

Spatial and temporal behavior of three paradigmatic cases of violence in
Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua México: feminicide, homicide and involuntary
disappearances of girls and women (1993-2013)

Report presented to

Mr. Christof Heyns

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By

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Citizens of Ciudad Juárez have experienced extreme forms of violence during the last 30 years. This violence has distinct and diverse manifestations, varied victims, and different perpetrators. It is a multifaceted violence that has created historical injustices, has induced deep sufferings, and has wounded and harmed an entire community (Monárrez and Rojas, 2013).

In support of our thesis and research, we consider two paradigmatic violent events that have affected our community: "*The Juarez feminicide*" (1993) and "*Juarez's War on Drugs*." (2008). Within these crises of human rights violations, people are abused and killed based on discrimination, which ranks human beings into superior and inferior classes. These hierarchies are limitless (Zaffaroni, 2004) and discrimination may be based on one's sex, age, by place of origin, area of residence, socioeconomic class, and gender. Local, regional, and national politics focused on political victories has criminal and unethical vulnerabilities for thousands of girls, boys, men and women (Todorov, 2002).

Within these paradigmatic violent events, we present three emblematic manifestations for your consideration: feminicide, involuntary or forced disappearances of girls, and homicides of men. Following an introduction to these manifestations, we analyze the spatial and temporal behavior of each, and we conclude with policy implications for improved public safety and justice.

I. The Juarez feminicide

In January 1993, organized women and feminists from Ciudad Juárez and Chihuahua began a record-keeping of girls and women that were murdered. This memory retrieval revealed the brutality and the impunity that both permitted and normalized feminicide. Victims' families reported that their daughters had been disappeared, tortured, and sexually abused; their bodies were dumped in vacant lots or in desert areas of the city as worthless residues. The families' cries for justice gained the attention of national and international human rights organizations, and recommendations were given to the Mexican State to address these long-tolerated atrocities and injustices against women (Monárrez and Bejarano, 2010).

Ms. Asma Jahangir, UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, visited Ciudad Juárez in 1999. Her report to the Mexican State was firm and direct:

The events in Ciudad Juárez thus constitute a typical case of gender-based crimes which thrive on impunity. The arrogant behaviour and obvious indifference shown by some state officials in regard to these cases leave the impression that many of the crimes were deliberately never investigated for the sole reason that the victims were “only” young girls with no particular social status and who therefore were regarded as expendable. It is to be feared that a lot of valuable time and information may have been lost because of the delays and irregularities (United Nations, 1999).

Throughout this paper, our data and analysis demonstrate that Ms. Jahangir's conclusions are as relevant today as they were 12 years ago when she issued the report.

Since November 2009, when the Inter American Court of Human Rights issued the *Cotton Field* Judgment against the Mexican State, the Mexican government has been held accountable to the international community for three specific cases of feminicides: Esmeralda Herrera Monreal, Laura Berenice Ramos Monárrez, and Claudia Ivette González. The ruling includes sanctions against the Mexican government for the absence of justice to families' victims.

Still, justice remains veiled. Furthermore, with the escalation of missing girls and women since 2008, and the discovery of female skeletons in the years 2011, 2012 and 2013, we can say that the commitment to the eradication of femicide remains unfulfilled. It is important to note that the number of bodies of young girls found in the Sierra de San Agustín, the Sierra de San Ignacio, and the stream The Navajo (2011-2013) has exceeded high-profile cases of the previous decades, including the Cotton Field, Lote Bravo, Lomas de Poleo, and Cerro del Cristo Negro cases (see photographs 1 and 2).¹

¹ The body count still vague; the coverage in the press is not relevant –although some exceptions of committed women journalist- and investigative and judicial impunity persist.

A mother mourns injustice and pain in public.



Mrs. María García Reynoso, decided to take her daughter's coffin to the Fiscalía's esplanade. Her daughter, Jessica Leticia Peña García, disappeared on May 30, 2010. Her decomposed body was found January 26, 2012. Mrs. García was notified February 23, 2012. Mrs. García Reynoso and other relatives with missing daughters remained at the site of the Fiscalía from February 24 to 28, until Mr. César Duarte Jaquez, governor of Chihuahua, arrived (Espinoza, 2013).

SOURCE: Julia Monárrez, [personal archive] February, 2012.

Photo 2

We want our daughters alive, we don't want memorials.



Victim's families protesting against federal, state and municipal governments in Cotton Field Memorial during the unveiling of Desert Flower sculpture.

SOURCE: Julia Monárrez, [particular archive] August 30, 2012.

II. Juárez's War on Drugs.

In 2008, Juárez, Chihuahua was called "the national dump of corpses" (Turati, 2009:11). That year 14,007 people were killed in México, and 18.6 percent of these violent deaths occurred in the state of Chihuahua. Ciudad Juárez was the site of 61 percent of these killings, and accounted for 11.35 percent of all assassinations in México (INEGI, 2010). On March 28, 2008 the city was informed about the creation of *Joint Operation Chihuahua*. This strategy - requested and supported by both the state and municipal governments of Chihuahua - was part of the war against organized crime declared by the federal government in late 2006 and early 2007, in order to restore citizen's public security across the country (Sala de prensa del gobierno federal, 2007).

Public security was not restored; instead, the city of Juárez was witness to the supremacy of the *facto powers*. Violence spread: bodies of decapitated and mutilated persons, mostly men, were left in fences, public buildings, schools, etc. Criminal groups - both organized and unorganized - resisted the force of the State, annihilating each other and subjecting a substantial segment of Juárez population to other violent crimes against their person and against their property. These crimes include: extortion, kidnapping, payment for "protection", arson (to businesses), carjacking, sexual violence against women, attacks on transgender population, and the disappearance of boys, men, girls, and women.

This was a period in which extrajudicial and summary trials² were disseminated through television, newspapers or internet; hit men burst into hospitals to kill wounded

² "In terms of the report for the Special Rapporteur, I cannot say how all of these homicides are classified in terms of "extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions. As we know, most of the murders are not investigated and these categories really do not exist (that I know of) in the Mexican legal system. I think that the only number we can report are the total homicides. It might be possible for the Rapporteur to get a statement from the Fiscalía with more details/descriptions of the crimes

rivals. A significant number of Juárez inhabitants were displaced: to other cities in Mexico, to other locations within Juárez, or to the United States of America. As a result, Juárez has become a city of orphans and widows, and, to a lesser extent, of parents without sons and daughters; comprehensive and official data for these populations is yet undisclosed.

The different expressions of drug war violence from 2008 to 2012 that we suffered in Ciudad Juarez - immeasurable losses of human lives - have left a total of 10,882 persons dead (Molloy, 2013). These violent deaths have a differential impact for men and women based on gender discrimination and social inequalities.

i. Femicide and Disappearances of Girls and Women in Ciudad Juárez

Femicide has different expressions in this city, and since 1993 up to April 9, 2013, according to our data base³ 1441 girls and women have been killed (see Table 1). Girls and women are killed by relatives, or known and unknown men. Motives for being a victim are based on gender discrimination. Although all lost lives are important, in order to document one of the most pervasive expressions of women killing, we focus on what is defined as Systemic sexual femicide.

Systemic sexual femicide. The assassination of women who are kidnaped, tortured, and raped. Their nude or seminude corpses are left in the desert, in empty lots, in sewer pipes, in garbage dumps, and on train tracks. Through these cruel acts,

that might allow him to determine which of the 11,200 homicides fit the definition of 'extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions' (Molloy, 2013).

³ From the definition of femicide as "the misogynist killing of women by men" (Radford and Russell, 1992, xi, 3) and the five factors that sustain it: motives, perpetrators, violent acts, structural changes in society and tolerance to violence by the state and other institutions, Femicide Database was constructed. In it are recorded cases of girls and women killed since 1993 until 2013. The sources are from newspapers and Fiscalía's reports.

the assassins strengthen the unequal gender relations that distinguish the sexes by emphasizing otherness, difference, and inequality. Systemic sexual feminicides are subdivided into organized systemic sexual feminicide and unorganized sexual feminicide.

Organized systemic sexual feminicide. The assassination of women in which the assassins may act as an organized network of people involved in sexual feminicides. The assassins consciously and systematically practice a method of killing directed at women's and girls' sexual and gender identity over a long and undetermined period of time.

Unorganized systemic sexual feminicide. The assassination of women accompanied, though not always, by kidnapping, torture, rape, and the disposal of the corpse. The assassins presumably kill only once over a period of time. They may be men who are unknown to the victims or close friends or family members of the victims. The victims are left in lonely places, at hotels, or inside their homes (Fragoso and Bejarano, 2010: 158-159).⁴

Systemic sexual feminicide accounts for 216 cases since 1993 until 2013. According to the critical definitions stated in the above paragraphs, 141 cases are considered organized and 75 are unorganized (see table 2). Among the 141 cases the average age and the modal age is 17 years old (see table 3).

Analyzing table 1, two categories merit special attention: “organized crime and drug traffic” and “no data”. For the first category mentioned, from the total of 695 cases, 648

⁴ Definitions coined Julia Monárrez in 2010. Translation to English by Rosa-Linda Fragoso and Cynthia Bejarano (2010).

girls and women were killed from 2008 to 2012. Within these statistics are the presumably 66 “collateral damages”. No data accounts for 172 cases, which are classified this way because there is no sufficient elements to do otherwise. 132 cases occurred during the drug war period, and were part of the hegemonic and gendered discourse: “They are killed because are parts of the drug cartels” (Monárrez, 2010).

Involuntary disappearances are pernicious and deadly for young women and young girls. Our database includes 246 cases; 211 girls disappeared from 2008 to 2013. They are targeted as *killable subjects*, because of the social inequalities in which they live.

Table 1: Categories of femicide and murders of girls and women in Ciudad Juárez and Valle de Juárez (1993-2013*)

Categories feminicides	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total de casos	%
Feminicides																							
Femicide	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	3	0.2
Intimate femicide (a)	8	5	7	8	10	8	7	14	10	16	16	5	14	11	14	14	21	6	13	4	1	212	14.7
Systemic sexual femicide (b)	9	7	22	22	18	17	7	9	15	6	8	6	8	2	7	10	6	4	12	18	3	216	15.0
Femicide by stigmatized occupations (c)	3	2	2	3	0	2	4	0	2	1	0	2	2	1	0	1	0	1	2	5	0	33	2.3
Murders																							
Organized crime and drug traffic	1	1	5	4	4	2	1	8	4	4	0	3	3	2	5	67	126	245	164	46	0	695	48.2
Communitarian violence (d)	0	3	8	3	4	8	3	2	4	9	5	2	4	6	1	11	8	8	4	0	0	93	6.5
Imprudent (e)	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	4	1	1	0	1	1	0	2	1	1	0	2	0	17	1.2
No data	3	2	4	5	5	2	3	4	1	4	0	2	2	0	3	26	37	39	21	8	1	172	11.9
Total by year	24	20	50	45	41	39	25	38	41	41	30	20	34	23	30	131	201	304	216	83	5	1441	100.0

Source: "Base de datos Femicidio 1993 - 2013" [particular research file], El Colegio de la Frontera Norte.

Notes:

(a) This category includes child and familiar femicide.

(b) It includes disorganized and organized femicide.

(c) Indicates women who work as prostitutes, exotic dances, and night club and bar tenders.

(d) Murders by robbery, juvenile delinquency and quarrels.

(e) As far as data shows, in these reckless murders there is not a premeditation act to kill the women.

*Since January 1, 1993 to April 9, 2013.

Table 2: Systemic Sexual Femicide 1993-2013*

Year	Cases
1993	5
1994	6
1995	16
1996	19
1997	11
1998	14
1999	6
2000	6
2001	13
2002	5
2003	5
2004	4
2005	4
2006	0
2007	3
2008	2
2009	3
2010	1
2011	4
2012	12
2013	2
TOTAL	141

* Since January 1, 1993 to April 9, 2013.

Source: "Base de datos Femicidio 1993 - 2013"
[particular research file], El Colegio de la Frontera Norte.

Table 3: Victims Age
Systemic sexual femicide 1993-2013*

Age	Frecuency	%
0-9	1	0.7
10-19	84	59.5
20-29	31	21.9
30-39	11	7.8
40-49	1	0.7
50-59	1	0.7
60-69	0	0.0
No data	12	8.5
Total	141	100.0
Average age	17	
Age modal	17	

* Since January 1, 1993 to April 9, 2013.

Source: "Base de datos Femicidio 1993 - 2013"
[particular research file], El Colegio de la Frontera Norte.

ii. Homicides

Discrimination that devalues human life is wielded against men as well. Men have been killed for years. As a matter of fact, from 1985 to 2010, homicide rates in the State of Chihuahua were equivalent to the national rate, and had a fluctuant tendency until 2007 (ONUMujeres, 2012). Expressions such as “Let them kill themselves; they are drug dealers”; “the city will be better off and clean if they kill each other” are examples of a rhetoric and a genealogy of discrimination on the basis of the “inhuman” compared to the “normal human” (Baudrillard, 1993: 125-126). In the year 2008, the homicide rate in Ciudad Juárez showed a significant increase: 5.3 times the previous year’s rate. The last three years from 2007 to 2010, the rate was 12 times higher compared to the year 2007.

III. Spatial and Temporal Behavior of Femicide, Disappeared Girls and Homicides at Ciudad Juarez

Understanding the urban spatial context where violence takes place is a keystone for better actions and public policy to prevent and to stop feminicides and disappeared girls at Ciudad Juarez. It is necessary to determine if the physical (infrastructure and urban equipment), socioeconomic, and demographic conditions of the space can explain violence.

Our research of this phenomenon includes the creation of a relational database in a GIS platform (Cervera, 2010), and spatial analysis with geo-statistic techniques to describe patterns, hotspots, and directionality. Our analysis also includes calculation of probability and prediction maps.

Feminicides

A database with 20 years of feminicides can be considered as a robust data source to study the spatial and temporal variation of femicide at Ciudad Juarez. From 1993 to 2007 the average number of feminicides per year was 33.4. This average skyrocketed to 187 per year during the time period 2008-2012, an increase of 560 percent (Figure 1). As made evident in previous sections of this paper, this time period corresponds with the exacerbated violence experienced in Ciudad Juarez, including the highest rates of homicides.

During this time period, when Ciudad Juarez was known globally as the “murder capital of the world”, the rising number of feminicides cases became invisible within the total number of homicides each year. Statistically, the ratio of homicides to feminicides increased to 10:1. Socially and publically, the local and international news media were

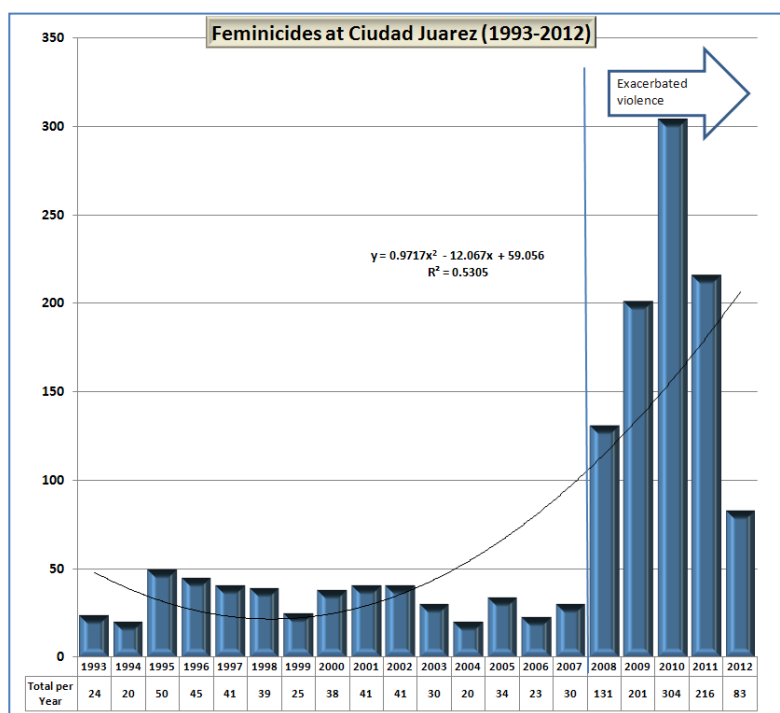


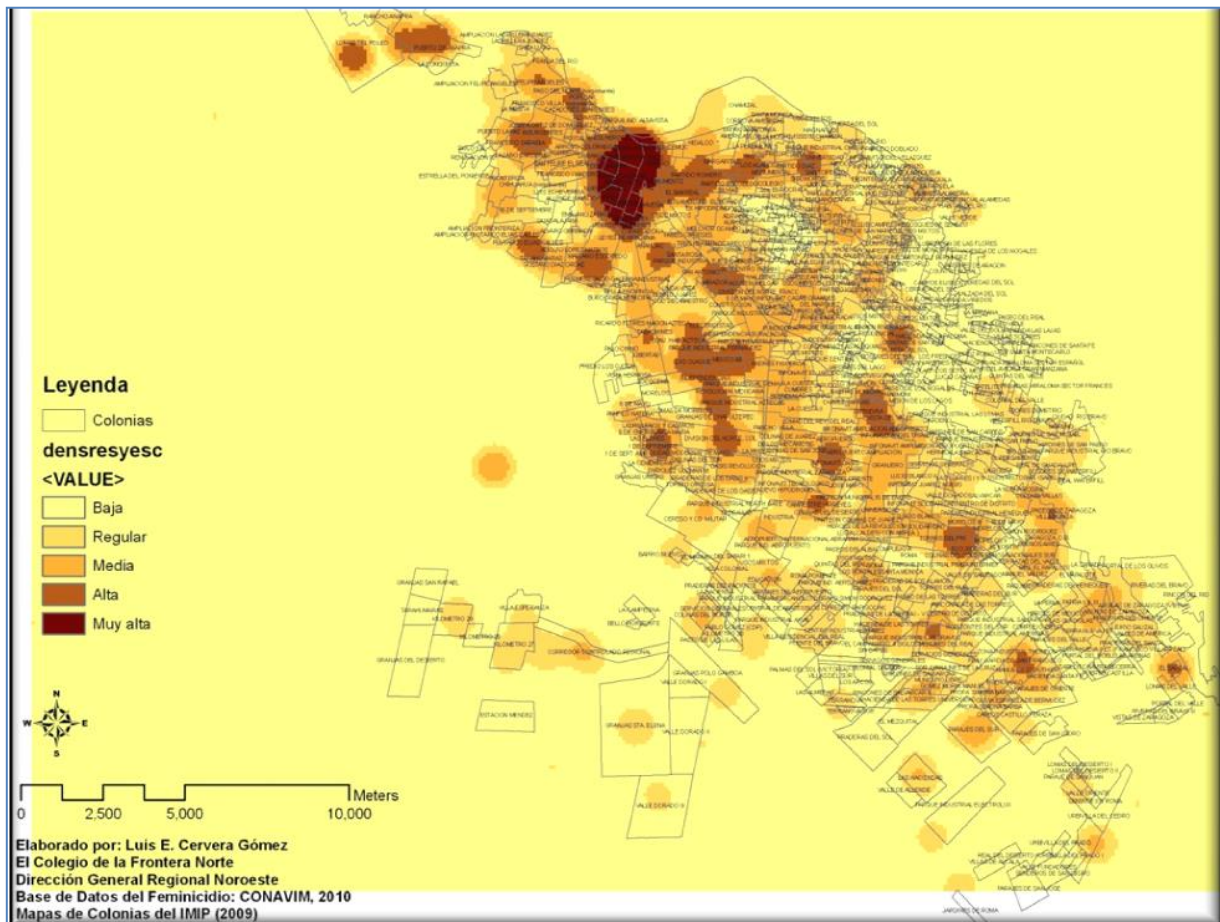
Figure 1. Feminicides at Ciudad Juarez (1993-2012)

concerned by and reported vigorously on the homicide statistics. Although feminicides were increasing in a significant way, this phenomenon went largely unnoticed by people and the news media. The data in figure 1 shows that the drug war violence generated a significant triggering effect on feminicides⁵. The chart depicts feminicides per year from 1993 to 2012. The trend line is adjusted to a polynomial model and a correlation level of 72%.

Using the GIS tools related to spatial analysis and geo-statistics techniques, the study reveals a spatial pattern defined as clusters (Geary and Moran index), resulting in several hotspots (see Map 1). The largest and most serious hotspot engulfs the city's historic center, and several smaller hotspots cover the western part of the city, the zone very well known as the "Poniente de Ciudad Juarez" (map 1).

The spatial analysis results indicate a high correlation level between poverty (measured by socioeconomic indicators) and femicide. In addition, these hotspots of femicide spatially match city zones with major deficits in infrastructure and urban equipment. Spatial segregation is a determining factor in understanding violence at Ciudad Juarez.

⁵ It is important to keep in mind that the elevated violence during the period of 2008-2012 triggered many additional forms of violence.

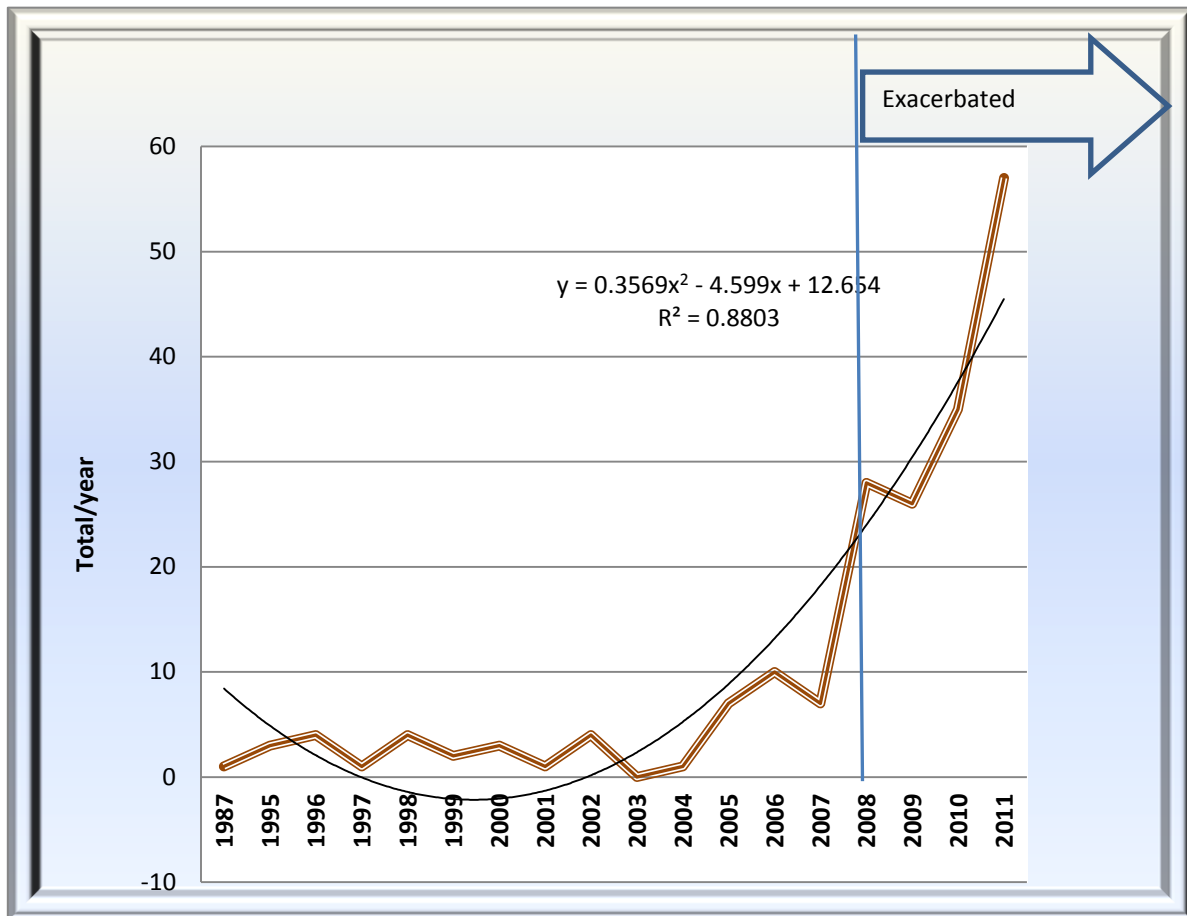


Map 1. Spatial density of Feminicides at Ciudad Juárez (1993-2010)

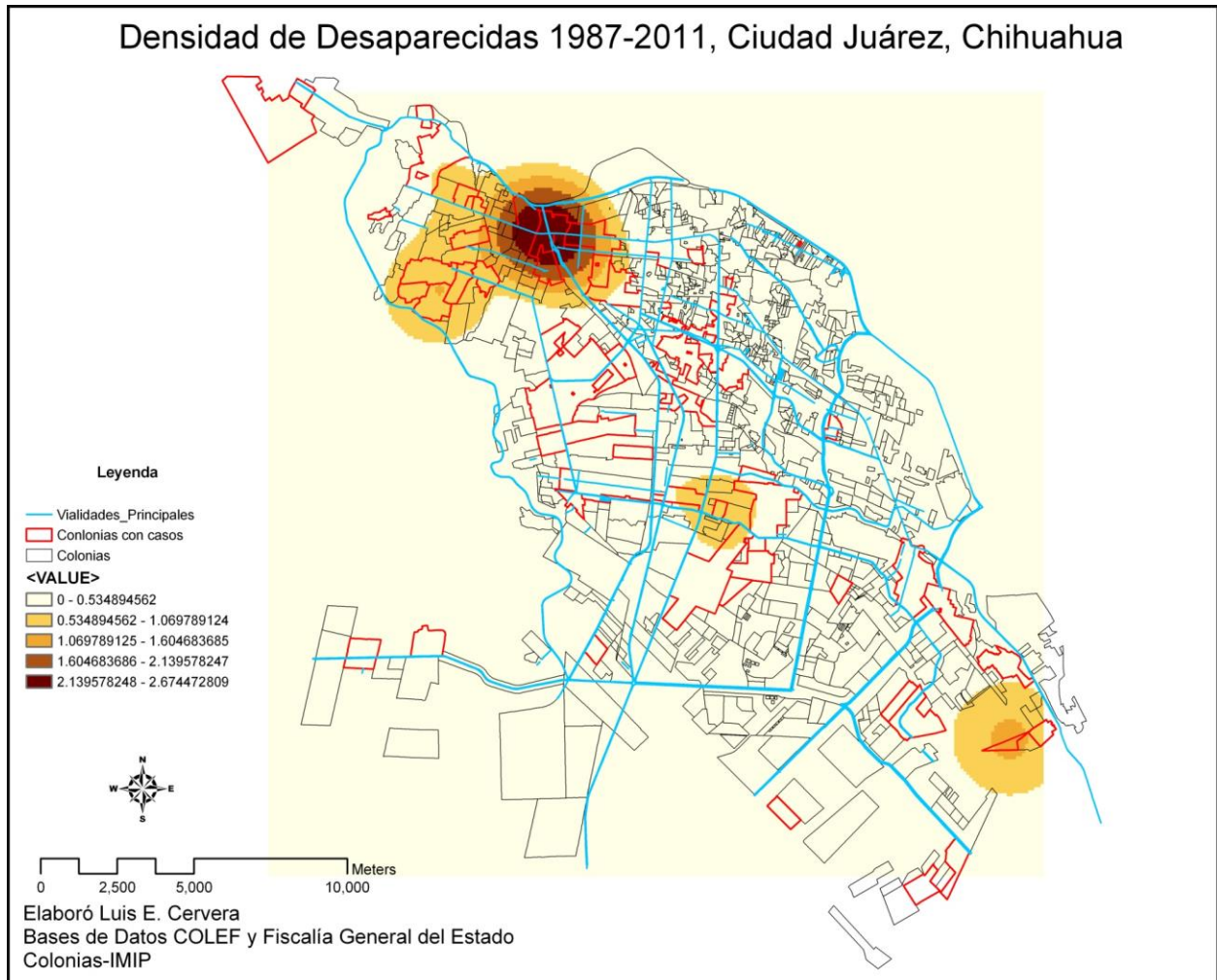
Disappeared Girls

In recent years, a small database of girls considered as disappeared was geo-referenced at El Colegio de la Frontera Norte. This database has no more than 200

registered cases, and 80% of them were geo-referenced in a GIS (see data in figure 2).



Although the size of this database cannot be considered statistically robust to fully represent the phenomenon of disappeared girls in Ciudad Juárez, the preliminary spatial analysis reveals a highly concentrated, well-defined hotspot zone around the city's historic center with a contiguous hotspot extending to the west, as well as two smaller hotspots - one at the city's geographic center, and one in the Southeastern area very close to "Riveras del Bravo" (map 2). The timing and location of these hotspots are significant: as with feminicides, there was a sharp increase in the number of disappeared girls beginning in 2008 (Figure 2).

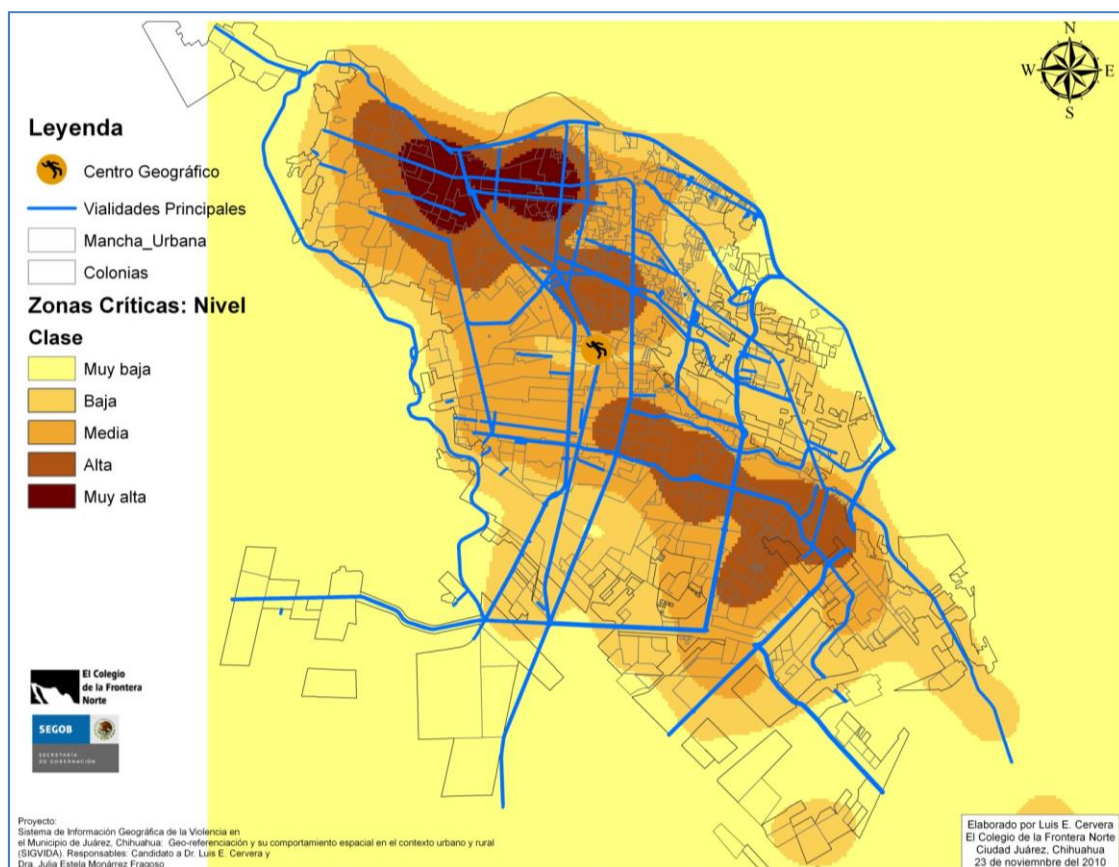


Map 2. Density of Disappeared girl at Ciudad Juarez (1987-2011)

The spatial definitions and representations of this phenomenon of violence indicates the city's historic center and its surrounding "colonias" (neighborhoods) as the main place to conduct research as well as develop and implement public policy to prevent and to stop this problem.

Homicides

Homicides in Ciudad Juárez evidence a spatial pattern fixed in clusters. This means that there are hotspot zones where the city has the highest rates of homicides. The strongest hotspots are located at the northern part of the city, covering a zone between the city's historic center and Pronaf - a culture, arts, and entertainment district (map 3). A second



Map 3. Spatial analysis of Homicides at Ciudad Juárez

hotspot occurs in the southern region of the city, along a corridor between Zaragoza and Jilotepec streets.

Unlike the hotspots for feminicide and disappeared girls, spatial analysis of homicides indicates that its territory is not correlated to poverty or infrastructure deficits. One of the advantages of these spatial representations is the possibility to create a preliminary hypothesis for research. Thus, it is possible to relate the two northern hotspots of homicide with the international bridges linkages to the main territory used to control drugs movements into the U.S.A. The second hotspot may be theorized as a territory of domestic drug dealers at Ciudad Juarez.

As a matter of conclusion

Feminicides, involuntary or forced disappearances of girls and women, and homicides are historical and long-tolerated atrocities in this city. Victims are part of the vulnerable groups of this community, with vulnerabilities related to sex, age, socioeconomic status, geographic area of residence. Justice is a chimera for the victims and their relatives.

The Mexican State must guarantee the right to live, the right a life with dignity and therefore to justice. Retributive and distributive justices are pending accountabilities Mexican state is obliged to grant to a significant portion of its population and the community. Finally, the Mexican State may utilize the tools of the geo-spatial referencing to generate public policies that mitigate the risk factors associated with three distinct types of violence with the violence and therefore improve safety for all inhabitants of Ciudad Juárez.

To this point, we have focused our attention within the borders of Mexico - both the paradigms of violence as well the responsibility of the Mexican State to protect and provide justice. We conclude by situating Mexico in the context of our international community: the forces of power in the drug-related violence traverse and transcend boundaries. The United States must compromise to change the paradigm of drugs as a public security issue to a public health issue. This vision will deter immense economic benefits for national and international mafias and save human life's of Mexican citizens.

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