

Ursidae: The Undergraduate Research Journal at the University of Northern Colorado

Volume 12
Number 1 2022/23 Full Article Issue

Article 1

July 2023

The Impact of the Mexican Drug War upon the Lives of Mexican Citizens

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Recommended Citation

Flores Velazquez, Samanta (2023) "The Impact of the Mexican Drug War upon the Lives of Mexican Citizens," *Ursidae: The Undergraduate Research Journal at the University of Northern Colorado*: Vol. 12: No. 1, Article 1.

Available at: <https://digscholarship.unco.edu/urj/vol12/iss1/1>

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Introduction

Mexico, located on the Southern Border of the United States, is diverse in its heritage, history, and land. Its beauty is hidden in its flaws as well as in its realities. These realities have created hardships for people as their own governmental foundations fail to find solutions to their desperation. Despite that, the richness of the people and the common necessity to help is what lies in the hearts of people looking for a change. Mexico as a nation has notable reputations like being the hub for drug trafficking and production which overshines the beauty held in its community. Citizens have begun to focus on the future of the country away from the violent trends it is known for and instead on its potential if improved through unity. Working together while utilizing the pride of being Mexican has supported their resiliency to changes in their politics and lifestyles. Their national identity as Mexican citizens gives them the desire and pride to seek new opportunities themselves. Unfortunately, limited opportunities have led to hostility and conflict in communities as the fight for power is constant among leaders. The potential that the citizens have goes unnoticed in the political atmosphere and chaos within the country. Their potential is disregarded as survival becomes a priority when drug trafficking organizations operate illicitly. The idea of reform sounds comforting, but others have taken advantage of the debilitating structure of the government to give way to a different type of business with real consequences. Consequences such as death, fear, and violence bring terror into the lives of citizens as they hope to not encounter those effects of drug trafficking organizations (DTOs). These organizations instill fear as citizens are left without hope for a future. DTOs operate based on the hopelessness that people have for the government to change for the benefit of the population, a population that needs resources and assistance to support disproportions in their way of life. Taking advantage of this concern, DTOs have adopted easier ways to dominate

regions and reinstate control one step at a time. The Mexican drug war¹ and all the different forms of its impact are detrimental for the humanity of the whole country. It is debated about why the conditions have gotten worse as time goes on and where it all went wrong. I acknowledge the importance of maintaining the family traditions and close-knit bonds that hold Mexican families together despite hardship. I am fortunate enough to witness the sense of community that arises from states of being that are often unpredictable. The War on Drugs² has severed communities through long lasting pains as the effects do not seem to just go away. People are forced to live with the reminders of the past and the possibilities of the present. Mexico is a country with diligent people, and the diversity that it holds is rich within its culture. The roots of the people should not be correlated directly with crime but instead with their work as a community to try to seek reform.

Poverty and policies to propose a solution to the drug war are limited since it has become difficult to address the needs of the citizens while also minimizing the extortion methods DTOs hold against the government. Since the demand for drugs continues to surge, the suppliers will continue to adopt new practices to keep up with the trends. Indeed, the declaration of the Mexican drug war has led to tensions against those wishing to do good by exposing the realities through journalism, advocacy and more. DTOs indeed are complex as they have transitioned into organized groups fearless against all forms of law enforcement in Mexico.

Poverty has influenced the drug war's success, but often the focus remains over drug addiction and the demand for drugs in the world. Also, the policies aiming to propose a solution

¹ The term Mexican drug war refers to the Mexican War on Drugs or as the following in Spanish "Guerra contra el narcotráfico en México."

² The term War on Drugs used in this article refers to Felipe Calderon's campaign that declared war against the drug trafficking organizations operating in Mexico (Shirk & Wallman, 2015, p. 1362). It does not refer to the United States declaration to fight against the illicit drug trade including the consumption, distribution, and selling of narcotics.

to the drug war are limited. Due to this, specifics for the Mexican drug war were moderately challenging to investigate. Overall, common themes within my research included governmental structures, poverty, violence, corruption, economy, and others. Since the drug war was declared about fifteen years ago under Felipe Calderon's presidency, data has been collected on a smaller scale. The complexity of drug trafficking has roots within the history of Mexico which may not have been completely understood. Therefore, the drug war is an indicator of the reality behind how drugs came to be. The phenomenon that the success of a country is within the decisions of the leaders is significant. Policies must be set in place to achieve those promises.

Trends of violence in Mexico suggest the drug war has effects. These trends may be misinterpreted as they are often associated with the Mexican community and not the drug trafficking organizations themselves. Lastly, this topic has several components that play a role and the information within the media is limited based on— censorship including the silencing of journalists in the Mexican Media as if they must abide to the desires of the leaders of these drug organizations. If journalists do not fulfill those desires, the risk of intimidation, death, and harm is guaranteed. Therefore, caution must be exemplified as the truth is prohibited to be shared. This knowledge is crucial to understanding operations of DTOs as they aim to keep their true intentions hidden. Freedom of expression has become infiltrated leading to limited truths of the realities of these groups. The mission to bring forth the truth has the potential to change the course of Mexico as a nation.

Review of Literature

The War on Drugs is a complicated issue that involves analysis of various components within a society. Poverty contributes to the war on drugs through drug trafficking networks which have provided relief for some families to use amidst the lack of economic aid from their

own government. Citizens in desperate measures are more likely to participate in the demands of these criminal organizations because it may seem like the last resort for survival. As this occurs, the drug production surges in the country while citizens remain stuck in the midst of the chaos. The government struggles to address the threat of DTOs infiltrating their government and their intimidation tactics to achieve power while the citizens must depend on their communities to help them meet those needs that are not being prioritized. Consequently, this leads to the struggle of people coping with fluctuations in the economy. These fluctuations demonstrate the ineffectiveness of the government as basic necessities for citizens are not met. These unpredictable resources are limited in their timeframe as power changes in the country. Enamorado and colleagues (2016) described how rising costs of living further create income inequality within communities. Therefore, an increased number of jobs are created in criminal organizations ranging from manufacturing, to working as snipers, and becoming sub-leaders of rings of drug trafficking routes. This research demonstrated how the regulation of this activity becomes difficult as it is unacknowledged as an issue by the Mexican government. The priorities in the government are not set straight as the effects of the drug war have been handled irresponsibly. The approaches to maintain power between DTOs and the government have created a war zone of tensions. This has led to a decay in economic prosperity and growth, according to Bel & Holst (2018), and the struggle remains balanced as military spending leads to small economic growth. Even though all crimes caused by the drug war have detrimental effects, by using the military to defend the impoverished, the consequences are alleviated. The focus on the effect of a limited job market and how practical solutions from the government will slowly help is necessary.

The research between violence and drug trafficking suggested that the struggle for power and control has led to surges in crimes. Magaloni and colleagues (2020) explained the change in roles of DTOs as they use violent acts such as kidnapping to instill fear and prey on citizens. This change they pointed out has been due to DTOs diversifying their duties and adopting higher roles in society. Calderón and their team (2015) agreed that higher violence is a consequence of capturing the kingpin which causes disruptions within operations of these cartels. These operations are responsible for the large distribution of drugs throughout the world, and the products are valued highly. Higher violence undoubtedly has an effect on the fight for power as unstable reactions are used as defensive mechanisms.

Corruption has strengthened the presence of drug trafficking organizations in Mexico as government involvement and upholding of its laws lacks. Trejo and Ley (2018) supported the idea that a division between the government and criminal groups is “a gray zone³” (p. 931). This strengthens the argument that they are similar as they share the same goal. The goal has been to have power and to monitor the decisions made in the country. Achieving this power level does not always have the best intentions for its citizens as candidates do not fulfill their promises. This lack of trust has established an atmosphere in which there is no hope for what can change because it has not over time. The goal of obtaining protection and power is responsible for the system in place in Mexico. Morris (2013) found that corruption was higher in areas with higher violence. These areas are regions that have gained recognition as being more powerful than their own government as the federal law does not apply in a serious manner. This has brought out limited enforcement of rules at a local level as the government engages in a prolonged battle for

³ Trejo and Ley (2018) used the term “gray zone” which refers to the fine division between the government and drug trafficking organizations. Often times, they are inseparable due to the current regime of the country where a balance of power is constantly fought over.

control over the country. This informs citizens to choose wisely who they elect as it is vital to pick someone who will do good for the community and not fall for bribery from DTOs.

Power dynamics and Economics

The global operation of the drug trafficking trade is based upon the politics of the country and its ability to support local chains of operations within developing countries to contribute to the existing billion-dollar industry. This industry has increased due to the instability of power and the authoritarian rule which has created a market of competitors that are looking to maximize their profits. The power dynamic among DTOs has directly impacted their development as political changes within staff in the government have led to criminal operations that have been hidden from the general public. This includes active election terms with members running for office and positions in the government as a gateway to maintain notoriety of the drug trafficking organization. With approaches such as bribery and intimidation, individuals seeking to represent municipalities, states, the federal government, or cities are enticed to support the agenda of these criminal organizations. As this occurs, DTOs remain undefeated. The approach to operating the country through coercion and guaranteeing a dismantlement of the war on drugs has proved impossible. Indeed, the changes in leaders and the switch in the regime of the country benefits the DTOs because they can manipulate those in office. Then, leaders are chosen to follow their agenda and focus upon the wellbeing of themselves instead of millions of Mexicans. As Trejo and Ley (2020) mentioned the democracy of the country is affected as “electoral competitions become intertwined with the drug trafficking industry the political change upsets the distribution of power within the gray zone” (p. 51). Competitions within the government may cause the government to steer away from their duty of law enforcement and serving the community. Instead, they focus their operations on dismantling a system that has

survived as elections have always been matters of violence instead of peace. As the government fails to control DTOs, these groups continue to control civilians and the population through industry, commerce, and acquired wealth. Their interest in businesses, homes, and their ambition to interfere within the private lives of citizens instill fear as the objective has shifted to another form of domination. The question is, what are these groups looking to achieve and why are they trying to involve innocent populations that have no desire for conflict? The transformation from “violent interest groups into local rulers” is concerning (Trejo & Ley, 2020, p. 61). This interest in politics has led to the conversion from criminal networks to a form of a political organization that has the ability to engage in behaviors that are no longer illegal under legislation. The specific approach of defeating the enemy of drug trafficking organizations as the main priority has done more harm than good. Instead, it has led to chaos within the government as they have used physical force and weaponry to fight against DTOs creating even more bloodshed and disproportionality. This has turned the streets of Mexico into violent public displays of what the government continues to fail to address. The ideal Mexico is long into the future and the focus should be what is needed by the citizens and what steps will be taken to listen and create change. As President Felipe Calderon mentioned early on, the government is fighting against criminality and making sure that their efforts meet the goal of stopping the enemy through their “zero-tolerance approach” (Barra & Joloy, 2011, p. 30). This government effort has stirred up the atmosphere as people are in fear of the consequences of living as they face constraints.

The economic prosperity of the drug businesses developed rapidly as drug prices increased as new drugs began to develop and hit the market. These drugs evolve and DTO’s operate with extensive expertise as they change their course of action to accommodate demands in the illegal market. Drug manufacturing is profitable and DTOs hope to dominate their turf and

conquer others. The wide range of illegal products being trafficked across borders led to an expansion in business opportunities which created an ongoing conflict that has escalated as it has broken out in communities (Trejo & Ley, 2020). The adjustment of drug prices led to an increase in the economy as Mexico gained notorious status as a contributor to the rewards from this industry.

Poverty and its Correlation with Lack of Opportunity

Poverty measures the lack of basic needs found in a community where insufficient amounts of money are the norm. This exact issue is frequent within Mexico as the government opts for a distinct set of values away from the interest of its citizens. In part, it is hard to address needs when there is a loss of who is truly serving the people and who is not. Due to this, hopelessness and a sense of desperation arise from within the community. People must conform and do what is best for them and their families. This means finding a way to make income to maintain their lifestyle. Survival for the people in some cases may involve involvement with criminal organizations. Jobs within the illegal side of a business can promise an opportunity to sustain themselves and others around them. This exact opportunity has created a false hope as the war on drugs plagues Mexico's society leading to a rampant increase of poverty. The success of criminal organizations like DTOs has become common. Since the initial declaration against the war on drugs within Felipe Calderon's presidency in 2006, people have struggled to keep up with the fluctuations in governmental aid. Therefore, the demand to contribute to society remains the main motivator for citizens to seek jobs in the illegal sector of the economy. Without a job, the task of raising a family becomes difficult because only money unlocks access to goods and services. As a result, illegal practices such as drug manufacturing, trafficking, and smuggling contribute to the flow of money in the economy despite its origins. Enamorado and colleagues

(2016) claimed the business side of drug trafficking organizations has given people an option to live comfortably despite the economic situations in Mexico. Therefore, it has led to an increased amount of job opportunities in the illegal industry as people become drug dealers, hitmen, or guards for the leaders of these organizations. The lives of the innocent are at risk as they are claimed by DTO greed. Even a minor association with these DTOs can result in violence or death.

Negative job opportunities for communities are a derivative of the poverty that contributes to the deteriorating state of quality of life. Unfortunately, this suggests that poverty has helped the drug war succeed in controlling the lives of citizens. It has also caused people to find solutions to their problems in the quickest and most dangerous ways. The drug war itself feeds upon the people who run it. Justice and reform are out of reach and a fantasy in current society. Fortunately, not everyone engages in crime despite the lingering opportunity for some to resort to this option. Certainly, the people of Mexico do not want to fall behind due to their economic situations as their adaptation to learning new ways to make income remain steady. If this trend continues, Mexico may experience an expansion in the success of drug trafficking operations involving regular people compounding the current issues that are faced on a daily basis. Aviña (2020) mentioned in his interview at the Texas Public Radio that the poverty found in communities within Mexico is the backbone to the success of the drug war. Within the economy, the failure to generate new opportunities for its citizens is related to the direct consequence of exploitation of the less fortunate. Aviña (2020) emphasized how “the drug problem is a capitalism problem” because the United States plays a role in the demand for drugs (para. 9). This highlights how the war on drugs has shaped the history of Mexico involving people from all societal classes. The current reality depicts the ongoing fight between drug

trafficking organizations and people who want to be free from their expectations. The fear caused by these groups has kept underrepresented people turning to them but in hopes of attempting to live their lives in a peaceful manner.

The term “sicarization” refers to gathering up children or youth to become killers and members of cartels. These cartels feed off of the most vulnerable population in Mexico promising them a future where they can live worryless. According to Vice News (Janowitz, 2021), the war on drugs has elevated as organized crime benefits off of youth who “come from broken families” where they experience pressures and a dysfunctional environment (para. 14). These families usually feel stuck and opt to find the best ways to make fast money. This such trend is a common theme in Mexico. The trend has revealed that organized crime in Mexico continues to convince youth to risk their lives for the bosses of these drug trafficking organizations. Danger is a common theme to why citizens feel entrapped within the situations that surround them. The negative consequences of poverty upon the War on Drugs have remained a steady factor in the success of DTOs. Economic matters between communities are not the only part of the issue as the government has a strong influence too. Bel and Holst (2018) emphasized that the government’s economic focuses during the drug war have led to fewer investments in education and increased amounts of military spending. The lack of prioritization of issues that are profoundly important suggests the failed infrastructure has detrimental effects. These effects continue to worsen as Mexico struggles as a nation to find a common ground.

In the context of children, human rights are being violated as the demands to sustain a safe society have affected the development and well-being of citizens. As poverty worsens, the social network of Mexico is damaged as labor markets crash with further limited opportunities for children who have become victims of the drug war. The demand for survival remains despite

changes in job availability. Children have been left orphaned, so the difficulty of finding a job and sustaining themselves has encouraged them to find opportunities within the drug trade. These opportunities prey upon children and use them to perform adult capabilities like operating guns, manufacturing drugs, and giving up their lives for the DTO (Barra & Joloy, 2011). The lack of security in resources has led to a scarce supply of those available to people in need. The use of poverty as a foundation for neglect from these drug trafficking organizations has contributed to easier connections to recruit more people in poverty. The lack of opportunities has been documented through the social structures of Mexico and its government. Mexico struggles with providing and understanding the needs of its citizens due to the gray zone. Different variables have an impact upon the accountability that Mexico has for its own laws and regulations. It is important to consider that as conditions get worse, children are discouraged from attending school and receiving a valuable education that will steer them away from criminal activity. There have not been many establishments that acknowledged the impact upon children and their disruption in their lives as conflict becomes integrated within their identities and actions.

Violence in the Drug World

The violence is a major problem that has taken control of daily life in Mexico. The increase in violence has been a product of the drug-trafficking businesses and the development of the drug trade routes throughout the world. The demand for drugs has contributed to the development of Mexico as a narco-world territory and as one of the main producers of drugs to supply the demand for narcotics. Drug trafficking has managed to achieve maximal expansion in recent years in territory and the size of their empire. They have started to distribute new products and drugs popular among addicts. Even though these drugs are lethal, they are desirable as a

product to sell. The battle of power is a complicated ordeal as DTOs have limits over what they are willing to do to obtain the status they desire. According to Robles and colleagues (2013) the levels of violence have increased in the last few years. This has caused a wave of despair among citizens and a cycle of tactics that are harmful to the communities in order to forcefully reach the desired level of achievement for the criminal organization. The control of these organizations in the drug trafficking business is in the hands of no one else besides the leaders; therefore, the tendency for violent crime is significant. They fight for the most control they can to make their empires grow until they are invincible in the eyes of the public. The domination of communities and territories paired with power motivates these groups to use violent tactics like kidnapping, extortion, intimidation, and more to establish a sense of fear through terrorism against their own communities. This translates to communities fighting against each other with the war on drugs used to mask institutionalized issues like corruption and incompetent leaders. The war on drugs in Mexico has been an opportunity for violent groups to gain popularity and for the public to recognize them officially as the public enemy. Robles and colleagues (2013) also mentioned that cartels have personal incentives to go against society and that their ability to conduct such actions is supported by the lack of order in the drug epidemic.

The true leaders are not the president but instead the leaders of these criminal organizations who operate at the same level as municipal, local, state, and federal levels. The following strategy has helped worsen the drug war for all Mexican citizens. The government has lost major control over the territories that used to belong to them, and instead they are influenced immensely by the ongoing war. The loss of territory has deteriorated the confidence the government has to fight against the cartels and DTOs since it is a deception for citizens as they find it harder to imagine progress towards a positive future. Overall, the acknowledgement that

the war is a topic embedded in the history of Mexico hints at the complicated relationship of drug trafficking to the lifestyles that citizens have. This suggests that this lifestyle may be seen as the only option for some to sustain themselves in an economy that worsens more each time. The lack of decisions and opportunities made to benefit the general public has helped other groups to step into the role of being the support for a country that is vulnerable to change. Unfortunately, the impact of these groups is widespread in both direct and indirect ways as they continue to abuse citizens. Citizens do not have a say in the reality that consumes their being, their life, and others around them daily. Calderon and colleagues (2015) noted that there was an increase in violence specifically in the form of homicides within six months after the capturing of a DTO leader. This suggests the complexity of the hierarchy within the drug trafficking organizations and to what extent it exists. The members of these organizations are the foundation of the power and success of the group. Therefore, protecting the capture of their members is important to maintain privacy within their business and to ensure that other enemies are not able to dominate over the territory. To avoid debilitating the internal structure of the drug organization, violence is a major reaction to the capturing of a leader even if it is temporary. Without the leader in the business, conflict arises over who will be the next leaders and how they will be able to maintain power. The objective of obtaining power contributes to the constant fight for the war as it keeps worsening. The DTOs are stronger than the federal law despite their efforts to be there. Shirk and Wallman (2015) explored the possible solutions to the situations that the drug war has caused, and they proposed decriminalization of drugs. They found that decriminalization could reduce violence in theory which would make drugs more likely to remain normal in society. If this were to happen, the DTOs would instead focus on finding other ways to maintain profits by specializing in other types of services that would not involve as heavily drug trafficking. The

best way to secure finances for DTOs is to develop new tactics to motivate groups to continue growing the business. Tactics such as violence will contribute to the infiltrations of the government in various ways.

Interference within Governmental Structures

Government corruption at all levels is a challenging issue to combat as it involves the smallest to the biggest influences within a government. Mexico is a country that has been influenced by the principles of the drug war and kingpin leadership since the 1900's. Narcos and the military police have had an alienated relationship with each other as they both operate for their own means. They have a long history of working towards the same objective of power. This same objective has created a division in the atmosphere of the country. The lack of order experienced is a consequence of the cycle that traps the most vulnerable. This cycle has caused people to question whether progress will become a part of their future—a progress that will eliminate corrupt figures in politics and reinstate policies that benefit all people, not only the wealthy. Unfortunately, the Mexican government is haunted by the increased expansion of cartels. Trejo and Ley (2018) illustrated that the origin of this expansion began once the government no longer promised to grant immunity for DTOs. With less government cooperation, the cartels' dependency for protection led them to create their own forces to uphold power. This caused these forces to use violence, fear, and bribery to make sure they are invincible in their aims. DTOs plan to do as they wish and stray free from the consequences and debts of their actions. Illicit drug business leaders are aware of the actions of their consequences which inspires them to aim to take over the big picture of the government in smaller steps. These steps weaken the infrastructure of the government whose objective is to avoid external factors that could alter their operations. As these practices are adopted, the distinguishing line between

organized crime and the government merges into one as the control is left in the hands of who wins in that moment. Therefore, these forces fight against each other, and the cartels retaliate if their agenda is not followed. The gray zone gets lost as individuals in higher power cooperate often due to threats to others and their families. The corruption integrated within all forms of governmental control dictates the future of reforms and implementations of policies. With the existence of the gray zone, it is hard to realize who is doing the right thing for the people and who is not.

To achieve instability, violence and the drug war are the perfect combination to offset original priorities proposed by the state. As the state declines in quality, governments are “less able to impose” basic actions like taxes or carrying out laws due to the complexity of the strategic approaches of DTOs (Grillo, 2016, p. 20). Due to this, the implementation of force to fight the drug war has caused unfavorable reactions from these criminal organizations. The corruption of the values of Mexican citizens exposes the value of their citizenship to them as citizens struggle to determine whom to trust for help (Trejo & Ley, 2018). This creates panic within the community as they place pressure upon themselves to solve the issues within the external world. The failure to address this division encourages the drug war to continue with violence, pain, and domination over innocent people.

The Kingpin strategy was an approach from law-enforcement organizations to target organized crime groups by focusing on the capturing of the leaders to dismantle, disarm, weaken, and destroy the enforcement of these groups in illicit activities (Lindo & Padilla-Romo, 2018). The kingpin strategy which the Mexican government and DEA (Drug Enforcement Agency) erroneously hoped would show promising results failed to consider the effect upon the people. Instead, their approach of capturing leaders from major DTOs to dismantle their organizations

posed a question about whether or not the costs of capturing kingpins outweighed the benefits. Since this strategy creates instability within the organization and neighboring states, it is challenging to determine the possible results in the future. Lindo and Padilla-Romo (2018) mentioned how kingpin captures increased homicide rates within a municipality and had positive effects on the neighboring municipality. This suggests that the use of force against criminal groups did encourage citizens to fight for the capture of leaders in some areas and against some in others. It was all dependent on the levels of violence that were used. Indeed, slight levels of violence can destabilize a municipality because citizens may act to protect themselves and their homes. This showed how government interference can help, but how the methods the government uses to pursue its objective may need revising. The primary focus of the drug war should not be to kill and destroy, but instead to support citizens with opportunities. Instead of helping, elected officials subject themselves to corruption as they form part of the illicit markets enabling DTOs' success nationwide. As individual states become weaker, the infrastructure of laws within these areas continue to fail. Chinchilla (2018) supported the previous ideas because the void for protection has been filled in by DTOs. Corruption encompasses a whole network of criminals with money, resources, and hope. Those are precisely the things they strip away from citizens.

The drug war involves individuals from lower socioeconomic statuses to the most privileged and wealthy. DTOs intimidate those in the government who work towards a common benefit for the future. That is why the exchange for safety comes at a cost as penalties lack against criminal organizations because there is no incentive to stop this war. The protectors of the people which should have been the government became the DTOs. The control was handed over as they lost their structure to a system they should have avoided (Chinchilla, 2018). The

expectation to continue to institutionalize corruption formally and informally has created a system that has taken too long to dismantle. Shirk and Wallman (2015) acknowledged how the government should have begun to realize their power is slipping away from them as a change may become “logistically unworkable” (p. 1370). Indeed, a slow recovery is ahead for Mexico to ensure human rights and decency are not threatened. Exposure to the events of the drug war have revealed the realities and imperfections of the current regime in Mexico. Worldwide, individuals desire to move past the war on drugs, but as priorities are stagnated in debate, the possibility of change feels out of reach.

Future Research

The drug war is a broad term as it has different connotations in different countries throughout the world. The response to this issue is dependent on the societies which people live in. Therefore, investigating drug addiction and the war on drugs could be beneficial to establish a direct relationship among the two. By halting drug use, the demand for drugs decreases, and the supply is no longer needed. Poverty and the correlation between the military assistance can expose the possibility for solutions that are measurable for citizens. Investigating job opportunities and education can show how the impoverished can have a pathway to reach success. Most of the issues can be solved if human rights were considered. Humanitarian issues like wars can provide insight into why the drug war began and investigating the history behind it will allow for those in power to strategize appropriate solutions. Research behind the effect on children and youth can help create a promising future if the negative effects are reversed early on before adulthood. A humanistic approach to these topics could tie realities and emotions to promote awareness of how we can come together for a greater cause.

Conclusion

The Mexican Drug War is a complex issue that indicates possible structural failures in the government, human rights, and power. DTOs are responsible for taking advantage of the fragile state of the Mexican government as it faces the struggle of poverty, decreased quality of life, increased amounts of violence, and corruption on a federal and state level. The creation of false hope for citizens has kept the drug war rampant as fatalities increase. In Mexico, the economy has given power to drug trafficking organizations as their efforts are a mask to hide their true intentions to maximize their profit and recognition. Violence, an effect of fulfilling the demands of drugs worldwide, has fueled addiction too. The competition among cartels has taken its effect on the innocent who are trapped in between the battle. Intimidation and public recognition for power is what DTOs strive for. The drug war has fueled them to reach the power they desire at a faster rate because the citizens cannot fight the battle alone. The incentives for cartels to turn against society are overbearing their charitable deeds. Mostly, the drug war has affected citizens negatively as they are stuck in the unknown of their fate. Therefore, a main takeaway of the drug war is that the lack of reform has negative consequences, and that prevention of corruption should be the focus now. Therefore, tackling corruption with peace by electing officials who strive to fight for the cause will create progress. Creating opportunities for citizens to educate themselves and become active members of society will most certainly improve the issues mentioned and more.

As conditions become intense in the drug war, the need to ask oneself what the stopping point should be rises. The damages of this war have been physical, emotional, and psychological upon children and adults who have grown up with narco-culture around them. The lifestyles that were built around the drug demands in other developed countries had led to competition for

money, greed, and power. These three components have not been used wisely by those in power contributing to the crumbling state of the country. The violence has been overwhelming as it interferes with the life of a normal citizen, which should not be the case. A call for action for their sake is vital. The consequences of poor leadership are intense as citizens have to adopt the roles of decision makers for a positive change towards peace. Tactics like coercion, corruption, and manipulation have left citizens with little hope to find a way to turn their country around towards improvement. This improvement includes creating jobs, providing access to quality education, and making sure that people are supplied with the needs to live comfortably. With these desires being fulfilled, the need for crime will diminish as people will manage to relearn how to trust the government with policies of reform.

The next step for this issue is not to eliminate drugs but instead to make sure to create living conditions for citizens to steer them away from the drug manufacturing, distributing, and consumption of these products. Once there is lower demand for drugs, these groups will lose their duty and power to supply the demand. DTOs will begin to seek other ways of obtaining that power but they will be stopped if the quality of life is changed. The authoritarian approach seeking to eliminate drugs and stop their production is unrealistic because this substance will continue to exist despite efforts to make them go away. People have grown fatigued with their voices not being heard and overwhelmed with the pressures placed upon them to save their nation. Reform is best achieved when the community works together.

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