

# Femicide Narratives in the Amazon

Cynthia Mara Miranda<sup>1</sup>  0000-0002-9399-7975

Carlos Alberto de Carvalho<sup>2</sup>  0000-0001-8433-8794

<sup>1</sup>Universidade Federal do Tocantins, Programa de Pós-Graduação em Comunicação e Sociedade, Palmas, TO, Brasil. 77.001-090 – [ppgcom@uft.edu.br](mailto:ppgcom@uft.edu.br)

<sup>2</sup>Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Programa de Pós-Graduação em Comunicação, Belo Horizonte, MG, Brasil. 31270-901 – [colposcom-soc@fafich.ufmg.br](mailto:colposcom-soc@fafich.ufmg.br)



**Abstract:** This article analyzes journalistic narratives of femicide in the Amazon from the conceptual contribution derived from gender studies. The starting point of the research was the gathering of reports from newspapers in the states within the Amazon Region that featured in their text the words 'femicide', 'murdered', and 'killed', and that said reports had a direct relationship with the crimes, their ramifications, investigation, trial, and conviction. The study indicated that journalistic narratives can symbolically colonize women when they construct a version of social reality anchored in the inequality between genders in Brazil. In the construction of the narratives, judgments and silencing that directly affect women emerged, which go against the range of discourses in favor of gender equality found in society, and effectively mask asymmetries in the context of the Amazon.

**Keywords:** Femicide; Journalistic Narratives; Amazon.

## **Narrativas do feminicídio na Amazônia**

**Resumo:** Este artigo analisa narrativas jornalísticas do feminicídio na Amazônia a partir do aporte conceitual proveniente dos estudos de gênero. O ponto de partida da pesquisa foi a coleta de notícias em jornais dos estados pertencentes à Região Amazônica que apresentassem em seu texto as palavras 'feminicídio', 'assassinada' e 'morta', e que essa inserção tivesse relação direta com os crimes, seus desdobramentos, investigação, julgamento e condenação. O estudo apontou que as narrativas jornalísticas podem colonizar simbolicamente as mulheres, a partir do momento em que constroem uma versão da realidade social ancorada na desigualdade entre os gêneros instalada no país. Na construção das narrativas, emergiram julgamentos e silenciamentos que afetam diretamente as mulheres e que destoam da amplitude dos discursos em prol da igualdade de gênero presentes na sociedade, e que, de forma eficaz, mascaram as assimetrias no contexto da Amazônia.

**Palavras-chave:** feminicídio; narrativa jornalística; Amazônia.

## **Narrativas de feminicidio en la Amazonía**

**Resumen:** Este artículo analiza las narrativas periodísticas del feminicidio en la Amazonía a partir del aporte conceptual de los estudios de género. El punto de partida de la investigación fue la recopilación de noticias en periódicos de los estados pertenecientes a la Región Amazónica que presentaban en su texto las palabras 'feminicidio', 'asesinada' y 'muertas', en los que esta inserción tenía una relación directa con los delitos, su novedades, investigación, juicio y condena. El estudio señaló que las narrativas periodísticas pueden colonizar simbólicamente a las mujeres, desde que construyen una versión de la realidad social anclada en la desigualdad entre géneros instalada en el país. En la construcción de las narrativas surgieron juicios y silencios que afectan directamente a las mujeres y que se diferencian de la amplitud de los discursos a favor de la igualdad de género presentes en la sociedad, y que efectivamente enmascaran las asimetrías en el contexto de la Amazonía.

**Palabras clave:** feminicidio; narrativa periodística; Amazonía.

## Introduction

Gender issues, at the heart of the research on the narratives of feminicide in the Amazon presented here, have been understood as analytical categories for comprehending the social relations between the sexes, culturally and socially constructed over the centuries. The adoption of the concept of gender, whether in the academic context, civil society or international organizations, is not consensual and has provoked numerous political clashes and epistemological uncertainties. For Joan Scott (2013), the political disputes follow the trails of uncertainties regarding gender and, in the author's own terms,

[it is] that political struggle that I think ought to command our attention, because gender is the perceptual lens through which we are taught the meanings of male/female, masculine/feminine. A "gender analysis" constitutes our critical engagement with those meanings and our attempt to reveal their contradictions and instabilities as they manifest in the lives of those we study. (SCOTT, 2013, p. 67)

Unequal gender relations, as such, are present in the most distinct societal spaces and, over time, have resulted in obstacles for women to gain access to basic rights such as work and education. Violence against women emerges from these unequal gender relations, and the female body, from early to old age, becomes a social marker upon which discrimination is established.

The plundering of the feminine is manifested in the forms of unprecedented bodily destruction, as well as in the forms of trafficking and commodification of all that these bodies can offer, up to their limits. The depredatory exploitation of female or feminized bodies is practiced as never before, and in this apocalyptic stage of humanity, it pillages until only remnants remain. (RITA SEGATO, 2012, p. 108)

For Segato (2016, 2018), we are facing strategies of outright wars against women, through material and symbolic apparatuses that aim to undermine resistance, which ultimately constitute paradigms of cruelty whose final goal is to impose terror to such a level that produces the sensation that the struggle is impossible. However, as witnessed by feminist activism and studies, resistance not only remains, but significant victories have been achieved, such as legal provisions and denunciations of abuse that have already shown results, such as increased exposure and punishment of abusers, even though there is still a long way to go.

Women's bodies that are plundered until they become mere remnants - legally defined as feminicides - lose their physical resistance and their social memory the moment their stories are erased in several directions: when the courts fail to protect women; when the criminal justice system fails to punish the killers; when newspapers colonize the narratives of murdered women by raising moral judgments to justify the death; when the media simply refuses to narrate such crimes, naturalizing them as if they were no longer a problem for journalism.

Feminicide, which refers to the murder of women and girls for gender reasons, that is, due to disdain or discrimination against women, is a serious social problem in the country. According to information from the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Brazil is in fifth place in the world ranking of feminicide, behind only El Salvador, Colombia, Guatemala, and Russia.

The starting point of the research was the gathering of reports on feminicide and/or attempted feminicide in newspapers from the states in the Amazon Region, especially all the states in the Northern Region of Brazil that comprise the Legal Amazon: Acre, Amapá, Amazonas, Pará, Roraima, Rondônia and Tocantins. It was not our intention to account for all the cultural, social and political diversity that relates to the Amazon territory but carrying out a reflexive and critical exercise based on the capitals as producers of news enabled us to understand how journalism constructs the narratives of feminicide crimes and whether or not it recognizes the elements of this vast territoriality in its narratives.

The Legal Amazon is an area that encompasses nine Brazilian states located in the Amazon Basin, demarcated according to Article 2 of Supplementary Law No. 124 (BRASIL, 2007), and seven of them constitute the Northern Region of Brazil. This vast territory that occupies 58.9% of Brazil's land area encompasses regions of identical and also distinct characteristics, and its population corresponds to a little more than 12% of the country's total inhabitants.

The reason for conducting the research confined to the states of the Northern Region was due to the absence of studies on the theme and in order to investigate how the narratives of feminicide are being constructed by the leading newspapers in these states and if, in these narratives, characteristics related to the Amazonian context could be identified.

For the gathering of data, carried out between March and June 2019, we adopted the technique of using keywords, typical of the methodological assumptions of content analysis (Bruno LEAL, Carlos Alberto de CARVALHO, 2012), using the words 'feminicide', 'murdered' and 'dead' in our search. By not restricting the query to the word 'feminicide' we anticipated that the results would be minimal, preventing us from discerning a broader picture of the murders or

attempted murders of women, whose logic of intelligibility through gender relations faces limits and challenges from the very beginning, i.e., the non-usage of the concept of femicide in a significant portion of the journalistic narratives that report on these events.

Accordingly, the *corpus* of the research consisted of 65 news items gathered over a three-month period (March 9 to June 10, 2019) from seven newspapers: *A Crítica* (Amazonas), *Diário da Amazônia* (Rondônia), *Diário do Amapá* (Amapá), *Folha de Boa Vista* (Roraima), *Jornal do Tocantins* (Tocantins), *O Liberal* (Pará), and *O Rio Branco* (Acre). On March 9, 2015, the femicide law (Law No. 13,104/2015) came into force and, thus, the sample was based on the four years that have elapsed since it was enacted in Brazil. It refers to a recent period, in which the law began to be enforced in the police and legal spheres and the media began to refer to it.

## Women, vulnerabilities and the Amazon

Inequality between genders is a striking feature of Brazilian society. According to data from the *Global Gender Gap Report* (GGGR) (WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM, 2020) survey, which investigates the disparity between genders around the world and has been conducted by the World Economic Forum since 2006, Brazil placed 92<sup>nd</sup> among the 153 countries investigated in the gender equality ranking. The survey evaluates four areas: economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment. In 2011, Brazil's position in this same ranking was 82<sup>nd</sup>, which shows that the country has fallen ten positions in the last nine years.

There is no survey along the lines of the GGGR to assess the gender gap across Brazilian regions. However, national surveys such as those conducted by the *Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública* (Brazilian Public Security Forum - FBSP) and the *Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada* (Institute of Applied Economic Research - IPEA), such as the *Anuário Brasileiro de Segurança Pública* (Brazilian Public Security Yearbook - FBSP, 2020) and the *Atlas da Violência* (Violence Atlas - IPEA; FBSP, 2019), rank some states in the Northern Region as being the most violent for women, which highlights the need for public policies to prevent and combat violence against women.

*Atlas da Violência*, (IPEA; FBSP, 2019) which analyzes data from 2017 and 2018, highlights the fact that three of the states whose femicide rates increased in the period showed an increase of more than 20%: Roraima (93%), Ceará (26.4%), and Tocantins (21.4%). Data from the *Anuário Brasileiro de Segurança Pública* (FBSP, 2020) regarding murder (female victims) and femicide, collected in the first half of 2019 and the first half of 2020, revealed that of the five states that occupy the top positions in the survey, three are from the Northern Region: Acre (1<sup>st</sup> position), Amapá (2<sup>nd</sup> position), and Amazonas (3<sup>rd</sup> position).

In research conducted by one of this article's authors (Cynthia MIRANDA et al., 2015; MIRANDA; Milena BARROSO, 2020) over the past nine years, surveys were conducted on public policies for gender equality in states such as Amazonas, Pará and Tocantins and it was noted that these policies are haphazard and/or non-existent, which shows that the territory of political dispute is not yet open to the incorporation of the gender perspective. As Esther Duflo (2012) points out, policies that seek to explicitly favor women need to be justified, not only in terms of the need to promote gender equality, but also to prove that gender equality itself is desirable and worth the cost it entails.

According to Iraildes Torres (2011), power relations in the Amazon are materialized in a type of *mandonismo* (bossism) diametrically cruel to women, which is not only related to the government structure, but to social relations loaded with ethnic prejudice in addition to the gender issue in that region.

Miranda and Barroso (2013) point out that the fact that the Northern Region is one of the most lacking in investments from the federal government poses major challenges to women who, in addition to dealing with various social problems arising from isolation, substandard health services, and high unemployment rates, face daily problems stemming from the feminization of poverty, precarious jobs, female underrepresentation in decision-making positions, and the constant vulnerability of their lives.

This list of adverse conditions, however, does not infer a passivity on the part of women in the Amazon Region when faced with the challenges imposed by gender hierarchies and violence. In this sense, it is worth remembering, not least because of the symbolic importance for women in the region, the Convention of Belém do Pará (Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women), held in 1994, which Segato (2018) considers an important milestone in the advancement of defining violence against women and building strategies to combat it.

The Amazon Region still concentrates large urban voids and has a diversity of territories where riverine, indigenous, and quilombola populations experience various social conflicts and where women from the city, countryside, forest, and wetlands are permanent victims of violence, which is not always reported by the local, regional, and national media.

Femicide emerges as the apex of the vulnerabilities experienced by women living in the Amazon territory, as evidenced by recent national research, such as the *Anuário Brasileiro de Segurança Pública* (FBSP, 2020) and the *Atlas de Violência* (IPEA; FBSP, 2020), which rank the states of the Northern Region in the top positions in terms of femicide incidents. Following the enactment of Law No. 13,104/2015, femicide came to be considered as the qualified murder of women because of their gender and was included in the list of heinous crimes. (BRASIL, 2015) The penalty for qualified homicide is imprisonment from 12 to 30 years.

Femicide explicitly expresses the unequal relations between men and women, in which the extreme manifestation of power and terror are behaviors that provide the basis for its existence in the most diverse societies. In this article, we adopt the concept of femicide as a hate crime against women, which, according to Segato (2016), results from a set of violence directed specifically at eliminating women because of their status as women.

Understanding feminicides, for Segato (2016, 2018), requires going beyond physical cruelties, such as mutilations of female bodies and their abandonment in vacant lots or garbage dumps. It is necessary to interpret them as strategies of “masculinity mandates,” through which men reinforce their positions of supposed superiority over women, but also send symbols of power to the “male confraternity” in messages that aim to maintain what the author calls “pedagogies of cruelty”.

## Narratives of femicide in the Amazon

By appropriating the reflections of Segato (2016) to consider the language of violence embedded in the narratives of femicide in the Amazon, using the journalistic texts of leading newspapers that do not employ the gender perspective as an editorial policy, we recognize the challenges faced in the construction of a non-sexist language in a society in which violence against women is naturalized.

The power of the journalistic narrative offered to the public is expansive, since, as Luiz Motta (2013) points out, journalism is the hegemonic narrative over all others in the construction of immediate truth and common consensus. On the other hand, when observed in their temporal, political, cultural, ideological and other dimensions, journalistic narratives cannot be interpreted outside the broader disputes of meaning and power games that take place in a given society. (LEAL; CARVALHO, 2012) This implies recognizing a myriad of male and female social players operating to define what and how to narrate, starting from the conceptual fractures and framings concerning gender relations, gender meanings, and the confrontations of physical and symbolic violence derived from hierarchies based on logics stemming from them.

The symbolic colonization of women in the narratives emerges, in this sense, through the hegemonic narrative of journalism in situations in which the news reports erase stories and memories, blame women for the violent acts suffered, dismiss any protagonism by women, emphasizing their passivity and non-responsiveness to violence. But not even that can be construed as having resulted exclusively from a logic within a journalism not affected by dynamics that are external to it. Therefore, we utilize the lenses of interpretation of gender inequality to deconstruct journalistic texts, in order to identify in them forms of Amazon women’s subjectivation. Subjectivation is understood here as a denial of legitimacy, voice, meaning, and visibility of women and their memories. The narrative frames characters, arranges scenes, and chooses what to narrate, attributing greater or lesser relevance to the facts. In the following excerpt taken from the newspaper *A Crítica*, the female victim of femicide is presented as follows:

The police also stated that the woman had a prior criminal record for drug trafficking, forged documents, and robbery. However, the Civil Police pointed out that one of the lines of investigation for the homicide was that the victim had been threatened by an ex-partner. (A CRÍTICA, 03/05/2019, p. C6)

It is evident that the newspaper made a choice to portray this femicide as a homicide while also adding details of the murdered woman’s prior criminal record, as reported by the police. This strategy may lead to the conclusion that her murder could have been a consequence of her criminal past and not due to the fact that she was a woman.

Accordingly, this study seeks to analyze the strategies used by journalistic narratives to tell the stories of murders and attempted murders of women because of their gender. The 65 news articles selected were published by seven newspapers based in the capitals of the states in the Northern Region, namely: 20 news articles from *O Liberal* (PA); 14 articles from *Diário da Amazônia* (RO); 12 articles from *A Crítica* (AM); 7 articles from *Folha de Boa Vista* (RR); 5 articles from *Jornal do Tocantins* (TO); 4 articles from *O Rio Branco* (AC); and 3 articles from *Diário do Amapá* (AP).

Most of the news items chosen are from the newspaper *O Liberal*, from the state of Pará, followed by the newspaper *Diário da Amazônia*, from Rondônia, and the newspaper *A Crítica*, from Amazonas. These are the leading newspapers from the most populated states in the Northern Region and, for this reason, we made the assumption that the capitals, as well as their editorial

teams, would be better structured, leading to a higher number of news items on femicide and/or attempted femicide. The other newspapers had few reports on femicide in the period analyzed, varying from three to seven pieces.

The data do not allow us to conclude that, during this period, there were few femicides, considering that the states of Amapá, Acre and Roraima demonstrate a concentration of high rates for the murder of women. However, bearing in mind that most news refers to crimes that occurred in the state capitals, it is noteworthy that the occurrence of femicides for the period, in the interior of the states, did not receive much coverage in the analyzed newspapers. In relation to the use of the word femicide in the news, it was observed that the majority of reports (46 news articles) did not use the word to refer to the crime, opting instead for terms such as homicide and murdered woman. Only in 19 news reports did the word femicide appear. The following are some excerpts of the journalistic narratives that do not use the word femicide to refer to the crimes:

A cloth belt was wrapped around the neck of Karolina, who was still wearing her uniform from the Monteiro Lobato State School, where she studied. Besides this, there were no other apparent signs of violence. Another suspicion raised by the investigation is that it may have been a crime of passion, that is, it could have been motivated by jealousy or arguments between the victim and an individual with whom she had a relationship. (FOLHA DE BOA VISTA, 10/06/2019, p. 11)

Allan Moreira Borges, former husband of the teacher found murdered by four stab wounds in her home in December 2014, was sentenced to trial by jury in July 2016. He will be tried for doubly aggravated murder, (committed out of jealousy over a suspected betrayal by his wife) and with no possibility of defense for the victim. (JORNAL DO TOCANTINS, 13/03/2019)

Two defendants accused of involvement in the rape and murder of student Naiara Karine will again go before a jury today (15). In the crime, the student Naiara suffered gang rape and was stabbed to death in early 2013, in rural Porto Velho. (DIÁRIO DA AMAZÔNIA, 15/05/2019, p. C3)

The sparse use of the word femicide in the news prompts some reflections: the first one is that, due to the recent legal definition of this crime (Law n. 13.104/2015), the word has not yet been assimilated in society and, consequently, the journalists responsible for producing the news have not taken this vocabulary on board. Since Brazilian society exhibits a marked gender inequality and journalism relies on society as the raw material to build its news, a journalist without in-depth knowledge about gender issues may reinforce gender inequality in his/her journalistic writing, in many instances, without being aware of it.

The second reflection is that, since society is marked by chauvinism and patriarchy, the news items could be seen as artifacts in which gender inequality comfortably hovers and is reinforced on a daily basis in these narratives. It is no coincidence that the use of the expression 'crime of passion' is still found in these narratives, harkening back to times when the criminal justice system itself accepted the thesis of a crime motivated by the legitimate defense of an offended honor on the part of the murderer.

In the case of femicide, the complaints are usually made by neighbors, family members and/or strangers, when they witness, in the vicinity of the crime, the violence that precedes it, such as screams, calls for help, and suspicious noises. They also denounce when the bodies are found unconscious or, furthermore, when family members report the disappearance of murdered women, hoping to find them alive. When the femicide results from an established relationship (marriage, stable union, dating), other violence preceded the femicide.

The restricted *corpus* of the research, 65 news items from seven newspapers over a period of three months, allowed us to determine that the press reported some femicides to the detriment of others, as if one femicide presented more relevant characteristics to the journalistic lens than another.

The statistics fall far short of reporting the growing number of femicides in the Northern Region, since there are gaps in reporting by the states. The state of Tocantins, for example, until 2018, did not register this specific type of offense. The body responsible for notifying these cases is the Secretariat of Public Safety, which had previously registered the willful killing of women as murder.

The deficiency in the notification of these cases masks the reality and makes it impossible to implement public policies aimed at female victims of violence. In the absence of public policies for women, such crimes tend to be treated exclusively as police cases, without adequate prevention and combat policies. The narratives of femicides in the newspapers also took this direction: they are treated as 'police cases', as was evidenced in the distribution of the news by editors. During the selection of the news items, 25 were located in the Police section, 17 in the section named City/Police, 9 in the section Cities/Current Events, 5 in the Cities section, 5 in the Urban Life section, 3 in the Latest section, and 1 in the section named Porto Velho.

With the exception of *Jornal do Tocantins*, the other newspapers had sections or sub-sections named Police or City/Police. More than half of the selected news articles were located in the Police and City/Police sections: 42 articles out of 65.

A characteristic of police journalism is superficial treatment in the coverage of these cases, which can contribute to the trivialization and naturalization of feminicides. There was no space, in any of the news reports, for a narrative that reinforced the importance of complaints to prevent the murders of women, which leads us to conclude that the news reports were merely extensions of the police reports. To illustrate, below is an excerpt from a journalistic narrative in which the police source predominates:

The Civil Police and the Guardianship Council in the city informed that the victim, who has an intellectual disability, suffered trauma from the introduction of a blunt object (penis or finger) into the anus. The organ had four centimeter lacerations on the lower part. Also according to the police, the girl had been hospitalized since Sunday to treat an infection. The nurse allegedly took advantage of the moment that her mother stepped away for a few moments to commit the crime. (A CRÍTICA, 19/04/2019, p. C7)

For the newspapers, violence against women, in which the murders are outcomes of other violence, is a police problem and not a problem arising from the marked inequality between genders. Reporting feminicide crimes, therefore, cannot be construed as reporting a crime without taking into account that cultural issues influence the production of the news. (Cleide dos SANTOS, 2019)

The analysis of the Amazon feminicide narratives sought to identify elements in the journalistic narratives that might bring some specificity from the Amazon territory to the reporting of the crimes. Throughout the unfolding research, we found it difficult to achieve such specificities as a result of the amplitude of factual news, often seen as an extension of police reports. The location of the crime was the category created to trace the geography of crime in the Amazon territory through the news and thus minimally guarantee a representation of territorial specificity.

The site of the murders was mostly the private residential environment (39 news pieces) and most of the women were murdered in their own homes (35 news pieces). The narratives about the crimes point out that such localities, which should be places of safety for women where affectivities and family relations occur, are in fact the setting for the perpetration of most feminicides and attempted feminicides reported by the newspapers. The following are excerpts from two journalistic narratives in which women were murdered in their homes.

A minor suspected of committing the murder of a 17-year-old teenager was apprehended by the Civil Police in Buritizal. The crime happened in the early hours of Saturday (13). According to the Fire Department, the girl was found charred after the room where she was sleeping had been set on fire. (DIÁRIO DA AMAZÔNIA, 16/04/2019, p. C3)

On the morning of Tuesday, 7th, a crime of feminicide took place inside apartment 101, block 05, Residencial Açucena, in New Buritizal, when Denivaldo Miranda da Silva, 40, stabbed to death his ex-wife, Keila Monteiro Madureira, 27 years old. The crime happened in front of Keila's son, only 8 years old, who is autistic. After killing his ex-wife, Denivaldo took his own life in the living room of the couple's apartment. (DIÁRIO DO AMAPÁ, 08/05/2019, p. P1)

In relation to the locality of the crime, which we understand here to mean the address where the crimes were committed, the majority of the news reports referred to occurrences of feminicide and/or attempted feminicide in the capital cities, especially in the outlying districts. From the universe of 65 news reports, only 23 dealt with incidents of this crime in municipalities in the interior of the states.

On the issue of intersectionality, especially with regard to social class in the context of gender relations marked by violence, we observed in the journalistic narratives of feminicides in the Amazon that socioeconomic differences, social classes, divisions based on racial dimensions and sexuality of the battered women, as a starting point, do not constitute a problem for the intelligibility of the cases narrated. The identification of the peripheral context as the site of the crimes was due to the reference, in the journalistic text, to the neighborhoods where the bodies were found. The prominence of the address was the main clue in ascertaining that the murdered women or those who had suffered a murder attempt were from less wealthy classes. In the sample of 65 news reports, only two cases of feminicide that reverberated in four news reports made reference to the wealthy class context.

The traces of cruelty were evident in the way these crimes were committed, according to the journalistic reports: strangled in her sleep, stabbed, physically beaten, battered, death as a result of rape and physical assault, firearm, asphyxiation, pushed down the stairs, hacked with machete, stoned, clubbed, punched and kicked, burned and smothered, hit with an iron bar, gang rape, and attempted hanging. The following excerpt highlights a journalistic narrative that evidences the cruelty of the crime: "the victim was killed with a blow to the middle of the chest, in a public square in the city. Juliana was surrounded by a group of female friends when she was blindsided by her ex-partner." (O LIBERAL, 04/06/2019, p. 12)

For the women who were murdered, the spaces to speak were possibly denied, since in the narratives we did not identify any minimal references to their biography, which may, in some way, have influenced the taking of their lives, since they were silenced because they were women.

To make minimal references to their back stories, beyond the crime, appears to be utopian, due to the immediacy of the journalism production routines, which demand from the professional a large-scale and diversified production for several platforms (text, audio, video), often on a daily basis. However, the adoption of textual constructions capable of reporting on the feminicide, giving protagonism to the woman, not blaming her for her past life, nor highlighting the aggressor's strength, for example, does not lie in the land of utopias.

Certain inferences can be drawn from the set of journalistic texts analyzed. The main one is the existence of a representation of social reality in which women, even after being murdered, continue to be reduced to second-class human beings. This is due to the erasure of their memories and pre-judgments. For Elton Antunes and Bárbara Caldeira (2017, p. 43):

Affirming without problematizing the place of women as victims can even be perceived as a way to once again deprive women of their protagonism, action, and empowerment. This is not, of course, to say that this woman is not in fact a victim, because she is. But by narratively constructing the female figure as only marked by passivity and non-response to the violence she suffers - which is still a moral judgment of journalism - the dimension of 'putting in relation' is emptied.

From this perspective, we can highlight that the narratives with the characteristics described above have the power to reinforce the inequality between genders and, in this way, the symbolic colonization of women is maintained as a body that is objectified until its death.

Feminicide is a naturalized crime, and this inference is mainly made when we look at the newspapers that compose our research *corpus*. The cases involving the murder of women in the Amazon occupy the highest positions in the rankings of national surveys, such as the *Atlas de Violência* (IPEA; FBSP, 2019, 2020) and the *Anuário Brasileiro de Segurança Pública* (FBSP, 2020), more specifically in Acre, Amapá, and Roraima. However, in these territories, the absence of coverage on local feminicides shows that they are not a problem for journalism. As such, a second death is materialized by the erasure, and by the ethical and moral non-recognition of women.

In this complex scenario, we also widely observe the sabotaged narratives, as they are called when the sources heard are police officers and when there is no concern in seeking out family members of the murdered women as sources. Even when dealing with absolutely factual narratives, all the news pieces highlight the location where such crimes took place, and these elements could be used to give a more plural character to the sources.

The symbolic colonization of women is solidified in the treatment accorded to them in the narratives, as second-class citizens, alive or dead, as a result of gender violence. For María Lugones (2014), the gender system has a visible side and a hidden side. The visible side hegemonically constructs gender and gender relations, and the hidden side of the gender system was and is completely violent. The union of the two sides, for the author, is what constitutes the modern colonial gender system. When we look at the narratives of feminicide in the Amazon, there is no difficulty in identifying the sedimentation of this modern colonial gender system in the versions of social reality presented by journalism.

## Final considerations

Language is capable of adapting itself to new social challenges and, thus, can and must be modified based on demands that emerge from the social body. When the social fabric is modified, in the case of this research, through the creation of the feminicide law to classify crimes against women due to their gender status, there is an opening for journalism to adopt this new vocabulary and all that it implies. There is no institutionalized requirement in this adoption; the obligation is in the sense of following and translating into the social imaginary a just way to treat the murders of women; however, it did not do so in a considerable portion of the news pieces that did not adopt the term feminicide.

To maintain the stereotypical and unjust manner of reporting the crimes of murder as a result of gender is to reaffirm the objectification of women in society. By looking at the narratives of feminicide in the Amazon, the research pointed to the existence of symbolic and affective domination of the murdered women, in a context of deprivation of rights: the right to a dignified existence, the right to come and go, and the right to protagonism over their own narratives. The construction of women's autonomy requires protagonism with discourse, with one's own conceptions, interpretations, arguments, and judgments. (Marcela LAGARDE, 2005) Such actions are linked to life, and the question is: how do we transport them to the field of death in journalistic narratives? The analysis of the journalistic narratives showed that there is no transposition of a protagonism, in life, which is already non-existent, and we assessed that this impossibility is the result of the multiple deprivations that women go through in their daily lives, fueled by gender inequality.

The journalistic narratives analyzed here could be read as resulting from the mere mirroring of the chauvinistic, misogynistic, and patriarchal dynamics of the Amazon Region, the stage for the feminicides, or attempted feminicides, reported in the news items under scrutiny. However, it seems more productive to think that such narratives are paradigmatic of what we propose as a triple colonization process: 1) journalism and its operators are colonized by the hierarchizing and violence-promoting logics that sustain gender relations; 2) the preference for police pages in the topography of newspapers, as we have found, points to the colonization of journalistic narratives by the diction of police narratives, reproducing reports from police corporations almost in their entirety; 3) the colonization of the people who read journalistic narratives, in the sense of offering a model with little inclination to problematize the reported events.

The most evident consequence of this colonization process of journalism and its operators is the lack of knowledge, or rather, the negligence of social forces in disputes of meaning and power games in the understanding of the dynamics of gender relations and in the formulation of strategies to surmount its disastrous consequences.

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**Cynthia Mara Miranda** ([cynthiamara@uff.edu.br](mailto:cynthiamara@uff.edu.br)) is a journalist, associate professor for the Journalism course and the Graduate Program in Communication and Society at the Federal University of Tocantins (UFT), coordinator of the research group Communication, Rights and Equality (CODiG), member of the Research Commission of the Red Internacional de Periodistas con Vision de Género (RIPVG). Researcher 2 at CNPq (Productivity Scholarship).

**Carlos Alberto de Carvalho** ([carloscarvalho0209@gmail.com](mailto:carloscarvalho0209@gmail.com)) is an associate professor at the Department of Social Communication in the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG). He

has published articles in journals and book chapters, in addition to books published individually, in collaboration and as an organizer, in Brazil and abroad. Coordinator of Insurgent: Research Group on Communication, Textual Networks and Relations of Power/Knowledge. CNPq Researcher 2 (Productivity Scholarship).

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