

Literature Review

Examining the Disclosure of the Mexican Dirty War Through Archival Theory

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Important Abbreviations

AGN: (Archivo General de la Nación) Mexican National Archives located in the former prison at Lecumberri Palace

DFS: (Dirección Federal de Seguridad) Mexico's former intelligence agency and secret police force which was disbanded in 1985.

PAN: (Partido Acción Nacional) Long-standing, conservative opposition party that ended 71-year PRI dominance in 2000 national election.

PRI: (Partido Revolucionario Institucional) Successor party to the winning faction of the Mexican Revolution that sustained 71-year dominance over the Mexican political system.

MORENA: (Movimiento Regeneración Nacional) Recent, left-wing political party swept into power in the 2018 national election. Formed by current president Andrés Manuel López Obrador.

Abstract

This paper examines the evolution of archival disclosure policy with respect to the archive of the Dirección Federal de Seguridad (DFS), Mexico's former intelligence agency and secret police force which was responsible for the torture, forced disappearances, and extrajudicial killings of alleged enemies of the state during a period known as the Dirty War. The theories of historical truth, the right to the truth, and informational restitution emerge through a chronological review of the political struggle to disclose the DFS archive. Finally, this paper draws on critiques from the fields of archival science, anthropology, psychology, and human rights to interrogate whether archival disclosure is itself sufficient to bring justice to the survivors of state sanctioned violence.

Examining the Disclosure of the Mexican Dirty War Through Archival Theory

On January 7th, 2019, the last nine armed guards of the Mexican intelligence agency, Centro de Investigación y Seguridad Nacional (CISEN), withdrew from their guard posts in the Archivo General de la Nación (AGN), the Mexican national archives. For nearly eighteen years those guards enforced a parallel archival apparatus inside the AGN complete with its own computers, keys, record access policies, and phone lines out to the CISEN central office (Ávila, 2020). What kinds of documents were they protecting? Behind a "secret door" in Gallery 5 was an archive of over 8,000 boxes belonging to CISEN's predecessor, the infamous Dirección Federal de Seguridad (DFS). Both the Mexican government and Inter-American Court of Human Rights have denounced the DFS for the reign of terror it unleashed on students, activists, and social leaders by way of domestic espionage, arbitrary detentions, forced disappearances, torture, and extrajudicial executions from the 1960s until its dissolution in 1985, a period that has come to be known as the *Guerra Sucia*, the Mexican Dirty War (Comité 68, 2006, 7).

With the DFS archive now free from an archival policy dictated by the barrel of a gun, the Mexican government has undertaken what it is calling the Policy of Truth and Memory of the Recent Past to create some semblance of justice for the victims of the DFS. This is, however, just the latest development in a twenty-year saga to disclose the DFS archive (Centro Prodh, 2020). In 2001, a Special Prosecutor was appointed with the goal of using evidence from within the DFS archive to bring those responsible for the Dirty War to justice. This process ultimately collapsed, but the Special Prosecutor had a keen sense of the historical importance of the investigation and recorded its findings and hopes for a future reckoning with the DFS archive in a report, the *Informe histórico a la sociedad mexicana*.

This paper will provide a close reading of those sections of the *Informe* that relate to the ways in which archival practice can be used to seek justice for victims of state violence. Through a close reading, several crucial questions emerge: what can archival theory learn from the saga of the DFS archive? What happens when prosecutorial justice fails? Is archival disclosure of past state crimes sufficient to claim that justice has been served? And who are the arbiters that say if or when justice has been served?

To address those questions, this paper will review government reports, academic studies, newspaper articles, and social media posts that have commented on the disclosure of the DFS archive. The Mexican state and civil society have pursued justice through the archive in three principal ways. First, that archives can document *historical truth*, which the literature distinguishes from true history. Second, that the survivors of the DFS are entitled to a *right to the truth*, which empowers them to have a hand in the disclosure process. And third, through a process of *informational restitution*, the victims or their families may finally gain custody over the original files that the DFS produced about them. This paper will deeply examine two milestones in the disclosure of the DFS archive, the *Informe histórico a la sociedad mexicana* and the ongoing Policy of Truth and Memory. Other works of archival theory as well as contemporary criticism from the Mexican and U.S. press will serve as commentaries on the benefits and limitations of historical truth, the right to the truth, and informational restitution.

I. Historical Context

Before entering the principal analysis of this paper, it is important to elaborate on the intertwining history of the DFS archive and the AGN. The history of the DFS and its oppression are well documented in both Mexican and the U.S. sources. Presented here is a brief overview of

these facts for context, but the focus of this paper will be on the theories surrounding Mexico's reckoning with an archive of state violence and oppression.

The Institutional Revolution Party (PRI) was the successor to the winning faction of the Mexican Revolution. It subsequently turned into the longest living single party dictatorship of the 20th century (Padilla, 2008). As the regime entered the 1960s, its grand political machine began to falter, and it confronted "the growth of popular discontent. To deal with it, there were two responses from the state: on the one hand, it adopted discursive strategies aimed at the cooptation of those sectors critical of the regime; on the other hand, dissent was violently repressed" (Comité 68, 2006, 6). To manage the increasing challenges to its authoritarian rule, the PRI created the DFS as a domestic intelligence agency and secret police force. The DFS assisted the Army's rural counterinsurgency campaign, such as against the Party of the Poor, a rural revolutionary movement in the mountains of Guerrero, as well as "orchestrated [a] program of kidnappings and disappearances in the country's urban centers in an effort to dismantle guerrilla networks and eliminate social and political opposition" (Doyle et al. 2010). The DFS exploded into the national and international consciousness with the student massacres in 1968 and 1971. Throughout the 1970s and 80s, the DFS recruited informants and conducted assassinations and disappearances around the country. It was disbanded in 1985, although many of its former agents, experienced in clandestine activities and assassinations, were eagerly recruited by the cartels (Valle, 1995).

In 2000, the election of Vicente Fox and the National Action Party (PAN) marked the end of PRI dominance. Fox's election was heralded as "a time of change. Change meant the implementation of a transitional democracy that would clarify all the crimes of the past and punish the perpetrators" (Karl, 2014, 735). Principal among those crimes were those perpetrated

by the DFS. In late-2001, the AGN received the DFS archive, and the Fox administration established the Special Prosecutor to begin combing through the thousands of boxes of records.

To speak of the intertwined history of the DFS and the AGN, one needs to look no further than where the DFS archive currently resides: inside the AGN which occupies the Palace of Lecumberri in Mexico City. Often dubbed the Black Palace of Lecumberri, this structure served as one of the most infamous prisons in Mexico and was where the DFS detained many leftist activists over the course of the Dirty War. Lecumberri was handed over to the AGN in 1976. The Mexican muralist David Alfaro Siqueiros, who served two stints at Lecumberri, described it as "the sad daughter of winter and loneliness, where there was no sunlight that could warm her nor music to bring her happiness" (Hernández Santiago, 2020).

The most striking aspect of Lecumberri is that it was built as a panopticon, a characteristic it maintains to this day. In a panopticon, the cellblocks radiate out from a central guard tower, whereby a single guard may surveil the entire complex. This creates the condition among the imprisoned that they are living under constant surveillance, as they are unable to precisely determine where a guard is watching at any given moment.

Ramírez et al. (2011), who analyze Mexican archival history, comment that the Lecumberri panopticon is "the ideal architectural work" to house the DFS archive and the national archives more generally (46). If the goal is to use the DFS archive to bring about restorative justice, why would it be "ideal" to house the archive in a panopticon, which serves to reinforce and recreate the oppressive surveillance state?

This question may be best answered by Rath's (2020) analysis of archival culture under the PRIist regime. While the PRI ruled as a one-party state, intraparty factions constantly jockeyed for power. Part of this turf war included the burning of archives before the transfer of

power. This "tradition" served the dual purpose of hobbling the incoming administration while protecting the outgoing from accusations of corruption or wrongdoing (17). Compounded on top of these political realities were the series of natural disasters and foreign invasions that have all prevented continuity in Mexican archival culture. Ramírez et al. (2011) see the panopticon of the AGN as a necessity to once and for all protect the nation's written memory (45).

That having been said, Dutch archival theorist Eric Ketelaar, who explores the relationship between political power and the archive offers a different take:

The concept of the panoptical building inspired the architecture not only of prisons but of libraries [...] entire societies may be imprisoned in what Michel Foucault calls panopticism, regimes where power rests on supervision and examination that entail a knowledge concerning those who are supervised (Ketelaar, 2006, 145).

On applying Ketelaar's analysis, the fact that the DFS archive lives inside of Lecumberri Palace, which served as a political prison for the agency, means that the structures of power and oppression that created the archive to being with remain intact. The archive is perpetually trapped in its surveillance past; it serves to intimidate those sectors of society that would like to use the archive to prosecute those who ran the Dirty War. This phenomenon is critical to understanding Mexico's first attempt of opening the archive, which is explored in section II of this paper.

Vazquez (2014) illustrates that "although the old spaces [in Lecumberri] dedicated to torture [have] been transformed into luxurious offices, the walls of the building retain the screams" of the tortured (487). When the DFS archive arrived, it was accompanied by its "jealous" archivist Vicente Capello Rocha, who had in fact served as archivist for the DFS since

1961. When he arrived at the AGN, he quickly made it clear that "no one could enter his archive" without his permission (Ávila, 2020).

With so many systemic forces conspiring against transparency, it should come as no surprise that the Special Prosecutor collapsed in 2006. Former President Luis Echeverría as well as former DFS Chiefs Luis de la Barreda Moreno, Miguel Nazar Haro, and Fernando Gutiérrez Barrios (who was elected to the Mexican Senate) were all exonerated or had their charges thrown out (Doyle et al., 2010). After the collapse of the Special Prosecutor, then Secretary of Defense Ricardo Clemente Vega García warned that "[The Mexican public] should know how to forgive so that the nation doesn't collapse" (Karl, 2014, 736). His words clearly demonstrate that the political elites of the country understood that true justice would topple the political order, something they and the Fox administration was unwilling to do.

Eight human rights NGOs in Mexico co-authored a postmortem of the Special Prosecutor's failure to secure convictions. While other countries had successfully applied Truth and Reconciliation Commissions, the Fox administration "opted for a different path." The postmortem identified the lack of training within the Office of the Special Prosecutor, the failure to develop an investigative structure that reflected the unique nature of crimes involved, and the glaring conflicts of interest within the Procuraduría General de la República, the Office of the Attorney General (Comité 68, 2006, 14).

The disaster of the Special Prosecutor returns to the questions raised at the beginning of this paper: What happens when prosecutorial justice fails? Is archival disclosure of past state crimes sufficient to claim that justice has been served? Though the Office of the Special Prosecutor was abolished in 2006, its leader Ignacio Carrillo Prieto and the other prosecutors had the foresight to pen their findings from the DFS archive in a 708-page report before turning off

the lights. The report was initially suppressed by the Fox administration but was leaked to outlets in Mexico and abroad. The National Security Archive at George Washington University was instrumental in its online dissemination (Karl, 2014, 736). This report, *Informe histórico a la sociedad mexicana*, offers a fascinating take on how truth can be represented in an archive and how archival disclosure can pick up where legal measures have failed.

II. Historical Truth

Aside from its prosecutorial mandate, the Special Prosecutor established a secondary line of investigation into what it called the "historical truths" of the Dirty War. It is noteworthy that the *Informe* refers to this term instead of a term such as "the true history." Is this syntactical difference simply a product of translation into English? Highfalutin legalese? Or does the term historical truth really identify a distinct archival process?

On defining a plan for documental and historical research, the Special Prosecutor called for the:

[...] integration of interdisciplinary teams of documental, bibliographic and hemerographic research, with the final purpose of clarifying the facts and recording the historical truths that coincide with the perpetration of the crimes under investigation (Fiscalía Especial, 2006, 7).

The constellation of resources employed by the Special Prosecutor corroborate and clarify the events documented in the archival record. This is especially important given that an expressly secretive, truth-bending DFS produced the archive. However, historical truths are said to be those things that "coincide" (or concur, run alongside) with the perpetration of the crimes and are not the reflection of an absolute truth. Thus, historical truths are those experiences accessible

through a constructive process. Historical truths operate on the notion that the facts before you *suggest* this is how it happened, which is a different position from *this is* the truth. It is a legal and evidentiary understanding of facts.

From a psychoanalytical perspective, Mijolla-Mellor (2005) refers to historical truth "as a kernel of truth in formations as diverse as legends, religions, or delusions." This signals the constructivist nature of historical truth. The archival records of the DFS serve as the kernel of truth from which the history of the Dirty War may be constructed.

The historian and anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot also reflects on a the concept of historical truth and its construction. He writes that popular and scholarly conceptions of history assume:

[...] the independent existence of a fixed past and posit memory as the retrieval of that content. But the past does not exist independently from the present. Indeed, the past is only past because there is a present, just as I can point to something over there only because I am here. But nothing is inherently over there or here. In that sense, the past has no content. The past--or, more accurately, pastness--is a position (Trouillot, 1995, 15).

According to Trouillot, selections are made in the construction of history, the line between past and present is imposed, and a position is taken, however arbitrary or politically motivated it may be. In this action, parts of the archival recorded are tamped down in silence.

Trouillot's notion of history as a "position" is reflected in the *Informe* of the Special Prosecutor, which states:

As a result of successive selections of information, what society is offered must be understood as part of a universe made up not only of material, but also of silences that, due to the vastness of its content, addresses what was considered essential. Both the

information presented, and the silences contained, are intended to truthfully present what happened, the facts, circumstances, and situations that were encountered (Fiscalía Especial, 2006, 10).

Two key similarities emerge between Trouillot and the Special Prosecutor with respect to the idea of historical truth. First, the Special Prosecutor acknowledges that the historical truth it presents is based on the materials it "encountered" in the archive. The kernel of truth it had to work with were those documents that the DFS chose to include in its archive. Second, the Special Prosecutor explains that certain selections of information were made. Material was left out of the final report due to the "vastness" of the archival record. The Special Prosecutor calls this silence. A better term might be cacophony. When faced with a cacophony of archival records (symbolically, the "screams" retained in the walls of the AGN that Vazquez (2014) describes in the section I of this paper), not every voice can be heard, and the Special Prosecutor explains that it took historical license to edit and construct historical truths from the archival record.

For all its subtleties around how history is constructed, the Special Prosecutor was an extremely centralized and private first attempt at disclosing the DFS archive. This is perhaps because its focus was divided between the public service of disclosure and the legal requirements of building a case against the perpetrators.

Walter (2005) points out that "societies contact with the dead is often feared and always regulated" (4). Though his analysis may certainly be true in the UK, in large segments of Mexican society, the living regularly coexist with the dead, which is observed in home alters, spiritual practices, or festivals such as Día de Muertos. Despite this custom within Mexican society, the Special Prosecutor was very much acting a mediator between the documents,

detailing the disappearances and murders, and the public. Walter calls these mediators "deathworkers" and he says that their job is to "gather information in private, edit a story, and then perform this story in a highly public, ritual setting" (4). Walter's analysis of deathworkers is offers a criticism of the ways in which the Special Prosecutor acted insularly to disclose the DFS archive and denied wider participation of Mexican society. The Special Prosecutor offered what it considered to be the historical truth.

In the final analysis, the Special Prosecutor was not successful securing convictions of the perpetrators nor of fully sharing with Mexican society the extent of the DFS archive. As a response to the questions put forward by this paper in the introduction: mere archival disclosure is not sufficient to claim that justice has been served. In fact, the over centralization of the Special Prosecutor enabled the political powers in the country against full disclosure to easily squash it. By its own admission, the Prosecutor wrote:

Sometimes the truth outlined in the report has not been sufficient to gather the necessary elements for our criminal procedural system, to make the case before the courts and prosecute those responsible. For this reason, the historical report that is presented is much broader since it indicates events that occurred and responsibilities for them, documented mostly in records in public archives and testimony. They will undoubtedly be the bases for [future] investigations (Fiscalía Especial, 2006, 8).

That future investigation would be picked up by the civil society.

III. Right to the Truth

In the period after the dissolution of the Special Prosecutor, the AGN did its due diligence: it steadily catalogued the DFS collection and offered reference services. But by 2015,

a political sea change swept through the country. The PRI had returned to power and imposed a 70-year moratorium on the disclosure of new documents, citing the informational privacy provisions of the Federal Law of Archives. Activists decried this move as a "false legal framework that generates a limitation of access to important files" (Terrazas Tapia, 2015). The public was allowed access to "versiones públicas," or public versions of DFS documents, but these were either redacted or had been previously disclosed.

The historian Kristen Weld (2019) succinctly puts it that "people study history in order to participate in contemporary politics; we recover the past in order to look to the future. As such, documents, archives, and historical knowledge are more than just the building blocks of politics—they are themselves sites of contemporary political struggle" (3). The sealing off of the archive in 2015 was a return to a state policy of secrecy and denial. Archival policy had shifted against the society's right to the truth. However, where the Special Prosecutor had failed, Mexican citizens stepped up to demand their right to the truth about the crimes of the DFS.

In a legal context, the right to the truth signals policies relating to government transparency. However, with the DFS archive closed and Special Prosecutor abolished, what does the right to the truth look like in Mexico outside a legal framework and who gets to define it?

Karl (2014) argues that "it is only the victims of violence who can define when transition ends and when a new status of integration [...] has been achieved" (734). In fact, Mexican civil society was deeply involved in fighting for the truth well before the formation of the Special Prosecutor. In 1977, over one hundred women formed the Committee for the Defense of Persecuted, Disappeared and Political Exiles of Mexico (Comité ¡Eureka!). One of its leaders, María Rosario Ibarra de la Garza, whose son had been disappeared, successfully led political

actions around the country to free political prisoners during the presidency of José López Portillo. At the same time, Martha Camacho Loaiza was abducted and tortured by the DFS while her husband was murdered and his body disappeared in the state of Sinaloa. Her activism to secure the right to the truth for her and other victims of DFS death squads endured 27 years until she was able to file her first criminal complaint with the Special Prosecutor. It was for another 15 years until she received an official apology from the Mexican government. What Weld (2019) points out is very much true in the actions of these women and other activists around the country: "documents, archives [are] themselves sites of contemporary political struggle."

Also after the closure of the DFS archive in 2015, a group of Mexican and U.S. journalists, academics, and activists began to pool together documents they had copied from the DFS archive pre-closure to form an independent, online archive. This project culminated in Mexican Intelligence Digital Archives (MIDAS), which also served the basis of other digital repositories relating to the Dirty War such as Archivos de la Represión. Though these were some of the only resources available after the archive's closure, they were largely collections of jpgs and pdfs without OCR, thus research with the digital documents was tedious.

A disappearance, by design, creates a prolonged form of violence that intimidates the family of a victim from speaking out. This violence takes four forms: denial of bodies, denial of mourning, denial of mortuary rituals, and denial of memory sites (Karl, 2014, 729). Through the denial of bodies, a family lives with a continued uncertainty of the fate of their loved one: is she alive? being tortured? dead? A denial of mourning inhibits the family from beginning the healing process. For large segments of Mexican society, observances such as Día de los Muertos are an important expression of family, culture, and commemoration of the dead. In this context, the denial of mortuary rituals is a reprisal against the victim's family in perpetuity. Finally, the denial

of memory sites is something that civil society established despite limited access to the DFS archive. These four forms of violence deny the victims their right to the truth about their loved one.

The political struggle to enforce the right to the truth and working through the records of the DFS take the place of a mourning ritual. Douglas et al. (2019) write that records can create a "continuing bond" between the deceased and the bereaved. The "deceased's influence in the bereaved's life is not viewed as static; instead, mourning represents an evolving process of adaptation and construction of a transformed connection" (96). The reading, sorting, weeding, annotating, and preserving of records are part of the grief process when the state has denied a person or a society the traditional avenues to do so. "One of the things that mourners do," comments Walter (2005), "is search for a story about the deceased's life and death that makes sense to them and that, ideally, can be shared with others" (19).

IV. Informational Restitution

As the previous sections of this paper have shown, a change in political power has signified a change in archival policy throughout the long saga to fully disclose the DFS archive. The PRI and PAN have proven to be two wings of the same party and they abused archival disclosure to undermine the other. The new, left-wing National Regeneration Movement MORENA party, led by current president and former community organizer Andrés Manuel López Obrador, appears to be taking the government's role in the Dirty War seriously.

On October 2nd, 2019, the fifty-second anniversary of the infamous 1968 student massacre at Tlatelolco, the government announced two significant archival policies. First, the government would dedicate resources toward digitizing and protecting the entire paper archive.

The DFS archive does have a large inherent value, but as with other archives that document human rights abuses, the informational value is essential. International human rights groups have advised that the "archival imperative" requires rapid application of preservation methods to the records to prevent their politically motivated destruction or revision (Bickford, 1999, 1122).

Second, at an emotional and symbolic conference at Lecumberri palace, Claudia Sheinbaum, the mayor of Mexico City, announced the Policy of Truth and Memory of the Recent Past:

As a city, we say a city of freedoms and rights. This history could not have been built without the thousands of men and women who enabled the end of an authoritarian state and opened the way for a different state, for the reconstruction of democratic life (Abundez, 2020).

The main archival outcome of this policy is what the government has called informational restitution, or the delivery of files to the survivors of political repression. Alejandro Encinas, undersecretary of human rights, population, and migration, who himself had been detained by the DFS for his involvement in the Mexican Communist Party, was first to receive the "master copy" of his file.



Figure 1, Tweet from Alejandro Encinas, Undersecretary of Human Rights, Population, and Migration, on receiving his DFS file.
Source: Abundez (2020)

The extent to which the Mexican government is dedicated to the concept of informational restitution is novel among states that have disclosed archives of prior authoritarian regimes. Survivors will not receive facsimiles; they will receive their actual file after a digital copy is deposited in the AGN. In other contexts, this process has also been referred to *habeas data*, which holds that "an individual has the right to access any information about herself or her family that is held by her government" (Weld, 2014, 61).

At the termination of its mandate, the Special Prosecutor imagined a different form of restitution for the victims of the DFS. It was one that included "the recognition of the damage, the acceptance of responsibility, the request for forgiveness, that there is justice instead of impunity [and] the monetary compensation for physical and moral damages suffered" (Special Prosecutor, 2006, 700). In the previous section on the right to the truth, Karl (2014) raises an important critique of the Special Prosecutor's proposal: it is focused on the government's power and responsibility, not engendering the agency of the survivors. The MORENA government's policy of informational restitution at least begins to address survivor's agency.

Ketelaar (2006) observes that records "may be instruments of power, but paradoxically, the same records can also become instruments of empowerment and liberation, salvation and freedom" (145). Informational restitution does empower citizens to control how their experience as survivors of the DFS is remembered. Furthermore, it liberates them from dependency on the state, which has proven incapable of securing justice or a reliably accessible archive.

It may be that MORENA is only in power for six years (the presidential term limit). However, the policy to digitize and deliver the archival master copy to survivors is a crucial measure to ensure that the DFS is not again withdrawn from public access, as was the case in 2015. The policy recognizes on a deep level what the Mexican human rights group Centro Prodh (2020) argues, that "the difference between the past and the present must be justice."

V. Conclusions

While the majority of the literature on the Mexican Dirty War focuses on examining the crimes of the DFS, this paper has tried to tie together those few sources that have assessed the actual archival policies surrounding the disclosure. Where there have been holes in this literature,

theories from the field of archival science, anthropology, psychology, and human rights have been brought in to provide analysis and criticism.

Mexico's saga to disclose the DFS archive is unique among other examples where states have reckoned with archives of state violence. Whereas the East German or Apartheid South African governments collapsed, the authoritarian regime in Mexico never fell: those who faced trial were exonerated and the PRI remains a major national party. This has impeded the disclosure process and places any progress made during the current MORENA administration in danger of being reversed when a new political party takes power.

Furthermore, it is remarkable how little national attention has been paid to the disclosure of the DFS archive. Terrazas Tapia (2015) offers an assessment as to why:

One of the functions of the construction of collective memory in cases such as the Dirty War and the forced disappearances is to prevent the repetition of these events.

Unfortunately, in Mexico we have lived through years of regression on human rights.

This is specifically reflected in cases such as extrajudicial executions, forced disappearances, and torture; in cases such as Tlatlaya, Ayotzinapa, Tanhuato, and the hundreds of reporters attacked and killed, and the thousands of others disappeared.

Though the DFS was disbanded, Mexico has not seen a cessation of violence. In fact, by all accounts it has gotten worse. As discussed during section I of this paper, many DFS officers joined the ranks of the cartels when the agency was closed in 1985. Since then, the drug war has destabilized Mexico into what Valle (1995) calls a narcodemocracy. In large swaths of the country, the cartels are a co-equal or superior governing structure, and this lawlessness means violence is common among the cartels, the military, and civilians.

The three cases Terrazas Tapia (2015) mentions involved extrajudicial mass murder on the part of the Mexican state in the name of winning the drug war. Most infamous of those cases is the 2014 disappearance and suspected murder of 43 students from the Ayotzinapa Teacher's College, which continues to fuel a nationwide movement for truth and justice.

Of the possibility for the disclosure of the DFS archive to hold the government accountable, it is unlikely at this point in time. Terrazas Tapia's (2015) assessment is sobering: There has been no time to grieve because the bodies keep piling up. Mexican society cannot work through the DFS records to prevent a repetition of the Dirty War while it is living through another.

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