

**ANALYSIS OF VIOLENCE TRIANGLE ON THE ISSUE OF FEMICIDE  
IN THE REPUBLIC OF HONDURAS (2013-2022)  
UNDERGRADUATE THESIS**



**UNIVERSITAS  
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Proposed to the Department of International Relations  
Faculty of Psychology and Socio-Cultural Sciences  
Universitas Islam Indonesia  
As a partial fulfilment of requirement to earn  
Bachelor Degree in International Relations



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Defended in front of Board of Examiners  
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## STATEMENT OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

I hereby declare that this undergraduate thesis is the result of my own independent scientific work, and that all material from the work of others (in books, articles, essays, dissertations, and on the internet) has been stated, and quotations and paraphrases are clearly indicated.

No other materials are used other than those contained. I have read and understood the university's rules and procedures regarding plagiarism.

Making false statements is considered a violation of academic integrity.

28 August 2023,



Audrey Nabila Habiba

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study explores the issue of femicide in Honduras between 2013 and 2022 using the violence triangle framework. Femicide is the deliberate killing driven by gender-related motivations. Cultural, structural, and direct violence are explored as key dimensions. Cultural violence, manifested through religious, ideological, and linguistic factors, perpetuates gender inequality. Structural violence is manifested in the prohibition of abortion and the misallocation of health resources, thereby increasing women's vulnerability; marginalisation and under-representation contribute even further. Direct violence includes visible acts such as aggression and killing. Despite the enactment of femicide law in 2013, Honduras is struggling to ensure women's safety and autonomy. By exposing the interaction of cultural, structural and direct violence through the concept of the violence triangle, this study provides a comprehensive perspective to understand femicide in Honduras. Gender-based violence, rooted in cultural norms and intensified by structural weaknesses, emerged as the driving force behind the killing of women. This study provides a complete view of the three factors contributing to femicide in Honduras.

**Keywords:** Femicide, Honduras, Gender, Violence Triangle, 2013-2022

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

Femicide, a manifestation of gender-based violence against women, is nothing new in this world that is broadly dominated by patriarchal structures and values. The patriarchal culture that is reluctant to disappear up until this day is still causing a rampant of social problems and issues, including femicide. Femicide includes various forms of gender-based violence that result in the intentional killing of women and girls solely because of their sex (World Health Organisation, 2021). It is a global phenomenon; an urgent issue for the safety of women around the world. This has become a very common occurrence even since our ancestors were still alive. Unfortunately, in this century, femicide is still one of the human rights violations that has a tremendous number of cases. It has been reported by the United Nations (UN) Women that in 2021, an estimated 81,000 women and girls were intentionally killed due to gender-related factors; the overall number of female homicide over the last decade has exhibited marginal change (UN Women, 2022).

Many countries have higher cases of violence against women compared to other countries. Honduras is one of those countries. Between 2002 and 2013, at least 3,923 women were murdered as the act of femicide in Honduras (Fides 2014). Moreover, 2,133 cases were for 2010 to 2013 alone (Commission of Human Rights 2014). That shows how the rate of femicide was getting higher and

higher by year– 83% in 2002 - 2009 and 2010 - 2013 (Ibid). This was all due to the lack of protection for women and girls in Honduras.

Honduras has the highest rate of femicide in the region of Latin America (UNDP 2021). As of 2019, the rate is 6.2 cases per 100,000 women and during the past decade the number has remained largely unchanged (UN ECLAC 2021). Honduras alone has significantly reduced its cases on femicide– and violence against women in general, in recent years, presumably due to the pandemic of COVID-19. However, it does not change the fact that it is one of the countries that have high numbers of cases in the world (Elena 2021).

In 2013, the Congress of Honduras amended the chapter of the criminal code concerning homicide to include the crime of femicide. The code defined femicide as: an act where a man or men killed a woman or women for reasons of gender, with hatred and contempt for her status as a woman, permitting 30 to 40 years of imprisonment. The conditions for femicide include a past or current partner relationship, prior domestic violence, preceding sexual violence or harassment, and/or the presence of cruelty or mutilation during or after the act (RELAPT n.d.).

Almost entirely femicide cases were dismissed by the law-enforcement officials, ultimately making the people who committed these femicide go unpunished (Educational Development Center 2020). It also has been reported that in Honduras, there are many cases of femicide went unnoticed and not reported since to the impunity of femicide (and sexual violence) which is up to 95 percent and other reasons concerning privacy and survival.

Femicide is manifested through the normalisation of gender based violence against women. Femicide corresponds in cultural, political, economic, and social aspects thus affecting women of all ages and backgrounds. It symbolises a broader context of violence against women while underscore the consequence of the normalisation and the unregulated sexism and misogyny. However, femicide is not solely a manifestation of gender based violence, it also reflects the deeply rooted structural problems and issues that perpetuate gender inequality. Femicide occurs from a complex intersectionality of life factors, including ingrained and deeply rooted social norms, gender discrimination, power and authority imbalance, and systematic injustice.

In 2014, a case that sparked national and international attention occurred as María José Alvarado and her sister– Sofia Trinidad, were shot and killed. Maria who was the Miss Honduras 2014 and her sister were then buried in a field by the killer– her sister’s boyfriend. Many have pointed out that this case was rather unusual occurrence as the victims had a good reputation and came from a family with stable financial situation, whereas many other victims of violence (against women, including femicide) are often members of impoverished households particularly in the slums surrounding big cities who have no means to flee the turmoil within their community (The Guardian 2014).

In 2016, two female environmental activists from the Council of Indigenous Peoples of Honduras (Copinh), Berta Cáceres and Lesbia Yaneth Urquía, were killed in March and July respectively. Cáceres was killed due to her activism while Urquia may have died due to family dispute as stated by the Honduran police. However, Copinh accused that the death of Urquía

“...constitutes a political femicide that seeks to silence the voices of women who defend their rights with courage against the patriarchal, racist, capitalist system”(BBC Mundo 2016). In 2018, a 27-year-old medical student was shot and killed after refusing to cooperate with a man who sexually abused her and her friend (Brigida 2019).

Based on that, it is important to understand how femicides manifest in an in-depth analysis. With Galtung’s concept of violence triangle, the issue of femicide in Honduras can be analysed, not only from the (direct) violence itself, but also from cultural and structural factors. Furthermore, to analyse how the three violences named cultural, structural, and direct violences, are responsible for the manifestation of femicide in Honduras.

## **1.2 Research Question**

Based on the background, the research question of this study is:

How is the issue of femicide in Honduras analysed by the concept of violence triangle?

## **1.3 Research Objectives**

The objectives of this research are:

1. To identify forms of violence against women that lead to the issue of femicide in Honduras.
2. To review the issue of femicide in the Republic of Honduras based on the concept of violence triangle.

#### **1.4 Research Scope**

In this research, the author set the limitations with the reason not to expand the assessment in the issue. The author will only analyse this issue using a concept that has been studied in an international relations study program: the Violence Triangle Concept. The author chose to analyse the case study in Honduras since the country had the highest femicide rate in Latin America for the past decade (UNDP 2021). The author will also only be analysing the cases of gender-based violence against women from 2013 to 2022. The year 2013 was the year Honduras implemented the Femicide Law, Legislative Decree 23. Moreover, the year 2022 indicates the latest full year that Honduras is still struggling with the issue.

#### **1.5 Literature Review**

In this research, the author conducts analysis of several previous studies that have similar scope with this research. The scope itself is the usage of violence triangle concept in a case, as well as other studies of femicide– a manifestation of gender-based violence against women in the Republic of Honduras. The follows are previous studies that has similarity with this research:

First is a work by Ganindra Ahmad Altamir in their article with the title “Women's Resistance Against Sexual Violence in The Keeping Room Movie (2014)”. This article analyses the sexual violence against women in a movie from 2014 entitled *The Keeping Room* (Altamir 2020, 78). Not only that, the article also analyses the resistance of women against sexual violence. This article discusses the concept of violence triangle by Johan Galtung and theory of resistance by James Scott. Altamir also implicitly encloses how to apply the

concept of violence triangle into a case. This journal discusses the crucial aspect of violence triangle. However, as this journal analysed a movie, the materials itself lack real life coverages. Therefore, this research will be using real life study cases with the same approach, namely the concept of violence triangle.

As for the second literature, the author has a journal article by Maaret Jokela-Pansini, entitled Complicating notions of violence: An embodied view of violence against women in Honduras (Jokela-Pansini 2020, 3). This journal describes the living condition in Honduras, especially their notions of violence. This journal is a crucial point for this research. The study talks about the variant of violence in Honduras and how the people there learn how to live with it in their everyday lives. The study suggests that Honduran people are forced to cope with that method. However, this journal article is too broad in scope, namely the violence against women in Honduras as it was intended for the general public. The approach made in this journal was from the perspective of feminism. Therefore, this research will cover the topic on the issue of femicide in the Republic of Honduras and then will be reviewed using the concept of violence triangle.

And for the third literature, an article paper by Maya Dania and Nichan Singhaputargun. With the title: Violence Triangle in Context of Indonesian Comfort Women, the paper discusses the violences experienced by Indonesian comfort women (Dania and Singhapaturgan 2020, 80). A thorough analysis about the three branches of violence triangle: direct, structural, and cultural, while putting them into the actual case back during the era of World War II. However, the case used in this article was dated back almost a century ago. Therefore, using

the same exact concept: violence triangle, the author will conduct an analysis of a recent case from 2013 to 2022 which is the issue of femicide in the Republic of Honduras.

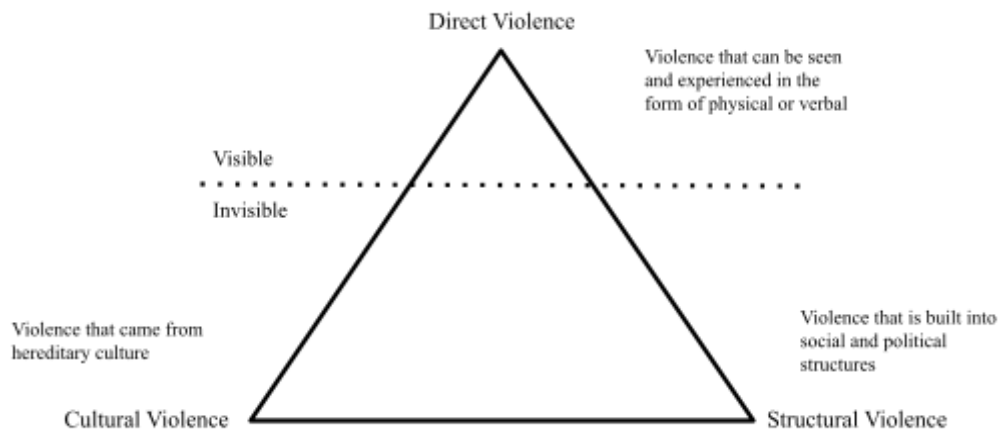
From several studies conducted by many other authors, those show that there is great evidence of the existence of gender based violence against women around the world. However, there has never been any research on the analysis of gender based violence against women specifically in the Republic of Honduras. Therefore, this research will be analysing the issue of femicide in the Republic of Honduras, reviewed with the concept of violence triangle.

## **1.6 Research Framework**

This research uses the concept of violence triangle as a tool to analyse the issue of femicide in the Republic of Honduras in the year 2013-2022. The concept model of Violence Triangle was first introduced by Johan Galtung in his paper “Violence, Peace, and Peace Research”. Galtung explained that violence could be distinguished into three dimensions: direct violence, structural violence, and cultural violence. Those three dimensions can be depicted and described as the three arms of a triangle– hence the name (Galtung, 1990, 294).



**Picture 1. Violence Triangle**



Source: (Galtung 1990, 291-305)

In the three dimensions of violence itself, there is still a clear line that distinguishes them even more. The line is visibility. Direct violence falls under the visible side. This violence is something that the victim feels and experiences. The impact has visible effects. It may afflict both in the form of physical and psychological— e.g., assault, killing, verbal violence, and other behaviour resulting in psychological issues. Whereas the violence in structural and cultural arms cannot be seen with naked eyes. The impact has invisible effects. Structural violence is a violence that comes from systematic injustice, caused by authoritarian institutions or policies. This violence impacts a particular(s) group of people, and it causes them the inability to fulfil their basic needs and/or necessities. The examples for structural violence are sexism, classism, racism, nationalism, etc. Lastly is cultural violence, it is a violence that comes from religion, ideology, ethnicities, etc. People tend to have social norms in society. However, the enforcement of social norms are sometimes harmful for other people. People feel like their own norms are the only one who are right while the

others are wrong. Occasionally, cultural violence commingle with the other two violences: direct and structure. The two usually are a tool to impose cultural norms that lead to cultural violence. For example, a man was killed due to his religious belief. This can be classified as both direct and cultural violence.

The author believes the concept of violence triangle is very suited to this research. Since the issue in this research is femicide, the three arms of violence triangle may help the author to analyse and understand the occurrence of the issue better. There are many cases in the Republic of Honduras regarding femicide that may support the interpretation of violence triangle in this research. In particular, there are numbers of femicide cases due to sexism and an ideology that women have to act and think a certain way. It also has been numerous reported by several organisations that the majority of the femicide cases were never even investigated. Thus, the author believes that the concept of violence triangle by Johan Galtung is compatible and corresponds with the issue of this research: femicide.

## **1.7 Provisional Argument**

Based on the background of the research explained above, it can be concluded that gender based violence is a common occurrence in Honduras. With that, the author predicts that femicide in Honduras occurred with the base of the three branches of violence in the Galtung's concept: violence triangle. In Honduras, *machismo* culture is strongly held by the people, leading to the deaths of many women throughout the years, 465 deaths of women, with 408 deaths categorised as femicide, in 2013 alone. With cultural violence and direct violence

being presented, the police force— a body representing civil authority of the government, has yet to prioritise the safety and justice for Honduran women. This can be proven with the fact that Honduras has an impunity rate of 95% for sexual violence and femicide crimes (The Advocates for Human Rights 2016). Hence, direct violence, structural violence, and cultural violence are all significant variables to observe the condition of femicide in Honduras. Ultimately, the provisional arguments that are based on the assumption of the author will be analysed thoroughly in the next chapters.

## **1.8 Research Method**

### ***1.8.1 Type of the Research***

In analysing the issue of femicide in the Republic of Honduras using the concept of violence triangle, the author uses the qualitative method to do so. This is due to the nature of qualitative research in which the epistemology emphasises the aspect of in-depth understanding of a problem referring to the data collected that shows and focuses on the description and observation.

### ***1.8.2 Subject and Object of the Research***

The subject of this research is Honduras and its government, whereas the object is the issue of femicide in Honduras during 2013-2022.

### ***1.8.3 Method of Data Collection***

This research uses descriptive analytical research as its data collection method. This method is statistics used to analyse data by describing and recapitulating it in the aim to deeply study a certain issue (Valamis, 2019). While

recapitulating the data collected from reliable sources, it is not the author's intention to generalise the information while summarising it.

#### **1.8.4 *Process of the Research***

During the research process, the author will collect data from many different reliable sources: journals, theses, articles, books, etc. The author will then make comparisons between one source and another as a way to check the validity of the data. After that, the author will observe and analyse the data to complete the research question of this research.

### **1.9 Thesis Outline**

In order to make this research easier to read and follow, the writing of this research will be carried out systematically as follows:

#### **A. Chapter 1: Introduction**

In this chapter, the author will include the background, research question, research objective, research scope, research significance, literature review, research method, and chapter structure of the research. This chapter provides an explanation of the introductory information before carrying out the research: the process and the results of it.

#### **B. Chapter 2: Analysis of Cultural Violence in Honduras**

In this second chapter, the author will explain the analysis of cultural violence in Honduras in the aspects of religion, language, and ideology.

#### **C. Chapter 3: Analysis of Structural Violence and Direct Violence in Honduras**

In this third chapter, the author will explain the analysis of structural violence and direct violence in Honduras.

#### D. Chapter 4: Conclusion

In this chapter, the author will be revising the analysis conducted before, and will then make a conclusion paragraphs of the whole thesis. This chapter indicates the completion of the thesis.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **ANALYSIS OF CULTURAL VIOLENCE IN HONDURAS**

The case of femicide in the Republic of Honduras that will be analysed using Galtung's cultural violence concept which in his book, Galtung describes that there are seven aspects of cultural violence: religion, ideology, language, art, formal science, empirical science, and cosmology (Galtung 1990, 291-301). However, based on the current state of Honduras in terms of, the author settled on three aspects of cultural violence, namely: religion, ideology, and language. While the four other aspects were not selected to be analysed in this study. To begin with, the aspect of art is not selected since Honduran arts are used by artists to empower women and perpetuate gender equality, instead of carrying out gender-based violence. Furthermore, empirical science relates to the structural economy in terms of production on an international level, thus cannot be related to the issue of femicide. As for the formal science that discusses the topic of black and white answers with no space for ambiguity and uncertainty, this topic cannot be related to it as the issue of femicide in Honduras requires deeper and complex understanding or interpretations. At last, cosmology will not be included in this chapter's analysis since the aspect explores the cultural root that is deeper than reality while it flows naturally; since Honduras was colonised by Spain in the 16th century, Spain consequently influenced Honduras which eventually produced new culture in the country.

This chapter analyses the cultural significance in the manifestation of femicide. Moreover, Galtung also stated that cultural violence can lead to justifications for structural violence and direct violence as those tend to be more

systematic and explicit (Galtung 1990, 291). In addition to that, Galtung added that when the cultural violence stood by the branch of structural violence and direct violence, it may imply that cultural violence is the legitimizer of both.

## **2.1 Context of Femicide in Honduras**

Honduras suffers a severe femicide crisis over the past decade, where women are subjected and killed due to their gender. This issue reflects complex intersectional challenges in the country including gender discrimination, harmful social norms or stereotypes in gender, and power imbalance and inequality that perpetuate women's marginalisation.

Furthermore, Honduras has the highest femicide rate in Latin America (UNDP 2021). The survival risks of Honduran women came from various aspects: health and reproductive, socio-political, economic, etc. Gang-related violence and organised crimes that are rampant in Honduras also worsen the condition of women in the country, increasing risks to their lives.

Despite legislative effort by enacting a criminal code of femicide, the number from before and after the law has remained significantly unchanged. The Congress of Honduras has amended the chapter in the criminal code concerning homicide to include the crime of femicide (UN Women 2023). The Legislative Decree No. 23-2013 referred to the act of femicide as a punishable offence where a man killed a woman for reasons of gender, with hatred and contempt for her status as a woman. The law permits an imprisonment of 30 to 40 years. The conditions for femicide include a past or current partner relationship, prior

domestic violence, preceding sexual violence or harassment, and/or the presence of cruelty or mutilation during or after the act (RELAPT n.d.).

## **2.2 Cultural Violence in the Aspect of Religion**

According to Johan Galtung in *Journal of Peace Research*, in every religion there is some place that is sacred and holy called *das Heilige*, where “God” exists. The Judaism described in the Torah which was established around 4000 years ago, believed in a male deity of a God who existed beyond the planet Earth. Galtung suggests that it is “a catastrophe idea” as a consequence to the other occidental (western) religions, such as Christianity and Islam, following the concept (Galtung 1990, 296). Another consequence from that view is that it enforces traditional gender roles and stereotypes in society where men are seen as more paramount and superior. It also serves as a blueprint that might contribute to patriarchal power structures in religious institutions. Furthermore, Galtung adds that it is highly probable that certain people will be perceived as “higher”, due to their closeness to God (Galtung 1990, 296).



**Table 1. The Chosen and The Unchosen**

<b>God Chooses</b>	<b>And Leaves to Satan</b>	<b>With the Consequence of</b>
Human Species	Animals, Plants, Nature	Speciesism, Ecocide
Men	Women	Sexism, Witch-burning
His People	Others	Nationalism, Imperialism
Whites	Colored	Racism, Colonialism
Upper Classes	Lower Classes	Classism, Exploitation
True Believers	Heretic, Pagan	Meritism, Inquisition

Source: (Galtung 1990, 297)

Based on the table above (Table 1), it is shown which group of people are the chosen one (by God) and the unchosen ones (by God, chosen by Satan); in this scenario, the chosen ones would be closer to God in Heaven for salvation, while the unchosen ones would be closer to Satan in Hell and face damnation (Galtung 1990, 297). Galtung also added that earthly experience can mirror Heaven and Hell as a foretaste or preview of the afterlife; Luxury and misery could be perceived as a trial and preparations for Heaven and Hell respectively, and that social class is viewed as an indication divine intervention– or the finger of God, quoting Galtung’s words (Galtung 1990, 297). Incorporate this perspective with the issue of women in Honduras, it can be suggested that women are seen as the unchosen ones while men are seen as the chosen ones, thus women are doomed with sexism and witch-burning as the consequences.

Patriarchal patterns are shown and deeply rooted in the society of Honduras. Patriarchy itself is a social structure through political, economic, and any other structural systems in which men hold more power and authority than

women. It is a social structure that has been deep embedded into the culture of Honduras. The patriarchal culture in the country is fostered and influenced by the church– both the evangelical and catholic church (OHCHR 2018). Honduras’s predominant religion is Christianity. A poll released in 2020 by CID Gallup showed a result in which 48% of Honduran population identify themselves as Evangelical Protestants while 34% identify as Roman Catholics (US Office of International Religious Freedom 2022, 2).

The first branch of Christianity introduced to Honduras is Roman Catholicism. It was first introduced in the 16th century by the Spanish conquistadors while then being spread during the colonial period. Catholicism was also the most predominant religion in Honduras up until approximately 2007 (US Department of State n.d.). Shortages of Catholic priests in recent years may have contributed to the rise of evangelicalism due to its capacity in providing consistent religious leadership service to its members compared to Catholicism (Catholic Culture 2021). Hence, it may be suggested that Christianity has had an abundance of influence on the country’s culture in the past century.

In the context of religion, it is essential to highlight that while religious teachings may not explicitly advocate patriarchy and gender-based inequalities, there are instances of misinterpretation and misuse of biblical verses and scriptures throughout time that contributed to current condition and societal positioning of women in Honduras (Hibma 2016, 12). Few have been misconstrued to perpetuate the idea that women are inferior to men, leading to their vulnerability to abuse (Baloyi 2008, 2).

The narrative of Adam and Eve in Genesis 2:21-23 is often interpreted to suggest that since Eve was created from Adam, she serves purpose as his companion and helper, establishing a notion of hierarchy (Milne 1989). Furthermore, in 1 Timothy 2:13-14 when Eve was deceived thus was held responsible for the original sin, it reinforces the notion that since women are more prone to deception, they should not hold an authoritative role.

Moreover, some interpretations such as 1 Timothy 2:11-12 and 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 limit women's voice in church— by submission and quietness (Baloyi 2008, 2). In addition, the concept of male headship and women's submission within marital relationships to their husbands— in Ephesians 5:22-24 and Colossians 3:18, perpetuate further notion of inequality and discrimination within gender hierarchy (Hibma 2016, 14).

With 82% of Hondurans adhering Christianity, the misinterpretation and misuse of scriptural teachings on male authority they profess likely contributes to women's societal oppression in Honduras. Even a subject of abuse which was then justified by Hondurans' interpretation of those religious verses. Beside the verses within religious scriptures, there is also an ideology or culture in Honduras— as in many other Latin American countries, that was stemmed from religion called *marianismo*. The term describes the cultural construct representing the idealised perception and expectation in women's gender role; expected to mirror the Virgin Mary who is viewed as symbolising chaste innocence and obedience (Castillo L., Pereza 2010, Castillo R., and Ghoshehb 164).

The five pillars of *marianismo* are Family Pillar, Virtuous and Chaste, Subordinate to Others, Silencing Self to Maintain Harmony, and Spiritual Pillar

(Kosmicki 2017). *Marianismo* normalises women's submission to men's power and authority. Honduran men also exhibit a significant fixation with the concept of *marianismo*, idealising the archetype of the 'real woman,' to an extent that it has detrimental impacts on women who do not conform to these expected behavioural norms, resulting in domestic violence and femicide.

Based on Galtung's cultural violence on the aspect of religion, it can be shown that the cultural condition influenced by religion in Honduras aligns with the concept— where Men was chosen by God, while Women was chosen by Satan and that sexism was generated as a consequence. The religious teachings of Christianity have cultivated an environment where women are not in an equal status of men and where women's nature is to be submissive and obedient. In such an environment, women are more prone to gender-based violence including femicide.

### **2.3 Cultural Violence in the Aspect of Ideology**

Since society has become more secular in the modern world and less focused on traditional religious beliefs and values, those beliefs and values will eventually be replaced by another entity similar to God in a form of political ideology and modern state (Galtung 1990, 298). Religion and God may die out or decline throughout modern times, however, the idea of dividing the universe remains the same. Before the modern state was established, religion drew lines between God, the Chosen Ones, the Unchosen ones, and Satan, but with modernity— where the belief of God and Satan may fade away, the world demanded a new way to separate the Chosen and the Unchosen; Self and Other

(Galtung 1990, 298). With the State as God's successor, Galtung added; enforcing, in this case, gender stereotypes and norms (Galtung 1990, 298).

Much like many other countries in Latin America, Honduras was introduced to the culture of hypermasculinity by the Spanish conquistadors and Roman Catholicism in the 16th century. Over time it adapted to a culture of machismo— subsequently upholds the apparent difference in gender roles throughout history (Ceballos 2013, 1). Mosher and Tomkins define the ideology of machismo as a framework shaping a perspective that chauvinistically glorifies the idea of "real men" with qualities like masculinity, virility, and physicality as the epitome of genuine manhood engaged in adversarial competition for limited sources— including women as their possessions (Mosher and Tomkins 1988, 64).

Machismo often reflects violence in the negative behaviour of men towards women through the power and authority they possess. Violence against women and patriarchal values are then justified and even sometimes encouraged by the culture of machismo. The consequences of machismo on women's lives are substantial. While women are affected in a political, economic, and social setting— in the form of oppression, women may also face verbal, emotional, and even physical abuse due to the culture of machismo.

A distinct behavioural tendency rationalised by hypermasculinity (or macho personality) is the entitlement to callous sex (Mosher and Sirkin 1984, 154). This suggests that women have to comply with men's sexual desires unconditionally. Sexual violence in Honduras is rampant as proven by the 2.914 reported cases of sexual violence in the most recent year of 2022 (Herrera 2023). There was also a femicide case in 2018 of a 27-year-old medical student who was

shot and killed after refusing to cooperate with a man who sexually abused her and her friend (Brigida 2019).

Furthermore, generally man would demand his family members to submit to his authority as the head of family (Barzallo and Tribby 2022). In an environment where the father dominates the household while the mother's voice is dismissed, it creates a hierarchy set as an example for the children. The hierarchy also opens up wider access to domestic violence and family abuse as reported by the National Emergency System of 2022 that registered 38.331 and 59.147 complaints respectively (Centro de Derechos de Mujeres 2023).

There is an increase of complexity to alter this ideology, given that machismo has been assimilated into culture in society as a fact of nature (Rembecki 2022, 24). Based on Galtung's idea on cultural violence in the aspect of ideology, while confronting the power and authority of men, women find themselves engaged in a constant battle for their rights and survival necessities (Prado 2005, 12-13). Accordingly, Galtung's idea of cultural violence in ideology is demonstrated in Honduras. While Honduras is still predominantly a religious country, an ideology formed from religious teachings is still dividing between men (chosen) and women (unchosen), leading to gender inequality and discrimination. Ultimately, the ideology practised in Honduras is responsible for the gender-based violence experienced by women including femicide.

#### **2.4 Cultural Violence in the Aspect of Language**

In his writings on cultural violence in the aspect of language, Galtung suggested that in certain languages, particularly those with a Latin base such as

Italian, Spanish, French (and Modern English), contribute to gender inequality through the usage of masculine or male-gendered terms to refer and represent the entire human species (Galtung 1990, 299).

May be referred to as ‘generic masculinisation’, this linguistic phenomenon erases women’s visibility within society while reinforcing patriarchal norms. By continuously using male gender terms in a gender exclusive language, it encourages the linguistic structure to indirectly promote gender bias and discrimination.

The official language of Honduras– like the majority of the countries in Central America, is the Spanish language. Before the arrival of the Spanish, Honduras had their own cultures inhabited by the Mayans, the Lencas, and other indigenous tribes. These cultures each had their own languages and coexisted within the region which is now known as Honduras. Honduran Spanish itself evolved from the Spanish conquistadors, led by Hernán Cortés in 1524. They began to spread their influence on the Spanish language throughout the colonial period and overtime, it became more dominant although several dialects and other indigenous languages fused with it.

The use of gendered language impacts how women are treated and regarded (World Bank 2019). Furthermore, gendered languages are allowing sexist expressions and attitudes in a broader context. Fundamentally, the rule in this male-dominated world is that males are associated with positive attributes, while females, as a consequence, are associated with negative attributes (Spender 1980).

During the early timeline of industrialisation, when women started to enter the workplace, they had no opportunity to occupy certain positions that are deemed as “man’s job”— such as leadership roles or other highly intelligent jobs (Garzia-Perez 2018, 45). This happens especially in a country where the majority of the nouns in the official language show that women are seen much less than men, including in Spanish speaking countries, such as Honduras. For instance *la ministra*, the feminine equivalent to *el ministro* (meaning: the minister), is used to refer to the wife of the minister. This also applies to other nouns such as *la alcaldesa* and *la jueza* which are terms used to refer to the wife of a mayor and the wife of a judge— respectively (Garzia-Perez 2018, 45). While this preventing women from having an equal footing with their male colleagues even ever since the beginning of the working culture, throughout time, this phenomenon has generated an actual situation where men are allowed to have better labour rights and working conditions than women (Garzia-Perez 2018, 45); and that this phenomena as a whole is deemed as the norms since the language– an important tool to communicate, grant the framework. This can be validated with the fact that for the past years, the gender wage gap in the government sector was 30% (UN Women 2022) and that on average, a woman earns 65 cents for every dollar a man earns (Oxfam n.d.). Despite women representing 39.9% of the labour force in 2022, their earnings remain substantially lower than men's (The World Bank n.d.)

Furthermore, those sexist nouns can be found in the DLE. DLE itself is an abbreviation from *Diccionario de la Lengua Española* (Dictionary of the Spanish Language); may be known as DRAE (its previous official name). The dictionary is an established set of Spanish language guidelines published by the *Real*



*Academia Española* or RAE. Additionally, as it is currently the most used dictionary of the Spanish language, it is bound to have an authoritative nature (RAE n.d). Within the dictionary, the nouns previously mentioned are also described as such. Though it also has the same definition as the masculine, RAE also added the colloquial use of the noun: ‘the wife of...’ (Garzia-Perez 2018, 45).

A few Spanish adjectives (within nouns) also have the same issue with the previously mentioned nouns and that they both can be found in DLE. Shown by Carmin F. Martin in his study journal (Martin 2011, 73), there are few examples of adjectives in the Spanish language that show how prejudice against women can be used in gendered words. Meaning that there are words that inherently mean the same but in the rhetorical context and practice on gendered language, they have two completely different meanings– specifically by using the feminine term, they have devalued the adjective’s connotation from the actual meaning.

Devalued connotation of an adjective can be shown with Spanish pair words: ‘cortesano’/’cortesana’ (Martin 2011, 73), whereas *cortesano* means the host and to refer to a distinguished one; while *cortesana* refers to a courtly lady who practises prostitution in a elegant and distinguished way (RAE n.d). In the same vein, the pair words of ‘maestro/maestra’. While it still inherently refer to similar line of work, the implications of the position itself are not equal: *maestro* may signifies higher position in school including master of an expertise and schoolteacher; while *maestra* is only to refer to a schoolmistress (Martin 2011, 74), furthermore, the feminine term may be used to refer to *maestro*’s wife (RAE n.d).

In the pair of ‘gobernante’ and ‘gobernanta’ (Martin 2011, 74), for *gobernante*, it means a governor or the ruler of the country, and as for *gobernanta*, it is a woman in hotels who is in charge of the cleaning service, or a woman responsible for the administration of a house or institution (RAE n.d.). In addition, the pair of the term, ‘solterón’/‘solterona’, where *solterón* is used to refer to bachelor men in the range of middle aged who are highly desired and sought after by women, whereas its feminine counterpart, *solterona*, is perceived in a negative light— describing unmarried women who are older than the typical age range that is considered to be the ideal age for marriage in certain society (Cambridge Dictionary n.d.).

Based on what Galtung has said in the cultural violence on the aspect of language, it can be shown that the cultural condition in Honduras aligns with the concept. Especially since Galtung stated that language makes women invisible by using the male-gendered term to refer to the entire human species as it also can be used to discriminate against a particular group of people in society (Galtung 1990, 299)— in this context: women. All the more the usage of Spanish language— in Honduras, that puts women down while placing them below men serves substantial evidence of gender bias. It is this type of gender bias that normalises violence against women which ultimately leads to the rise of femicide cases in Honduras.

Accordingly, cultural violence in Honduras came from the aspect of religion, ideology, and language. As stated by Galtung, these cultural violence are the justification of structural and direct violence (Galtung 1990, 291). This

argument is validated further by the fact that other countries similar to Honduras— in terms of religion (Christianity), ideology (machismo), and language (Spanish), also have a similar issue which is the manifestation of femicide; countries such as Mexico (Farhan 2022), El Salvador, and Guatemala. Subsequently, the next chapter will proceed to analyse the structural violence and a direct violence as a facilitator of femicide manifestation and the femicide itself, respectively.

**CHAPTER 3**

**ANALYSIS OF STRUCTURAL AND DIRECT VIOLENCE IN**

**HONDURAS**

In accordance with Galtung's analysis, the cultural violence may be operated as the justification for structural and direct violences. Since the justification has been analysed, it is now appropriate to analyse the structural violence that facilitated the manifestation of femicide in Honduras; and the normalisation of direct (gender-based) violence that lead to the considerably high number of femicide cases.

**Table 2. A Typology of Violence**

Type of Violence	Survival Needs	Well-being Needs	Identity Needs	Freedom Needs
Direct Violence	Killing	Maiming Saige Sanctions Misery	Decosialisation Resocialization Secondary Citizen	Repression Detention Expulsion
Structural Violence	Exploitation A	Exploitation B	Penetration Segmentation	Marginalisation Fragmentation

Source: (Galtung 1990, 292)

Galtung further added that in both structural and direct violences, there are four elements of ecological balance that have to be satisfied in order to maintain or achieve 'peace'. They are survival needs, well-being needs, identity needs, and freedom needs. Moreover, if one of the fundamental aspects is not satisfied, it would lead to an ecological degradation and imbalance (Galtung 1990, 292).

### **3.1 Structural Violence**

Structural violence is a form of violence in which some social institutions or structures prevent people from equal access to the fulfilment of their basic human needs in a systematic way. The basic human needs may refer to aspects such as health, economic, political, cultural, etc. The negative impacts of these social institutions and structures on the people are very substantial as they are essentially the vital framework with significant influence of a country's social order. Moreover, given the intricate and complex frameworks (within institutions and structures), it is rather difficult to identify the perpetrators and actors responsible for the violence compared to the direct violence. Specifically, Galtung describes in the Table 2, that there are four categories of structural violence: to start with, 'exploitation A' affects survival needs; 'exploitation B' affects well-being needs; 'penetration' and 'segmentation' affects identity needs; and lastly, 'marginalisation' and 'fragmentation' affects freedom needs (Galtung 1990, 292). This research will analyse the survival, well-being, and freedom needs and will not include identity needs as there is no explicit evidence that the violation of penetration and segmentation have been committed by the structural institutions in Honduras in the past decade.

Honduras struggles with a deeply entrenched social and political structure marred by corruption (Olson 2023), causing immense harm to its citizens, particularly women. The country's institutions often fail to provide adequate protection and support, perpetuating a cycle of gender-based violence and discrimination. Rampant corruption within law enforcement, judicial systems, and government bodies hinders effective implementation of protective measures and

the enforcement of laws like the femicide law. This dire situation not only undermines women's rights but also obstructs progress towards a safer and more equitable society for all Hondurans.

### **3.1.1 Structural Violence in the Aspect of Survival Needs**

Based on Galtung's table of typology of violence, there is a type of violence that harms the 'survival needs' of a subject: exploitation A. According to the perspective of Galtung, the fundamental trait of a violent structure involves the concept of exploitation as its central element. He further indicates that within the structure, there are 'topdogs' who receive more benefits than others, the 'underdogs'. This phenomenon of unequal exchange is referred to as euphemism— a phenomenon where it is clear that the balance of benefits is heavily favoured by one group of people (in this context: the topdogs). Furthermore, the underdogs could in fact be so disadvantaged that they die. Galtung referred to this violence as Exploitation A (Galtung 1990, 293).

In a report of Human Rights Watch, there were 8,600 women seeking medical attention and then hospitalised due to miscarriage and abortion in 2017 according to the health secretary. Additionally, there were 23 maternal deaths in that year though the health secretary claimed that only one of the deaths was caused by abortion (HRW 2019). Conversely, it is important to recognise that in a country where abortion is prohibited by the law, women are often forced to claim their abortion as a miscarriage. Thus, Human Rights Watch stated the possibility of a higher number of maternal deaths caused by abortion as an attempt of women to conceal their abortions from authorities (Dickson 2023).

In Honduras, abortions under any circumstances are prohibited by law, even in the scenario such as rape, incest, or if the woman or the baby inside her is in danger. The criminalisation of abortions extends to both the woman receiving the procedure and the medical professionals facilitating it (HRW 2020). A research from 2018 showed that even under the law of prohibition, women are still having abortions at about the same rate as women who live in the country with access and no restrictions to abortions (Kwok, Onda, Remez, Sedgh, and Singh 2018, 8); but instead, the prohibition law just resulted in riskier abortions that lead to the endangerment of the women's health and chance of survival (HRW 2019). Much just like the scenario in Honduras, there is a confidential matter about the knowledge of abortions around poor neighbourhoods across the country— regarding pill sources, discreet usage methods, appropriate response and strategy if a medical assistance in hospital is needed, and other tools (blunt objects, herbal remedies, and traditional herbal treatments) to terminate pregnancy out of desperation when no other option is accessible (Volpi 2022).

Galtung's concept of structural violence that harms the survival needs of a subject aligns with the condition of Honduras. The social structure and institutions— in this case: the government who passed the prohibition law, failed to satisfy the survival needs of the subject— in this case: women undergo an unwanted pregnancy, they are often left to fend for themselves and eventually end in tragic maternal death (Galtung 1990, 293). A situation where the underdogs keep suffering until the day they die because of the topdogs.

### **3.2.2 Structural Violence in the Aspect of Well-Being Needs**

Based on Galtung's table of typology of violence, there is a type of violence that harms the 'well-being needs' of a subject: exploitation B. According to the perspective of Galtung, the fundamental trait of a violent structure involves the concept of exploitation as its central element. He further indicates that within the structure, there are 'topdogs' who receive more benefits than others, the 'underdogs'. This phenomenon of unequal exchange is referred to as euphemism— a phenomenon where it is clear that the balance of benefits is heavily favoured by one group of people (in this context: the topdogs). Furthermore, the underdogs could in fact be so disadvantaged that they could be in a constant state of suffering and misery. This state of condition often includes adversities such as malnutrition and illness and is referred to as 'exploitation B' (Galtung 1990, 293).

While discussing the topic on the exploitation of well-being needs, it is essential to identify and determine manifestations of what constitutes with violence against the well-being of a subject— in this context: women. Whilst Galtung suggested that the constant state of misery may include adversity from the aspect of health, it is possible to suggest that it may come from any other aspects, such as economic, political, socio-cultural, and legal. While it is possible that an aspect may stand alone as an adversity, it is important to recognise the intersectionality of the adversities. It validates the overlapping identities of a subject; for instance: a mother of four who came from a poor family with no high school diploma could not secure employment during the pandemic, this means



that her struggle not only came from one aspect but it came from every other aspect at the same time.

Women– or people in general, in Honduras have been suffering from high levels of poverty. As recent as the data extracted from 2023 by the World Bank, it becomes apparent that the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Honduras has demonstrated a trend of evident increase since the year 2013 until the year 2022– and that there had only been a singular instance of a decline in the year 2020 due to the COVID-19 (Macrotrends n.d.). Despite the economic expansion of the GDP (itself) and its trajectory growth that were above the average of both Central America and Latin America, there has yet to be a conversion of the GDP growth into increased household income, particularly in the rural areas (The World Bank 2023).

Moreover, a significant gender discrepancy exists within the poverty rate, with women being disproportionately affected compared to men while also lacking any source of individual income. In addition, with every dollar men earn, on the average, women only earn 65 cents (Oxfam n.d.). Additionally due to COVID-19 in 2020, women had been laid off from their jobs more than men. The unemployment rate of men rose from 4.2% to 8.7% in a year; while the employment rate of women rose from 8.1% to 13.7% in a year (UN ECLAC 2021). Businesses had to suspend or lay off their employees as a response to the substantial economic disruption caused by the pandemic.

Simultaneously, the high rate of poverty and unemployment in Honduras would lead to the lack of individual's access to the health care system. As of now, 18% of the people have no access to medical assistance (International Health

Partners n.d.). Even if they do have access to healthcare, they sometimes have to travel for it– a family from Colon had to travel to San Pedro Sula by bus in order to get their daughter the medical assistance she needed (Volpi n.d.). Carmen Madrid– of the Regional Committee of the People’s Health Movement and the Citizen Alliance for Health in Honduras, added that, before Xiomara Castro (from the Liberty and Foundation (LIBRE)) was elected in 2022 as the president, the previous party– the National Party, had an issue with corruption and embezzlement of the Ministry of Health’s funds– the amount of USD\$200 million was misappropriated from IHSS (Institute of Honduran Social Security) originally established to guarantee the accessibility of a healthcare to the population of Honduras (BBC Mundo 2015). Not only the budget cut resulted from the mentioned offences against the population, the party had also reduced the capacity of health centres to be able to provide care by allegedly hiring their political activists for election purposes (Alexandra 2022).

These cases of deprived situations in Honduras are a prominent concern and issue of the well-being of the people, specifically Honduran women and young girls. Galtung’s statement aligns with this particular condition of Honduras, as they cannot satisfy the needs of the subject’s well-being, they are left into a state of suffering and misery (Galtung 1990, 293). With the limited access to public health assistance due to the embezzlement, women who are likely to be unemployed than men and have no earnings of income inevitably have to look to the private sector which by the year 2020 the private health services increased by 10.9% (UN ECLAC 2021). This intersectionality of struggle and misery

perpetuates the gender inequality which eventually increases the rise of gender based violence including femicide.

### **3.2.3 Structural Violence in the Aspect of Freedom Needs**

Based on Galtung's typology of violence, there are forms of violence that harms the freedom needs of a subject: marginalisation and fragmentation (Galtung 1990, 292). Marginalisation, a violence for keeping the underdog on the outskirts of an influence; while fragmentation, a violence in the form of keeping the underdogs from one another— isolating them to further actions that will lead them to unite and prevent them to an act of resistance (Galtung 1990, 294). The two violences can be adopted and integrated with the context of gender— with women being the underdogs whereas social structure and institutions being the topdogs. Marginalisation in the context of gender can suggest the exclusion of women from leadership roles, process of decision making, and even as far as limiting women to educational opportunities— exuding them from the centre of power and influence. Simultaneously, fragmentation in the context of gender can refer to the isolation of women solidarity with limited networking access and safe space between one another.

In 2013, the Congress of Honduras amended a reform of the Criminal Code to classify the offence of femicide as a punishable crime with a possibility of sentences from 30 up to 40 years. In 2017, there was a proposal to reduce the sentence from 20 to 30 years. In 2018, the new code passed and has not been cleared by the executive branch— which has the decision authority to either repeal or amend the law (Herrera 2020).

This shows the lack of protection Honduras is willing to give to women, the subjugation of femicide. With the majority of seats in the Honduran National Congress in 2017 and 2018 of predominantly men– 78.3% (or 110) men and 21.7% (or 27) women (Freidenberg 2019), it could be implied that the proposal of the new code resulted from the lack of female representation in the office.

Proper representation of women in the office is significantly essential for fostering the prosperity and progress of women– and even the general public as a whole. That statement can be validated and confirmed by the fact that Honduras has now legalised the use of emergency contraception after Xiomara Castro won the election. In December 2022– the very same year of Castro’s inauguration as the first female president of Honduras, under Castro’s administration, an official protocol was approved, enabling the use of emergency contraception– commonly known as morning-after pill (HRW 2023). Then as of 8 March of 2023, during international women’s day, Castro signed an executive order to lift the ban and open the access of the contraceptive. Castro added that the pill is “a part of women’s reproductive rights, and not abortive” (The New York Times 2023).

The case above could be related to Galtung’s statement of freedom needs in structural violence. By limiting women’s influence and networking access, the-Honduras-before this particular progress of women’s rights, the country has failed the subject– women, with their needs of freedom.

### **3.2 Direct Violence**

Direct violence is a violence under the visibility line, according to Johan Galtung, in which the injury can be easily identified. This type of violence may

take various forms, such as killing, physical assault, sexual assault, and any other acts that involves aggression or harm to certain individual, group, or property. Specifically, Galtung explained that there are four categories of direct violence: to start with, the act of killing affects survival needs; well-being needs have an impact on maiming, siege, sanctions, and misery; desocialization, resocialization, and secondary citizen categorised under the identity needs; and lastly the freedom needs have an effect on repression, detention, and expulsion (Galtung 1990, 292). This research will analyse the survival, well-being, and freedom needs and will not include identity needs as the subtypes of violence had never been committed in Honduras in the past decade as the nature of women has been set and embedded into society ever since the construction of the country; as well as there is no explicit law that differentiate genders while putting one less than another.

### **3.2.1 Direct Violence in the Aspect of Survival Needs**

Galtung explained with Table 2 that the first category of violence that would harm the survival needs of a subject– in this context: women, is killing (Galtung 1990, 292). Killing is clear enough to be recognised and identified (Galtung 1990, 293); as the order of victim and perpetrator are explicit and obvious. Galtung further added it is worth considering the use of even more extreme words to convey the severity of the violence; and for killing, Galtung suggested to use words with accurate description that are more impactful such as ‘extermination, ‘holocaust’, and ‘genocide’ (Galtung 1990, 292).

Although the Congress of Honduras has amended the chapter in the Criminal Code concerning homicide to include the crime of femicide in February

2013 (UN Women 2023), that in itself was not enough to end the rise of femicide. The Legislative Decree No. 23-2013 referred to the offence of femicide was officially established as a punishable act according to the law on 27 April 2013. Before the femicide act, according to Rashida Manjoo— a Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women from the UN, between the years of 2005 and 2013, violent deaths of women had been increasing relentlessly; with an approximate increase of 263.4% over the past nine years as in 2005 there were 175 deaths while in 2013 there were 629 violent deaths of women (OHCHR 2014).

Two thousand and thirteen is considered as the year that is the most violent for women in Honduras for the last decade (UNDP 2021), even up until the present time— compared with the data from 2021 and 2022. In that year, every 13.8 hours a woman— or even a young girl, was killed and by the end of the year, approximately 629 women had been killed in Honduras; an increase of 3.8% from the previous year with 606 violent deaths of women (The Advocates for Human Rights and The International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) n.d.). Adding to that, 408 cases were classified as an offence of femicide in 2013 while the year 2012 had 319 cases of femicide (UNDP 2021). This proves that in the year the Femicide Act was established, the case of femicide rose 27.89% from the previous year.

The following years after that, there have been ups and downs with the number of cases. Pursuant to the data of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and InfoSegura Regional Project, in 2014, 290 out of 493 cases of intentional killing resulting in violent death are classified as femicide (UNDP 2021). At the end of the year, there was a case that shocked the whole nation

regarding a known public figure. María José Alvarado, Miss Honduras 2014, alongside her sister Sofia Trinidad had disappeared after leaving a party in Santa Barbara on Thursday, 13 November 2014. The disappearance of the women led to a major search that extended to the border of Guatemala involving the police and the army (The Guardian 2014), especially when Maria José Alvarado had been due to attend the contest of Miss World in London (BBC 2014). Six days later on the 19th, the Alvarado sisters were found on the same day the killer confessed to the killing and burying the women due to jealousy. The women were shot with a 9mm calibre pistol (La Prensa 2017) and buried in a field by a river near Cablotales– a locality near Santa Barbara (BBC News 2014).

Years later in 2017, Plutarco Ruíz was sentenced to a 45 years jail time (Daily Star 2023) while his 3 other accomplices were handed 4 years prison sentences (La Prensa 2017). Furthermore, as the case got nationwide attention, many have pointed out that this case was rather unusual occurrence as the victims had a good reputation and came from a family that is relatively in a stable financial situation, whereas other significant amount of the completely innocent victims of violence (against women, including femicide) are often the members of impoverished households particularly in the slums surrounding big cities who have no means to flee the turmoil within their community (The Guardian 2014).

As for the year 2015, there are 478 cases of homicide of women and the 312 off of the number are classified as cases of femicide (UNDP 2021). On 14 March that year, three models were riddled with bullets by anonymous hitmen on their way to participate in a beauty event (La Prensa 2015).

In the following year– 2016, the number of femicide cases had decreased significantly. It went to one hundred and sixty four cases of femicide out of 466 cases of intentional killing of women (UNDP 2021). Nonetheless, in that year, two female environmental activists: Berta Cáceres and Lesbia Yaneth Urquía were killed in March and July respectively (BBC Mundo 2016). The two prominent environmental activists that were in the same organisation– Council of Indigenous Peoples of Honduras (Copinh), were both assassinated. Cáceres was shot by a hitmen in her own home (Global Witness 2023), while Urquía died violently with several marks from machete blow to the head. Both murders sparked national and international outrages. For the case of Cáceres, the seven people involved in the killing were found guilty in 2018 and Roberto David Castillo, the then-head of the hydroelectric company Desarrollos Energéticos, was found guilty in July 2021 for co-conspiring in her murder (Global Witness 2023). For the case of Urquía, the Honduran police point out that she may have died due to family dispute. However, Copinh accused the government of Honduras and its government body, such as the police force and the army, for the murder. Copinh has also suggested that the death of Urquía “...constitutes a political femicide that seeks to silence the voices of women who defend their rights with courage against the patriarchal, racist, capitalist system” (BBC Mundo 2016).

In 2017, 235 out of 391 cases of intentional killing resulted in violent death are classified as femicide; in 2018, 218 out of 376 cases of intentional killing resulted in violent death are classified as femicide; in 2019, 295 out of 393 cases of intentional killing resulted in violent death are classified as femicide (UNDP 2021).



Then in the year when the COVID-19 cases were rife in Honduras, 2020, resulted in the start of lockdown restrictions when the whole scenario made women more prone to be the victims of gender-based violence which was then associated with the name “shadow pandemic”. However, in the context of femicide, the rate during the pandemic dropped by approximately 24.1% with the rate of violent death due to femicide 4.7 per 100,000 women compared to the previous year with the rate of 6.2 per 100,000 women (UN ECLAC 2021). Granted the fact that due to the lockdown policy the majority of people could not leave their house, the rate of female homicide in public space has dropped from 73% (in 2019) to 65% (in 2020) (UNDP 2021). Although it further implies that women have become more vulnerable in the presence of their family while in private spaces including their own home. Ultimately, the data from the UN SDG recorded the murders of 278 women in 2020 in the country while 229 cases from the previous number were committed after the curfew from March 15 was established (Centro de Derechos de Mujeres n.d.).

In the following year, it was reported by the Public Prosecutor’s Office that in 2021, around 260 women killed resulted in violent deaths in Honduras. As for the most recent year–2022, Honduras registered 398 killing of women in violent death– an increase of 138 cases by the previous year, and according to Centro de Derecho de Mujeres (Women’s Law Centre), 297 cases in 2022 were registered as femicide (Herrera 2023).

By Galtung’s points on direct violence in the aspect of survival needs and with evidence mentioned above, the two integrate with one another as Galtung mentioned that direct violence is easy to identify (Galtung 1990, 292). Moreover,

in the case of femicide which resulted in deaths of Honduran women, one may easily identify who is the victim and who is the perpetrator; and in this case, the perpetrator are the people who killed the women and the government institutions that facilitate the manifestation.

### **3.2.2 Direct Violence in the Aspect of Well-Being Needs**

Galtung stated with Table 2 that well-being needs cannot be achieved if there are still subtypes of violence: maiming, saige, sanctions, and misery. It has been further added that maiming has the same nature as killing— they both are particularly visible as both victims and perpetrators can be easily identified.

As for 2022, the National Emergency System of Honduras registered 38,332 reports of domestic violence (Centro de Derechos de Mujeres 2023). Whilst in 2020, the system received approximately 58,745 reports of domestic violence through the 911 hotline calls (UNDP 2021). Official data from Honduras estimates that domestic violence takes place every 45 minutes in the country; however, data gathered by women’s organisations, while not officially recognised, suggests that the frequency is closest to every 20 minutes (Green n.d.). The data also shows that violence against women starts at an early age at home, though the risk increases overtime as they turn to an adolescence age (UNDP 2021).

Female injuries through 2018, 2019, and 2020 have consecutively increased with no decline– 121, 122, and 128 cases respectively (UNDP 2021). However, in 2021, the number decreased to 94 cases and approximately 27.7 percent (Infosegura 2022).

In October 2018, an attempted femicide was committed to Heidi Garcia. Her ex-partner was trying to kill her with a machete as she was cooking dinner at her own home. While Garcia survived, her face and body now bear scars, and her health has since declined. Prior to the incident, Garcia had filed a report against Andres Martinez five times for domestic violence in order to secure a restraining order. As of August 2020, Garcia's case was still pending before the Supreme Court of Justice (Herrera 2020).

Honduran law recognises domestic violence since 1997; as before that, it was not considered as crime. It also recognises types of domestic violence: physical, psychological, sexual, and property violence under the Criminal Code. The punishments vary from 1-3 months of community service for crime without damages up to 2-4 years of prison sentences for crime with bodily harm, etc (Herrera 2020).

In accordance with Galtung's concept on well-being needs in the aspect of direct violence, Honduras' condition of women aligns with it. Especially when there are cases, one of which is mentioned above, of domestic violence leading to maiming and misery still occurring in the past decade.

### **3.2.3 Direct Violence in the Aspect of Freedom Needs**

According to Galtung, there are three forms of direct violence in which in a certain scenario one of them still exists, the freedom needs of a subject cannot be fulfilled. The three forms of direct violence (in the aspect of freedom needs) are repression, detention, and expulsion (Galtung 1990, 292). Repression is defined as 'freedom from' and 'freedom to' adapted and taken from the

International Bill of Human Rights while incorporating limitations in history and culture of the subject (Galtung 1990, 293). Galtung further added it is worth considering the use of even more extreme words to convey the severity of the violence; and for repression, Galtung suggested the words ‘gulag’ and ‘KZ’ to provide and symbolise the severity of repressive actions especially in a historical context. Then the two other forms in which it can be implied that the two are included to emphasise their significance as further manifestations of repression are namely detention and expulsion. While detention means locking people *in*, expulsion means locking people *out*. Both forms may include concentration camps or imprisoning people (for detention) and banishing people out of a country or out of a certain area (for expulsion) (Galtung 1990, 293).

Women living in Honduras are constantly living in fear and feeling repressed due to deplorable conditions of the country. These emotions are validated and rationalised especially with the fact that violence targeting young girls and women rates is excessively high in the country of Honduras. As of the most recent year in 2022, 297 deaths occurred due to femicide (Centro de Derecho de Mujeres 2023) and 38,332 cases of domestic violence and 59,147 cases of intimate partner violence were registered by the National Emergency System (Security Distillery 2023). Women in Honduras have also been restricted on their own bodily anatomy since 1982 with the completely prohibited law to terminate a pregnancy under any circumstances, including rape and incest (HRW 2019).

Responding to the high number of gender based violence against women including femicide on top of issues of poverty and unemployment, it is inevitable that many women chose to flee the country of Honduras and migrate– while some

even seek refuge and asylum, to another country, such as the United States of America and Mexico. Based on the most recent data of 2022, the migration authorities in Mexico came across 72,928 individuals from Honduras, and deported 40,700 Hondurans back to their country– which from the total of deported individuals, 13 percent were women (WOLA 2023). Mexico is counted as a second choice for Hondurans to migrate after the US as the country also speaks in Spanish and overall has better working conditions for women compared to their country of origin.

Integrating the cases above to the Galtung's discussion about direct violence where the freedom needs have not been fulfilled with the existence of repression in Honduras. Repression in the name of gender includes domestic violence and abuse by family members or intimate partners, restrictions on autonomy, limited opportunities in employment, and etc. The interconnected and overlapping system of repression that eventually led to the rise of femicide in Honduras.

Galtung mentioned repression has elements of 'freedom from' and 'freedom to'. It can be examined that 'freedom from' ensures protection of a subject from harm and injustice while 'freedom to' ensures the subject to a choice and opportunities without unjustifiable restrictions. In this particular case, Honduras women have yet to be granted freedom unless the government would give them an environment safe from violence and an environment with a variety of opportunities in the aspects of social, economic, and political.

As Galtung stated that cultural violence may lead to the justifications of both structural and direct violence, in this study, we can identify from the perspective of direct violence which produces a triangle that places the direct violence itself under the two other branches, namely cultural and structural violence. This in itself is implying that both cultural violence and structural violence are responsible for the occurrence and the escalation (in the past decade) of direct violence— in this context gender based violence, specifically the phenomenon of femicide. The rise of femicide in Honduras is a manifestation of gender based violence's common occurrence in almost every aspect of social and political culture in the country.

## CONCLUSION

### 4.1 Conclusion

This research aims to analyse the issue of femicide in the Republic of Honduras from the year 2013 until 2022 using the concept of violence triangle. In this research, the author conducted a thorough analysis using the concept initiated by Johan Galtung by discussing three branches of violence which are: (1) cultural violence, (2) structural violence, and lastly (3) direct violence. Subsequently, the author determined that the issue of femicide corresponds to Galtung's study on violence.

To start off, cultural violence refers to any type of violence that may lead to the justifications of both structural and direct violence (Galtung 1990, 291). Culture violence has embodied itself into society as it is a constant; an unchanging; a permanent; enduring element of modification essentially for a considerable time period due to the slow shifting nature of the fundamental core of a culture (Galtung 1990, 294).

Galtung described the seven aspects of cultural violence: religion, ideology, language, art, formal science, empirical science, and cosmology (Galtung 1990, 291-301) in which this research covered the first three out of seven aspects, namely religion, ideology, and language.

In the aspect of religion, Honduras, whose partition of religion in the country is predominantly Christians, acquired a culture based on that religious teaching: a culture where women are lacking representation. In the aspect of ideology, Honduras– which was colonised by Spain in the 16th century, was

influenced by the ideology of machismo: an ideology where masculinity is seen as something superior to femininity. This leads to the killing of women due to the strong belief that men are better than them. In the aspect of language, consistent with the ideology aspect, due to the colonisation of Spain in the 16th century, the current official language of Honduras is the Spanish language. In the usage of a Spanish language, men are more exalted, respected, and placed higher than women due to the gendered nature of the language. This leads to the discrimination of women while communicating with the language in everyday life.

Unto the second violence, structural violence is a form of violence in which some social structure or institution— as a vital framework with significant influence of a country's social order, prevents people from equal access to the fulfilment of their basic human needs— including in the aspect of health, economic, and political, in a systematic way with no evidence of direct and singular perpetrators.

Galtung described that there are four categories of structural violence: 'exploitation A' affects survival needs; 'exploitation B' affects well-being needs; 'penetration' and 'segmentation' affects identity needs; and lastly, 'marginalisation' and 'fragmentation' affects freedom needs (Galtung 1990, 292).

The evidence of exploitation A in Honduras is the prohibition law of abortions— where it leads to an unsafe and risky practice of one and that kind of practice is more likely to result in death.

One of the evidence of exploitation B in Honduras is the embezzlement of the fund from the health sector—that was supposed to be a collective public



prosperity, which impacted the constant suffering and misery of the Honduran women within the intersectional framework.

The evidence of marginalisation combined with fragmentation in Honduras is the lack of women's voice and representation in the office that lead to the lack of women protection. The correlation between them can be established during the election victory of the first female president of Honduras that eventually made progress on women's rights.

Lastly, direct violence is the most easy to identify as the harm includes killing, assault, and aggression. Galtung further four categories of direct violence: 'killing' affects survival needs; 'maiming', 'siege', 'sanctions', and 'misery' affects well-being needs; 'decosialisation', 'resocialization', and 'secondary citizen' affects identity needs; and lastly, 'repression', 'detention', and 'expulsion' effects freedom needs (Galtung 1990, 292).

Honduras has yet to create a safe environment for women that can satisfy their freedom needs out of repression and harm. Simultaneously, when the femicide law was established in the year 2013, the femicide in Honduras reached the highest rate in its history with 408 cases. Additionally, there have been ups and downs in the trajectory through the years after that; with the most recent available data, the case of femicide in 2022 is 297 cases.

While this study research discussed the issue of femicide, it is essential to emphasise that the manifestation of femicide is a direct result of the normalisation to gender based violences in society. Based on the research, it can be concluded that the issue of femicide as a direct violence is a consequence of cultural violence in the aspect of religion, ideology, and language while the structural violence

facilitates it with an environment that essentially dismisses women. The three branches of violence triangle are all equally responsible for the issue of femicide.

#### **4.2 Recommendation**

This research has discussed the analysis of violence triangle in the issue of femicide in the Republic of Honduras in the year 2013 to 2022. Therefore, the author anticipates the next researchers can extend their analysis to elaborate more and to do more in-depth discussions surrounding this research's topic by using other concepts and methods in the future. While writing this research paper, the author had come across a few obstacles such as lack of understanding of the language— particularly in Spanish, and lack of English-based academic journals on the topic. The author recommends the next research to collaborate with institutions in Honduras or with a native Spanish speaker.

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