

Femicide: The Political and Social Blind Spot in the Legal and Welfare State of Germany

Authors : Kristina F. Wolff

Abstract : Background: In the Federal Republic of Germany, violence against women is deeply embedded in society. Germany is, as of March 2020, the most populous member state of the European Union with 83.2 million inhabitants and, although more than half of its inhabitants are women, gender equality was not certified in the Basic Law until 1957. Women have only been allowed to enter paid employment without their husband's consent since 1977 and have marital rape prosecuted only since 1997. While the lack of equality between men and women is named in the preamble of the Istanbul Convention as the cause of gender-specific, structural, traditional violence against women, Germany continues to sink on the latest Gender Equality Index. According to Police Crime Statistics (PCS), women are significantly more often victims of lethal violence, emanating from men than vice versa. The PCS, which, since 2015, also collects gender-specific data on violent crimes, is kept by the Federal Criminal Police Office, but without taking into account the relevant criteria for targeted prevention, such as the history of violence of the perpetrator/killer, weapon, motivation, etc.. Institutions such as EIGE or the World Health Organization have been asking Germany for years in vain for comparable data on violence against women in order to gain an overview or to develop cross-border synergies. The PCS are the only official data collection on violence against women. All players involved are depend on this data set, which is published only in November of the following year and is thus already completely outdated at the time of publication. In order to combat German femicides causally, purposefully and efficiently, evidence-based data was urgently needed. Methodology: Beginning in January 2019, a database was set up that now tracks more than 600 German femicides, broken down by more than 100 crime-related individual criteria, which in turn go far beyond the official PCS. These data are evaluated on the one hand by daily media research, and on the other hand by case-specific inquiries at the respective public prosecutor's offices and courts nationwide. This quantitative long-term study covers domestic violence as well as a variety of different types of gender-specific, lethal violence, including, for example, femicides committed by German citizens abroad. Additionally alcohol/ narcotic and/or drug abuse, infanticides and the gender aspect in the judiciary are also considered. Results: Since November 2020, evidence-based data from a scientific survey have been available for the first time in Germany, supplementing the rudimentary picture of reality provided by PCS with a number of relevant parameters. The most important goal of the study is to identify "red flags" that enable general preventive awareness, that serve increasingly precise hazard assessment in acute hazard situations, and from which concrete instructions for action can be identified. Already at a very early stage of the study it could be proven that in more than half of all femicides with a sexual perpetrator/victim constellation there was an age difference of five years or more. Summary: Without reliable data and an understanding of the nature and extent, cause and effect, it is impossible to sustainably curb violence against girls and women, which increasingly often culminates in femicide. In Germany, valid data from a scientific survey has been available for the first time since November 2020, supplementing the rudimentary reality picture of the official and, to date, sole crime statistics with several relevant parameters. The basic research provides insights into geo-concentration, monthly peaks and the modus operandi of male violent excesses. A significant increase of child homicides in the course of femicides and/or child homicides as an instrument of violence against the mother could be proven as well as a danger of affected persons due to an age difference of five years and more. In view of the steadily increasing wave of violence against women, these study results are an eminent contribution to the preventive containment of German femicides.

Keywords : femicide, violence against women, gender specific data, rule Of law, Istanbul convention, gender equality, gender based violence

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