



Gretta Hernández

# Our Voice

*You'll never have the comfort of our silence*  
(Placard at a women's demonstration, March 8, 2019)

Women's struggle for equality is not new: in Mexico it dates from the early twentieth century when small groups began to demand participation in political life, among other things. But it is new to think about it as the exercise of equity in all spheres, as many women demonstrate without having previously been involved in political activism or having had a prior feminist consciousness, since they, like all of us, experience harassment —the #MeToo movement showed us just how widespread and generalized it is— and, especially daily violence.

In this decade in Mexico, the numbers of women murdered and forcibly disappeared have reached historic, alarming heights; so has violence outside the home and inside the family, while the state has not taken actions to guarantee protection and equity for us. As a matter of fact, many military and police forces participate in kidnappings and murder. This situation has had the effect that most of today's feminisms are anti-system and many have chosen to violently protest to attempt to move society and the authorities who dodge the problem.

Another of the reactions has been women organizing to protect themselves and to look for disappeared women and men, since, besides the proliferation of feminicides, kidnapping for trafficking or for rape and murder has also increased. Thus, mothers have launched themselves into the search for clandestine graves or the places where their disappeared relatives might be found.

Nevertheless, at the same time, and paradoxically, extraordinary achievements have been made thanks to our own tenacity: one of them is the proliferation of academic spaces for gender studies, as well as their incorporation into the study programs of several universities. These have served not only to make visible women's work or problems, but also to create aware-

ness and to have an impact on the public policies put in place. At the same time, important advances have been made in reproductive health and the right to decide about our own bodies, due to the legislation that has decriminalized abortion, the court decisions that have declared its prohibition unconstitutional, and the unofficial establishment of work or educational equity quotas so that maternity is not an obstacle to professionalization —although the latter depends a great deal on parents equally caring for their children and doing housework, something which should not even have to be an issue, since it should be habitual, but isn't.

Something else that is important today is that women's voices are loud. Women artists are more visible every day; special collections of women's literature are being published more and more; music expresses a special point of view rooted in tradition and the mixture of races; the visual arts are part of diverse feminisms and denounce violence through sophisticated and/or stark aesthetic resources that make us look at it without flinching. This is a moment of visibility, of activism. Also, unfortunately, the feminine has become a trending topic, in which the market wants to make a gourmet media dish out of a political struggle. However, at *Voices of Mexico*, we are interested in making it clear that the moment for women has changed: although we do not yet enjoy full equity, and violence against us is measured in horrific intensity, we no longer live in silence or submission. We are a tide, a blow, a shout, work, and we make very clear what we represent for the economy: an indispensable percentage of production and the work force.

Astrid Velasco Montante  
CISAN-UNAM Coordinator of Publications  
And editor at *Voices of Mexico*



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Suscripciones y ventas: [revprode@unam.mx](mailto:revprode@unam.mx)

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