt to eradicate violence must directly attack its origins, so social and political inequality of men and women must be taken into account (Torres Falcón in Fernández de Juan, 2004: 10). Likewise, it is important to focus masculine violence as a social problem because

<sup>11</sup> Drunkenness is a vehicle for the potentiality of masculine violence toward women and children (Ferreira 1989 in Alberti in Teresa Fernández de Juan, 2004:39); moreover, it is an element closely linked to the union/abandonment cycle of women. Situations of acute violence, generated by jealousy, alcoholism and infidelity (Alberti, in Fernández de Juan, 2004: 21,39).

[...] it is important that men learn to see themselves as subjects that follow social mandates which go beyond them and that—in the exercise of violence— execute them without any further reflection [so educational work is essentially with men] for it is ‘violent men’ those who express the deepest paradox of this masculine domination system (Garda, in Fernández de Juan, 2004: 123,125).

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