

Male and female sources in the coverage of femicide in the Mexican press

Fuentes femeninas y masculinas en la cobertura del feminicidio en la prensa mexicana

Fontes femininas e masculinas na cobertura do feminicídio na imprensa mexicana

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ABSTRACT | This study investigates the journalistic sources used in the Mexican press in news about femicide. The aim is to analyze the dynamics of the sources' selection regarding gender and its official status (officiality). The research is quantitative and studies the content on femicide and gender violence in four newspapers of national circulation: *La Jornada*, *Reforma*, *El Universal* and *Milenio* during 2017. Of 1324 news pieces emerged 2091 sources for analysis. These were classified with a pre-established model: official sources that accept the official version regarding the information on the facts of femicide, officials who reject the official version, protagonists of the events, victims of the situations and specialists, experts or willing to express themselves. The result shows that the female sources question the official version, while the male ones support and sustain it; female sources also have greater presence as experts regarding femicide. The female sources build the critical discourse on femicide, while male sources support the hegemonic discourse. The research confirms a high level of discrimination against women as official sources of information about femicide in Mexico. Gender is a category that the media use to discriminate the valid sources in the construction of the news event.

KEYWORDS: sources; gender; press; newspaper; femicide; Mexico.

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RESUMEN | *En este estudio se investigan las fuentes periodísticas utilizadas por la prensa mexicana en noticias sobre el feminicidio. El objetivo es analizar las dinámicas de la selección de esas fuentes con relación al género y su oficialidad. La investigación de corte cuantitativo estudia el contenido sobre el feminicidio y la violencia de género en cuatro periódicos mexicanos de tirada nacional: La Jornada, Reforma, El Universal y Milenio durante 2017. De 1324 textos, se analizaron 2091 fuentes. Estas se clasificaron con un modelo preestablecido: fuentes oficiales que aceptan la versión oficial respecto de la información sobre hechos de feminicidio, oficiales que rechazan la versión oficial, protagonistas de los hechos, víctimas de las situaciones y especialistas, expertas o con voluntad de expresarse. El resultado mostró que las fuentes femeninas cuestionan la versión oficial, mientras que las masculinas la apoyan y la sostienen. Asimismo, las fuentes femeninas tuvieron mayor presencia como expertas. Las fuentes femeninas construyen el discurso crítico sobre el feminicidio, mientras que las masculinas lo sostienen con versiones oficiales. La investigación constata un elevado nivel de discriminación hacia las mujeres como fuentes de información oficial en el tema del feminicidio en México. De hecho, se puede afirmar que el género es una categoría que los medios de comunicación usan para discriminar las fuentes válidas en la construcción del hecho noticioso.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *fuentes; género; prensa; periódico; feminicidio; México.*

RESUMO | *Este estudo investiga as fontes jornalísticas utilizadas pela imprensa mexicana em textos relacionados ao feminicídio. O objetivo é a análise da dinâmica de seleção dessas fontes em relação ao gênero e sua oficialização. A pesquisa quantitativa estuda o conteúdo sobre o feminicídio e a violência de gênero em quatro jornais mexicanos de circulação nacional: La Jornada, Reforma, El Universal e Milenio durante 2017. De 1.324 textos foram analisadas 2.091 fontes. As fontes foram classificadas com um modelo pré-estabelecido: funcionários que aceitam a versão oficial respeito de informações sobre atos de feminicídio, funcionários que rejeitam a versão oficial, protagonistas dos acontecimentos, vítimas das situações e especialistas, expertos ou com vontade de se expressar. O resultado mostra que as fontes femininas questionam a versão oficial, enquanto as fontes masculinas apoiam e sustentam. Além disso, as fontes femininas têm maior presença como especialistas. As fontes femininas constroem o discurso crítico sobre o feminicídio, enquanto as fontes masculinas sustentam um discurso baseado na versão oficial. A pesquisa revela um alto nível de discriminação contra as mulheres como fontes de informação oficiais sobre o feminicídio no México. De fato, pode-se afirmar que o gênero é uma categoria que a mídia utiliza para discriminar as fontes válidas na construção do acontecimento noticioso.*

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *fontes; gênero; imprensa; jornal; feminicídio; México.*

INTRODUCTION

During 2017, Mexican authorities and media coverage emphasized the increase in femicide cases (Xantomila, 2020). Since then, official statistics show a steady rise in femicides in Mexico (Tiscareño-García, 2021; Salazar & de la Garza, 2020), despite the fact that it was a decade since the enactment of the General Law on Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence (LGAMVLV, by its Spanish acronym) with which the State intended to address this problem (Jasso & González, 2018; Tagle Martínez, 2017; Bernal & Flores, 2018). In 2017 there were 741 victims of femicide, a higher figure than in 2016, when 605 femicides were registered (SESNSP, 2020), and than in 2015 (411 murders). I.e., in two years, the increase was 330 cases (44.5%). Femicide comprises the murder or attempted murder of a woman at the hands of a man for gender-based reasons, in some cases under the social acquiescence and permissiveness of political and legal structures (Bejarano, 2014; Monárrez, 2019; Tiscareño-García & Miranda Villanueva, 2020). In 1990, Caputi and Russell defined femicide as the murder of a woman at the hands of a man because she is a woman. It also represents the extreme of anti-female terror through verbal and physical abuse (Radford & Russell, 1992; Monárrez, 2010). Mexican law considers it as the extreme form of gender violence against women, violating their rights in both the public and private spheres (Ley General de Acceso de las Mujeres a una Vida Libre de Violencia, 2007).

As part of the construction of journalistic texts, news sources are considered the substance of journalism (Lippmann, 1965; Shoemaker & Reese, 2014). Although news narratives seek to avoid the overt intrusion of the journalist's personal values, the literature on sources agrees that media workers tend to generate commitments to some of them (Berkowitz, 2009). This is why it is considered that the constant use of the same sources monopolizes the information and makes the journalist move away from alternative sources. The study of the selection of information sources in the construction of journalistic texts is a topic that is suitable for research in Mexico, especially in cases such as femicide. Thus, this article analyzes the informative sources to which Mexican press journalists resorted in the news coverage on cases of femicide during 2017, in relation to gender and its officialdom.

The purpose of this study was to determine the role of information sources in journalistic texts on femicide in the Mexican press in relation to gender, to establish the ratio of men and women according to the type of source, and to which discourse they respond more.

Literature review

Different studies analyze how sources, which are the origin of journalistic information, have a relevant impact on the construction of news. The most common perspectives to study sources are related to the following practices, according to different authors:

1. Journalists accept the versions of authoritative sources and their rules of dissemination to form tacit alliances (Sigal, 1986).
2. Powerful sources use their influence to create news that favors them (Gans, 2004).
3. Privileged sources provide good information, do favors for newspapers, and expect to receive something in return (Grijelmo, 2002).
4. No source communicates as a free agent without being influenced by the position it has in the sociocultural system (Berlo, 1999).
5. Journalists collect authorized data and then present it without explicitly taking sides in the discourse but, in the end, they are indebted for the raw material provided by the interviewees (Herman & Chomsky, 1988).
6. Journalists include and do not challenge the interpretations of official sources because they are representatives of their community and are a reflection of the reporters themselves (Breed, 1958).

However, power is not only exercised through the intentional proactivity of sources. It also happens among taken-for-granted assumptions; i.e., when journalists do not investigate thoroughly and hold to what they are told, since the journalist's dependence on sources can lead to a disaffection of reality and a biased view. This, because they are only provided with the information they need to know, in addition to facing several pressures before publishing a news item (Manning, 2013, Ortega & Humanes, 2000; Carpenter, 2008; Tuchman, 1973; Sigal, 1986). Sources give journalists autonomy in their work, since they constitute their personal assets; therefore, sources are considered as an essential resource to build the news and confer credibility to it (Bezunartea, 1988; Diezhandino, 2007; Gómez, 2016; Lozano, 2007; Menéndez, 2014). In this context, the literature shows that news is loaded with individual and collective interests of those who generate the information.

The source is represented in that person to whom journalists turn to obtain the information, so they are frequently officials or experts related to the main institutions of society (Berkowitz, 2009). Shoemaker and Reese (2014) raised the issue of the dependence of each type of publication on external sources such as releases, organizations, and individuals. Retegui (2017) highlights the importance

of studying sources when they are represented through various types of documents. In this article, the source is that person who provides newsworthy information with which the journalist elaborates an informative text. This can be of different types: specialist, expert, official, citizen, or resources such as press releases, bulletins, studies, research, and anonymous sources.

Regarding the case studies in the literature (Bystrom, 2004; Freedman et al., 2004; Powers & Fico, 1994; Van der Pas & Aaldering, 2020), there is an explicit questioning of the sources' power and the way in which informative texts are produced, and it is reiterated that the media tend to resort to official sources. The above produces a homogenization in the contents in the press that goes against the narrative of the information society, which according to Gallur and García (2019) promotes the balance between gender participation. Among these studies are those that explore the diversity of sources by gender, whose findings show the predominance of male sources (Freedman et al., 2004).

In addition, studies on sources focus mainly on comparisons of women and men from a political perspective and the space they occupy in the media (Bystrom, 2004; Freedman et al., 2004; Van der Pas & Aaldering, 2020). Powers and Fico (1994) explain that the traditional media cite more official sources who occupy positions of power, with a predominance of male sources, who appear more frequently in the business and sports sections. However, these researchers determine that journalists do not consciously select sources based on gender (Powers & Fico, 1994), but because of various factors, such as social roles.

On the other hand, there are the large studies (GMMP, 2021; LenRíos et al., 2005; Pew Research Center, 2005; Tamarit et al., 2011), whose results are coincidental and reiterative in showing that the media discriminate against women as sources. After analyzing 16,800 news pieces in U.S. newspapers, the Pew Research Center (2005) found that more than three-quarters of the stories used male sources and only one-third contained a single female source. These data suggest that the representation of women in the news is far from reflecting their actual role in society.

From this perspective, the Global Media Monitoring Project 2020 (GMMP, 2021) reported that of the people interviewed, listened to, seen, or written about in the press, radio, and television, only 25% were women, compared to 75% men. Especially in the written press, 26% were women and 74% men. From the same angle, Tamarit and colleagues (2011) point out that, out of 12,551 informative texts collected in the Spanish press, in 1,603 women appeared as protagonists of the information, which represented 12.77%. Moreover, most of the news items with women as protagonists had not been signed, so the information was obtained from press conferences or press releases (Tamarit et al., 2011). The aforementioned

studies infer that the masculinization of sources is a worldwide problem, in which similar cultures prevail when selecting sources.

Other works on the study of sources focus on establishing dominant cultural patterns in the ways in which news is produced, with emphasis on the presence of male voices and the invisibilization of female voices. The research of Len-Ríos and colleagues (2005) studied the representation of women in newspapers and compared it with the perceptions of news staff and readers to explore the concept of male cultural hegemony. The first part showed that men appear more than women in stories and photographs. The authors established that the newspapers studied reflect the predominant male hegemony in American culture, as about three-quarters of the people in the news pieces were men and two-thirds of the photos showed men.

Works such as that of Lagos (2008) on gender violence or femicide in the press reflect that sources are included in a marginal and uncritical manner in cases of femicide, and official sources such as the courts or the police are used. Thus, femicide is presented through concepts such as police, criminal, and judicial. In these cases, official records could blame the victim if there were incidents in which she did not want to give her statement or withdrew the charges despite police efforts (Taylor, 2009). The sources of equality institutions and organized movements are considered from the actions of protest for the death of a woman (Menéndez, 2014). The literature also warns that the writer's gender, ethnicity, education, and sexual orientation are present in the news production (Berkowitz & Liu, 2014). Thus, the masculinization of the media is also reflected in the workforces (Danés, 2017; Niemi & Pitkanen, 2016; Tiscareño-García & Miranda-Villanueva, 2020). Likewise, studies show that, in general, immediacy implies that the media cover the same facts and go to the same sources, which generates uniformity in their contents. It also becomes a habit to use data similar to those of the competition and, in this process, female voices are discriminated and balance and confrontation of ideas are put aside.

The imbalance in women's opportunities in different social spaces is observed from a legal perspective as discrimination, which implies preventing and annulling the recognition or exercise of rights and real equality of opportunities for individuals (Ley General para la Igualdad entre Hombres y Mujeres, 2021). Exclusion is embedded in discrimination and responds to a multidimensional and multicausal process that concerns different factors within the legal, economic, social, and individual spheres (Rizo, 2012). Both discrimination and exclusion translate into a lack of spaces for women to obtain real equality and agency in issues of social interest.

One recent research on news sources and the topic of femicide is that of Gallur and García (2019). This quantitative study focuses on the use of sources according to gender, and suggests that the hegemonic discourse persists in the media. Specifically, it analyzes the coverage of femicide in Ciudad Juárez conducted by the Mexican gender news agency *Cimacnoticias* (CIMAC) between 1999 and 2015. Said analysis focused on the study of 2,712 sources used to produce 1,284 news stories. The results indicate that, as the level of officialdom decreases, the presence of women as sources in the news increases.

In this context, this research is based on the following premises:

1. The Mexican national press, regardless of its ideological stance and its practices for selecting information sources, generally resorts to official male sources.
2. Official male sources diminish critical perspective.
3. The news pieces related to femicide cases in the Mexican national press reduce the critical perspective.

METHODOLOGY

The sample universe covered journalistic texts related to femicide and gender violence published from January 1 to December 31, 2017 in the newspapers *La Jornada*, *Reforma*, *El Universal* and *Milenio*. This period was chosen because it comprises the year in which authorities and civil organizations publicly emphasized the increase in femicide statistics in Mexico.

This article is part of a broader investigation that studies the language in the Mexican press on femicide; the study in general contemplates 1,679 journalistic texts (table 1). The unit of analysis was established as the news pieces that address the issue of gender violence or femicide and that presented the problematization in different contexts. Therefore, texts in which the sources did not contribute to the debate and where the search words were only stated in the text and did not delve deeper into the topic were left out. Thus, the 1,679 texts dropped to 1,324: *La Jornada* (18.5%), *Reforma* (16.5%), *El Universal* (33%), and *Milenio* (32%). In 1,324 journalistic texts 2,091 sources were located (table 1).

We studied the news on femicide in the Mexican press in these four newspapers because they are considered to be of reference and have national circulation. Regarding the ideological spectrum, it should be considered that the right-winged media are spokespersons of the interests of large companies and are governed by the values of that group, as in the case of *Reforma* (Durán, 2009; Álvarez-Monsiváis, 2020).

Theme	La Jornada	Reforma	El Universal	Milenio	Total
Femicide and gender violence (general)	348 20.7%	257 15.3%	549 32.7%	525 31.3%	1679 100%
Femicide and gender violence (problematic)	246 18.5%	217 16.5%	439 33%	422 32%	1324 100%
Total sources	530 25.35%	341 16.3%	663 31.7%	557 26.65%	2091 100%

Table 1. Breakdown of texts and sources by newspaper

Source: Own elaboration.

Salazar and colleagues (2019), however, describe it as hybrid, considering it as civic and capitalist. Meanwhile, those media that are placed in the center are defined by the plurality of ideas and a moderate ideology (Bautista, 2013), like *El Universal* and *Milenio*. The former began as a traditionalist newspaper, without contradicting the interests of the government (Rodelo & Muñiz, 2016). *Milenio* emerged with the juncture of the 2000 election campaigns (Salgado, 2005). The left-wing press uses critical discourse, engages in denunciations towards political power and power elites (Salgado, 2005); *La Jornada* is positioned in this spectrum, as a cooperative association, without ties to large conglomerates, with an anti-regime attitude (Rodelo & Muñiz, 2016).

The methodology used in this research is quantitative. Content analysis was used as a tool for study analysis and communication analysis: systematic, objective, and quantitative, which measures certain variables (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011).

The information from the four newspapers was extracted digitally. In this case, information was collected from all the texts included in the criteria of the universe or population, i.e., those texts that contained the components of femicide, homicide, dead, crime, woman, girl, and young woman. For *Milenio* and *La Jornada*, the news items were selected from each media outlet's website. In the case of *El Universal* and *Reforma*, it was done with the ProQuest database, which was accessed through the digital library of the Tecnológico de Monterrey.

In the advanced search for the *Reforma* newspaper, the publication ID (PUBID) (32,652) AND (Mujer OR niña OR joven¹) AND (asesinada OR homicidio OR muerta OR feminicidio OR crimen²) was used. In *El Universal*, the search was PUBID (47,134) AND (Mujer OR niña OR joven) AND (asesinada OR homicidio OR muerta OR feminicidio OR crimen). In the case of *La Jornada*, a link from the newspaper's portal

1. Woman OR girl OR young woman.

2. Murdered OR homicide OR dead OR femicide OR crime.

was used to access the Google search engine through the page of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM). The criteria used were: (ene.2017) AND (Mujer OR niña OR Joven) AND (asesinada OR homicidio OR muerta OR feminicidio OR crimen). Regarding *Milenio*, the search was done directly on the newspaper's webpage and the words: (enero.2017 Feminicidio³) were used; for *Milenio* and *La Jornada*, the searches were done for each month. Three different search methods were applied depending on the access of each newspaper.

Based on a pre-established scheme for the study of sources, we elaborated a coding model in Excel in which the 1,324 texts were analyzed. The analysis was conducted in two parts; in the first, the journalistic texts and the number of sources were quantified: who writes the information, the text classification, and the number of sources. The variables for the journalistic genre were: news, summary, reportage, opinion article, and others, such as interviews and figures, while for the journalist's genre they were: male journalist, female journalist, both, and the newspaper when the piece was signed by the editorial office, staff, or the newspaper. The number of sources ranged from 0 to 12, which was the range presented by the texts. In the second part, the characteristics of the sources were studied using the model already worked by Gallur and García (2019), which pre-establishes five categories:

1. Official sources that support the official version. These are institutionalized sources that are part of the governmental system or related to it; this type of sources disseminates and supports the official version. They are officials from public institutions of the three branches of government, mainly in the area of security and justice, as well as from institutionalized national and international organizations. The sources can be female, male, and those that allude to unidentified sources or to some type of document.
2. Official sources that contradict the official version. This is the same type of sources as the previous classification, but in this case they question or disagree with the official version.
3. Protagonists of the events. These are the persons directly involved in the femicide case. The victim and the perpetrator or alleged perpetrator.
4. Victims of the events. These are women who die or survive witnessing or defending a victim of femicide, and suffer attacks similar to that of the person they are defending.

3. January.2017 Femicide.

5. Experts and people with information on the subject and willingness to express it. These are sources that offer information related to femicide as specialists or experts, who are outside the official sphere, or those close to the event such as family members and witnesses. They are classified as: feminine, masculine, and those who do not have a specific spokesperson, but assign the information to an association or instance or mention some type of document.

The coding of the informative pieces was done by a single person, who was trained with the evaluation criteria for each variable in order to maintain an objective posture when coding the information.

RESULTS

General aspects of the study of information sources

Out of the 1,324 texts, 2,091 sources were obtained, of which 778 (37%) promote the official version. 332 (16%) were official sources that reject the official version, while the sources that were the protagonists of the events correspond to 0.05% (one source). Those victims of the situations accounted for 0%, and 980 (46.95%) were specialist sources, experts or those willing to express themselves (table 2).

Of the four newspapers studied in the breakdown by gender and newspaper, the female voices were 668 (32%); the proportion was higher than the male voices (447, 21.5%), while documents or anonymous sources comprised 976 sources (46.5%) (table 3). From the above, we can see a homogeneous behavior in the analyzed newspapers, which at the moment of selecting the sources to construct the text about femicide, mainly turn to documents, then to female sources and, finally, to male sources.

Based on these general data, the following paragraphs present the analysis corresponding to each premise, so that specific aspects of the analysis are considered.

Fuente Sources/ newspapers	<i>La Jornada</i>	<i>Reforma</i>	<i>El Universal</i>	<i>Milenio</i>	Total
Official sources promoting the official version (778; 37%)					
Male	47 9%	37 11%	58 9%	55 10%	197
Female	9 2%	17 5%	20 3%	43 8%	89
Documents and institutions	85 16%	90 26%	195 29%	122 22%	492
Official sources rejecting the official version (332; 16%)					
Male	33 6%	5 1.5%	13 2%	11 2%	62
Female	55 10%	5 1.5%	25 4%	24 4%	109
Documents and institutions	67 13%	23 7%	37 5%	34 6%	161
Sources involved in the events (1; 0.05%)					
Male	0 0%	0 0%	1 0.15%	0 0%	1
Female	0	0	0	0	0
Documents	0	0	0	0	0
Sources victims of the events (0; 0%)					
Male	0	0	0	0	0
Female	0	0	0	0	0
Documents	0	0	0	0	0
Expert sources, specialists, and people willing to express themselves (980; 46.95%)					
Male	27 5%	50 15%	66 10%	44 8%	187
Female	112 21%	75 22%	150 23%	133 24%	470
Documents	95 18%	39 11%	98 14.85%	91 16%	323
Total %	530 100%	341 100%	663 100%	557 100%	2091 100%

Table 2. Breakdown of categories by source and newspaper, 1,324 texts, 2,091 sources*Source: Own elaboration.*

Sources	<i>La Jornada</i>	<i>Reforma</i>	<i>El Universal</i>	<i>Milenio</i>	Total
Male	107 5.1%	92 4.4%	138 6.6%	110 5.4%	447 21.5%
Female	176 8.4%	97 4.6%	195 9.4%	200 9.6%	668 32%
Documents or unidentified	247 11.5%	152 7%	330 16%	247 12%	976 46.5%
Total	530 25.35%	341 16.3%	663 31.7%	557 26.65%	2,091 100%

Table 3. Breakdown of sources by gender and by newspaper

Source: Own elaboration.

Official sources on the issue of femicide in the Mexican press

The first premise consisted of measuring the recourse to official male sources by the Mexican national press, regardless of their ideological stance. In the categorization of the 2,091 informative sources, 53% corresponded to official sources, resulting from sources that accept (778; 37%) and reject (332; 16%) the official version. Although the percentage of documents, i.e., bulletins, releases or unidentified sources had a higher frequency (58.5%), the gender of the journalist could be identified in 457 news items (41.5%), with a greater male presence (table 4). From a general perspective, female sources occupied more space in journalistic texts, but when it comes to the official nature of the sources, the male presence was more important.

Official sources by gender	Number of sources	Percentage
Male	259	23.5%
Female	198	18%
Documents	653	58.5%
Total	1,110	100%

Table 4. Breakdown of official sources

Source: Own elaboration.

Official sources that accept and reject the official version

The second premise considers that male official sources diminish the critical perspective; the analysis of three of the categories allowed us to learn more about this aspect: official sources that accept the official version, official sources that reject it, and specialist sources, experts, or those willing to express themselves (table 2).

The sources that accept and reject the official version had a higher concentration of male sources (25.3%) than female ones; when it comes to identifiable gender, at the moment of constructing the text, the journalist resorts more to male voices that tend to support the official version and in a lower proportion to female ones (11.4%). This is reversed when it comes to the category of official sources that reject or disagree with the official version of femicide in the Mexican press. The number of women who disagreed with the official version was 32.84%, while the number of men interviewed was in the order of 18.67%. This places the female narrative on a more critical plane than the male narrative (table 5); therefore, the official male sources tend to present a less critical discourse and only disseminate the official version.

The third category in the study of the critical perspective on official male sources deals with the voices of experts, specialists, and people willing to express themselves (980 sources, 46.95% of the 2091). Female sources are more consulted (470) than male sources (187). This type of sources behaved as an unofficial alternative, while the number of male sources was 250% lower than female sources (table 2). This shows that experts, specialists, and men willing to express themselves contribute in smaller proportion as optional sources and are more positioned in the representation of official power.

Type of sources	Reject	Support	Total
Male	62 18.67%	197 25.3%	259 23.5%
Female	109 32.84%	89 11.4%	198 18%
Documents	161 48.49%	492 63.3%	653 58.5%
Total	332 (100%)	778 (100%)	1,110 (100%)

Table 5. Sources accepting and rejecting the official version

Source: Own elaboration.

Newspaper perspective on femicide cases in the Mexican press

In this section, the third premise is analyzed: the news pieces related to femicide cases in the Mexican national press diminish the critical perspective. The following findings are related to the text composition. Subsequently, those linked to the categories are presented: four aspects that stand out from the general analysis of the texts.

1. The majority of the texts are constructed with a single source. Of the 2,091, the concentration is in one source per text, 858 (41%); two sources, 564 (27%); three sources, 342 (16%); four sources, 188 (9%), and in smaller proportion five to 12 sources are located. By newspaper: *La Jornada* had 530 sources (25.35%); *Reforma*, 341 (16.3%); *El Universal*, 663 (31.7%), and *Milenio*, 557 (26.65%). Texts with more than two sources show a homogeneous position and do not guarantee contrasting versions.
2. The results also allow us to affirm that there is reduced journalistic research on the phenomenon of femicide. The topic was present as news in 1,071 texts (81%); 177 texts were summaries with several facts (13.3%); regarding opinion, there were 63 texts (4.7%); interviews and independent figures had nine texts (0.7%), and in the area of reportages, only *Milenio* published four (0.3%). The type of text shows that femicide is approached from the daily news piece and in very few occasions the problem is dealt with in depth.
3. The largest proportion of texts is constructed thanks to bulletins. Unidentified documents or sources amounted to 976 out of 2,091 sources (46.67%), which means that almost half of the texts come from press releases, studies, or unidentified sources.
4. The percentage of female journalists is higher than that of male reporters. The presence of the former was 10% more (table 2). Of the 1,324 texts, 547 were written by male journalists (41%), 408 (31%) by female reporters, 47 (4%) were written by male and female journalists, and 322 (24%) were written without a signature or with the support of the newspaper or agency. *Milenio* was the newspaper that most resorted to this practice.

Regarding the use of sources and newspapers, the four newspapers consulted a greater number of male sources that accept the official version than female sources (table 6), while the number regarding female sources was more heterogeneous per newspaper. *La Jornada* had a wide margin between male and female sources accepting the official version, with more male sources, as well as a wide margin between female sources accepting and rejecting the official version, with more female sources doing the latter. *Reforma* and *Milenio* had a lower number of female sources that reject the official version, compared to female sources that accept the official version.

Newspapers	La Jornada		Reforma		El Universal		Milenio		Total
	A	R	A	R	A	R	A	R	
Sources	A	R	A	R	A	R	A	R	Total
Male	47	33	37	5	58	13	55	11	259
Female	9	55	17	5	20	25	43	24	198
Documents	85	67	90	23	195	37	122	34	653
Total	141	155	144	33	273	75	220	69	1,110

Note: A is accept, R is reject.

Table 6. Type of sources per newspaper that reject the official version

Source: Own elaboration.

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Through various studies, researchers show that in the media there is a tendency to a greater use of male sources (Len-Ríos, et al, 2005; Tamari et al., 2011; GMMP, 2021). For Len-Ríos and colleagues (2005), the identification of this pattern is related to male cultural hegemony, while the other authors mention the disproportion that puts women at a social disadvantage. One aspect in which this work differs from previous studies is that in the general results of this research, male sources are less present than female ones. What is specifically identified here is the contrast in relation to the officialdom of the sources: male officials are more than female ones. Specifically, the bulk of male sources are in the category of those who accept the official version, which translates into a discrimination of female official sources regarding a problem that concerns women, femicide.

As for the results and proposals of Gallur and García (2019) on the critical aspect of the sources, the findings of this research coincide with what was found by them. In the category of sources that reject the official version, the presence of female spokeswomen was greater; therefore, male voices had less presence, which suggests that the critical stance on the issue of femicide in the Mexican press is provided by women, who are the ones who from the institutional system are more demanding and highlight the weaknesses of public policies and the way in which justice operates.

In addition, the participation of male sources, such as specialists, experts, and people willing to express themselves is also lower, while female sources are more, which shows that the discussion on femicide takes place through spokeswomen who contribute to the issue from civil society.

The literature highlights that, in cases of femicide, whoever constructs the text generally resorts to official sources and that there is a strong dependence on

documents such as those issued by security agencies that come from official bodies. Lagos (2008) identified them as police sources, while Taylor (2009) refers to the testimonies contained in the authorities' reports. We agree with these authors that official sources predominate. Likewise, this work establishes the proportion of documents such as bulletins, press releases, studies, and unidentified sources that are used at the time of writing the news of a femicide, which comprise the largest number of official sources. Thus, the Mexican written press analyzed also lacks a critical perspective, as it replicates the information provided to it, and loses the opportunity to contrast versions. In this regard, what reaches the reader is the version of the authorities, in which the media presents the information in a partial manner.

This research confirms that the official nature of the information sources is directly linked to the male gender. I.e., most of the official sources chosen by the media studied are men. This would directly affect the informative texts in two different ways: on the one hand, there would be the exclusion of non-official and female sources and, on the other, the critical perspective. Thus, the critical level of the discourse of the sources used by the media is inversely proportional to the number of male sources used, and to their level of officialdom.

From the above, it could be inferred that the higher the degree of officialdom of the men consulted as sources, the lower the degree of criticism of such news pieces (Gallur and García, 2019). Therefore, this research has found a high level of discrimination towards women as sources of official information on the issue of femicide in Mexico in the analyzed newspapers, through a traditional and defined structure of both gatekeeping (Shoemaker & Reese, 2014) and the agenda setting itself (McCombs, 1972; 2006). Therefore, gender is a category that the media use in the discrimination of valid sources in the construction of the news event.

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