

# THE CELAC STUDENT VOICE

## Mexico, An Invisible War Against Women

by Perla Maldonado Cortez

Stop the Femicide is a national emergency in Mexico; nevertheless, 12 of the 32 states of Mexico have not even typified femicide as a crime. In addition, a real cipher does not exist that reflects the magnitude of the problem due to bad procedures and methodologies. For example, Mexican governments do not register all the homicides committed in Mexico. Besides, in many cases when they register it, they do not specify the gender or reasons of death. In 2018, the government registered 760 femicides, but some independent organizations believe that the figure is more than double. For instance, according to the Spanish newspaper "El País" from 2008 to 2018, more than seven women per day die victims of sexist violence. This journal points out that in 10 years more than 23,800 women have been killed; nevertheless, although the numbers are important, this is not everything. The transcendental concern is the hatred reflected in each of the women murdered. Before dying, women suffer because they are sexually abused, tortured, and massacred on the streets, in their schools, and even in their own homes. It is worth adding that the latest report on gender violence by the Mexican National Institute of Statistics emphasizes that: "the data show women are killed with greater violence and brutality, and the killers use instruments that produce more pain and prolong suffering before dying."

On the other hand, in general, when a woman is killed, the mass media tends to blame the victim; consequently, the population repeats the action. There are generalized arguments for incriminating the victims of femicides: she was drunk, it was too late for her to be in the street, she was in the wrong place, she was dressed inappropriately, her parents did not take care of her, or simply, she provoked that situation. On the theme and cases of femicide, official institutions, the media, and population function as a judge of morality, who finally determines that the victims are culpable of their death and with these actions they "clean" their hands and disclaim their responsibilities.

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## "Mexico," cont.

However, thousands of women throughout the country have started to note that the Mexican government does not worry about them, but as the “El País” said, “there is not a single woman in Mexico, who can say that she has never smelled fear.” In addition, those women do not see real action, progress or government actions to stop femicides. For these reasons, slogans like “they are killing us” have been shouted and written on the streets and walls of Mexico. More and more women are comprehending that it is necessary to name the victims of sexist violence and demand justice for them because if they do not, the situation will not stop. In the upcoming edition, you will read more about the femicides in Mexico and the action that women are taking to face of institutional inefficiency and the apathy of the people.



## Push the red button! Push the red button!

by Liliana Alva Regalado

In my country, Mexico, when we try to cross the street, it is common to run because the driver is the boss of the street, except when there is a traffic light. In that case, the pedestrian can feel safe from the fast drivers. I know, it sounds funny, but these days in Albuquerque, I have been noticing some people don't use the crosswalk button. Why? We are going to make a theory in this article.

*To push or not to push the button, this is the dilemma.* Sometimes when I'm walking around the city, I stop in the intersections to cross the corridors. Occasionally among avenues, I need to wait for 5 minutes under the sun or feel the cold (specially near UNM or Coronado Center). In those moments a little voice on my interior says: “Cross the street, nobody is here! Go!” But then I think about my slow movements and I stop myself.

Something different happens to CELAC's students in low intermediate and high intermediate levels. All of them prefer to push the crosswalk button every time they cross the streets. In the case of Xinyu, he uses the button every day and every time because “It's very useful. It makes the pedestrian feel safe”. Similarly, Kiko's opinion is that “Cars in Albuquerque are fast, so we should use the crosswalk”. On the other hand, Mona says, “when I see that there is no traffic and I am a little bit in a hurry...” she skips the button. In truth, maybe more than one time we have skipped the button or even the crosswalk, so, it is a good moment for reflection about the topic.



## Featured Essay: A Learning Journey

by Marj Alhumayed (Advanced)

I have been in love with the English language since I was five years old. My dream was to study abroad after graduating from high school. Whenever I think about travelling, I think about learning, I see travelling as a great learning process. I worked hard to maintain excellent grades throughout the twelve years in elementary, middle, and high school. Working hard, not giving up, and trusting myself made me do what I wanted for years. Now that I am studying abroad in the US and being so close to achieve my goals, I will express the significance of this experience on my life in this essay. Studying abroad helped me to be fluent in English, to be self-dependent, and to discover my true passion.

First, studying abroad helped me to be fluent in English. I started to learn English in kindergarten, and I was learning it until third grade of high school. When I graduated from high school in 2014 in Saudi Arabia, I applied for a scholarship from my country's government. After a few months, I got my scholarship. At that time, I started to search for an English institute to improve my language before I started my bachelor's degree. Searching for an institute to study in and getting the acceptance was challenging because during that process I had to email several institutions and know about them and decide which one to attend. Finally, I chose to attend the Intensive English Program at Rice University in Houston, Texas. I started my learning journey on August of 2015. I took the placement test and I was placed in level 4, which was a surprise for me. I was surprised because the institute has 6 levels and an advanced level, which is optional. I was so happy that I would finish learning the language in less than a year, because each level was only 6 weeks. Time flew by so fast, and I finished my English courses on April of 2016. By that time, I was impressed by the level of English I reached. I totally noticed a huge difference in my English skills.

## "Button," cont.

*Walking dead*

Walking is one of the most gentle and recommended activities, and it the best season for walk in Albuquerque is coming. You can walk down Central Avenue to Downtown or Nob Hill, or visit some parks, stores, museums, restaurants, cinemas, the zoo, the Biopark or bars, but there is a simple rule to be safe: use the crosswalk.

According to the NMSU Police Department, the pedestrian's rights can be applicable as long as "when crossing where there are traffic control devices, pedestrians must obey the signals. This includes 'walk/don't walk' signals, as well as regular traffic control lights (red, green, and yellow lights and turn arrows), [and] when available, pedestrians must generally cross at crosswalks".

You must know this because the pedestrian's accidents were common some years ago. In 2011 New Mexico was ranked 5th state in USA for pedestrian fatalities per capita. "Pedestrian crashes are correlated with areas of high pedestrian activity, including major transit hubs, UNM, and Downtown", according to data collected by the City of Albuquerque named "Bernardillo County Pedestrian and bicyclist crash data analysis 2008-2011". Furthermore, the network News Kob4 says there were 55 pedestrian deaths across the state of New Mexico in 2015: "That number spiked to 77 the following year before increasing again to 79 in 2017". Both statistics say alcohol consumption is the principal reason for the accidents by conductors or pedestrian.

*Johnny walker, Gabriela walker, and you can walk*

The spring is here and to run or to walk will be one of the most popular activities for a lot of people in Albuquerque. You can enjoy these activities around the main campus or near your home, if you push the crosswalk's button! It is pretty useful.



## "A Learning Journey," cont.

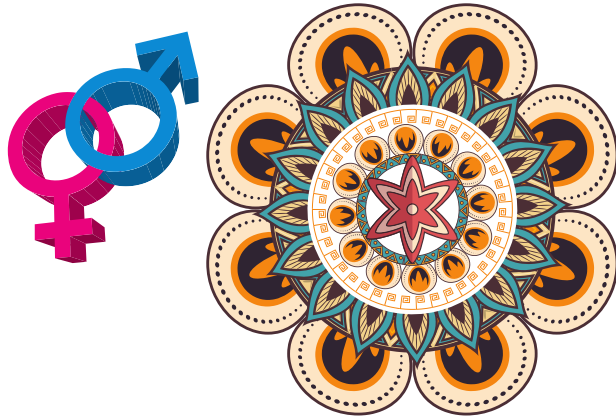
I was able to speak, understand, and be understood. Even though I was learning English in Saudi Arabia before joining the English program in Houston. However, I was not really practicing it much outside of school since Arabic is the dominate language in my country.

Second, studying abroad assisted me to be self-dependent. I got married 3 months before I traveled to the US. Then, right after I finished my English program on May 2016, I delivered my baby girl (Aljood). I am proud of many things in life, but none of them beat being a mother! When she came to life, I noticed that that my responsibilities changed. At that time, I had to apply for a university too, so there were many things that I needed to take care of. Especially that I was living only with my husband and daughter, there was no one from our family with us to help. It was the time to start working harder. I applied to the University of New Mexico and I got my acceptance. I knew that it would be hard to study and take care of my daughter at the same time, but I did not want to give up. When I started the university on August of 2016, my daughter was 3 months old. I remember struggling with my homework until late at night and not having enough time to sleep. However, as people say hard work pays off, by the end of the semester I was so happy seeing that all my grades were A+. Since that time, I decided to keep working hard and I always tell myself that I can do it!

Third, studying abroad helped me to discover my true passion. To be honest, I chose my major randomly because of my scholarship requirements. I chose to major in Emergency Medical Services (EMS). By the time I joined the university, I realized that I am liking the major more. Due to the fact that I am in the US I have the privilege to meet with people who are working in the field. Meeting with people who are working in the field, helped me to better understand the major and the requirements. Also, from their experience, I noticed that I had lots of false information about EMS. For example, when I think about EMS personnel, I always think about bad things happening like crimes, death, and blood. When I took my EMT-Basic class I started to see the positive aspects of being an EMS staff member. I truly appreciated choosing this field to work on. Even though, EMS employees work in a very hard environment, they are serving other people and saving their lives, which is an honor. I am thankful for the chance that made me choose EMS as a major; because I cannot see myself doing another profession than EMS. It became my passion!

In conclusion, I appreciate the chance that made me want to study abroad. This new and challenging experience has changed my life in a better way. Studying abroad gave me the opportunity to shape many aspects of my life. The change of responsibilities from being a wife, to a student, and then to be a mother; the need to adopt to do several things at the same time. The most challenging thing was to be able to manage all the three roles and be successful doing each. In addition, during this journey, I gained lots of benefits including being more fluent in English, self-dependent, and I got to know my true passion.





## Misunderstanding Some Aspects in Arab culture

by Mona Al-Dweik

Every country has its own culture. However, all the cultures have a lot of people who don't understand it correctly, but some just take what they like personally and what fits their circumstances. I always criticize some people's action if they blame it on the culture. In this essay, I will try to clarify my point of view. Whatever is mentioned in this essay are my personal thoughts.

Before I clear my point of view, I would like to say that every country in the Middle East has its own culture. On the other hand, they have some commonalities.

A lot of Arab people say that they give girls and women their freedom to live or to choose what they want, and I do say, actually, there are some people who do that, but most people don't depending on how they define the word freedom. I think that a lot of people waste their girls' opportunities in education because they refuse to send girls to study abroad by themselves. However, if we look at girls who studied outside their countries, we will see that they have better lives than those who stayed in their countries. If a girl's family agrees to send her, they will send one of her family members to go with her. I criticize this because if we gave our girls the same freedom as boys, especially in education, we will see how good the girl will be. I sometimes say this to my parents, but they don't get convinced about it easily because they say that the girl is like a diamond; we need to protect her from anything that would harm her. What actually makes me feel sad is that they don't teach boys these lessons.

Unfortunately, boys can choose what they want and what they like, which is not fair, and if the boy does something wrong, we always give him an excuse to what he did, saying he is a boy. When it comes to girls, we will say that she is wrong, she is not a boy, so she cannot do that. However, in my culture, our main references are religions, yet in all religions, there is no difference between girls and boys.

Some families give their kids the right to choose what they want to be, and I do wish that people changed their thoughts on this because we could develop our countries, and we could have a lot of jobs and high education. Even though we over protect our girls, we don't stop them from getting their education done. A lot of people encourage their girls to continue in their education, but when it comes to studying abroad, they stop.

I always say to stop giving excuses to boys, to raise boys so that what is not allowed for girls is not allowed for boys, too. To try to understand our culture correctly, to read what other prophets said about the woman and how important she is in the community, our prophet Mohammad said that women are the most important part in the community, so treat her softly and kindly.

Despite all the things that I have said recently, I cannot say that I don't feel proud to belong to Jordan. Every culture has bad and good things in it. The best thing in my culture is that we care so much about people, and we love everyone no matter how different he or she is. We always help people without thinking if they are bad or good. It is not good to just mention what is bad in my culture because I love my country and I want the best for it. I am so thankful for being a Jordanian girl, and I am so happy that I was born and raised there, and I hope I can visit it as soon as possible.

# Five places to visit in Albuquerque

*By Catalina Cardenas*

People may not find a lot of things to do in Albuquerque. For that reason, I want to suggest some ideas to have fun with family and friends.

For people who enjoy places that offer a variety of options, I highly recommend visiting Main Event Entertainment. It is located on 4040 Pan American Fwy NE, Albuquerque, NM 87107. This place has a variety of activities to have fun with family and friends, such as a pool, bowling, and multi level laser tag, as well as interactive video games. In this place people can find a variety of American food such as hamburgers, hot dogs, french-fries, nachos, and beverages such as beer, cocktails and wine. People should visit this place because it offers a diversity of activities in the same site.

For film enthusiasts, I recommend going to Icon Cinemas or Century Rio 24. They offer discounts during the week. Icon Cinema offers Matinee discounts on Monday and Tuesday before 4:00 pm, with a price of \$8.25. Also, every Tuesday, the ticket's cost is \$6.00 at any time. On the other hand, Century Rio 24 offers a membership "movie club member", which offers 20% off in snacks. Also, a member can reserve seats online or using the app with no fees, earning connections points for reward, and the price of the ticket is \$8.99 at any time. Visiting these places is a great option to have fun and save money.

For the speed fanatics, I recommend visiting Albuquerque Indoor Karting. This place is located on 5110 Cooper Ave Ne, Albuquerque NM 87108. Albuquerque Indoor Karting offers the services to drive an indoor karts and compete with your family and friends to get the best time. In the same way, this place also offers Air Hockey and Pool. This is an excellent option to do something different with a reasonable price.

For the lovers of the adrenaline, I recommend to visit Calibers. This place offers indoor shooting ranges. It is located on 9320 Coors Blvd NW and it is open from 10 am to 8 pm seven days a week. Also, this place offers a membership to use unlimited indoor shooting ranges and 10% off in merchandise. Also, they offer classes with 25% off using a coupon that people can obtain visiting the web side <https://calibersusa.com>. This place is a great opportunity to do something different and practice shooting.

## Reasons to Study Abroad

*by Abdul Bahri*

Battle royale games have been the most All of us in CELAC are studying abroad. We travelled away from our home, family, and food because we wanted to make our parents happy by getting a degree. Think about what you have gained, or what you have learned so far. Studying abroad is a profound experience for students to have.

One of the aspects that students can experience is that they will learn new study methods. For instance, in the reading class, I learned how to understand articles better. While you are reading, you need to put guide questions to make you understand better. When you face a statistic in the article, you can ask this question, "What is this statistic for? Or what is the purpose of this statistic?" By asking these questions, you need to find the answer for these questions. After, you will have a better vision of the article.



## My Best Friend

By Mingxin (Kiko) Lyu  
(Intermediate)

My best friend is Yang who is excellent, humorous and kind.

She looks pretty with short black hair, which is also her most obvious feature.

We have known each other for about five years. She is my teammate when I am a member of 10-meter air pistol of BOHAI University.

We have been the best friends of each other since 2014.

Yang is excellent, since she is the president of Chinese Students and Scholars Association and she has hosted Lunar New Year gala for all Chinese faculties, students and local Asian communities for 3 years. Additionally, she is a graduate student who assists to teach graduate students in her field.

Yang is not only my best friend, but also my idol that always encourages me to chase and achieve my goals. Yang is an excellent student that balances the academic career and activities well. She is a humorous person and she is willing to share interesting experience of herself. For instance, even if each person in the occasion is a stranger and does not know each other, if Yang is there, she is the one to make the occasion warm and break the ice.

It seems that students from China know her and she likes to help them with any problems. She is very patient all the time. Sometimes, if I do not know whether the questions I ask are stupid, she will never be unhappy with me.

In short, she is the most important friend of my life, and I consider her as part of my family. I will keep learning from her, and we will encourage each other to achieve our goals together.

## "Reasons to Study Abroad," cont.

Also, the biggest experience that can benefit you when you study abroad is the opportunity to see the world. By studying abroad, you will experience a brand-new country with incredible new outlooks, customs and activities. The benefits of studying abroad include the opportunity to see new terrains, natural wonders, museums, and landmarks of your host nation. In addition, when you are abroad, you will not be limited to traveling in just the nation in which you are studying in, but you can see neighboring countries as well. For example, if you study in France, you will have the option to travel through various parts of Europe including London, Barcelona, and Rome. Since I have come to the U.S., I have visited The Bahamas and Mexico.

Ultimately, studying abroad has many positive impacts. However, the most important ones are exploring the world and teaching you new techniques of studying. I have learned a lot from being away from home even though I feel homesick sometime. This is what I have learned and gained how about you?





# What is going on in Venezuela? Caray!

by Miguel Emiliano Rivera Sandoval



Venezuela is a country located in South America and it has a population of around 30 million people. They are famous because of their Arepas (A kind of food), benevolent climate, and unfortunately, because of their deep and long dated social conflicts.

We have heard a lot about them in the recent news; “In Venezuela this is happening” or “in Venezuela that is going on,” but no one explains to us, in simpler words what is going on and how they reached that point. That is exactly what I am going to try to do in this brief article.

You will see: in Latin America, there is a deep history of social revolt, of fight between conservative movements and liberal movements.

The liberal movements stood for equality, justice and division of the wealth for the poor (And generally, they aligned with socialist ideologies and the communist Soviet Union). Meanwhile on the other side, the conservative movement stood free market, right of private property, and conservation of moral values (And generally, they aligned with capitalist ideologies and the United States of America). This division caused a lot of revolt and social movements in the region through the 20th century.

In some countries, like Mexico, this fight “wasn’t so violent” (in quotation marks because we have had violent and bloody episodes like the Tlatelolco student massacre) and the conflict was primarily fought in the elections. However, in South America the fight was very intense, with radicalization and violence inflicted by both sides. The liberals radicalized to the left and formed armed guerrillas to fight the conservative governments, and the conservative governments transformed into far-right dictatorships that received support of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

Fearing the spread of communism, the CIA spent millions of dollars to support several anti-communism, far-right dictatorships in Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil, Peru and Bolivia in a secret operation called *Condor*. However, with their support, they caused the suffering and death of millions of people that went missing by the dictatorship soldiers or were killed for suspicion of ‘being a communist’.

As the countries mentioned before, Venezuela passed for several periods of dictatorship and democracy that had guerrilla movements and civil wars between them. In 1989, Venezuela had a democratic conservative elected president called Carlos Andres Perez but he was corrupt as no one. The economy started to collapse and people of Venezuela started to disapprove of him. Thousands of Venezuelans went to the street to protest against the government, but the government suppressed the protest with gunshots and violence, causing many people to die in an event known as El Caracazo.



## "Venezuela," cont.

At the same time, a young liberal soldier of the Venezuelan army of the name Hugo Chavez disapproved of the government's response to their own people and started to radicalize. Soon after El Caracazo, he organized a military coup against Carlos Andres Perez; that is when the military took the power of the government. In the darkness of the night, in 1992, he, along a hundred soldiers, attempted to take the power, but they would fail to do it.

The failed military coup gave Chavez popularity among the Venezuelan people but because of it, Hugo Chavez went to prison accused of betrayal to the nation (in an attempt of Carlos Andres Perez to recover his image and his power). However, far from diminishing Chavez followers morale, he became even more popular and in a point that democratic elections were made, a new president would win them, and Hugo was forgiven and freed.

By the year 2000, Chavez competed in Democratic Elections for president of the nation and won. Then he became the constitutional president of Venezuela. The people were very enthusiastic about it, and there was a feeling of change. Chavez named his presidency movement "The Bolivarian Revolution" after Simon Bolivar, the George Washington of South America.

After winning the elections, Chavez radicalized. He started to wear military style clothes and started to apply unpopular policies such as mandatory military service, nationalization of the gas companies, and a more rigid government that seemed like an authoritarian one.



He did some good things though, such giving assistantships to the poor people to get out of poverty.

The Venezuelan people divided between the pro-Chavez and the people against Chavez causing them to fight between them, sometimes in the streets, and in a violent way. In 2002, the military attempted a coup against Chavez, but the Venezuelan people went out to the streets to recover the democracy, and they ended up winning and restoring Chavez government.

The social division increased over the years until Chavez got cancer and went to Cuba (A government ruled in that time by Fidel Castro, that supported him) to get medical treatment. Chavez was really ill and he finally passed away on March 5th, 2013. With Chavez's death, the government followed the constitution procedure and passed the power to minister Nicolas Maduro. This was the beginning of a new period in the Venezuelan Bolivarian movement.

President Maduro resulted to be worse than Chavez. He was incompetent and ignorant. Maduro quickly became unpopular because of his mistakes when he was giving speeches, the bad management of the economy (allowing food corporations to create a food scarcity in Venezuela), and his Authoritarianism against the opposition and their freedom of speech.

## "Venezuela," cont.

Nicolas Maduro continued with his government from 2013 until elections in 2018. In the Venezuelan constitution, because of the changes made by Chavez, it is legal to re-elect the president for several terms. In the middle of a controversial election process, marked by doubt and accusations of fraud, Nicolas Maduro won for a second presidential term.

Nowadays, on the other side of the Caribbean, the president of the United States of America, Donald Trump, intensified his stand on the Venezuelan government and asked for an armed intervention. The vice-president of the United States, Mike Pence, had a meeting with the conservative opposition movement leader Juan Guaido to plan an action plan in Venezuela. Moreover, the U.S government asked Colombia and Brazil to collaborate in an eventual military intervention in Venezuela that is potentially dangerous and wrong.

You might be wondering, if this Maduro Guy is so bad why not intervene? This is why I wrote about the operation Condor before. Maduro's and Chavez's governments were and are based on the plenty sovereignty of Venezuela. That means no other government can stick their noses in Venezuela's national affairs, something that the U.S had not respected in a long history of economical boycotts, military interventions (Guatemala 1954, Operation Just Cause), election manipulations (in 2016, America tried a spoonful of their own soup with the allegations of Russian Intervention), or giving financial and military aid to dictatorships. Almost every time that America intervenes in a Latin American country, it is in the best interests of the United States' government and not for the will of the people of that country.

In addition, we have to remember the results of every time the U.S has intervened in a foreign country to deliver "democracy" and "freedom". We have to remember the disastrous results in Vietnam (for both sides), the state of terror in Afghanistan, the destruction and collapse of the society in Iraq and Syria, the instability inherited of the civil war in Libya, among many other cases.

Even if Nicolas Maduro might be a dictator, the solution is not to initiate a war that could potentially involve the entire South American continent and claim the lives of millions of innocents. We want to think that the intentions of the United States government are good and they really are concerned about Venezuelan people and not Venezuelan oil reserves, the biggest in the whole world. Nevertheless, it is not of the U.S government's interests to decide the fate of the Venezuelan people, just like it is not the Russians' interests to help some candidate to win the U.S elections.

Just like the English settlers came to this continent to escape the oppression of the English Empire and fought a war that spilled blood to win their right to freedom, Latin America is fighting their own war to win their own freedom and sovereignty in which the oppressor unfortunately are us. The best thing to help Latin America to freedom is to let it be free from the United States.

I believe in democracy, justice, and freedom, and what Venezuela and the world needs right now is their self-determination; the right to decide their own fate. This is something that is only going to be achieved if we leave them alone. If we start to build a world where you can be, as you want, I can be, as I want without forcing you to be like me and without forcing me to be like you.

A world of many worlds!

## The Staff of the CELAC Student Voice



**Mona Al-Dweik**

*Mona is from Jordan and enjoys sports and reading in her free time.*



**Catalina Cardenas**

*My name is Maria Catalina Cardenas Garcia. I am from Colombia. I was born in Bogota. I studied Finance and Business Administration at the Sergio Arboleda University. I am so happy living in Albuquerque and enjoying this new experience in my life. I prefer outdoors activities, so that I like hiking and playing volleyball.*



**Andre Massuda**

*André Massuda is from Brazil, CELAC's student, Alice's father, and Priscila's Husband. Makes your own beer and Corinthians FC fan.*



**Liliana Alva Regalado**

*Liliana likes to write, walk and learn about cultures. Her major is Journalism. She graduated from a local university in her city Morelia, Mexico. She worked in local newspapers and taught Spanish in a government school. Last year she changed her residence to the land of enchantment in Albuquerque*



**Miguel Emiliano Rivera Sandoval**

*Emiliano Rivera, is originally from Mexico City. He is 21 years old and his hobbies are writing and cycling.*



**Abdul Bahri**

*I am Abdulrhman Bahri. I am from Saudi Arabia. I am a video gamer. I also like soccer. Thank you and have a nice week!*



**Perla Maldonado Cortez**

*I am Perla Maldonado from Mexico. I like to read, run, and spend time on the internet.*