



*If we can see it, we can understand it. If we can understand it,  
we can fix it:*

*The roots of the crisis of enforced disappearances in Mexico.*

*by*

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## ABSTRACT

This project aimed to investigate the causes of the enforced disappearance crisis that Mexico is living. Enforced disappearance is one of the most serious violations of human rights. The case of Mexico becomes of great relevance for a human rights study that seeks to provide recommendations for the improvement of public policies aimed at combating this crisis. This thesis attempts to answer the following research questions: 1) why has there been an exponential increase in disappearances in Mexico since 2006 to 2022? 2) what role has the militarization of public security played in this crisis? And 3) what has been the impact of the exponential increase of ED between 2006 and 2022 on women? The methodology that was selected to accomplish this objective is that of a Systematic Literature Review as it enables the researcher to present a summary of all the existing relevant literature on a specific topic. Thus, one of the main strengths of this study is that it extracted the original key concepts from the research questions and, by the time it was finished, we were able to connect those with new concepts drawn from the systematic review. These links could set the field for the formulation of new research questions in further research. The interconnection of our three research questions is found by the elements that were common as factors that repeat themselves across them, i.e., Impunity, Criminal Organisations, Necropolitics, the War on Drugs and Militarization. These could become key overarching and main concepts for the analysis of further research on enforced disappearances in Mexico. In addition, each of the research questions has its own set of other specific concepts of analysis.

*Key words: Human rights, enforced disappearances, Mexico, militarization, women, war on drugs, criminal organisations, impunity, necropolitics, systematic literature review.*

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This thesis was born from getting acquainted with a reality in which the Mexican government hands over shovels and pickaxes to the relatives of disappeared persons who risk their lives by working shoulder to shoulder with state officials going out to the places where they may find human remains, hoping that any of them will correspond to their loved ones. Being there fired up my indignation, my empathy and a deep sense of helplessness that translated into the questions of why are we not doing more? How is it possible that we cannot do more while knowing all the damage this is causing? Why is this happening?

I was there when over twenty women, all mothers, gathered around a pile of human remains that were discovered in one of those searches conducted in coordination by different government offices to pray a rosary and say many different prayers together in an effort to honour the bodies and souls of those people. They were all crying but powering through in order to carry on and finish the prayers. Because it was important that they did. Because since the moment their sons and daughters disappeared, they became the mothers of all the disappeared. They would make sure that each and every one they came across was honoured and could rest in peace, knowing that they had finally been found. I could not speak witnessing this scene. Since that moment, I was determined to embark myself into a journey to do whatever I could to try to make this situation better. This thesis is inspired by all of them and comes from the idea that if we can acknowledge this crisis, we can attempt to understand it, and if we can understand it, someday we will be able to fix it.

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Más de 110,000 personas desaparecidas en México. Hasta Encontrarles.

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# Introduction

In 2021, because of this author's job as investigating agent at the local Ombudsman in Mexico, I developed a deep admiration and empathy for the relatives of disappeared persons and a sensitivity towards this crisis. I understood that one of the most important and hurtful questions was: Why? Why did they disappear? This thesis was born as a result of wanting to get closer to that answer and contribute from my trench to the understanding and hopefully, the solution of this issue.

Thus, this project set out to research the causes of the crisis of enforced disappearance (ED) that Mexico is currently going through. The number of disappeared persons in the country currently goes over 112,000 (CNB, 2023)<sup>1</sup> according to official figures. From those same figures, 91,662 involuntary disappearances were committed between December 2006 and December 2022. This means that 83.7% of the disappearances were committed within the last 17 years, which is the last 30% of the time period covered by the data from the National Registry of Disappeared and Missing Persons.

As explained below, ED is one of the most serious violations of human rights (HR). The case of Mexico becomes of great relevance for a HR study that seeks to provide recommendations for the improvement of public policies aimed at combating this crime which has caused so much pain and damage. The aim of this thesis was to answer the following research questions: 1) why has there been an exponential increase in disappearances in Mexico since 2006 to 2022? 2) what role has the militarization of public security played in this crisis? And 3) what has been the impact of the exponential increase of ED between 2006 and 2022 on women?

The selected methodology was that of a Systematic Literature Review (SLR). This methodology enables the researcher to present a summary of all the existing relevant literature on a specific topic. This is accomplished by the elaboration of a review protocol and the subsequent conduction of the review.

The thesis is made up six main sections. In section one, we carried out an initial literature review. In section two, first we explain the SLR methodology. Next, we develop the review

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<sup>1</sup> The dashboard of the National Search Commission updates daily, this number was retrieved on 28 February 2023, accessible at: <https://versionpublicarmpdno.segob.gob.mx/Dashboard/ContextoGeneral>



protocol. Afterward, we present the documentation of each of the steps and procedures implemented according to the review protocol so that the reader can follow the process that led to the results.

In section three, we present the findings of the SLR. In section four we discuss the findings, present our conclusions, and indicate the limitations of this project. Finally, in section five we present a series of recommendations to different sectors such as the Mexican State, International Organisations, and the Academia. This thesis aims to investigate and generate an understanding of the dynamics in which EDs occur in Mexico and the causes of its exponential increase in the country since 2006 with a view to provide a steppingstone for further efforts to prevent and eradicate this crisis.

## **1. Initial Literature Review**

### **1.1. Enforced disappearances as a human rights issue**

In order to start with this research, it becomes salient to address why EDs are such a threat and a serious violation to HR. Perhaps the first element that should be discussed is that, as some authors have pointed out, EDs are a complex, ‘agglutinative’ HR violation that affect a number of other rights such as personal liberty, not to be subject to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, personal security, the right to a fair trial, humane conditions under detention, legal personality, family life, and in some cases the right to life (Bargu, 2014, p. 13; Citroni et al., 2022). It is relevant to indicate that, even when EDs may end up with torture and the extrajudicial execution of the person, they cannot be reduced only to torture or execution, due to the whole range of behaviours deployed whether carried out, tolerated, supported or abetted by the State (Bargu, 2014; Citroni et al., 2022).

EDs also imply violations that go beyond the rights of the direct victim, since they also entail violations to the HR of those in their social circle. As literature signals ED ends up affecting the immediate family member of the victims (Adams, 2019; Bargu, 2014; Behraves, 2015; A. F. Martínez & Arratia, 2019; Palma Florián, 2016; Smid et al., 2020).

As Gabriella Citroni et al. (2022) indicate, ED refers to a serious violation of HR that has been considered an affront to all humanity. This violation of HR has been historically considered of such a serious and harmful character that even in international criminal law it has been

recognized as a crime against humanity under the Rome Statute (UN Diplomatic Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Establishment of an International Criminal Court, 1998), which includes political organizations as potential culprits of the crime. As a result, under the Rome Statute, EDs can be carried out by either the state or a political organization outside the state, creating a possibility for individuals to commit this crime as well (Basaure Miranda, 2018).

Thus, the study of the case of Mexico, a country in which there is a generalised context of EDs, becomes highly relevant topic for a HR study that aims to provide with recommendations for the betterment of the public policy that seeks to combat those affronts to the Mexican society.

## 1.2. Previous research on Enforced Disappearances

This initial review will analyse the history of the concept, its practice during different periods, the special framework that has been developed on the subject in Latin-America and the efforts at the international level to counter ED as well as its conceptualisation and elements.

### 1.2.1. *General history of enforced disappearances*

Earlier research agrees that the first historical precedent of ED was during World War II, with the Third Reich's Night and Fog Decree (NN), formulated by Marshall Wilhelm Keitel and ordered by Adolf Hitler (Basaure Miranda, 2018; Dulitzky, 2018; Finucane, 2010). The NN constituted a counterinsurgency program that contained action protocols that consisted in suppressing any suspected members of the resistance against the Reich by abducting them secretly during the night in the territories of Western Europe that were at the time occupied by the Third Reich. That way, a suspect who was arrested abroad was captured, and immediately transported to Germany where they would face trial by special courts, circumventing military procedure and rules of treatment of prisoners and eventually disappear without notice, warning or information of any kind of neither the abduction nor of their whereabouts and their fate (Basaure Miranda, 2018). The purpose of the NN was, as Finucane (2010) explained, to remove an individual from any access to any legal protection; and for the secrecy of the vanishing, and fate of the victim to "serve as a form of general deterrence" (2007, p. 7). Such a methodology ended up increasing the anguish of the relatives and generating panic in the population due to the bewilderment of the 'evaporation' of the person (Basaure Miranda, 2018; Finucane, 2010; López Belloso, 2019). According to Dulitzky (2018, p.9), the NN already reunited three of the

elements of what is currently defined as ED, the deprivation of liberty with State participation followed by the denial of information.

While different studies consider the NN as the origin of the modern concept of ED, there is research that posits that the NN was inspired by the Great Purge ordered by Joseph Stalin in the 1930s (Dulitzky, 2018). Even the European Court of Human Rights has considered the Katyn Massacre<sup>2</sup> as a case that initially presented the features of ED (Dulitzky, 2018, p. 10). In other studies, as Dulitzky (2018, p.10) has pointed out, the techniques and tactics by the French army in Algeria and Indochina<sup>3</sup> also reunited these elements. Finally, there are precedents dating back to 1932 in El Salvador as a result of the massacres committed during the regime of Maximiliano Hernández Martínez in 1931 (Citroni, 2003, p. 373).

A conducting thread that can be detected in these examples is that they all involved a clandestine detention, beatings, arbitrary and indefinite detainment, torture, forced displacement, extrajudicial executions, and the consequential uncertainty of the fate of the individual (Bargu, 2014). As Bargu (2014) affirms, ED is a form of violence that not only aims to eliminate the person by destroying the individual, but it also involves the removal of the individual's previous existence. The latter becomes one of the essential features of ED, in the sense that every reference of the abducted is lost. There is no knowledge of their location, their condition, nor the identity of the perpetrator (Palma Florián, 2016).

In this light, a first conceptualization is that ED is the practice carried out, either directly or indirectly, by a state apparatus, consisting of the arrest, detention, or transfer of a person, who is deprived of their freedom and denied information about their whereabouts, in order to prevent them to access to the protection of the legal system, thus obstructing the actions of justice (Basaure Miranda, 2018). By committing ED, the State casts a deadly cloak of invisibility over a person so that they cannot be subject to the corresponding protection of the law.

Once we have carried out this initial study on the first occasions in history that these practices were used, it is necessary to also study their proliferation in Latin-America. As Basaure Miranda pointed out, “this crime was at its peak during the Latin American military dictatorships of the

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<sup>2</sup> One of the episodes of the Purge where thousands of Polish state officials were killed without surrendering any information related to their abduction and eventual killing in 1940 (Dulitzky, 2018, p. 10).

<sup>3</sup> These techniques consisted in torture and interrogation as a way to gain information that usually led to the death of those kidnapped and the hiding of the bodies (Dulitzky, 2018, p. 10).

twentieth century” (2018, p. 11). One of the main reasons being that this was the period in which ED was understood as systematic state terrorism, as different studies have named it (Bargu, 2014; Crenzel, 2022; Dulitzky, 2018; Palma Florián, 2016).

### *1.2.2. Origin, proliferation, and relevance of enforced disappearances in Latin-America.*

One of the first precedents of when EDs became a systematic practice in Latin-America was in the 1960s in Guatemala; although in the following two decades the practice would penetrate and extend to El Salvador, Chile, Uruguay, Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Perú, Honduras, Bolivia, Haiti and Mexico (Citroni, 2014; Finucane, 2010; Molina Theissen, 1988). In fact, as sadly stated by Amnesty International and other international HR organisms have stated that, from 1966 and 1986, around 90,000 people were victims of EDs in Latin-American countries (Molina Theissen, 1988).

Before that, 1950s would mark the beginning of a period that was characterized by a deep rejection and denial of HR as dictatorships started to arise (Molina Theissen, 1988). EDs would start as a consequence of a not-so-estranged intention pursued by those dictatorships: the wish to silence the opposition (Basare Miranda, 2018; Citroni, 2014; Finucane, 2010; Molina Theissen, 1988), however, EDs were not a practice exclusive to the dictatorial governments, given that, to mention a few, in Colombia, Peru, and Mexico, EDs were adopted during democratic times (Molina Theissen, 1988; Saenz, 2017).

As mentioned above, it was the extensive and systematic use of EDs in the Latin-American countries that brought the international community to address it (Dulitzky, 2018). When the American Convention on Human Rights was created in 1969 by the Organization of American States (OAS) and entered into force in 1978, its monitoring would be in charge of two organs: the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights (IACHR) and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACrHR). The IACHR took on the responsibility to investigate and issue a country report on Argentina after having received over 5,580 accusations of disappearances that described the disappeared person as those “apprehended in operations that, due to the conditions in which they were carried out and due to their characteristics, make it possible to presume the implication of the public security forces” (IACHR, 1979). The case of Argentina is notable since previous research suggest that it was during the military dictatorship of Jorge Rafael

Videla that the phenomenon of ED became fully consolidated (Basaure Miranda, 2018; Crenzel, 2022; Dulitzky, 2018; Finucane, 2010).

As Crenzel (2022) reminds, that report accounted for a system that the IACHR called 'free zones' where kidnapping would take place and then people would be transferred to military facilities and other clandestine detention centres, where they would be tortured, followed by deliberate denial of any information by the authorities about their whereabouts. In its conclusions, the report attributed responsibility for the disappearances in Argentina to decisions coming from the highest levels of the armed forces and stated the IACHR's concern for the detainees who could be reasonably presumed dead (IACHR, 1979).

As the IACHR kept addressing the issue of the EDs in different countries, it determined that EDs in the continent were characterised by governments refusing to provide information on people who were kidnapped not only from their homes but their workplaces, ports, airports or even public spaces by heavily armed individuals who are assumed to be invested with some authority given the impunity they acted with (Dulitzky, 2018, p. 11). Thus, the common elements became clear. As Dulitzky (2018) signals, a pattern consisted in States selecting their victims, depriving them of their personal liberty arbitrarily and unlawfully, taking them to secret detention centres where they were usually tortured, executed and whose remains would be disposed by the security forces followed by the complete ulterior denial of any involvement or information regarding the whereabouts of the victims or their remains. In line with this, the practice of ED in the continent pursued as objectives to obtain information from the victims; to remove opposition leaders with impunity and to intimidate the population (Dulitzky, 2018). Basaure Miranda posits that the intimidating effect of EDs rested on a) the disappearance without a trace and b) that it is not permitted under any circumstances to give information on their whereabouts or fate as a State policy (Basaure Miranda, 2018, p. 16).

Finally, the IACrHR gave its first full description of the pattern of ED in its judgement of the case *La Cantuta v. Peru*, as follows:

*"Selection of the victim, detention, deposit of the victim in a detention centre, contingent transfer to other detention centre, interrogation, torture, processing of the data obtained, decision to eliminate the victim, physical elimination, concealment of victim's remains and use of State resources." The common denominator in the whole process*

*was "the denial of the detention itself and denial of any information on what had happened to the arrested person. That is, the victim entered an already established circuit of clandestine detention, which only very lucky people could survive." [...] These abductions were frequently carried out late in the night, while the alleged victim was asleep [...] The complex organization and logistics of the forced disappearance technique required the use of resources of the State, for example: motor vehicles, fuel, premises where to transfer and hide the detainee or to avoid or obstruct his/her being tracked down.... As regards the techniques used to destroy any evidence of the crimes committed during the forced disappearance procedure ... included, inter alia, the mutilation or cremation of victim's mortal remains" (IACrHR, 2006, pp. 32–33, par. 80.5-80.8).*

Notwithstanding, even when EDs were widely practiced in the region, there were significant differences in the ways they were perpetrated and their repressive roles in different countries (Citroni, 2014; Dulitzky, 2018; Molina Theissen, 1988). In this connection, as different authors state (Citroni, 2014; Dulitzky, 2018; Finucane, 2010; Molina Theissen, 1988), the Latin-American context of EDs has encompassed those carried out exclusively by state forces and those that private or non-state actors with the cooperation, tolerance, or acquiescence of the State commit, such as are those that occur nowadays in Mexico.

### *1.2.3. International efforts to counter enforced disappearances, its conceptualisation, and characteristics*

The Declaration on the Protection of All Persons From Enforced Disappearance (the Declaration), adopted by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly marked a milestone in the combat against ED. Its drafting took place following to the thirty-third session of the UN General Assembly in 1978, which was the first time that the UN addressed the deep concern regarding reports on disappearances of individuals at the hands of law enforcement officials ‘from different parts of the world’ (The International Coalition against Enforced Disappearances, n.d.). It requested the UN HR Commission to examine the matter of EDs, with a view to issue the corresponding recommendations to States (UN General Assembly, 1978). In 1993, the General Assembly resumed consideration of the subject and proclaimed the Declaration (UN General Assembly, 1993).

The main concern that motivated the Declaration was the increasing accusations, allegations and reports of ED in a high number of countries (UN General Assembly, 1993). They referred to cases in which individuals were arrested, detained, or kidnapped by officials from different branches or levels of the government, or by organized groups or private individuals with the government's direct or indirect support, tolerance, or acquiescence. Afterward, according to those reports, these individuals' fate or whereabouts would be withheld, and the fact that they had been deprived of their liberty would not be acknowledged under any circumstance, thus placing them outside the protection of any remedy of the law (Behraves, 2015).

In the Declaration, the UN General Assembly affirmed that the systematic practice of EDs was to be considered as a crime against humanity (UN General Assembly, 1993). That idea would later be used in other relevant international treaties that addressed EDs (Behraves, 2015; UN General Assembly, 1993). Despite the step forward that the Declaration meant, its capacity to influence States behaviour was hindered because it lacked binding effects (Behraves, 2015; UN General Assembly, 1993).

By the times that the drafting of the Declaration was taking place, lawyers who were exiled from Argentina as a consequence of the 1976-1983 dictatorship gathered in a colloquium in Paris in 1981. This Colloquium was entitled “The Policy of Enforced Disappearances” and it set out to present and analyse the different aspects and realms that EDs extended to, focusing specially on the Latin-American context. From this colloquium, one of the main ideas that would model the following efforts to counter ED was extracted, which consisted in that EDs combined different HR violations. However, they concluded that there was a need for a specific international instrument that had binding character that sought the prevention and punishment of ED universally. It was the Colloquium that requested the UN HR Commission that said instrument should consider those cases of systematic or massive nature, that were proven to follow a purpose of elimination of political opponents to be classified under the category of crimes against humanity (Crenzel, 2022, pp. 40–42).

Under this same context, as mentioned above, the context in Latin-America for over two decades (1966-1986) was one in which EDs gained popularity; a context that the IACHR took on the responsibility to document, report, and issue the corresponding recommendations to States. As stated, its country report from 1980 on the situation of HR in Argentina provided the continent and the international community with the first official document from a regional body

that put the responsibility for the EDs on the State and called for justice (Behraves, 2015; Crenzel, 2022). That way, the annual reports and the country reports issued by the IACHR became repositories of evidence regarding how EDs originated and settled as an ordinary practice in Latin-America, ever since 1974 when the IACHR started making referencing the 'disappeared' (desaparecidos) (Basaure Miranda, 2018; IACHR, 1974).

Given the imperative attention that the IACHR was paying to the context of EDs, and due to the fact that under the Inter-American System for the Protection of HR a case must first be analysed by the IACHR before it is sent to the IACrHR for a jurisdictional binding resolution of it, it comes as no surprise that in 1988 the first judgement that this regional Court issued was the one related to the ED of Manfredo Velásquez Rodríguez attributed to the State of Honduras (Basaure Miranda, 2018; IACrHR, 1988). Before that judgement in 1988, given the context in the continent, the General Assembly of the OAS had already declared in 1983 that the practice of forced disappearance of persons in the Americas is an affront to the conscience of the continent and constitutes a crime against humanity (OEA General Assembly, 1983). Based on this reasoning, in 1987 the OAS General Assembly commended to the IACHR to prepare a first draft for a binding regional treaty on EDs, resulting in the creation in 1994 of the first international binding treaty on the matter, the Inter-American Convention on Forced Disappearance of Persons (The International Coalition against Enforced Disappearances, n.d.).

It would not be until 2003, when a working group would be appointed and summoned by the UN HR Commission in order to create a draft of an International Convention (The International Coalition against Enforced Disappearances, n.d.). For three years the draft was under elaboration of this working group, with the participation of more than 70 countries, until 29 June 2006 when the UN HR Council proclaimed the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (the International Convention), with the addition of an international body stipulated by the convention to monitor states and receive individual and interstate complaints, the Committee Against Enforced Disappearances (CED) (Bargu, 2014; Behraves, 2015; The International Coalition against Enforced Disappearances, n.d.; UN General Assembly, 2006).

It is worth mentioning the influence that Latin America's impact on EDs has had not only under the monitoring of the regional monitoring bodies such as the IACHR and the IACrHR from the OEA, but also at the UN level. To illustrate, the CED rendered its first decision on the urgent



action mechanism on a Latin American country, and its first visit was requested for the same country. In both instances, the country in question was Mexico (Citroni et al., 2022; Dulitzky, 2018).

Thus, within the Universal System for the Protection of HR from the United Nations, the definition of ED was conceived as follows in its Convention:

*“For the purposes of this Convention, "enforced disappearance" is considered to be the arrest, detention, abduction or any other form of deprivation of liberty by agents of the State or by persons or groups of persons acting with the authorization, support or acquiescence of the State, followed by a refusal to acknowledge the deprivation of liberty or by concealment of the fate or whereabouts of the disappeared person, which place such a person outside the protection of the law”* (UN General Assembly, 2006, p. 1, Article 2).

From this definition, there are key elements that can be drawn: 1) depriving a person of their liberty; 2) committed either by state agents, or by private individuals acting with the authorization, support or acquiescence of the State or the political organization in power; and 3) the abstention or refusal to acknowledge the deprivation of liberty or to provide with information about the fate or whereabouts of the disappeared person. These are the elements that must be accounted as the constitutive elements of the crime when analysing cases where the practice of ED is adduced (Pervou, 2012, p. 130).

Stemming from those elements, from the perspective of International Human Rights Law (IHRL), EDs are considered one of the worst and most serious HR violations (Adams, 2019; Citroni, 2014; Citroni et al., 2022; Estrada Tanck, 2019; Sarkin, 2012). Therefore, as the Office of the High Commissioner for HR from the United Nations (OHCHR) (2009) has indicated, and as is envisaged in the preamble of the Declaration (UN General Assembly, 1993) of the International Convention (UN General Assembly, 2006), and in the jurisprudence of the IACrHR (IACrHR, 1988), due to the fact that the crime EDs are a violation of civil and political rights as well as economic, social, and cultural rights, it must be qualified it as a violation of rights of a multiple nature.

In this same line, ED can also be identified as an autonomous and continuing crime. EDs cannot be reduced to only one of the conducts that compose it due to the whole range of behaviours deployed that fit into a systematic mechanism, whether carried out, tolerated, supported, or abetted by the State (Bargu, 2014; Citroni et al., 2022). Furthermore, as has been coined by María López (2019), the recognition in the International Convention of an autonomous right to protection from ED generates, as a counterpart and consequence, the same recognition of ED as an autonomous crime (Ambos & Böhm, 2009; Citroni & Scovazzi, 2009). Moreover, as a continuing crime, the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (WGEID) (2011) shed light on how ED begins at the time of the kidnapping and lasts throughout the period of time in which the crime has not ceased, that is, until the State acknowledges the detention or provides information about the fate or whereabouts of the victim (López Beloso, 2019, p. 118).

Finally, the WGEID has also stated that ED is also a crime against humanity, as is established in every international treaty on the matter. As such, this determination implies that protection against ED is of universal jurisdiction and does not admit prescription nor can it be a crime subject to amnesty (Estrada Tanck, 2019; WGEID, 2009).

### 1.3. Background to the case of Mexico: A generalised context of Disappearances since 2006

In Mexico, EDs can be traced back firstly as “a tool for political repression” in the 1960s (Open Society Foundation, 2016) accounting for the first documented precedent with the arrest of Epifanio Avilés Rojas (Calveiro, 2022; CNDH, n.d.). However, nowadays, novel modalities of ED as a crime have taken place in Mexico.

For the last two decades, Mexico has gone through a security crisis related to organized crime (Cadena & Garrocho, 2020). According to official figures, both homicides and disappearances increased notably during the past two presidential terms (from 2006 to 2018) (Cadena & Garrocho, 2020, p. 230; Pantoja, 2019). As per the contributions of Leyva Morelos Zaragoza (2019), EDs are being used now particularly in a new scope of different contexts, such as the activities of criminal organisations (CO), specifically referring to Drug Cartels, presumably and worryingly with the support, tolerance or acquiescence of state officials (Beristain, 2017).

The literature reviewed in the next section shows the serious character of EDs in Mexico. Let us commence with the study of how the current crisis of ED in Mexico came to be.

### 1.3.1. *History and evolution of enforced disappearances in Mexico*

According to the work of Vicente Ovalle (Vicente Ovalle, 2019), there are three different phases through which it's possible to visualize the development of ED in Mexico. The first one, between 1940 and 1970, where, as a technique, EDs started to show criminal elements unique to it as was clandestinity and the denial of information. The second phase would be comprised between 1971 and 1978, where EDs would become a part of the counterinsurgency strategy of the Mexican government and would determinedly fit the characteristics that are currently recognized, as a state crime, today. Both of those first two phases are considered to have taken part in what came to be known as a period of counterinsurgency strategies implemented by the Mexican state, known as the 'Dirty War' (Vicente Ovalle, 2019).

Meanwhile, the third phase comes as the one historical stage where the work of Vicente Ovalle becomes of salience for this project. The third phase of ED in Mexico would start in 1977 and would stem from both the counterinsurgency strategy and the start of the War On Drugs (WOD) (Vicente Ovalle, 2019; p, 331). In this vein, Vicente Ovalle (2019) attempts to provide with historical insights regarding the distinct periods when EDs occurred in Mexico. First, during the period known as the 'Dirty War' and the change of paradigm when the WOD became a relevant factor to the new and current context of violence in the country. Finally, the study remarks how the Ayotzinapa case of the ED of the 43 students in 2014 set the memory of the country alive and how the Mexican society was reminded of the authoritarianism and criminality of which the state is capable of (Vicente Ovalle, 2019).

On that same note and referring to of how violence plays a main role in the Mexican reality, Eugenia Montaña et al., (2022) start by pointing out how violence in Mexico goes a long way back, and how it has placed Mexican society in a state of social emergency that has now embedded itself in the daily public conversation. The main objective of their work was to study political, state, and other forms of violence such as criminal violence, that have 'gained traction' in later years in order to provide a 'historical framework' for the origin of EDs in the country. The period that they analysed was from 1958 to 2018. Similar to the exercise carried out by

Vicente Ovalle (2019), Eugenia Montaña et al. propose to divide their study in timeframes based on the patterns and features of violence recurred to by different actors in each period.

The fourth and last timeframe, which analysed from 2006 to 2018, Eugenia Montaña et al. (2022) called it the period of 'reorganizing violence', where the phenomenon that encompasses the ways of the violence that Mexico experiences today is the WOD. In this sense, they insist that starting in 2006 the different kinds of violence 'overflowed' (Montaña et al., 2022, p. 66) and thus, it is difficult to disentangle them from one another to study them separately, among them, EDs.

In this regard, a mention of the Ayotzinapa case from 2014 is made in terms of indicating how it showed a more than problematic relationship in the actions of law enforcement, political groups, and CO when referring to EDs in Mexico (Montaña et al., 2022). In other words, they argue that the circumstances of this case and its investigation (to this day still pending of resolution, punishment, and reparation to the families of the victims) indicated that the "Mexican political class is not interested in solving the drug trade problem, because it is involved with and benefits from it" (Montaña et al., 2022, p. 64). In this connection, they lastly warn that this last time frame can be characterised by not only the state's direct responsibility in EDs, but also its accountability in terms of failing to investigate duly and punish those responsible (Montaña et al., 2022, p. 65).

The work of both Vicente Ovalle (2019) and Eugenia Montaña et al. (2022) set the overview from which this project will start and will attempt to answer its research questions. In that same connection, they propose to enlighten a logic of how EDs originated and also developed from being an isolated crime and became part of either a political stratagem or a consequence of the confrontations or the collusions between criminal organizations and the state.

Thus, it is possible to identify the historical and the social characteristics that revolve around the time frame on which this project will focus. First of all, both studies place the year 2006 as a milestone that identifies the last stage of evolution of the proliferation of disappearances in Mexico. Likewise, both name and link two different elements of analysis as indispensable elements for the conception of this last stage: WOD and the Ayotzinapa case.

Thus, these pieces of academic work allow also to identify a connection between the WOD, Ayotzinapa, and the fact that more than 80%<sup>4</sup> of the officially recorded disappearances in Mexico have occurred since 2006 (CED, 2022; CNB, 2023). Nevertheless, even with these initial precisions in terms of chronological evolution, there remains the question of how the mechanics and the dynamics of disappearances changed from before 2006 to after that year.

In this connection, the perspective of Pilar Calveiro (2022) proposes a narrower view of the evolution of ED in Mexico. Her work separates only two particular political periods, the state counterinsurgency strategy on one hand and the WOD and organized crime on the other. Her work attempts to identify the differences between EDs in terms of their perpetrators, victims, and motives from one period to the other (Calveiro, 2022). She envisages this distinction also in function of the governmentality of the two different periods, which are: the authoritarian-populist government (existing during the Dirty War) and the neoliberal government (during the WOD).

According to her study (2022), similar to the proposition of Vicente Ovalle (2019), the emergence of WOD implied the adoption of new modalities of ED whose exponential increase began from 2006 on during the administration of both former presidents Felipe Calderón (2006-2012) and Enrique Peña Nieto (2012-2018) with distinct characteristics regarding perpetrators, victims, and motives (Calveiro, 2022, pp. 79, 85–92).

On a more precise note, Alejandra Martínez & Norma Arratia (2019) signal that ‘the new kind of disappearances’ in Mexico started during former president Carlos Salinas de Gortari’s administration and persisted during the following administrations (Ernesto Zedillo 1994-2000, Vicente Fox 2000-2006, Felipe Calderón 2006-2012 and Enrique Peña Nieto 2012-2018). They emphasize how on December 10, 2006, Felipe Calderón made a public statement officially declaring the WOD (2019, p. 184). In this sense, after this statement, the WOD now implied a security policy and strategy which consisted of a violent confrontation against the drug cartels by means of involving not only the police corporations, but also the Mexican military forces.

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<sup>4</sup> From the official figures provided by the state it is possible to account that from 1964 up until February 2023, the number of disappeared and non-located persons is 112,002. Of those disappearances, 91,662 were committed between December 2006 and December 2022, in other words, the 83.7% of the disappearances were committed in 17 years, which is the last 30% of the timeframe that the National Registry comprises.

However, different research signals that as for the perpetrators at this stage of the evolution of ED, i.e., the WOD, “both journalistic and testimonial material identified municipal, ministerial and federal police among the perpetrators, as well as the members of the army, marines”, therefore, not only drug traffickers (Calveiro, 2022, p. 85). In this line, it is paramount to underline the practical link between the state and private perpetrators and how in a number of times they blend into each other, i.e., "military drug smugglers and police officers kidnapping people and handing them over or selling them to criminal networks—as in the case of the 43 Ayotzinapa students" and the case of Jorge Parral (Calveiro, 2022, p. 86). More in depth, Calveiro (2022, pp. 86–87) shows how derived from particular cases, it can be drawn that there exists an ‘outsourcing of violence’ between the state and criminal networks, which under every light would fit under every conceptualization of ED, since the tolerance and acquiescence by the state elements are met, as will be seen in the next chapter.

In the same line as Pilar Calveiro (2022), Alejandra Martínez and Norma Arratia (2019) argue how the role of the State in the context of ED is strengthened because of the alliance between the military, police corporations and members of CO. Moreover, they also point to the case of Ayotzinapa as one of the most important precedents that support the idea of the participation of the state.

In this connection, the report issued by the CED, on its visit to Mexico in 2021 pursuant to article 33 of the International Convention, it concluded that there was a generalised context of disappearances in the country. In this vein, the CED emphasized a rather strong link between the government’s approach to security that derived from the security crisis that Mexico has undergone that was fostered since 2006, under the context of the WOD and the increase of the disappearances of persons. The CED pointed out that the key factor involved was the militarization of security to combat the mentioned rising wave of organized crime (CED, 2022) that was mentioned above.

Across this context, one of the most applauded responses from the Mexican State to the exponential increase of ED in the last two decades was the creation and promulgation in October 2017 of the General Law on Enforced disappearances of Persons, Disappearances Committed by Individuals and the National Missing Persons System (Cámara de Diputados, 2017; CED, 2022; Huhle, 2019; Leyva Morelos Zaragoza, 2019). Posteriorly, former president

Enrique Peña Nieto enacted said law, it was published in the Federal Official Gazette and came into force in January 2018 (Diario Oficial de la Federación, 2017).

In light of the creation and entry into force of said law and the diverse efforts to implement its mechanisms, from what the CED (2022) has concluded, Mexico has implemented a number of institutional measures in order to address the on growing situation of ED. However, despite these legislative (Diario Oficial de la Federación, 2017) and jurisprudential (Centro de Estudios Constitucionales de la SCJN, 2021) efforts, EDs are a generalised situation in the face of which there is almost absolute impunity, revictimization, and a forensic crisis (Guercke, 2021; OHCHR, 2022).

In addition, the security crisis in Mexico has also incrementally affected women and girls, with a notable increase in EDs from the age of 12 since 2006 (CED, 2022), where Ciudad Juarez has been considered as the emblematic case and epicentre of femicidal violence and disappearances of women (Estévez, 2017; J. J. Rodríguez et al., 2020). The CED (2022) pointed out that these EDs could be related to human trafficking for sexual exploitation, the concealment of femicides and the recruitment or retaliation by CO. At the end of Felipe Calderón's six-year term (2012-2018), more than 12,000 women had been murdered (Juárez Rodríguez, 2016). Juárez Rodríguez (2016) points out that this violence against women must be framed within the activities of CO and the WOD, while María Velasco & Salomé Castañeda (2020) refer that EDs of women are immersed in a system where impunity continues to prevail. Up until December 2022, there were 21,263 disappeared women of which 9,295 were girls (CNB, 2023). Thus, it is clear that there is a gender component in this crisis (Velasco Domínguez & Castañeda, 2020) which this project will also attempt to address.

#### 1.4. State of the knowledge and positioning prior to the systematic review

Considering the review of the relevant literature on the case of Mexico and the previous research on ED that has been hereby presented, the state of the knowledge and where we position this study is the following:

With a rising tide of ED casting its shadow in Latin-America different efforts from the OAS through its General Assembly, the IACrHR and the specially the IACHR by means of its annual and country reports, played a paramount role for the adoption of the Inter-American Convention

on Forced Disappearance of Persons in 1994, becoming the first specialized and binding treaty on this subject.

In addition, in response to the increasing number of cases and reports in Latin-America, different efforts were adopted in the international arena to prevent, investigate, and punish those responsible of ED, including 1) the creation of the WGEID in 1980, 2) the drafting of the Declaration in 1993, and 3) the International Convention.

In this vein, ED are a violation of multiple HR. Not only does it affect the rights of the direct victims, but it also causes damage to the rights of their immediate social circle: their families. The research shows that ED are a weaponized tactic that has been used systematically with a view to elimination of political opponents of with generalised tolerance and acquiescence of the State. Therefore, in light of the foregoing, it can be drawn that EDs are a HR violation of multiple nature, an autonomous a continuing crime, and considered a crime against humanity.

In the Mexican context, the milestones that the literature offers in order to understand the context of the generalised context of ED in Mexico are (Beristain, 2017; Calveiro, 2022; CED, 2022; Juárez Rodríguez, 2016; A. F. Martínez & Arratia, 2019; Montaña et al., 2022; Velasco Domínguez & Castañeda, 2020; Vicente Ovalle, 2019):

- The beginning of the WOD in 2006 and the militarization of public security
- The association and collusion between state officials and criminal networks
- The case of Ayotzinapa
- The increase of EDs of women and girls
- More than 100,000 disappeared in the country, 83.7% of which occurred after 2006

From this initial review, we draw that in the case of Mexico there is a role that CO and the military have played in relation to the WOD, but there is still a gap regarding why EDs are happening at the hands of CO, at the hands of the armed forces or at the hands of both working together, i.e., what is the role that EDs are playing in the WOD, why are they and the increase of EDs of women and girls constitutive elements to it.



## 2. Methodology

### 2.1. Systematic Literature Review

Moher et al. (2015, p. 1) have defined the systematic literature review (SLR) as “the reference standard for synthesising evidence”. As such, a SLR is a tool for identifying, evaluating and interpreting all available research that is relevant to a particular research question, topic area or phenomenon of interest (Kitchenham, 2004, p. 1). A SLR offers the researcher important possibilities, such as being able to present a summary of existing evidence or identify gaps in current research and propose suggestions for future studies and new hypothesis (Kitchenham, 2004). This is possible due to the fact that the SLR is based on a pre-defined eligibility criteria embodied in a protocol (Moher et al., 2015; Xiao & Watson, 2019).

That protocol is a necessary element to the SLR as it ensures that its conduction "is carefully planned and that what is planned is explicitly documented before the review starts" (Moher et al., 2015, p. 1). Thus, by having a pre-established protocol, the researcher can avoid arbitrary decision making when extracting data and may anticipate potential obstacles and limitations in the review.

General research on how to conduct a SLR agrees that a successful one is made up by three main phases (Brereton et al., 2007; Kitchenham, 2004; Kitchenham & Charters, 2007; Xiao & Watson, 2019):

- **Planning the Review:** At this first stage we must create a research question and develop the search strategy that includes identifying the key concepts, the construction of the search strings that will be utilised, and databases that will be consulted.
- **Conducting the Review:** This phase will consist in the identification, selection, and quality assessment of literature based on inclusion and exclusion criteria. This will be followed by data extraction and data synthesis.
- **Reporting the Review:** After the data is extracted and synthesised, the findings are presented in order to answer the research questions.

More specifically, following the guidance on conducting the process of a SLR developed by Yu Xiao & Maria Watson (2019, p. 102), all SLRs can be conducted by implementing 8 steps:

- 1) Formulating the research problem
- 2) Developing and validating the review protocol
- 3) Searching the literature
- 4) Screening for inclusion
- 5) Assessing quality
- 6) Extracting data
- 7) Analysing and synthesising data; and
- 8) Reporting the findings.

In the process of conducting and selecting the literature for this SLR, we will follow the method of Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) because of how widely researchers have utilised it when creating systematic reviews in different fields (Hu et al., 2023; Moher et al., 2015; Sarkis-Onofre et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2021). The PRISMA method is made up by four consecutive steps:

*Figure 1. PRISMA steps (made by the author)*



This way, these will be the steps that this review will follow in order to present the documentation of the conduction of the SLR, in the form of a PRISMA diagram.

### *2.1.1. Relevance for Human Rights Research*

As detailed above, ED is one of the most serious HR violations. As the practice gained, so to speak, popularity, the international community made efforts both at different levels to regulate it in terms of qualifying it as a serious HR violation of multiple nature, both an autonomous and continuing crime, as well as a crime against humanity.

In this sense, the context of Mexico in relation to EDs has already been described above. Mexico, as of February 2023, had a number of more than 112,000 people officially registered as disappeared amidst a public security crisis defined by the WOD, and the adoption of

constabularization as a strategy to neutralize CO. This is why the case of Mexico proves to be one whose urgency merits the development of more and more research with a view to generate contributions to the creation of effective public policies that can address this context.

Before, we have already established the possibilities and advantages that SLRs offer to the researcher or research team. SLRs can be used to identify all relevant existing literature on a certain topic with the objective to answer a single or a set of research questions. Therefore, a SLR addressing the crisis of ED in Mexico whose objective is to answer our research questions can be a starting point that can be of service for future research or for decision-makers in order to develop either new knowledge or public policies.

On the other hand, while the crisis of ED in Mexico is a topic about which there is a significant amount of research done already, this is the first time that a SLR would be carried out on this specific topic. To be clear, this is not the first time that SLRs are used in HR research. There are precedents for the implementation of this tool in the issues of racial discrimination and disparities (Birk, 2022; Merkison et al., 2023), justice systems (Le et al., 2023), the humanitarian field (Alim et al., 2021; Bruno & Haar, 2020; Khorram-Manesh & Burkle, 2023), business and HR (Blanco Vizarrata & Betta, 2022), the rights of peoples with disabilities (Gjermestad et al., 2017; Trounson et al., 2022), the right to education (Birk, 2022; Schuck & Feser, 2022), the right to access to food (Franco-Lares et al., 2022), the right to access to palliative care (Johns et al., 2022), gender-based violence prevention (Decker et al., 2022), the rights of children (Falch-Eriksen et al., 2021), modern slavery (Such et al., 2020), internal displacement (Kamara et al., 2017), the right to access to healthcare, mental health and abortion (Cannon et al., n.d.; Loi et al., 2015; Macgregor et al., 2019; Sorenson et al., 2014) and, of course, human rights and COVID-19 (Kissi et al., 2022; Kubenz & Kiwan, 2023). However, as of yet, SLRs have not addressed the area of violent public security crises in the HR field.

In this connection, conducting an SLR on the ED crisis and its exponential increase in Mexico since 2006 would contribute by providing the first SLR of its kind, making available a report on the evaluation and interpretation of the findings based on all relevant existing and identifiable evidence as to why such an exponential increase occurred, what role the militarization of public security in the country has played in it, and what impact EDs have had on women.

### 2.1.2. *The relevance of a feminist epistemology theory for this research*

Feminist epistemology is aware of the fact that epistemology traditionally places a particular subject as the producer of knowledge (Cabrera et al., 2020, p. 308) and thus focuses on “the viewpoint based on a masculine way of seeing things” (Pal, 2021, p. 146) . Thus, it attempts to generate situated knowledge constructed from the often-invisible women’s experiences (Pal, 2021). The integration of feminist epistemology and gender perspective in HR research is paramount since they provide new frameworks for understanding violence against women, for instance, in Mexico (Velasco Domínguez & Castañeda, 2020, p. 97). This is the reason why this project will include within its objectives to also investigate the impact the crisis of EDs in the country has had on women.

This project will also attempt to make visible the knowledge produced on the matter by women by aligning its content to the feminist standpoint theory (FST). According to María Cabrera, María López & Raquel Royo (2020), FST argues that different groups' perspectives should be at the centre of knowledge production, a principle that this project aims to follow by highlighting the works of women authors in its content. The in-text citations of these authors will be done on a full name basis to contribute to their visibility and provide a more nuanced and visible understanding of EDs from their perspective.

## 2.2. Review Protocol: Planning the Review

As mentioned above, a SLR must start by establishing a review protocol. This will be done in this project by relying in the model developed by Yu Xiao and Maria Watson (2019, p. 103) that explain the elements that an adequate review protocol must describe, such as the purpose of the study, research questions, inclusion criteria, search strategies, quality assessment criteria and screening procedures, strategies for data extraction, synthesis, and reporting. We proceed.

### 2.2.1. *Purpose of the study*

The general purpose of this research is to contribute to the study and to formulate recommendations regarding the generalised context and crisis of EDs in Mexico. It aims to investigate and generate an understanding of the dynamics in which this phenomenon, a serious HR violation, occurs and its exponential increase in the country since 2006. Even though a SLR requires considerably more effort than traditional reviews (Kitchenham, 2004), we hope that

the implementation of this tool addressing this specific topic and the research questions listed below provides the academia with the first study of its kind and therefore provide a platform for further HR research and public policy building.

### *2.2.2. Research questions*

The research questions (RQs) that this SLR will attempt to answer by reporting its findings are the following:

- RQ1: Why has there been an exponential increase in disappearances in Mexico since 2006 to 2022?
- RQ2: What role has the militarization of public security played in this crisis?
- RQ3: What has been the impact of the exponential increase of ED between 2006 and 2022 on women?

### *2.2.3. Inclusion and exclusion criteria*

As the attempt of the SLR is to identify, assess, extract and present data from all existing relevant studies, our project must determine the inclusion criteria that this SLR will abide by when conducting the review. In this sense, the variables for inclusion and exclusion criteria will be those listed below.

#### *Criteria for inclusion:*

- Studies that address the issue of enforced disappearances in Mexico since 2006 that describe or present evidence or data on its probable causes will be included
- Studies examining the link between EDs in the country and the militarization of public security following the open declaration of War on Drugs in 2006 will be included.
- Studies examining the link between the exponential increase in disappearances in the country and the impact they have had on women, or their differential impact based on gender will be included.

#### *Criteria for direct exclusion:*

- For this SLR, studies written in languages other than English or Spanish will be excluded.

- In order to respect the purpose of this study, studies that address or examine the history, evolution, causes and consequences of disappearances in Mexico prior to 2006 and, therefore, disappearances happening during the time frame known as the ‘Dirty War’, will be excluded.
- Considering that this review seeks to present findings regarding the causes of the crisis related to enforced disappearances in Mexico, one of the limitations of this project will be that it will not include studies that address the consequences, collateral impacts of disappearances or the experiences or processes of the relatives of disappeared persons. This is beyond the scope of this project.

Unlike the inclusion criteria which, from this point on, could be said to be exhaustive, the same could not be said of the exclusion criteria since we consider that there is a clear possibility that a study could be discarded for a reason that is not listed here.

#### 2.2.4. *Search strategies*

##### 2.2.4.1. The databases

As one of the major sources to search for academic literature, and the usual first option for literature search (Xiao & Watson, 2019), for this study we decided to use reputable databases which are four of the most widely used in social sciences: Google Scholar, ProQuest, Scopus, and Dialnet. The inclusion of Dialnet was due to the fact that this project is based on the study of the reality of a Spanish-speaking Latin American country such as Mexico. Dialnet is one of the largest bibliographic portals of Hispanic scientific literature. Therefore, the decision was made to include Dialnet in addition to the previous ones.

##### 2.2.4.2. Key concepts

The next element that is necessary is to determine what are the key concepts that will be used as inputs in the databases and, therefore, will become the key words for this SLR which must be derived from the RQ (Kitchenham & Charters, 2007; Xiao & Watson, 2019). Considering the three RQs that were established, the selected keywords were the following:

- *Enforced disappearances*
- *Forced disappearances,*
- *missing persons,*
- *Mexico,*
- *military,*
- *militarization,*
- *women,*
- *gender perspective,*
- *desapariciones forzadas*<sup>5</sup>,
- *personas desaparecidas,*
- *desapariciones,*
- *México (Méjico)*<sup>6</sup>,
- *militarización,*
- *mujeres y perspectiva de género*<sup>7</sup>

Now, it will be necessary to formulate different search strings (SST). Each of them should be designed so that the database yields results related to each research question. Considering this, six different search strings will be used. Thanks to the use of Boolean operators such as AND/OR (for the search strings that connect the key words in English) and Y/O (for the search string that connect the key words in Spanish), we will ensure that the searches yield over all possible returns that connect the key words while also including the connection of two or more similar concepts and thus broaden the results.

Once the search strings have been defined, the next step will be to enter them in each of the four databases in order to proceed to the identification of relevant studies within the returns. Following the steps of Yu Xiao and Maria Watson (2019, p. 93), in each one of the searches, a preliminary selection of literature will be made by determining the relevance of the study by title. If the title of the study is considered of relevance, then the article will be preselected, and the full reference of the study will be retrieved for the next step, the screening procedures.

### *2.2.5. Screening and eligibility assessment procedures*

Once the preselection of material has been carried out, deeper screening procedures should be conducted by reviewing each article in two different stages. The first stage will consist in reading the abstract and the concluding sections of the preliminarily selected studies, thus

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<sup>5</sup> As it was mentioned before, this project is based on the study of the reality of a Spanish-speaking Latin American country; in this sense, it will not be enough to only conduct searches using the key words in English. Therefore, the project should also make use of the terms translated into Spanish.

<sup>6</sup> Not until too much ago, some sectors still used to spell 'Méjico'. Even when the forms with 'j' are also correct, the spelling with 'x' is recommended as it is the one used in the country itself and, mostly, in the rest of Latin America (RAE, 2022).

<sup>7</sup> Translation of the key words by the author.

determining their matching to the inclusion and exclusion criteria detailed above. Those studies that match the criteria will move forward to the second stage.

The second stage will consist in reading the full text of the studies that were selected in the first stage and contrasting them against the inclusion criteria. That way, we will determine whether they contain relevant data for the RQs. Based on this screening procedure and eligibility assessment, a final selection of studies will be obtained.

### *2.2.6. Strategies for data extraction and synthesis*

As Yu Xiao and Maria Watson (2019) point out, there are different methods to carry out a synthesis of research, the selection of which will depend on the literature review typology that is chosen. Among the typologies, they group literature reviews into four categories: describe, test, extend, and critique. They explain that each category has its own purpose and, consequently, each category has its own literature review types (Xiao & Watson, 2019). In this sense, for this project we have selected the ‘describe’ category of reviews. This category aims to be descriptive and analyse and study the state of the literature regarding a specific topic, concept or set of RQs. This category seeks to provide a comprehensive account of the state of the knowledge that stems from the reporting of the extracted data from all available research that is relevant to a particular research question (Xiao & Watson, 2019).

In this line, the data extraction in this SLR will aim to collect all the information needed in order to address the RQs. Therefore, this step will make use of the data collection form method (Kitchenham, 2004). In line with what Barbara Kitchenham (2004, p. 17) has indicated, the data collection form is a method for data extraction that retrieves the name of the SLR; the date of the data extraction; title, authors, abstract and publication details of each study and of course, the data and information that address the RQs of the SLR. This will allow us to have the extracted data from each study at hand in order to proceed to synthesise and organise the findings.

### *2.2.7. Reporting of the findings*

As the last step of the SLR, the report of the findings will be organised so that the RQ are addressed with the data collected, one by one and in order. First the findings regarding RQ1, then those related to RQ2 and finally the findings concerning RQ3.



## 2.3. Conducting the Review: Documentation of the steps of the protocol

In the following sections, we will recount the documentation of the protocol steps related to the Search strategies, Screening and eligibility assessment procedures, Data extraction and synthesis, and Reporting of the findings. We will include the PRISMA diagram in order to provide the reader with a graphic visualisation of the process that amounted to the final results of this SLR.

### 2.3.1. *Search strategies*

In order to commence with the SLR, we need to recall our RQs, which are: RQ1: Why has there been an exponential increase in disappearances in Mexico since 2006 to 2022? RQ2: What role has the militarization of public security played in this crisis? and RQ3: What has been the impact of the exponential increase of ED between 2006 and 2022 on women?

Secondly, since electronic databases are the main source of published literature (Xiao & Watson, 2019), this study will use four different databases: Google Scholar, ProQuest, Scopus and Dialnet. In order to properly use the databases, the RQs were broken down in key concepts that could be used as key words to introduce in the databases search engines in the form of SSTs. As explained above, for this SLR we would have to make use of three SSTs both in English and Spanish. The SST used were the following:

*SST in English:*

- **SST1:** (“enforced disappearances” OR “forced disappearances” OR “missing persons”) AND “Mexico”
- **SST2:** (“enforced disappearances” OR “forced disappearances” OR “missing persons”) AND “Mexico” AND (“military” OR “militarization” OR “armed forces”)
- **SST3:** (“enforced disappearances” OR “forced disappearances” OR “missing persons”) AND “Mexico” AND (“women” OR “gender perspective”)

*SST in Spanish:*

- **SST4:** (“desapariciones forzadas” O “personas desaparecidas” O “desapariciones”) Y (“México” O “Méjico”)
- **SST5:** (“desapariciones forzadas” O “personas desaparecidas” O “desapariciones”) Y (“México” O “Méjico”) Y (“militarización” O “fuerzas armadas”)
- **SST6:** (“desapariciones forzadas” O “personas desaparecidas” O “desapariciones”) Y (“México” O “Méjico”) Y (“mujeres” O “perspectiva de género”)

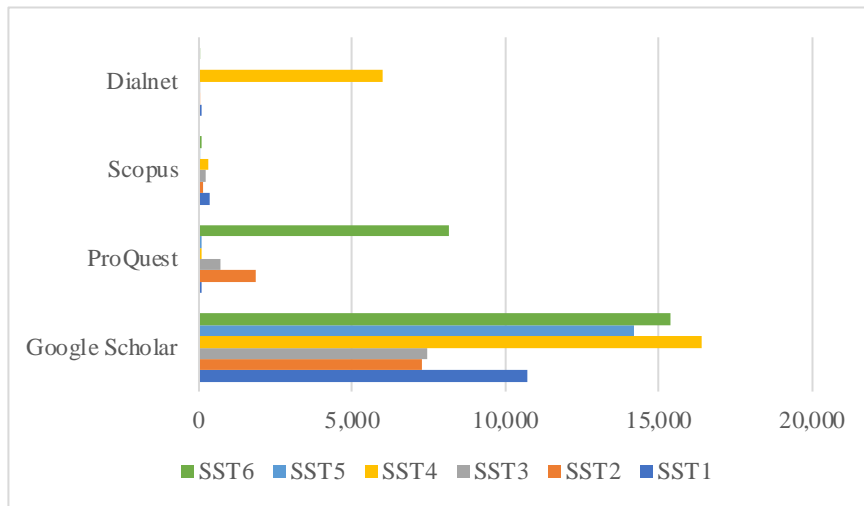
In each of the databases the SSTs were introduced making use of the Boolean operators as shown above. Thanks to the advanced search setting that these databases allow the user to implement, the search was limited to 2006 - 2022, as per the inclusion criteria. In addition, as allowed in each database, the searches were limited to books, academic journals, and professional journals.

The total returns for every search string on each database were as represented in the following Table 1 and Fig. 2.

Google Scholar		Scopus	
SST1	10,700	SST1	343
SST2	7,280	SST2	152
SST3	7,440	SST3	230
SST4	16,400	SST4	302
SST5	14,200	SST5	17
SST6	15,400	SST6	95
ProQuest		Dialnet	
SST1	98	SST1	85
SST2	1,872	SST2	2
SST3	375,182	SST3	8
SST4	109	SST4	5,986
SST5	90	SST5	0
SST6	8,161	SST6	3

*Table 1. Total returns per database (made by the author)*

**Figure 2.** Total returns per database (made by the author).



With these results from each database, the identification of relevant literature started. For each of the six searches in each database based on the SSTs the first ten pages of search results were reviewed in order to identify relevant literature. Thus, within those first ten pages of search results, a preselection of literature was made based on whether the study title was of relevance for the inclusion criteria outlined in the protocol above.

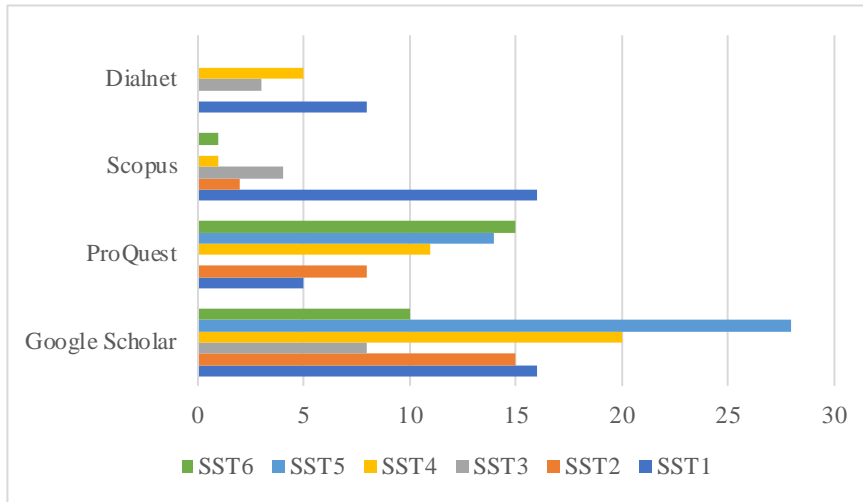
If a study was identified as relevant by its title, then the full reference of the study was retrieved for the screening process. After conducting the identification of literature as explained above, the number of records retrieved from each database were those that can be observed in Table 2 and Fig. 3.

**Table 2.** Preliminary selection of studies based on study title (made by the author).

Databases / search string	SST1	SST2	SST 3	SST4	SST5	SST6	Total
Google Scholar	16	15	8	20	28	10	97
ProQuest	5	8	0	11	14	15	53
Scopus	16	2	4	1	0	1	24
Dialnet	8	0	3	5	0	0	16

**190**

**Figure 3.** Preliminary selection of studies based on study title (made by the author).



### 2.3.2. Screening and eligibility assessment procedures

The preliminary selection returned a total of 190 pieces of literature related by study title. Once the preliminary selection of material was carried out, a first screening process was conducted whereby the abstract and the concluding sections of the 190 preselected studies were read and thus their relevance to the present project was determined. Having carried out said process, the number reduced from 190 to 98 studies, the results broken down by each database were as follows in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Selection after reading the abstract and concluding sections of studies (made by the author).

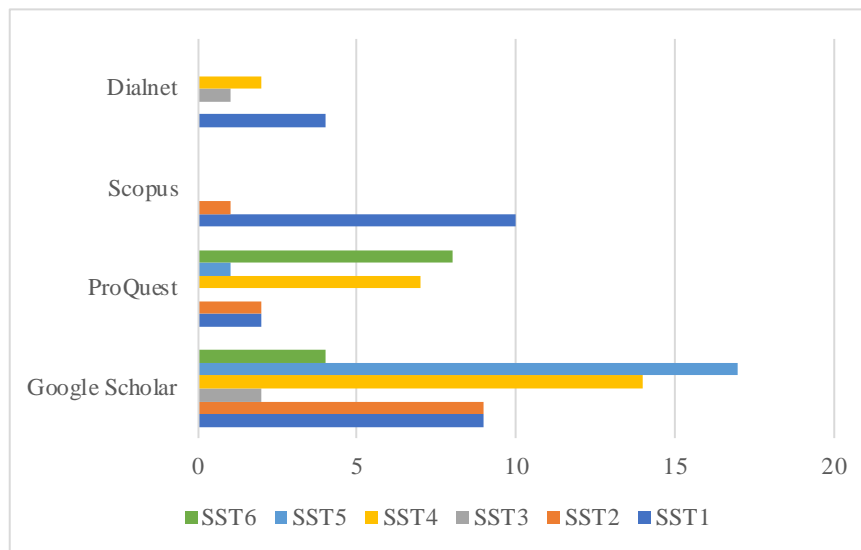
Databases / search string	SST1	SST2	SST 3	SST4	SST5	SST6	Total
Google Scholar	9	9	2	14	18	4	56
ProQuest	2	2	0	7	1	8	20
Scopus	10	2	1	1	0	1	15
Dialnet	4	0	1	2	0	0	7
							<b>98</b>

After comparing the results for each one, duplicate studies across the different databases were discarded. There were a total of 5 duplicate studies, leaving a total of 93 studies, broken down as follows in Table 4 and shown in Fig. 4.

**Table 4.** Number of studies after eliminating duplicates (made by the author).

Databases / search string	SST1	SST2	SST 3	SST4	SST5	SST6	Total
Google Scholar	9	9	2	14	17	4	55
ProQuest	2	2	0	7	1	8	20
Scopus	10	1	0	0	0	0	11
Dialnet	4	0	1	2	0	0	7
							<b>93</b>

**Figure 4.** Selection after abstract and conclusion screening and eliminating duplicates (made by the author).



Next, the quality and eligibility stage procedures were carried out. This required us to conduct a more thorough inspection of the studies selected so far. In order to do so, first, we had to verify where the study was published, i.e., a scientific journal, book, or professional journal. Second, the full text of the studies had to be contrasted against the inclusion criteria set above in the review protocol. By doing this, we were able to examine whether the studies provided relevant data in order to answer our RQs. Once this last step of the screening and eligibility procedures was carried out, the number of studies that surpassed these conditions, and therefore were included for the review were **48**.

At this point of the process of conducting the review, the PRISMA diagram<sup>8</sup> for our SLR can be filled up with the following figures in Fig. 5.

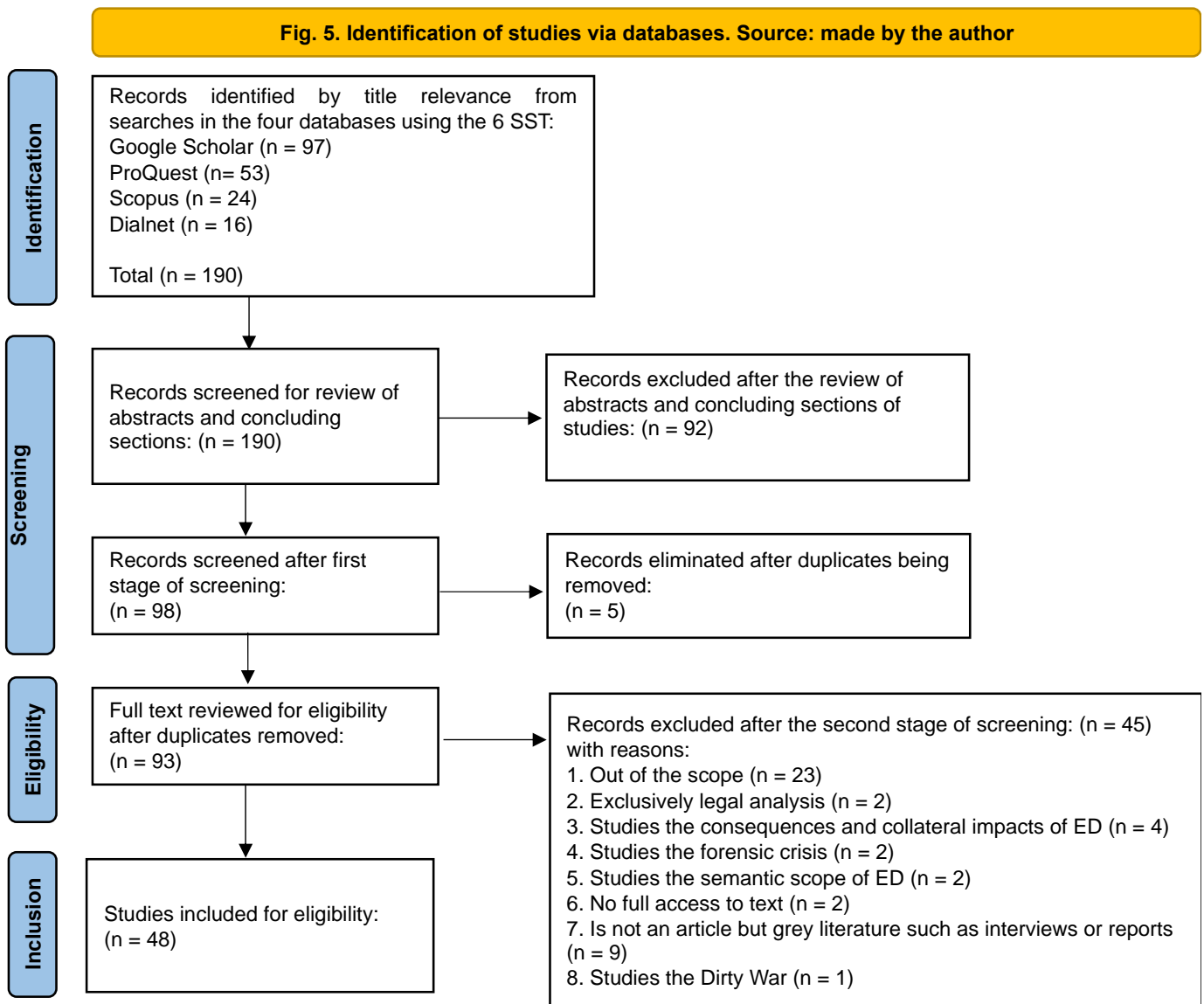


Figure 5. Identification of studies via databases (made by the author).

### 2.3.3. Data extraction and synthesis

After having conducted the review and all the steps from the PRISMA diagram, we ended up with 48 studies that were included for data extraction. These will be the studies that we will use in order to answer the three RQs of this project. The process for this step consisted in implementing the method of the data collection form. The Appendix I of this project includes that information in its table. As for the information and data that address the RQs and the date of the extraction, the date of the extraction for each study is also included in the Appendix I,

<sup>8</sup> Extracted from <http://www.prisma-statement.org/PRISMAStatement/FlowDiagram>

while the extracted data were synthesised and organised in order to be reported as answers to the RQs in the next section.

### 3. Findings report

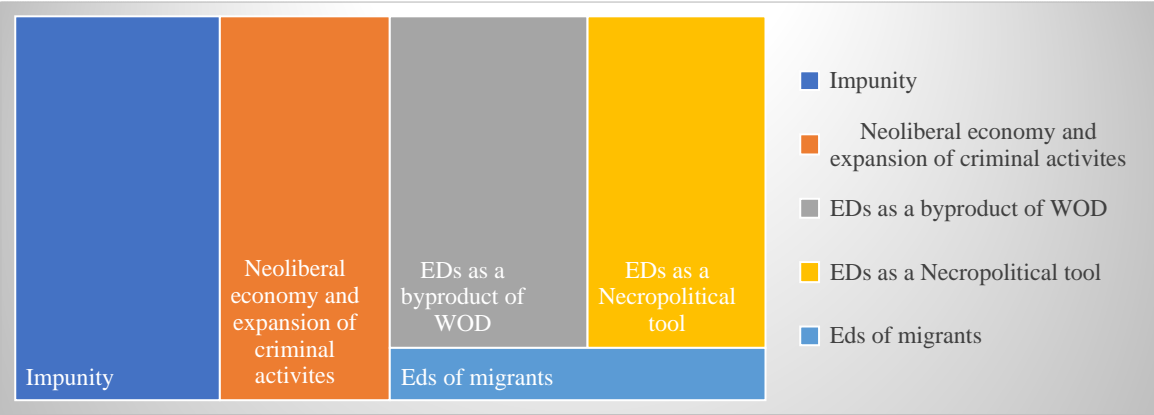
Now, we will present the findings from this SLR. As previously mentioned, the data was extracted, synthesised, and organised per themes. Those themes are our three RQs. Therefore, the following section is divided in three blocks. At the beginning of each section, we will mention a percentage remark derived from the results of the process of our SLR. Afterward, we will proceed with the substantive findings for each RQ.

#### 3.1. Main Findings

##### 3.1.1. RQ1: Why has there been an exponential increase in disappearances in Mexico since 2006 to 2022?

As RQ1 was the most general RQ in this study, findings on RQ1 suggested a series of general causes for the proliferation of EDs. Among these reasons are 1) impunity, 2) a neoliberal economy and expansion of the activities of criminal organisations, 3) EDs are a byproduct of the WOD, 4) EDs are a necropolitical tool, and 5) the EDs of migrants. We will proceed to present the findings below. Of the 48 final studies 31 (64.58%) provided data for RQ1<sup>9</sup>. As a paramount remark, it is necessary to mention that the case of **Ayotzinapa** was mentioned as an emblematic case that illustrates how far the corruption and impunity goes in relation to EDs in **29 (60.41%)** studies.

Figure 6. Distribution for RQ1 (made by the author).



<sup>9</sup> Regarding this and the following percentages, it is important to clarify that there were studies that provided information and data for more than one of the three RQs.

### 3.1.1.1. Impunity

Of the 31 studies that substantiated the findings of RQ1 in our SLR, 38.70% of those studies pointed out to impunity. Díaz Román & Carolina Jasso González (2018) start by stating that EDs in Mexico have existed for over four decades and have evolved and transformed significantly. Three studies (Bermúdez & Vargas, 2018; Bielous & Petit, 2018; Calveiro, 2022; Carreras, 2019) indicate that there have been two key periods in which EDs have become a generalised practice, i.e., the ‘Dirty War’ and the WOD, and one of them posits that the common element in both is impunity (Díaz Román & Jasso González, 2018). In the study by Bermúdez & Lucía Vargas (2018), they defined impunity in this context as the inexistence of criminal accountability both *de facto* and *de jure* ascribed to those responsible. In sum, they signalled how this translates to the lack of accountability of hierarchical superiors in cases of EDs, the lack of will and capacity of the Prosecutor’s Offices to investigate cases, and the population’s distrust of the authorities; all of which renders structural impunity (Bermúdez & Vargas, 2018).

That being stated, another finding is the assertion that most EDs go unpunished, which becomes an incentive to repeat this practice (Gutiérrez, 2020). Gutiérrez (2020, p. 264) holds this point by arguing that if the Army was not sanctioned for the EDs committed during the ‘Dirty War’, then the State is sending a very clear message legitimising EDs. This becomes problematic in the context of the WOD because since its beginning drug trafficking and criminal violence among the CO have become generic explanations for EDs; however, journalists and groups of ED victims have emerged as key informants who have pointed out police as well as personnel of the army, marines, and drug traffickers as responsible for EDs, together (Calveiro, 2022). Calveiro (2022) shows that according to their reporting and testimonies, CO and State officials act in association when crimes such as EDs and other serious HR violations occur. These accounts go as far as to indicate that there is a sort of ‘outsourcing of violence’ *quid pro quo* between CO and the State<sup>10</sup>, for which the case of the 43 Ayotzinapa students provides a clear example, as state officials were involved in their abduction and delivery to CO (Calveiro, 2022; Lara, 2020). Thus, according to these authors, the WOD makes EDs a complex issue since it involves mixed perpetrators.

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<sup>10</sup> Accounts have reported government officials and police personnel capturing people who obstruct political interests and turning them over to criminal networks for physical extermination and disappearance (Calveiro, 2022).



In line with the above, according to Behravesch (2015) similar patterns in EDs that have been observed by civil society on their reports are 1) widespread impunity, 2) the withholding of the truth by state officials and 3) lack of redress for the victims and their families. He indicated that the WGEID has also noted material and formal obstacles for the prevention of ED since the legislative framework in the country did not consider the possibility that EDs could be perpetrated by criminal agents or individuals acting on behalf of the government itself with its direct or indirect support (Behravesch, 2015).

Also, Behravesch (2015) has also noted that according to the WGEID 2011 report, the Mexican state had not implemented any mechanism to monitor the use of military personnel in public security operations, Mexico City's police was the only security corporation bound by legislation on the use of force. Therefore, there was no legal framework binding the armed forces to act pursuant to an established regulation of the use of force that was respectful of HR at the time, thus promoting the exacerbation of HR violations on their behalf without punishment (Behravesch, 2015).

In the same line, Behravesch (2015) and Carolina Robledo Silvestre (2015) pointed out how in regarding investigations of EDs by Mexican prosecution agencies, judging by the documentation of their missteps that ended up in a prevailing impunity, the state was either unwilling or unable to conduct effective investigations of cases that involve EDs. In order to illustrate with an example, Behravesch (2015) conducted an analysis of the case of Ayotzinapa. The analysis concluded with relevant remarks: the failure of the prosecution agencies to immediately charge those who were identified as responsible at the time for ordering the interception of the students, former mayor of Iguala, Guerrero, José Luis Abarca, and his wife, former head of family services in the same municipality, María de los Ángeles Pineda Villa on one hand. On the other hand, considering that the participation of state officials was proven, then their failure to take adequate measures to ensure that those who believe an ED had taken place reported it to the proper authorities (Behravesch, 2015, pp. 323–334).

The argument regarding impunity is strengthened by an analysis of the shadow reports submitted by 18 NGOs to the CED on the occasion of the review of Mexico in 2014 carried out by Yáñez (2016). In this regard, Yáñez (2016) stressed how ONGs focused on the historical framework of impunity that governs the nation, placing particular emphasis, again, on the case of Ayotzinapa; stating that it could only have been possible and only be explained in light of

widespread and interinstitutional networks of impunity inside the Mexican government in its three levels over the entire nation (Yáñez Sj, 2016). Additionally, Yáñez (2016) indicates that within those reports, NGOs point out specifically 1) the same lack of interest that the authorities charged with investigating and prosecuting EDs show, 2) their ignorance of the international obligations of the Mexican State, 3) their refusal to act in accordance with them and 4) how the Public Prosecutor's Office has attempted to eliminate complaints of EDs, and cover torture actions used by its personnel as an investigation technique. Moreover, the Prosecutor's offices are singled out for obstructing justice by making 'oversights' and 'errors' in integrating case files and executing inefficient investigations (Calveiro, 2022). These omissions and lack of transparency suggest an intention of making it difficult to shed light on the political motivations of EDs (Montaño et al., 2022).

Finally, as the cherry on top, Laura Reyes (2019) signals that another catalyst for impunity is the role of the Ombudsman institutions in Mexico and their lack of independence and autonomy. She explains that this is due to their lack of independence from governments of the executive level, their lack of expertise in the field, and their lack of political will. It was mentioned that some of these institutions once operated independently, but over time people without experience or who were close to the government were given preference. This implied that their investigations were distrusted by society, and they do not often guarantee that those responsible would face real punishment nor reparations would be granted (Reyes, 2019).

#### 3.1.1.2. Neoliberal Economy and expansion of the activities of criminal organisations

For this section, 10 studies (32.25% of the 31 that contributed to RQ1) pointed out to EDs increasing due to a neoliberal economy and the expansion criminal activities. As will be observed in this section, there are indications in the literature that economic and political power keep a correlation with the increase of ED in Mexico. For starters, according to Silvestre (2022), half of the disappearances up until 2021 had happened in 28 municipalities which correspond to the states with the largest number of cases of EDs including Tamaulipas, Jalisco, Sinaloa, Guanajuato, and Chihuahua. Those States are related with economic interests that may gain profit for the government from the eviction of their local residents.

In this context, three studies (Fuentes, 2017; Pereyra, 2015; Robledo Silvestre, 2015) point out how the liberalisation of the economy fostered the emergence of transnational operations as a

consequence of the expansion of illegal markets globally, which prompted CO to dispute the trafficking routes and expand their criminal activities, which included the theft of enterprises' property, extortions, human trafficking which includes migrants trafficking, child exploitation, charge of '*derecho de piso*', and selling protection to powerful business people. In this line, these studies remark that as organised crime expanded beyond drug trafficking, ED became a method of punishment, extortion, enslavement, or traffic of individuals.

In that logic, directly related to ED is human trafficking, one study emphasises that Mexico ranks fifth globally in this crime (López Marroquín, 2019, p. 172), and discusses various aspects of how people are trafficked within Mexico, such as domestic and international trafficking for labour exploitation of young men and sexual exploitation of women. In terms of drug trafficking, it is stated that the EDs of young men between the ages of 15 and 30 has a connection to labour exploitation, particularly for males coming from the interior of the Mexican Republic. One example that supports this is the documented cases of young men from the state of Chiapas who, while looking for jobs as journalists, wound up being taken to marijuana farms and thus imprisoned permanently, losing their liberty and contact with family. These kinds of cases have also been discovered in parts of Tabasco and Quintana Roo (López Marroquín, 2019, p. 164).

Another aspect that has been mentioned in three studies is the functionality that EDs mean for the State and other private actors. They account that it becomes necessary to consider the benefit for transnational corporations who hold relevant interests in Mexican soil (Calveiro, 2022; Delgado Parra, 2022; Silvestre, 2022). Liliana Velasco & Silva (2015) argue that EDs work as part of a 'shock culture' with a view to keep society dormant and unable to protest the neoliberal policies for the indiscriminate extraction of energy resources like oil, water, and biodiversity banks at the hands of these transnational corporations. In connection with this, the study by Karla Lara (2020) poses that during the WOD, the motive for EDs transited from a political one where the objective was to eliminate the dissidence, to an economic one with a view to not only protect the criminal economy but for the State to also control different territories which would help a neoliberal economic model. The article by Concepción Delgado Parra (2022) also supports the same argument presenting as evidence that within the WOD, constitutional reforms have been enacted to facilitate the transfer of natural wealth to private corporations. Thus, Concepción Delgado Parra (2022) holds as evidence the documentation of the government's

practice of EDs and internal forced displacements in order to gain access to energy-rich territories in northern Mexico, for instance.

In addition to the foregoing, the studies from Ariadna Estévez (2017), María Velasco & Salomé Castañeda (2020), Ana Castro Sam (2021), Verduzco & Fátima Palacios (2022), and Pilar Calveiro (2022) mention that an expansion of criminal markets has also emerged and involved business and political actors. Pilar Calveiro (2022, p. 92) specifically refers to said expansion as a ‘criminal capitalism’ in which CO activities constitute an integral component of the neoliberal project. In this light, these mentioned studies posit that the acts of violence committed by CO are tolerated and even protected by governmental groups as was indicated in the section about Impunity. Once again, the Ayotzinapa case is used to exemplify the State's connection with organised crime, with the state attempting to conceal its involvement in unlawful operations for economic profit (Calveiro, 2022).

Lastly, within the literature there exists also the indication in the study by Concepción Delgado Parra (2022) that the WOD is a fiction concocted by the governments to justify militarization and accelerate neoliberal economy at the expense of more than 272,000 murders and more than 110,000 EDs, according to official figures as a result of the security strategy (Delgado Parra, 2022, p. 61). Accordingly, Karla Lara (2020) considered that the WOD then constituted a strategy capable of producing a factory of death and displacement of people classified as ‘superfluous’ or obstructive for those interests by means of different technologies, among which the commission of EDs and state tolerance towards them were some of them.

#### 3.1.1.3. Enforced Disappearances as a byproduct of the War On Drugs

From the results of the SLR, 10 (32.25%) considered EDs as being a byproduct of the WOD. One study signalled that, even though in Mexico ED has always been linked to state action, during the so-called WOD, the situation evolved into a practice that associated both CO and the State (Lugo, 2022). The studies by Ana Castro Sam (2021) and Mónica Naime (2020) recall that Felipe Calderón declared the WOD just days after becoming president in 2006, how the WOD became a security strategy that continued under the administration of Enrique Peña's Nieto (2012-2018), and also under Andrés Manuel López Obrador current presidency, and how this has resulted in, among other things, an increase in EDs, homicides, different kinds of violence, and other HR violations.

The response of the State to the proliferation of the illegal activities of CO, read, the WOD, with the militarization of the anti-drugs policies is emphasised as a factor that pushed CO to recur to ever more violent and reckless methods which has been one of the cause for the wave of EDs (Bermúdez, 2022). According to Pereyra (2015), the WOD disrupted a succession war inside CO, and eroded trust amongst them. As a way of example, according to the data provided by Laura Atuesta & González (2022), in Durango, EDs are a result of Sinaloa Cartel fragmentation. EDs are part of 'Los Zetas' tactics in Tamaulipas, and their presence in Coahuila, Durango, and Tamaulipas has been linked to battles with other criminal gangs. EDs in Coahuila and Durango were the result of disputes and forced recruitment between Los Zetas and the Sinaloa Cartel. Forced recruitment has been well documented in Coahuila and other northern Mexican states, some victims with professional degrees have been kidnapped, allegedly to work in the construction of tunnels and better telecommunication systems (Atuesta & González, 2022, p. 18).

In that line, the study by Saenz (2017) posits that the increasing influence of CO and their disputes for control over drug trafficking routes in North America was one of the reasons that prompted the Mexican government to adopt the militarised approach. As part of the WOD, EDs have emerged as an additional instrument of war, with many of these disappearances being used strategically to intimidate or eliminate perceived enemies engaged in the drug war. The involvement of state officials, such as police officers, soldiers, and marines, has contributed to the proliferation of this practice, highlighting the impact of corruption and impunity on this issue (Saenz, 2017).

In sum, the literature holds the WOD in Mexico as a failed security strategy that has caused substantial changes in the phenomenon of EDs, where their increase and commission by both State and private individuals and the crisis of extreme violence are a byproduct of it (Ansolabehere & Martos, 2022; Carreras, 2019; Robledo Silvestre, 2015; Saenz, 2017).

#### 3.1.1.4. Enforced disappearances as a necropolitical tool

There were 9 studies (29.03% of the 31 that provided data for RQ1) that referred to EDs as being a necropolitical tool. Firstly, in relation to the advance of neoliberal economy, Verduzco & Fátima Palacios (2021) argue that EDs are necropolitical<sup>11</sup> devices to control territories for

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<sup>11</sup> Gutiérrez (2020, p. 265) cites Achille Mbembe (2006) to define necropolitics as a category that has made it possible to account for the practices by which control is maintained over those who must live and those who must die (translation from Spanish by the author).

economic reasons, be it illegal drug trafficking, human trafficking, exploitation of natural resources, among others, and not only to eliminate those who are considered dissidents. Ana Castro Sam (2021) supports this argument by stating that necropolitics are deeply entwined and sharpened by criminal capitalism and neoliberalism. Gutiérrez (2020) explains that in the case of Mexico, the concept of necropolitics would allow anchoring the relationship between militarization, political violence, and ED as mechanisms to establish the exercise of power around the most precarious and vulnerable bodies. In this sense, he explains that necropolitics is manifested by the precarization of social groups, who are deprived of their rights and live in poverty and social marginalisation. Gutiérrez (2020) and Ana Castro Sam (2021) point out that this process seeks to make people 'disposable' for the economic benefit of others. They hold that the historical use of extreme violence by the Mexican state, particularly EDs and torture, and now their collusion with other actors such as CO, is a clear example of a political power centred on an arbitrary criteria for death.

Four studies (Bermúdez, 2022; Estévez, 2017; Gutiérrez, 2020; Verduzco & Palacios, 2022) come as far as to conclude that given the large number of HR violations by public servants accredited by the National Commission of Human Rights (CNDH) or international mechanisms for the protection of HR, and their similarity, it is reasonable to conclude that these are not isolated cases, but rather part of a political motivation. As a result, the study by Verduzco & Fátima Palacios (2022) indicate that it is reasonable to argue serious HR violations are perpetrated as part of the same policy more so when factoring in the context of structural impunity.

On top of that, three studies (Calveiro, 2022; Nateras González & Valencia Londoño, 2020; Velasco & Silva, 2015) emphasise a modus operandi put in practice by the Prosecution Offices and other institutions where the objective is to systematically criminalise the victims of ED by contaminating the crime scenes to simulate combat and issue statements to stigmatise the victims as members of criminal groups only to end up retracting it because in only a small number of cases have the links of victims to CO been demonstrated. This has been heavily criticised by the families of the disappeared, for this constitutes a systematic stigmatisation and a disengagement of responsibility from the obligation to investigate, sanction and redress (Robledo Silvestre, 2015).

In this connection, two more studies (Bermúdez, 2022; Castro Sam, 2021) consider ED as a necropolitical technology but not only used by the State, but also by CO that exert their control over territory with a view to empower themselves and displace the State. All with the ultimate goal of accumulation of wealth and forced recruitment.

However, as a counterweight to this argument Karina Ansolabehere & Martos (2022), oppose this view of considering EDs as a necropolitical tool by stating that EDs are rather a byproduct of the current ruling violence regimes in which they occur and its specific rules. According to them, EDs are not a manifestation of the neoliberal economy and criminal capitalism methods for regulating life and death inside this violent regime since EDs do not always result in death, and the figure of the missing person cannot be reduced to that of a deceased person. Therefore they defend that the necropolitical role belongs to prisons, femicides, homicides, massacres in general and those of migrants (Ansolabehere & Martos, 2022).

#### 3.1.1.5. Enforced Disappearances of Migrants

Closing the findings for RQ1 and a relevant one was that three studies (9.67% of the total for RQ1) pointed out to the increase of EDs of migrants also as a collateral circumstance of the WOD as another reason for the exponential increase of EDs in general.

Through the analysis of reports by the CNDH, the IACHR, and the WGEID, Citroni (2017) presented evidence in her study regarding both individual and mass abduction of migrants during their transit in Mexico perpetrated by CO, tolerated and even with the collusion of State officials and that the investigations for these crimes were followed under generic terms such as missing or lost migrants, which ended up hindering and bringing them to a dead end.

Her study emphasises that within this crisis, an already group in vulnerable conditions as are migrants, become calls an 'easy target' for violence and different abuses that include abduction, exploitation, trafficking and of course disappearance and execution (2017, p. 740). The study by Araya (2021) explains that this violence is part of a value-violence continuum that characterises the whole migratory journey towards the United States and how CO have studied the routes of migrants, where they are detained, and how they are transported in order to intercept them.

In this light, according to the findings of Araya (2021) and Paola Rodríguez (2022), the principal administrators of the disappearance apparatus of migrants are both CO and State actors who control the migration routes and employ violence to extract economic profit from them as another revenue activity as a result of the expansion in their illegal activities. These studies conclude that, in the context of the WOD, these circumstances violence, abuses and exploitation against immigrants has increased, and migrant EDs are a direct result of this.

### *3.1.2. RQ2: What role has the militarization of public security played in this crisis?*

In order to answer RQ2, hereby are presented the findings regarding the role that the militarization of public security in the context of the WOD has had in relation to the exponential increase of EDs since 2006. Of the final 48 studies, 14 provided data that addressed RQ2, which means 29.16% of the total of studies selected, where the main contributors from whom this section of findings drew the most were Anaya (2014), Laura Carlsen (2011), Alejandra Carreras (2019), Ariadna Estévez (2012), Flores (2021), Flores-Macías & Jessica Zarkin (2021), Gaussens & Carolina González (2020), Martínez (2013), Martha Nateras González & Paula Valencia Londoño (2020), and Pérez Ramírez & Dayri Flores Ramírez (2020).

In 2006, former Mexican President Felipe Calderón proclaimed the WOD in 2006 and deployed 45,000 soldiers to the streets, thus intending to use extreme violence to fight drug trafficking and the strengthening of CO (Anaya, 2014; Flores-Macías & Zarkin, 2021; Gaussens & González, 2020; Pérez Ramírez & Flores Ramírez, 2020; Rivera Cabrieles, 2021). Nowadays, military operations have expanded to several Mexican states. This war's brutality has resulted in a HR crisis in Mexico, with thousands of people killed, missing, or forcibly displaced. The government has denied the humanitarian crisis and blames the violence on criminals, but the literature points out that both criminals and officials are perpetrators (Estévez, 2012; Pérez Ramírez & Flores Ramírez, 2020). The involvement of armed forces in public security tasks has resulted in numerous violations of HR, including EDs, extrajudicial executions, torture, illegal detentions, intimidation and threats, and sexual abuse (Nateras González & Valencia Londoño, 2020; Rivera Cabrieles, 2021).

As stated above, Ariadna Estévez (2012) establishes within the WOD, violence has been committed not only by CO, but hand in hand by the armed forces. According to the CNDH, eight complaints against the Army were filed in December 2006, increasing to 376 in 2007,



1,143 in 2008, and 1,644 in 2009. By 2010, the number had begun to fall, with 1,320 complaints filed, though this could be due to a fear of reporting rather than a decline in abuses (Estévez, 2012).

Laura Carlsen (2011) and Ariadna Estévez (2012) point out that since the implementation of military operations, there was a 70 percent increase in complaints of HR violations between 2010-2011 compared to the previous years, the majority of which were filed against the Army. The top categories of HR violations in said cases were arbitrary arrest, torture, extortion and EDs.

Furthermore, Martínez (2013, p. 690) cites the report titled 'Neither Security nor Rights: Executions, Disappearances, and Torture in Mexico's War on Drugs' issued by HRW in 2011 where the international NGO stressed the involvement of soldiers and police officers in extrajudicial executions and EDs throughout the country. In this line, as mentioned in the section above on impunity, numerous Mexican HR organisations that met with the WGEID in 2011 reported on the country's climate of militarization and impunity, where they pointed out a significant increase in complaints against military personnel accused of HR violations, including 30 cases related to ED of HR defenders between 2005 and 2011, and 283 complaints made before the CNDH in 2011 for cases of ED, 124 of which were against the Secretariat of National Defence (SEDENA, the army) (Behraves, 2015; J. C. Martínez, 2013).

In this light, the analysis carried out by Carlsen (2011) shows the increase in EDs complaints since the militarization started as part of the WOD by analysing the reports from the CNDH, the international NGO Human Rights Watch, and local HR NGOs. Specifically, she highlights that the CNDH registered 475 complaints of ED in 2011 compared to only four to six cases in 2006 allegedly perpetrated by the military (Carlsen, 2011). In this same line, Carreras (2019) stressed that the CNDH issued 18 recommendations between 2006 and 2019 specifically regarding ED, in which SEDENA, the Secretariat of the Navy (SEMAR), the Federal Police (now the National Guard) and the Municipal Police are identified as responsible. An important remark that Bermúdez & Lucía Vargas (2018) make regarding the CNDH recommendations where the armed forces are found responsible for ED is that they were allegedly carried out in the context of operations against CO a pattern which has resulted in the accreditation of 139 victims.

With evidence gathered in her study, Alejandra Carreras (2019) shows that the majority of the EDs that have been recorded in recent years have occurred in the context of an arbitrary detention by military authorities from two distinct perspectives: 1) on one side, the armed forces have committed arbitrary detentions, EDs and extrajudicial executions on the grounds of acting against alleged insecurity contexts on the suspicion of young people having ties to organised crime (Rivera Cabrieles, 2021), and 2) authorities have been identified as having colluded with the CO and made use of the outsourcing of violence; Ayotzinapa being the emblematic cases as has been stated in multiple occasions above (Calveiro, 2022, p. 86; Carreras, 2019).

The results generated by the strategy are terrible with 234,966 people killed violently, 61,637 people missing, and 80,259 people detained by the armed forces by 2018 as recounted by Leticia Rivera Cabrieles (2021). These concerning figures are explained by Flores & Zarkin (2021), they pointed out that the high ratio of civilians murdered per soldier slain, as well as the large number of physical abuse accusations filed by detainees, demonstrate the armed forces' use of excessive brutality.

Another important remark from the literature is that militarization has not helped reduce the extreme violence or insecurity, but rather it increased along with HR violations since its implementation (J. J. Rodríguez et al., 2020). Gaussens and González (2020) indicate how the use of excessive, illegal, and systematic violence by the military have resulted in more civilian casualties than wounded and more wounded than detained, unlike a normal operation that were conducted by civil police elements.

This context does not seem to improve nowadays. The Army and the National Guard have faced a worrying increase in the number of complaints for ED filed with the CNDH (Flores, 2021). In other words, the militarised approach to fighting crime is not producing the desired results and is jeopardising the democratic system's consolidation, as military power is increasing at the expense of HR. Furthermore, the use of military forces in domestic or urban security ends up legitimising a perpetual state of exception, posing a constant threat to HR due to their unrestricted use of force and, therefore, increasing the risk of the population to suffer serious violations of their HR, such as EDs that remain impune (Gaussens & González, 2020; Nateras González & Valencia Londoño, 2020).

### 3.1.3. *RQ3: What has been the impact of the exponential increase of ED between 2006 and 2022 on women?*

Following the same line as the previous section, it is important to mention that, of the 48 final studies, 12 (25%) studies provided data for RQ3 on the impact of EDs on women. A starting point, a paramount remark is how Rosen et al. (2015) present arguments on how the violence caused by the WOD is amplified by being fuelled by different historical violence, one of which is misogyny, which has led to one of Mexico's biggest problems, generalised violence against women. In the same line, the article by Juárez Rodríguez (2016) states that in order to understand the chapters on violence against women in Mexico in the context of the WOD, one must understand and accept the background of a patriarchal system that seeks to subjugate them to a position of inferiority, subordination, and exploitation.

The same studies (Juárez Rodríguez, 2016; Rosen et al., 2015) show how the WOD has impacted women in places like Ciudad Juárez, where, with the start of the WOD and the military ops in the city, there was an increase of EDs of women and girls between the ages of 11 and 20, which, according to a study from different NGOs, is highly related to a network of traffic and exploitation. The study by Juárez Rodríguez (2016) is the one that links this argument to the example in 2013, when the Prosecution Office of Ciudad Juárez released a report on a criminal gang that abducted young women for the purpose of sexual exploitation and drug sales before killing them.

This study (Juárez Rodríguez, 2016) also addresses the consequences of militarization and concludes that as a result of the arrival of the armed forces to Ciudad Juárez, violence and EDs of women increased. Specifically, it explains how 12,500 troops were sent to Juárez when it became one of the most dangerous places under Felipe Calderón's presidency (2006–2012) to confront the extreme violence that was present there. However, rather than improving the situation, there were more victims associated with WOD operations, totalling 3.000 during that presidential term. In addition, 1818 women were reported missing between 2008 and 2013 and the tendency continued during 2014 thus, concluding that as a result of their arrival, violence and EDs of women increased (Juárez Rodríguez, 2016).

In the same line, he indicates that since 2008 women and girls have been targeted by CO, who, as has been stated above, are said to have the complicity of members of the State. For instance, in order to prevent that the circumstances in the State of Chihuahua were classified as a systemic

case of femicide, journalists and families of missing persons reported in 2011 that the Prosecution Office had delayed the delivery of the bodies or remains of these victims to their families for months or even a year, trying to spread their findings over time (Juárez Rodríguez, 2016). As a result, Juárez Rodríguez (2016) concludes that cases of ED of women should not be understood solely as a lack of political will, but rather as the result of a structure that not only fails to punish, but also establishes mechanisms to ensure their impunity.

Expanding on the circumstances that surrounded Ciudad Juárez, the study by Rodríguez (2014) discusses instances of systematic femicides against women and girls in that same city, as it can be considered as representative of the multiple forms of violence women are subjected to in Mexico. As conclusion to his study, he claims that women have now become weapons of war in criminally contested territories or ritualistic sexual objects between members of CO (J. J. Rodríguez, 2014).

For its part, the study by Estévez (2017) indicates that EDs respond to a necropolitical war that seeks to dispossess and commercialise with their bodies through extreme physical and sexual violence. She claims that this war had its birth alongside the WOD as a result of the struggle between CO for power and to free themselves from state control in order to maximise their illegal profits (Estévez, 2017). Moreover, Ariadna Estévez (2017) illustrates that massacres and EDs are the primary methods of inflicting death in necropolitics, and this instance is no different. On the one hand, she emphasises that femicide is the necropolitical technology used on women over 30 whose bodies have no commercial utility or when they have rebelled against economic, sexual, emotional, or physical domination within the home and sexual slavery. On the other hand, she notes that ED is a necropolitical technology used on girls and young women (from 0 to 30 years old) to extract their bodies and subject them to sexual slavery. In consonance with what other studies included in this review establish (Behraves, 2015; Calveiro, 2022; Estévez, 2017; Velasco Domínguez & Castañeda, 2020; Yáñez Sj, 2016) , Ariadna Estévez claims that the impunity that exists for crimes in general makes EDs of girls and women and all of the above crimes against them feasible.

In this connection, Maria Velasco & Salomé Castañeda (2020) point out that according to the National Register of Disappeared and Unlocated Persons, the number of missing women and girls in Mexico has increased significantly in recent years. They hold that this increase is linked to the economy of human life disposal and systemic violence, which includes competition

among CO and the appropriation of resources and territories by the State (2020, p. 97). In coherence with what, other studies (Delgado Parra, 2022; Lara, 2020; Montaña et al., 2022; Robledo Silvestre, 2015; Silvestre, 2022) assert regarding how the neoliberal economy has contributed to EDs and how in general the same neoliberal economy has contributed specifically to the violence against women.

The study by Palacios (2021) indicates that sexual exploitation in Mexico is a growing problem that stems from the ED of both Mexican and Central American girls and women who end up being exploited in locations far from where they were abducted in order to serve a wealthy and powerful clientele. In his study, the author indicates that from the interviews to procurers in charge of sexual exploitation networks it was concluded that to their knowledge, EDs of women in Mexico were indubitably linked to sexual and labour abuse, and that this also affects boys and adult males. Moreover, the interviewees confirmed that the increase of EDs of women in Mexico is related to the diversification of activities of the CO, who have found a growing source of profit in sexual exploitation. However, the procurers stated that the authorities are the backbone for the roots of human trafficking in Mexico, because they conceal and do not address the problem to prevent it since they benefit from it, too (Palacios, 2021).

Furthermore, the article written by Rodríguez (2014) also indicates that some authorities have been accused of perpetuating impunity for these crimes simply because the victims are women and poor. The study concludes that the combination of these conditions foster and end up "justifying" the social normalisation of this reality within patriarchal and misogynistic political and cultural structures where women are used as subjects of violence and exploitation as a result of societal structural discrimination and inequality, which has resulted in the proliferation of their EDs.

## **4. Discussion and Conclusions**

RQ1 related to why has there been an exponential increase in disappearances in Mexico since 2006, the findings to this RQ suggest that this exponential increase has happened for different reasons. The generalised structure of impunity that exists in the country; the neoliberal economy and activities of CO; EDs as a byproduct of the WOD and a necropolitical tool, and finally, the increase of EDs of migrants. One of the most unexpected finding for us was the use of EDs as a necropolitical technology, including as a tool wielded by the State. As the final studies related

to this aspect indicated, the Mexican government apparently shows no interest in solving the ED crisis that has arisen since 2006, failing to develop effective strategies or investigative techniques that help preventing, investigating and above all punishing those responsible for this serious HR violations; instead, the government has prioritized the development of policies, the passage of legislation, and the allocation of budgets for large-scale extraction projects undertaken by transnational enterprises. In other words, an unexpected conclusion suggests it is likely that the government possesses the necessary resources but chooses not to use them to solve the ED crisis because they have become a technology that facilitates profit-generating projects, whether they are committed by state officials or organized crime.

As for RQ2, regarding the role that the militarization of public security played in this crisis, the main findings indicate that the deployment of military elements to conduct public security operations had a definitive impact in the increase of EDs. Ever since the WOD was declared in 2006, the crisis of EDs was officially attributed to CO and their illegal operations but this SLR shows how EDs and other serious HR violations have been committed by both, CO, and state officials, especially the armed forces through the analysis of the figures from the CNDH since 2006. Those findings explain how the complaints, recommendations, and acknowledgement of victims of violations of HR committed by the military have increased. Additionally, they point out how the collusion of authorities with CO is also a factor in this matter. Another conclusion suggests that the militarization has had an active impact on EDs since it has exacerbated the violence in the country due to the different standards of use of force of the military which are not in line with the standards that civil police.

Finally, RQ3 set out to research the impact of this crisis EDs on women. The literature circles back to the context of the WOD and the security crisis, including the militarization in the country and how these factors merge with other violence already present in Mexico, such as misogyny and the existence of a patriarchal system. In this line, the findings signal that this security crisis shows a gender component that ends up affecting women differentially. With the start of the expansion of criminal activities of CO and the WOD, disappearances of women and girls increased due to them becoming targets in the war between CO, for instance. Drawing from the findings of RQ1, the findings for RQ3 address how, in the context of the WOD, EDs of women are another necropolitical technology that aims for the dispossession of women's bodies. On the other hand, increase of EDs of women have been documented as a tool for the benefit of human trafficking for purposes of sexual exploitation that have become a meaningful

part of the expansion of illegal markets by CO. The literature considers that the last element is the corruption and cover-up that the authorities provide to these criminal networks, as they are part of it and also benefit from it, either in political or economic terms.

In this connection, one of the main strengths of this SLR is that it made it possible to extract the original key concepts from our RQs and, by the time this SLR was finished, we were able to connect those with new concepts, as shown in Table 5. These links could set the field for the formulation of new RQs in further research both focused on practice and theory.

From the study of the findings obtained in this SLR, it is clear that the reason why Mexico is in a crisis of EDs has no simple explanation, but if anything has been demonstrated in this thesis is that the explanation is complex because of all the elements involved. As CO began to gain power, territory and expand their illegal activities, Mexican government responded in 2006 with a strategy that involved militarization and declaring the war to CO. However, that fight has been proven unsuccessful since that same government suffers from corruption and impunity and is immerse in a neoliberal economy that, above all, seeks profit even at the expense of human lives. This war-like context lands in a country that carries embedded violence, two of the most important being violence against women and the rejection of migrants. From the conduction of this SLR, those factors are suggested to have generated what matters most to us in this thesis, they have generated the crisis of the exponential increase in EDs since 2006 in Mexico.

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From Table 5 below, we can observe the interconnection of the three RQs as there are elements that are common across them, i.e., Impunity, CO, Necropolitics<sup>12</sup>, the WOD and therefore militarization are factors that repeat themselves across the three RQs, which could become the key overarching and main concepts for the analysis of further research on EDs. Meanwhile, each of the RQs has its own specific concepts for analysis.

Table 5. Concepts of origin and new concepts drawn from conducting the SLR (made by the author).

Research Questions	Key concepts of origin	New key concepts related
<b>RQ1:</b> Why has there been an exponential increase in disappearances in Mexico since 2006 to 2022?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Enforced disappearances</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Forced disappearances</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Missing persons</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> México</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Impunity</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Neoliberalism /neoliberal economy</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> War on Drugs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Criminal Organisations</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Necropolitics</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Migrants</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ayotzinapa</li> </ul>
<b>RQ2:</b> What role has the militarization of public security played in this crisis?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Enforced disappearances</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Mexico</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Military</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Militarization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> War on Drugs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Human Rights Violations</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use of Force</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Collusion with Criminal Organisations</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Impunity</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ombudsman Recommendations</li> </ul>
<b>RQ3:</b> What has been the impact of the exponential increase of ED between 2006 and 2022 on women?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Enforced disappearances</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Mexico</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Women</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Gender perspective</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> War on Drugs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Misogyny</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Patriarchal system</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Criminal Organisations</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Dispossession of bodies</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Necropolitics</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Human trafficking</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Sexual exploitation</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Impunity</li> </ul>

<sup>12</sup> Necropolitics is explicitly named in RQ1 and RQ3; however, considering the findings from RQ1 that refer to the utilisation of the armed forces as the executioners of the EDs technology and their involvement in the “outsourcing of violence”, then the militarization very well could be linked as a means of necropolitics as well.



This project was not exempt from limitations. A common element that was found in the final studies was that grey literature<sup>13</sup> has become some of the main sources of primary information regarding HR violations by elements of the military, cases of impunity and real experiences related to EDs. Studies selected for this systematic review were nourished by the data provided by these reports or interviews, however, this SLR has not included relevant grey literature, only scientific literature that used grey literature, which means a limitation that could be addressed in further research.

## 5. Recommendations

In view of the results of this thesis, we recommend:

### 5.1. To the Mexican State:

- ⇒ **To transform the country's public security doctrine** so that it is not oriented towards the elimination of an enemy but is **based on human security** and that is **civilian, not military** in nature.
- ⇒ **To address drug trafficking** by focusing the greatest effort on tackling it **as a public health** problem and regulating both product and consumption, since criminalization is what ends up making products more expensive and fuelling the economies of illegal markets.
- ⇒ To address the serious problem of **impunity** and corruption from which it suffers, given that the fact that **EDs remain unpunished implies their legitimization**. Likewise, to eliminate the crisis of disappearances, the government must concentrate on **dismantling the networks of corruption and impunity**. As long as this is not done, the WOD will continue to attack the weakest and most replaceable link of CO such as the people who fill its ranks, while the upper class will remain protected and that will simply **generate re-editions of a war that will never end**.

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<sup>13</sup> Reports from collectives, grassroots organisations, international NGOs and journalists through reports, journalistic notes, public statements, or interviews.

- ⇒ To **revise its legislation and policies on projects for extraction of natural resources**, guarantee transparency and abstain from utilising EDs as a tool for forcible displacement or as a necropolitical technology.
- ⇒ To radically **change its migration policy in order to ensure the HR of migrants** in their transit through the country and abstain of treating them as criminals in order to also protect them from being abducted by CO.

## 5.2. To International Organisations:

- ⇒ **To the OAS**, specifically, that the IACHR could hold an event or thematic hearing that will lead to **the elaboration and issuance of an instrument of observations and recommendations specifically for Mexico on corruption and impunity and their impact on serious HR violations**. The IACHR has already issued a general document on corruption and human rights, but now it should make an instrument with analysis and recommendations exclusively for the Mexican State.
- ⇒ **Both the OAS and UN bodies** should continuously remind the Mexican state of how it is breaching its international obligations by utilising the armed forces in public security labours continuously **by means of both recommendations and binding documents in order to compel the government to change its approach to security**.

## 5.3. To the Academia:

- ⇒ As stated above, in this kind of research related to EDs in Mexico, grey literature becomes one of the main sources for data. In this connection, not only **the comparison of the findings presented in this SLR with the findings that a SLR of grey literature** could produce with its own protocol and inclusion criteria but the contrast and complementarity between the two could produce a more comprehensive and effective study.
- ⇒ In addition, the General Law and the National Search System Programme was a meaningful step, but further research could focus on **whether the state obligations that derive from it have been effectively implemented** at the three government levels and

**whether the level of implementation holds any correlation** with the official figures on EDs by territory.

- ⇒ Moreover, **a qualitative study** could be carried out in order now to investigate the crisis from the public, social and academic sectors, and international organizations by **holding interviews** to gather their inputs as key informants. Personnel from the UN, the OAS, international NGOs, scholars, representative of grassroots organizations, relatives of victims of ED who participate in Search Collectives, among others.
  
- ⇒ Future research may focus on addressing one of the aspects that was not touched upon in this SLR but is repeatedly mentioned in grey literature, such as **the effects of EDs on democracy** in the sense that a large number of them are **committed against human rights defenders**.

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## 7. APPENDIX I: Data Collection form

TITLE	AUTHOR(S)	Publication Title	Abstract (directly from each study)	Date of publication	Date of data extraction for this SLR
Calveiro, Pilar	Disappearance and governmentality in Mexico	Disappearances in Mexico: From the 'Dirty War' to the 'War on Drugs'	<p>“The mechanisms and diapositives that are used in enforced disappearances are modified according to the forms of the state and kinds of governmentality. During the 1970s, in Mexico, the practice of enforced disappearance was articulated according to a populist governmentality with a strong centralised and authoritarian state that used differential policies to treat dissent. These policies ranged from legal and illegal forms of repression to the use of co-opting practices and even the creation of consensus. As of 2008, this practice was inscribed within a neoliberal governmentality in which the state, penetrated by large legal and illegal corporations, became a fragmentary structure with relatively autonomous local powers, which can be deeply penetrated by global criminal networks. The resulting criminal-state makes it so that, in this context, violence that appears to be private should be thought of as public-private, and that the distinction between the practices of disappearance and enforced disappearance becomes diffused.”</p>	2022-01-27	03/04/23

<p>Ansolabehere, Karina; Martos, Alvaro</p>	<p>Violence regimes and disappearances: Some reflections from the north-east region of Mexico</p>	<p>Disappearances in Mexico: From the 'Dirty War' to the 'War on Drugs'</p>	<p>“How can we understand the frameworks of violence that make the widespread practice of disappearance possible and thought of, to some extent, as acceptable? This is the question that this chapter seeks to answer. Through an analysis of the logics of disappearance in north-eastern Mexico, we point out the importance of contextualising these logics within the conditions of violence in which the disappearances take place. This led us to propose the concept of the ‘violence regimes’, the fertility of which is argued for in the chapter. We consider the violence regimes, which refers to the formal and informal rules governing the access, use and circulation of violence, to be a tool which allows us to specify the conditions in which disappearances take place. At the same time, the concept opens a door to thinking about the contexts of disappearances in other environments and to construct a common vocabulary around the phenomenon. The research results presented here are the product of the work of the Observatorio sobre Desaparición e Impunidad en México (Observatory on Disappearances and Impunity in Mexico, ODIM for its Spanish initials). This is a collaborative initiative between academic institutions based in Mexico (IIJ-UNAM and FLACSO-Mexico) as well as internationally (the Human Rights Programme of the University of Minnesota and the University of Oxford), civil society organisations, and collectives of families of the victims in north-eastern Mexico.”</p>	<p>2022</p>	<p>03/04/23</p>
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Rodríguez, P.I.R.	The Mexican war against drug cartels, traffickers' collateral incentive to commit crimes against undocumented immigrants	Estudios Fronterizos	<p>“This article aims to demonstrate that Mexico’s 2006 war on drugs exacerbated violence against undocumented immigrants its territory. It compares drug-related violence and homicides from 2006 to 2013 and analyses the fact that many Central American migrants never made it to Mexico’s northern border, but were not detained or deported by Mexican authorities either. In order to conduct this research, information was obtained from government, autonomous and civilian agencies as well as the United Nations regional commissions. A formal data analysis was performed using the SPSS method. This manuscript shows that US immigrant detentions decreased in this period and increased again in the following presidential administration. Simultaneously, hundreds of migrants disappeared in Mexico, although exact data is not available due to the secrecy surrounding this type of criminality. Migrants were seen as targets against whom extortion or human trafficking could be committed. Despite this, Central Americans continue to immigrate in mass flows. © 2022, Universidad Autónoma de Baja California. All rights reserved.”</p>	2022	03/04/23
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<p>Cadena, Edel; Garrocho, Carlos</p>	<p>Geography of terror: Homicides and enforced disappearances in the municipalities of Mexico 2006-2017</p>	<p>Papeles de población</p>	<p>“The objectives of this work are i) unveil the dynamics of homicides and enforced disappearances in Mexico, its states and in the 2,458 municipalities of the country; ii) discover the spatial pattern of homicides and disappearances in the municipal scale of Mexico in terms of its intensity and agglomeration in the territory; iii) Identify priority regions of care to prevent homicides and forced disappearances; and, iv) Explore the statistical relationship at the municipal level between homicides and forced disappearances with official indicators (or estimated from official sources) of social marginalization, social backwardness, poverty, and inequality. The period of analysis was from 2006 to 2017, in order to cover a full decade and practically two six-year terms: from the declaration of the “War against Narco” until the year prior to the electoral process of the second presidential period. The analysis was done with conventional and spatial statistics methods with 99 per cent confidence level.”</p>	<p>2019-12</p>	<p>03/04/23</p>
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Carlsen, Laura	Mexico's False Dilemma: Human Rights or Security	Northwestern University Journal of International Human Rights	<p>“The article states that there has been a 70 percent increase in complaints of human rights violations between 2010-2011 compared to the previous level, the majority of which were filed against security forces, especially the Federal Police and Army. The top categories of human rights violations are arbitrary arrest, torture, extortion and enforced disappearances. The UN High Commissioner of Human Rights expressed grave concern over the militarization and expanded use of pre-trial house arrest during an official visit to Mexico. In this light, the National Commission on Human Rights (CNDH), the international NGO Human Rights Watch, and local human rights groups report the increase in enforced disappearances.”</p>	2011	03/04/23
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Saenz, Rudolfo D.	Confronting Mexico's Enforced Disappearance Monsters: How the ICC Can Contribute to the Process of Realizing Criminal Justice Reform in Mexico	Vanderbilt Journal of Transnational Law	<p>“This Article will argue in favor of pursuing an investigation at the International Criminal Court (ICC). It will demonstrate that, if the Office of the Prosecutor (OTP) were to open a preliminary examination in Mexico, the OTP would likely decide to initiate an investigation, even if enforced disappearance were the only crime considered. It will further argue that pursuing an investigation would likely contribute to Mexico's reform process through the OTP's use of positive complementarity, a strategy by which the OTP supplements ongoing domestic criminal proceedings in order to help ensure effective investigations and prosecutions. Not only could the OTP use the threat of opening an investigation to pressure Mexican authorities to enact reform but it could also adopt proactive measures to help accelerate that progress. This Article will propose three innovative measures that the OTP could use in Mexico as part of its positive complementarity strategy to bring Mexico closer to confronting its enforced disappearance monsters”.</p>	2017	04/04/23
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<p>Gaussens, Pierre; González, Carolina Jasso</p>	<p>Militarization of Public Security and Violation of Human Rights in Mexico (2000-2020)</p>	<p>The Age of Human Rights Journal</p>	<p>“This article analyses the militarization of public security in Mexico from a human rights perspective to observe the main effects of this policy at the national level in the last twenty years (2000-2020). The methodology used is mixed, combining a quantitative and a qualitative approach. The investigation shows that militarization, far from fighting crime, contributes to general growth in violence and human rights violations. Its main result is increasing lethality of security institutions in the use of public force, indicating that an important part of what had been presented as combats with organized crime, are instead extrajudicial executions. This harsh reality is illustrated with a case study based on the events that occurred in Tlatlaya in 2014.”</p>	<p>2020-12-15</p>	<p>04/04/23</p>
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<p>Flores-Macías, Gustavo A.; Zarkin, Jessica</p>	<p>The Militarization of Law Enforcement: Evidence from Latin America</p>	<p>Perspectives on Politics</p>	<p>“What are the political consequences of militarizing law enforcement? Across the world, law enforcement has become increasingly militarized over the last three decades, with civilian police operating more like armed forces and soldiers replacing civilian police in law enforcement tasks. Scholarly, policy, and journalistic attention has mostly focused on the first type, but has neglected the study of three main areas toward which we seek to contribute: 1) the constabularization of the military—i.e., when the armed forces take on the responsibilities of civilian law enforcement agencies, 2) the extent to which this process has taken place outside of the United States, and 3) its political consequences. Toward this end, we unpack the concept of militarized law enforcement, develop theoretical expectations about its political consequences, take stock of militarization in Latin America, and evaluate whether expectations have played out in the region. We show that the distinction between civilian and military law enforcement typical of democratic regimes has been severely blurred in the region. Further, we argue that the constabularization of the military has had important consequences for the quality of democracy in the region by undermining citizen security, human rights, police reform, and the legal order.”</p>	<p>2021-06</p>	<p>04/04/23</p>
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<p>Delgado Parra, Concepción</p>	<p>La Lógica De La Crueldad Y Las Desapariciones Forzadas En México: THE LOGIC OF CRUELTY AND FORCED DISAPPEARANCES IN MEXICO.</p>	<p>Andamios</p>	<p>“The article proposes to discuss the scope of the moral discourse of the logic of cruelty in forced disappearances during the six-year administration of Felipe Calderón. It also seeks to identify practices that can reverse this grammar. To this end, two perspectives are used: a philosophical-anthropological one and a political-journalistic one, whose methodological structure posits four analytical axes. These include the ethical and moral distinction to determine what the logic of cruelty involves; a political-journalistic analysis to contextualize Calderón's "war on drug trafficking," a turning point in the increase in forced disappearances; the instrumentality of moral grammar and the logic of criminalization in the process of forced disappearance; and the ethical response of the "searchers" that points to the transgression of the logic of cruelty.”</p>	<p>2022-09</p>	<p>05/04/23</p>
<p>Velasco, Liliana Pablo; Silva, Carlos Alejandro Montero</p>	<p>El vacío informativo de las desapariciones en México</p>		<p>“This project presents an interdisciplinary proposal capable of monitoring disappearances in Mexico. It takes up the dialogic and participative proposal of communication for social change, the design of visualizations, geographic and statistical, raised by data journalism and the possibilities of information storage, retrieval, processing and sending offered by ICT for the development of an interactive web system.”</p>	<p>2015-11</p>	<p>05/04/23</p>

Pereyra, Guillermo	Violencia, desapariciones y catástrofe. México después de Ayotzinapa	Argumentos	<p>“The article discusses the links between trafficking and the permanent state of exception to understand the current crisis in Mexico. It addresses the factors that explain the persistence and visibility of traditional violence –racism, extreme poverty, local authoritarianism, state repression– and its overlapping with the most recent and unexpected of their manifestations – massacres, mutilations, exhibition of tortured bodies, disappearances of persons operated by private and state forces. The forced disappearance of 43 students and murder of three of them, from the rural normal school of Ayotzinapa “Raúl Isidro Burgos” in the state of Guerrero, it’s crucial to understand the overlap of criminal and state violence, and persistence of the catastrophe in the country.”</p>	2015	05/04/23
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Robledo Silvestre, Carolina	El laberinto de las sombras: desaparecer en el marco de la guerra contra las drogas	Estudios Políticos	<p>“This article presents an analysis of the phenomenon of missing persons understood as a socio-historical fact that has been substantially transformed in the last two decades in Mexico, both in practice and discourse, passing from a Dirty War context to the Drug War. Forced disappearances, previously explained within the framework of political repression, today offer less clarity on the motives and actors associated with the phenomenon. This document is the result of a qualitative fieldwork over five years in the city of Tijuana, and a literature review that includes texts from the early 90’s and newspaper archives. The information collected indicates that current symbolic disputes in the field of forced disappearances, under the pressure exerted by victims’ movements, are expanding the frames of recognition around the phenomenon of missing persons in the context of criminal violence.”</p>	2015-12	05/04/23
Estévez, Ariadna	La violencia en México como crisis de derechos humanos: las dinámicas violatorias de un conflicto inédito	Contemporânea - Revista de Sociologia da UFSCar	<p>“In the war against drug trafficking in Mexico thousands of people have died, disappeared or fled abroad. The State denies the human rights crisis and says that the violence does not come from its forces but from criminals. This article proposes that such a humanitarian emergency does exist. We are facing a type of conflict that generates a mixed violence in which it is indistinguishable whether the authorities are involved or not. State power is eroded and diluted by criminal power. The victims are ordinary citizens as well as journalists or activists facing violations that challenge the traditional understanding of human rights.”</p>	2012	05/04/23

<p>Yáñez Sj, David Velasco</p>	<p>Noche y niebla: desaparecer las desapariciones forzadas</p>	<p>Xipe Totek</p>	<p>“This study offers an analysis of the evaluation of Mexico made by the Committee of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances, in which Mexico and NCOS present their corresponding reports. Attention is also paid to the symbolic struggle and the tensions between the agents who take part in the sessions and the recommendations made to the Mexican State regarding this problem, which has grown brutally in recent years.”</p>	<p>2016-06-30</p>	<p>06/04/23</p>
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Martínez, Jorge Ceja	<p>Seguridad ciudadana, militarización y criminalización de las disidencias en México (2006-2012): Citizen Security, Militarization and the Criminalization of Dissidence in Mexico (2006-2012).</p>	<p>Espacio Abierto. Cuaderno Venezolano de Sociología</p>	<p>“The article reports on the extreme climate of violence and insecurity that exists in Mexico. This violence is caused by criminal groups that are both outside and within the State or in coexistence with it. In the light of the deterioration of citizen rights, citizen dissent and popular mobilization have grown; but at the same time, the authoritarian government responds by criminalizing social protest and human rights defenders. In connection with Mérida Initiative, the Mexican State has militarized the country and uses repression, fear and terror as means for systemic control. Like many authors, Noam Chomsky (2010) has pointed out the correlation that exists between U.S. government assistance and human rights violations; Mexico is no exception. The central argument raised in this manuscript is that the violence experienced in that country is not accidental, but rather systemic and favors a political and economic order that goes beyond Mexican borders. Violence is an expression of the social fabric tearing apart, a result, in many ways, of economic policies that keep millions of people living in segregation; this is encouraged by the Mexican State itself, whether by action or omission. Corruption and impunity are the links that bind state violence and criminal violence together.”</p>	2013-10	06/04/23
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Anaya, Alejandro	Violaciones a los derechos humanos en el marco de la estrategia militarizada de lucha contra el narcotráfico en México	Programa de Política de Drogas del CIDE	<p>“In this document the reader will find, as the main input, the complaint files opened by the cndh and the recommendations adopted by the same in the period 2007 to 2012. In particular, it records the complaints and recommendations directed at federal government agencies directly related to the fight against drug trafficking: the Secretariat of National Defense (sedena), the Secretariat of the Navy (semar), the pgr and the Federal Police (formerly the Federal Preventive Police, pf/"pfp). In the case of the recommendations, a textual analysis of the recommendations was carried out in order to identify those that are directly related to the fight against drug trafficking.”</p>	2014	06/04/23
Díaz Román, Mario Pavel; Jasso González, Carolina	Cuatro décadas de impunidad: Contexto y patrones de la desaparición forzada en México	Revista Divergencia	<p>“This article explores the forced disappearance in Mexico at two key moments: the dirty war and the war on drugs. In the first, it was a tool of punishment to the opposition while in the second both the agent who perpetrated it and the victim were “blurred” to the extent that there is no specific identification of such. For each period a possible pattern can be identified, however, the common element is impunity. The argument is divided into three parts, in the first are normative definitions, in the second are context elements of each period, and the third part is aim to a possible pattern identification.”</p>	2018	07/04/23

<p>Velasco Domínguez, María de Lourdes; Castañeda Xochitl, Salomé</p>	<p>Desaparición de mujeres y niñas en México: aportes desde los feminismos para entender procesos macrosociales</p>	<p>Íconos. Revista de Ciencias Sociales</p>	<p>“According to the 2019 information from the National Registry of People Missing or Disappeared, beginning in 2007 the number of disappearances in the country has increased with more men missing than women. However, the opposite tendency is true with minors because more girls than boys have gone missing. This article proposes some hypotheses to understand this increase in girls who have disappeared in Mexico. A discussion of feminist theories, which seek to understand the increased violence towards young women in the context of neoliberal policies, is presented. This research argues that the increase in disappeared girls is associated with two main factors: an economy of dispossession of human lives for the accumulation of capital, which produces specific forms of violence against women and girls, and a systematic violence against women exercised by agents from state security and legal institutions.”</p>	<p>2020-08</p>	<p>07/04/23</p>
<p>Gutiérrez, Salvador Salazar</p>	<p>(Des)militarización y violencia política: desaparición forzada en el norte de México</p>	<p>Chihuahua Hoy</p>	<p>“The text presents a discussion about the implications that the strategy the militarization of public security in the last 15 years, has generated about the increase in violence in various sectors of the population, and specifically in practice of the forced disappearance by agents of the Mexican State in the border region of the state of Chihuahua. From the analysis of sources, it reveals how the implementation of the Operativo Conjunto Chihuahua-Juarez, was the example of a policy based on the production of disposable bodies.”</p>	<p>2020-12-22</p>	<p>08/04/23</p>

<p>Nateras González, Martha Elisa; Valencia Londoño, Paula Andrea</p>	<p>Riesgos de la militarización de la seguridad como respuesta a la violencia derivada del narcotráfico. El caso de Colombia y México</p>	<p>Revista Espiral (Guadalajara)</p>	<p>“The international security strategy makes use of a discourse that privileges military action as an effective method to achieve the desired peace and order. This speech, by its high degree of legitimacy, is incorporated into the national order, linking it with notions such as national identity, unity and security, based on concepts such as national security, public safety and even citizen security, to justify the use of the army in the fight against organized crime and drug trafficking. Its main risk is that it may end up oppressing those who are protecting and violating respect for human rights.”</p>	<p>2020-12</p>	<p>08/04/23</p>
<p>Carreras, Alejandra Silva</p>	<p>De la detención arbitraria a la desaparición forzada: Límites y realidades del Estado mexicano</p>	<p>Revista Mexicana de Ciencias Penales</p>	<p>“This article is an excerpt from an investigation of greater scope in which the behavior of the authority was analyzed in the framework of arbitrary detentions and its relation to forced disappearance, extrajudicial execution, torture, and cruel or degrading treatment. This article focuses mainly on the results obtained in the matter of forced disappearance, as well as some of the conclusions noted in terms of the behavior of the authority.”</p>	<p>2019-04-05</p>	<p>08/04/23</p>

Citroni, Gabriella	The first attempts in Mexico and Central America to address the phenomenon of missing and disappeared migrants	International Review of the Red Cross	<p>“The phenomenon of missing migrants, including victims of enforced disappearance, presents exceptional challenges due to its specific features and transnational scope. This article analyzes the case of missing and disappeared migrants in Mexico and illustrates the obstacles faced by their families, mostly residing in Central America, in their efforts to establish the fate and whereabouts of their loved ones and to obtain justice and redress. The article describes the process which led to the establishment of three mechanisms – a Forensic Commission, an Investigative Unit on Crimes against Migrants and an External Mechanism of Support for Search and Investigation – that aim at providing innovative responses and tackling the transnational dimension of the issue. The first significant achievements are presented, along with the remaining pitfalls.”</p>	2017	09/04/23
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Behravesh, Justin A.	"Ya Me Canse" 1: How the Iguala Mass Kidnapping Demonstrates Mexico's Continued Failure to Adhere to Its International Human Rights Obligations	Law and Business Review of the Americas	<p>“On Sep 26, 2014, college students gathered in the town of Iguala, Mexico, located in the state of Guerrero, to protest teacher-hiring practices that they viewed as discriminatory. When Jose Luis Abarca (Abarca), the mayor of Iguala, learned that these protests might interfere with a speech being given by his wife, Maria de los Angeles Pineda Villa (Pineda Villa), he told Iguala police to "teach the students a lesson." Iguala police responded to these orders by attacking the students with gunfire, killing six people, including three of the students, and injuring twenty-five others. Forty-three students went missing for several weeks after being taken into police custody. Tragically, these missing students appear to have been killed by drug gangs at a garbage dump, their bodies then set ablaze. Forensic testing confirmed that a bone fragment found at the dump belonged to one of the missing students.”</p>	2015	09/04/23
Bielous, Silvia Dutrénit; nueva, Enlace a sitio externo Este enlace se abrirá en una ventana; Petito, Gonzalo Varela; nueva, Enlace a sitio externo Este enlace se abrirá en una ventana	Desapariciones forzadas e impunidad en la historia mexicana reciente	Razón Crítica	<p>“In 2014 the disappearance of 43 students from a rural school in Ayotzinapa, Guerrero, showed evidence to the world of the continuous practice of the crime of forced disappearance in Mexico. From decades back similar events had occurred, which led the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACHR) to sentence Mexico in the 2009 case known as Rosendo Radilla. However, deeply structured impunity mechanisms have impeded the prevention or elucidation of these crimes.”</p>	2018	09/04/23

Reyes, Laura Loeza	Violencia criminal, desempeño institucional y respuesta de la sociedad organizada en México	Política y Sociedad	<p>“This article analyzes the strategies adopted by civil society organizations promoting human rights in Mexico in their process of accompanying organizations of victims of violence (relatives of victims of forced disappeared, unlawful detention, murder, execution, femicide, human trafficking, etc.). It highlights legislative action strategies and the design and implementation of public policy with a human rights perspective, which are aimed at dealing with the causes of violence, preventing it and accompanying victims in the defense of their rights. It demonstrates that in the search for justice and truth, victims have developed their capacity for agency, and the organizational processes and strategies they employ are an indication of that agency. This article also demonstrates how corruption and impunity have created favorable conditions for the reproduction of violence and the strengthening of its perpetrators (criminal organizations, civil servants, police forces, and the military). These processes are framed in two competing narratives, the official narrative, which supports the “fight against organized crime,” and the organizations’ alternative narratives, which are based on human rights. The former, and the actions it supports, materially and symbolically attack the victims’ identities, while the latter seeks to preserve them as a way to preserve the individuals’ human dignity.”</p>	2019	10/04/23
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<p>Bermúdez, José Antonio Guevara</p>	<p>Los Crímenes Atroces Cometidos En México En El Marco De La Guerra Contra Las Drogas Y La Justicia Transicional Como Respuesta</p>	<p>Revue Québécoise de Droit International</p>	<p>“The enormous number of serious human rights violations that have been committed in recent decades in Mexico, particularly as a result of the bloody security policy of the three recent presidential terms, coupled with the lack of capacity and will of the justice institutions towards impunity, make it necessary to reflect on the dimension of the crisis and on the alternatives to guarantee the rights of the victims. This article aims to present the context and dimension of the atrocities committed, as well as a series of proposals to bring those responsible to justice, reparation to the victims and prevent the repetition of similar criminal conduct, particularly when committed under the protection of the institutions and policies of the Mexican State.”</p>	<p>2022</p>	<p>10/04/23</p>
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<p>Montaño, E.A.; Ovalle, C.V.; Granada-Cardona, J.S.</p>	<p>Recasting history to cast off shadows: State violence in Mexico, 1958-2018</p>	<p>Disappearances in Mexico: From the 'Dirty War' to the 'War on Drugs'</p>	<p>“This chapter aims to understand political and state violence in Mexico from the late 1950s until today. We posit the need for an analytical approach that emphasizes plurality, in order to distinguish between the different expressions of state violence directed against different political enemies. We propose a periodisation of these violences during the last seven decades. During the first period, from the late 1950s through the late 1960s, violence was organised and deployed so as to ensure the working of government mechanisms (coercion, negotiation) based on positions of superior force, and involving mass killings, selective assassinations and political imprisonment. The second period was marked by the deployment of the type of violence associated with counterinsurgency, of which an example are the clandestine methods of enforced disappearance used during the 1970s and 1980s as part of the efforts of the authoritarian regime to regain legitimacy and ideological hegemony. Throughout the third period, towards the 1990s, state violence began to take another direction, this time against popular demands caused by economic crises and the loss of rights. Finally, a new phase of generalised violence developed during the mid-2000s, marked by the emergence of non-state actors such as groups of organised crime. © 2022 selection and editorial matter, Silvana Mandolessi and Katia Olalde; individual chapters, the contributors.”</p>	<p>2022</p>	<p>10/04/23</p>
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Silvestre, C.R.	Pedagogies of searching in contexts of dispossession	Disappearances in Mexico: From the 'Dirty War' to the 'War on Drugs'	<p>“In this text I make two central arguments. First, that enforced disappearance is a form of dispossession and it is manifested as a symptom of the neoliberal project, through processes of occupation and lordship (dueñidad). Second, that this project, expressed in the enforced disappearance of people, among other violences, is opposed by the pedagogies of searching, a group of practices that are generated from a collective embodied knowledge that brings back hope and u1633:542pholds the possibility of inhabiting fairer worlds. I support these arguments through ethnographic work carried out in Mexico over the last decade and, in particular, by describing the experience of Ana Enamorado, who is searching for her son Óscar Antonio López Enamorado, a Honduran young man, disappeared in Mexico. © 2022 selection and editorial matter, Silvana Mandolessi and Katia Olalde; individual chapters, the contributors.”</p>	2022	10/04/23
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<p>Guерcke, L.</p>	<p>State acquiescence to disappearances in the context of Mexico's 'war on drugs'</p>	<p>Disappearances in Mexico: From the 'Dirty War' to the 'War on Drugs'</p>	<p>"Disappearances in the context of Mexico's 'war on drugs' are committed by state agents and non-state actors, most prominently organised criminal groups. From the perspective of International Human Rights Law, disappearances committed by non-state actors are enforced disappearances if committed with the authorisation, support or acquiescence of state agents. This chapter examines the question of whether a legal argument could be made that all disappearances in the current Mexican context should be considered enforced disappearances on the basis of acquiescence, due to the pervasive impunity that surrounds virtually all disappearance cases. Based on current applicable jurisprudence, I argue that while impunity certainly incentivises the perpetuation of disappearances, it is unlikely that it alone could be used as a basis for establishing acquiescence. Rather, acquiescence could be based on the failure of the authorities to take effective measures to dismantle organised criminal groups, which would encompass not just the generalised impunity, but also the failure of the authorities to take preventive measures. © 2022 selection and editorial matter, Silvana Mandolessi and Katia Olalde; individual chapters, the contributors."</p>	<p>2022</p>	<p>11/04/23</p>
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Araya, S.S.	Disappearance of Central American migrants in Mexico: Discursive formation and value forms on the migratory route	European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies	<p>“The article reconstructs and critically analyses two main contemporary discursive formations associated with migrants disappearing in transit through Mexico: the official state discourse and the social discourse of organizations searching for missing persons along the migratory route. This article discusses how the two discourses contradict each other, disputing how to represent a phenomenon occurring at the intersection of diverse, complex forms of violence. This exposes collusion between states and criminal organizations, as well as the scattered duplications and continuities between legal and illegal dynamic forces producing regional social order. Disappearance is a technique specific to actors who are battling one another in a broader field of transnational mobility and circulation. In addition, both discourses hinge on social value forms that go beyond the strictly pecuniary and situate people's systematic disappearance as a central feature of regional power networks. The empirical data was collected during fieldwork in Mexico and Central America, and collated with data published in recent reports (state and non-governmental) on migrants' disappearance in Mexico.”</p>	2021	11/04/23
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Palacios, S.P.I.	Sex trafficking in Mexico from procurers' perspective	Perfiles Latinoamericanos	<p>“This article analyzes procurers' discourse about the problem of sex trafficking in Mexico. A qualitative methodology was used, and ninety procurers were interviewed (33 males and 57 females). This research concludes that, according to Mexican procurers, sex trafficking in Mexico is a growing phenomenon, which is nourished both by the deceptive or forced recruitment of Central American women and the enforced disappearances of Mexican women, who are exploited in places far from where they were abducted, to serve customers of high economic resources.”</p>	2021	11/04/23
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<p>Verduzco, David Márquez; Palacios, Fátima Flores</p>	<p>La desaparición de personas en un contexto situado de violencia: impactos subjetivos en una familia</p>	<p>Eirene Estudios de Paz y Conflictos</p>	<p>“One of the most ominous forms of violence in Mexico since the “Drug war” initiated in 2006, is disappearance, existing more than 90 000 persons disappeared. This work shows the way disappearance is particularly executed in a situated context. Initially, the concept of necropolitics is explained in order to understand violence in the country as well as the subjective configuration that is ensembled. Then, the concept of subjectivity is deployed mapping three dimensions of it, where social significations of necropolitics are constituted. So, the method used in the present research is described, responding to the interdisciplinary view shown in the theoretical framework, regarding on qualitative perspective in order to delve into subjective processes. Forms of disappearance in the situated context, as well as extermination places and subjective impacts are discussed, particularly broken links, isolation and generalized terror. Later, intrasubjective impacts and lived experiences of the family that participated in the study are analyzed. Conclusions aim to the importance of family organizations in order to elaborate experiences and resist violence.”</p>	<p>2022-03-11</p>	<p>12/04/23</p>
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<p>Juárez Rodríguez, Javier</p>	<p>Parallels in chapters of femicide and forced disappearances of women and girls in Ciudad Juárez and Ecatepec between 2008 and 2014: Patriarchy as a power system that guarantees impunity and misinformation</p>	<p>Estudios Sobre el Mensaje Periodístico</p>	<p>“This paper develops a comparative analysis of different types of violence against women and girls in two Mexican municipalities: Ciudad Juárez (Chihuahua) and Ecatepec (State of Mexico). Although geographically far apart, both have disturbing similarities in relation to cases of forced teenage female disappearances and femicides, between 2008 and 2014. Through this research we delve into the misinformation regarding the cases studied and we analyze the official responses and actions implemented, or lack thereof, in order to clarify the facts. To do this, we have developed a work of historical context from a gender perspective and we have provided data and unpublished statements that have enriched the rigor and scientific quality of our study of this phenomenon.”</p>	<p>2016-01-01</p>	<p>12/04/23</p>
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<p>Rodríguez, Javier  Juárez; Escobar, Nora  Elena Botero;  Ramírez, Natalia  Grisales</p>	<p>Estrategias del Estado mexicano  para minimizar los feminicidios</p>	<p>Revista Estudios  Feministas</p>	<p>“This article is the result of an empirical research conducted in Ciudad Juarez (Mexico), which analyzed the effects that the militarization process carried out there between 2008-2015 had on the disappearances and femicides of women. The work, which provides updated data and analysis on this phenomenon, aims to demonstrate the existence of strategies of the authorities to minimize the facts and blame the victims. For the development of this research, reference works and authors were used in the framework of gender studies, as well as femicides in Juarez, all supported by a documentary work reinforced with official data from the Attorney General's Office and reports from non-governmental organizations. A qualitative approach methodology was used, where ethnography prevailed, with the use of participant observation and personal interviews.”</p>	<p>2020-03-09</p>	<p>12/04/23</p>
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<p>Pérez Ramírez, Rigoberto; Flores Ramírez, Dayri Jaruny</p>	<p>Militarización y debilidad institucional de la seguridad pública en México / Militarization and institutional weakness of public security in Mexico</p>	<p>Religación. Revista de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades</p>	<p>“Public security is one of the main problems facing the Mexican government today. The problem is central to the functioning of democracy insofar as it affects social trust, undermines sustainable social development and may eventually affect its political stability. The main objective of this work is to analyze the public security policy strategies implemented by the Mexican State in the 2006-2020 period, through the descriptive-analytical method that allows us to carry out a narrative journey around using the armed forces in the fight against organized crime and provide protection to the population, in order to understand the scope of its results in the country in the face of the militarization of public security. This allows the hypothesis to be established that the institutional weakness in matters of public security in Mexico means that the State has as its main instrument the military power to restore authority and impose the law in the country. Widespread violence is the result of policy strategies whose public security narrative is based on punitive state control through the increase of the armed forces in security police tasks but which do not contemplate primary provision, since the social is the structural problem: impoverishment, unemployment, marginality, among others. Hence the idea that the Mexican State has failed to fulfill its obligation to guarantee the security of people due to the existence of a weak institutional security system.”</p>	<p>2020-09-30</p>	<p>12/04/23</p>
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<p>Lugo, Brenda González</p>	<p>Interpretaciones sobre las desapariciones y el crimen organizado en San Luis Potosí</p>	<p>Jurídica Ibero. Revista Semestral del Departamento de Derecho de la Universidad Iberoamericana</p>	<p>“In the framework of the war on drugs, events related to human rights violations took place throughout the country, mainly disappearances. The appropriation of this mechanism of violence by organized crime has generated multiple discussions about the logic of the phenomenon and the conditions of its reproduction. San Luis Potosi is one of the scenarios in which both dynamics have occurred, however the analysis of this situation has been limited. This article aims to identify the existence of a relationship between the disappearances occurred during the period 2006-2012 and the presence of organized “cartels” in the entity, in order to determine the existence of a pattern that meets the conditions of the San Luis Potosí context.”</p>	<p>2022-01-03</p>	<p>12/04/23</p>
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<p>Rosen, Jonathan Daniel; Zepeda Martínez, Roberto; Rosen, Jonathan Daniel; Zepeda Martínez, Roberto</p>	<p>La guerra contra el narcotráfico en México: una guerra perdida</p>	<p>Revista Reflexiones</p>	<p>“After the first year of President Enrique Peña Nieto's administration (2012-2018), Mexico continues to face problems linked to drug trafficking, reflected in high levels of violence and an increase in illicit activities such as kidnapping and extortion. A dozen drug cartels are fighting for control of territory and drug trafficking routes in the country, leading to violent struggles. After taking office as president, Felipe Calderón (2006-2012) launched the war against drug trafficking, and during his six-year term, approximately 70,000 people were violently executed; the number of drug cartels expanded, and drug trafficking continued. This article argues that the war against drug trafficking in Calderón's administration, and in Peña Nieto's six-year term, has been and is a lost war, considering the results. In the first part, a brief historical analysis of the drug war in the United States and Colombia is made. The second part focuses on the case of Mexico. It reviews trends in narco-violence, organized crime-related offenses, and the drug cartels operating in Mexico. The causes of the levels of violence in recent years are examined to understand the current situation in the country. Finally, the article makes a critical analysis of the security and drug trafficking strategy of former President Felipe Calderón and his successor Enrique Peña Nieto, who has not modified the overall security strategy. Keywords: drug trafficking; Mexico; drug war; Calderon; narco-executions.”</p>	<p>2015-06</p>	<p>12/04/23</p>
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Flores, Miguel Garza	Las graves consecuencias de la militarización de la seguridad ciudadana	Desafíos Jurídicos	<p>“The militarization of the security and public policy in our country is a 20-year-old phenomenon, this investigation attempts to demonstrate this impact in terms of the violations of the human rights. The strategy of the current government consists in increasing the number of the military and marine personnel represented by figure of the National Guard which is civil only in its design, and it could initiate its operation with military personnel due to the lack of manpower, however, its consolidation as an institution of civil police will take many years of efforts.”</p>	2021-08-31	13/04/23
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<p>Castro Sam, Ana Sabina</p>	<p>Desapariciones forzadas y hallazgo de fosas clandestinas en México: el caso del Colectivo Madres Buscadoras de Sonora</p>	<p>PACHA. Revista de Estudios Contemporáneos del Sur Global</p>	<p>“Forced disappearances are a manifestation of the exacerbated violence that prevails in Mexico, as well as the necropolitics implemented by capitalism in its neoliberal phase. The tracking of clandestine graves has become a daily labor for mothers looking for their children. Due to the government’s negligence and the lack of an efficient justice system, women have faced the need to create and self-manage search networks with the intention of finding their relatives. This paper analyzes the case of the Colectivo de Madres Buscadoras de Sonora (Searching Mothers’ Collective of Sonora) with the objective of giving an account of the resistance processes undertaken by this group of women through self-organizational and collective schemes that claim new conceptions of politics opposed to traditional and hegemonic political notions. For this purpose, a qualitative research is presented based on the analysis of information gathered from journalistic articles and social networks. Secondly, a theoretical reflection is generated on the social and political panorama in which the collective is positioned with a view to analyzing the problem of structural violence and its expressive dimension.”</p>	<p>2021</p>	<p>13/04/23</p>
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Lara, Karla Miguel	La desaparición forzada: genealogía e importancia de conocer los derechos de las víctimas	El Cotidiano	<p>“In Mexico, during the governments of Felipe Calderón Hinojosa (2006-2012) and Enrique Peña Nieto (2012-2018), the phenomenon of political-economic and social violence of the forced disappearance of persons increased with the so-called war against drug trafficking, and currently persists, leaving in its wake deep wounds in society and high levels of impunity, because as a serious violation of human rights it subsumes the commission, omission and acquiescence on the part of the Mexican State. The death flights in Algeria were perpetrated by French troops against members of the National Liberation Front (FLN). In the words of Espinosa (2011), it was the Battle of Algiers that inaugurated the aerial transfers of detainees: their feet were tied on a concrete base so that they would sink to the bottom of the sea and not be found; however, sometimes the knots were untied and the deceased arrived on the shores with rope marks on their feet and severe sunburn. The French journalist and historian MarieMonique Robin points out, in an interview in the Diario Argentino (Bianco, 2004), that the death squads in Argentina are wielded as a result of the relationship that in 1959 the Argentine General Staff established with French veterans and ex-combatants of the Algerian war, to advise the Argentine army against the subversives.”</p>	2020	13/04/23
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Estévez, Ariadna	La violencia contra las mujeres y la crisis de derechos humanos: de la narcoguerra a las guerras necropolíticas	Revista Interdisciplinaria de Estudios de Género de El Colegio de México	<p>“El artículo argumenta que las organizaciones de derechos humanos y sus reportes tienden a ignorar las continuidades de género que hay en la violencia criminal que origina la crisis de derechos humanos. Desarrolla la idea de las guerras necropolíticas como un tipo de conflicto que simultáneamente explica la violencia delincuencia y la de género, como parte de un contínuum de una violencia cuyo objetivo es asegurar el comercio de la droga y la mercantilización de los cuerpos de las mujeres para afirmar los mercados criminales. Con México como estudio de caso, se ofrece una tipología de las guerras necropolíticas: la guerra por la gubernamentalización necropolítica del Estado y la guerra por la desposesión de los cuerpos de las mujeres. Mientras que estas dos guerras tienen objetivos diferentes —cooptar y reconfigurar al Estado, y desposeer a las mujeres de sus cuerpos, respectivamente— comparten una característica: un espacio socio-legal disfuncional, permanentemente corrupto y deliberadamente letal que asegura la impunidad de las tecnologías de muerte del necropoder: masacre, feminicidio y desaparición forzada. Al analizar la violencia desde la perspectiva de las guerras necropolíticas, la violencia contra las mujeres se vuelve visible.”</p>	2017	13/04/23
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<p>Rodríguez, Javier Juárez</p>	<p>Las mujeres como objeto sexual y arma de guerra en espacios de conflicto armado de México y Colombia y el papel de los medios de comunicación/Women as sexual objects and as weapon in armed conflict areas of México and Colombia and the role of media</p>	<p>Historia y Comunicación Social</p>	<p>“The present article is the result of six years of documenting and interviewing hundreds of people involved in cases of violence against women in areas of armed conflict in México and Colombia. This document analyzes the systematic discrimination and violence directed towards girls and women living in these areas by focusing on settings that exemplify the impunity and permissiveness of the patriarchal system. In addition, the present work not only details the important role played by journalists and the media, but it also highlights the obstacles that they must overcome while attempting to investigate and expose this reality.”</p>	<p>2014</p>	<p>13/04/23</p>
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<p>Rivera Cabrieles, Leticia</p>	<p>De los daños colaterales a las desapariciones forzadas y ejecuciones arbitrarias: la importancia de historiar la violencia estatal en la estrategia de combate al crimen organizado (2006-2016)</p>	<p>Nóesis: Revista de Ciencias Sociales</p>	<p>“The objective of the article is to show the violence deployed by the Mexican State against civil society, in the context of the strategy to combat organized crime (2006-2018), which resulted in forced disappearances, arbitrary executions and collateral damage committed by the military. It starts from the premise that the application of violence was to regain sovereignty in the face of the advance of organized crime. The present history approach is followed, where the analysis of complaints, reports and recommendations from human rights organizations served as testimony to document the issue. Three representative cases were chosen: the death of civilians during the detention of Arturo Beltrán Leyva; the disappearance of the Ayotzinapa students and the disappearance and arbitrary execution of Armando Humberto del Bosque Villarreal. The results indicate the existence of a “modus operandi” that had the acquiescence of the State.”</p>	<p>2021</p>	<p>13/04/23</p>
<p>Fuentes, Óscar Daniel Rodríguez</p>	<p>History of disappearance in México: profiles, modus and motivations.</p>	<p>Derecho y Ciencias Sociales</p>	<p>“The enforced disappearance as serious human rights violations had been practiced in México constantly. The profiles of missing people, the modus and the motivations had been changed as well as the context, for this reason, our research studies the evolution of the some variables, from political reasons in the authoritarian rule of past century up to the social crisis that began with the fight against drug trafficking. The enforced disappearance is a big problem not only by the number of victims (30,000) but also for the corruption and impunity that surround this crime in a supposed context of democracy.”</p>	<p>2017-11-03</p>	



<p>Naime, Monica</p>	<p>Defining wicked problems for public policy: The case of Mexico's disappearances</p>	<p>Gestión y Análisis de Políticas Públicas</p>	<p>“Wicked problem literature is increasingly popular, but empirical studies about its relation to public policy are scarce. Additionally, there is no consensus on the convenience of Public Administration as policy makers addressing wicked problems by artificially defining and structuring them. The purpose of the paper is to address these gaps, specifically how, in practice, governments handle wicked problems. Two possible alternatives are discussed: either policy makers are rational, or rather they use heuristics for problem definition. The research focuses on problem definition as part of the policy process. In particular, how the definition of the particular wicked problematic situation was reflected in legislation: disappearances in Mexico. The case shows that forced disappearances is an heterogeneous phenomenon that can be considered a wicked problem, which further increases the complexity of policies that aim to tackle it. Also, results of applying congruence tests show that policy-makers structure wicked problems when defining them, but after a certain amount of energy has been spent on this task, policy makers employ heuristic devices. This contributes to understand how flesh and bone decision-makers build public policies.”</p>	<p>2020-05-01</p>	<p>14/04/23</p>
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<p>Atuesta, Laura H.; González, Isaac Vargas</p>	<p>Organized crime-related disappearances in Mexico: evidence from Durango, Tamaulipas, and Coahuila</p>	<p>Trends in Organized Crime</p>	<p>“More than 77,000 people have disappeared in Mexico since the beginning of the war on drugs, but very little is known about them. After analyzing the descriptions of a non-randomized sample of disappearance registries from governmental data, we find that those events associated with organized crime are better understood by analyzing four factors: migration to the U.S. border and traveling on highways, gender differences and individual vs. multiple-victim disappearances, the forced recruitment of skilled and unskilled workers, and cooperation with the authorities. These results should be used as a starting point for pushing the government to release better data and to improve search mechanisms.”</p>	<p>2022-04-22</p>	<p>14/04/23</p>
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<p>Bermúdez, José Antonio Guevara; Vargas, Lucía Guadalupe Chávez</p>	<p>La impunidad en el contexto de la desaparición forzada en México = Impunity in the context of enforced disappearance in Mexico</p>	<p>EUNOMÍA. Revista en Cultura de la Legalidad</p>	<p>“Impunity is defined as the absence of punishment for those responsible for committing crimes. In the case of Mexico, impunity stands out for the crime of enforced disappearance of persons. The enforced disappearance has manifested in Mexico in at least three periods: the Dirty War, the Zapatista conflict and the war on drugs. The crimes that have been committed in those contexts remain unpunished, so that the victims remain without an integral reparation. The article seeks to analyze the Mexican case on the crime of forced disappearance considering the elements that make up the concept of impunity. In addition, it explores a series of proposals tending to contribute to the eradication of impunity for serious human rights violations.”</p>	<p>2018-03-19</p>	<p>14/04/23</p>
<p>López Marroquín, Scherezada López</p>	<p>Desaparición, esclavitud y trata de personas: situación de las mujeres en México</p>	<p>Cuicuilco Revista de Ciencias Antropológicas</p>	<p>“The phenomena of forced disappearance, slavery and human trafficking are currently one of the greatest concerns on both the national and global levels. Involuntary absence has serious consequences for families. In addition to the families themselves, governments and their policies aim to resolve this problem. Analyzing the modalities of these disappearances, with respect to the women in Mexico, is the objective of this article.”</p>	<p>2019-07-15</p>	<p>14/04/23</p>