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U2 Annotated Bibliography

My question is, What consequences do civilians in Mexico face as a result of Mexican Cartels? I got interested in this topic originally through watching extremely graphic videos on cartels. However, for some reasons that I cannot explain, I was drawn into them. It fascinated me that these inhumane killings were happening not too far from here, they are just south of the border. I would say that these videos gave me a hard dose of reality, it was a hard pill to swallow, that this violence is ongoing, it is still happening. After this, I got more interested in cartels because of a youtube channel that would cover the violent videos, they would provide background on the videos. Another reason that I am still interested is because I've seen a handful of videos of civilians dying at the hands of the cartels, or kidnapped at the hands of cartels as well, in broad daylight too. I want to know more, because I am certain that cartels work hand in hand with the police, at least some of them. I hope to learn how they have hurt civilians in Mexico.

Citation #1

CFR.org Editors. "Mexico's Long War: Drugs, Crime, and the Cartels." *Council on Foreign Relations*, Council on Foreign Relations, 8 Feb. 2021, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/mexicos-long-war-drugs-crime-and-cartels>.

Summary

This article overall goes over Mexico's drug war and its effects. Some main points of the articles include explaining how drugs come into the U.S. illegally, what has been done against cartels, the effects on the people of Mexico and the U.S.'s actions regarding the drug war. They mention that "Mexican drug trafficking groups ... dominate the import and distribution of cocaine, fentanyl, heroin, marijuana and methamphetamine in the United States." They show just how much money Americans spend on these drugs, 150 billion to be exact. In the last couple of years, the demand for these drugs coming from Mexico has only gone up, and the U.S. has not done anything effective to reduce this. Many of the smugglers are caught before they enter the U.S., however many others do not. They use tunnels, boats, aircrafts, and ground vehicles to get the drugs into the U.S. After that, they have ties to folks in the U.S. who will distribute the drugs for them. While president Calderon was in office, he received aid from the U.S. and together they got rid of twenty five high ranking drug kingpins, leaving twelve. However, that may have only made the situation worse by leading to the creation of many more smaller criminal groups in Mexico. This is because without a leader, the groups were lost and decided to go and start

their own organization. In Mexico, there have been countless cases where people go missing and are never found. Some famous cases include the one where 40 protestors who were students went missing. After some investigation, it was revealed that there was some teamwork between cartel members and the police, a.k.a. Corruption. This led to huge protests throughout Mexico demanding answers as well as an end to the corruption in their country. As a result of all of these cartels killing civilians, there has been a rise in autodefensas, which are similar to militias, they are groups of civilians who came together to protect their communities against cartel organizations. The U.S. has put billions into the drug war. When Trump came into office, he increased the security along the border as a result of the drugs coming into the U.S. among other things.

Reflection

When it comes to the smugglers who get caught in the border at checkpoints, I wonder what happens to them. I wonder if the U.S. takes them in, are they sent back to Mexican authorities, etc. I also wonder who contacted who first when it came to the student protestors, did the cartel reach out to the police to get rid of them, or did the police maybe ask the cartel to get rid of the students for them. In order to better understand the article, I need to do more research on what exactly the U.S. has done to help Mexico. The reason I say this is because there are still ridiculous acts of violence happening down there, meaning that what the U.S. did to help didn't help much, or at least that's what I think. I also think that I need to search up the details as to how the drugs are smuggled into the U.S., because it seems kind of crazy to me that they are using

aircrafts and tunnels. It's not that I am not believing it, but I am wondering just how exactly they do this, what the procedure is. I also need to search up and better understand the corruption down in Mexico between public leaders and organizations and cartels. I believe that the number one reason for corruption is money, everybody wants money and power. This document tells me that innocent people are being targeted by cartels backed up by the police, it tells me that for some, justice will not be served. I think that the author's writing style is very good in this article. I say this because they went section by section with subheadings, it was very clear and the order made perfect sense. I believe that the purpose of the author writing this is to let the public know why the war is still ongoing, why it still has to not come to an end. I think the intended audience is Americans, whether that be North Americans, Central Americans or South Americans. I believe that this source is reliable because it is not biased. To back up my claim, the cfr is a non-profit based in New York. They are not with the government, they are independent of them, their focus is on Foreign policies.

Quotation(s)

- “The country has seen more than three hundred thousand homicides since 2006, when the government declared war on the cartels.”

- “More than sixty-six thousand people have disappeared since 2006, primarily at the hands of criminal organizations such as cartels, though government forces also play a role.”
- “In recent years, vigilante groups known as *autodefensas* have sought to fill in where security forces have failed to protect communities from criminal groups.”

Citation #2

Press, The Associated. “Mexican Police Helped Cartel Massacre 193 Migrants, Documents Show.” *NPR*, NPR, 23 Dec. 2014, <https://www.npr.org/2014/12/22/372579429/mexican-police-helped-cartel-massacre-193-migrants-documents-show>.

Summary

The article goes over the fact that corruption was to blame for the missing students who disappeared after protesting. The article claims that the police kidnapped them and gave them over to a cartel in the nearby area, where they were most likely burned and killed. This led to

huge protests by many Mexicans demanding justice for the innocent who died as a result of corruption between police and cartels. Police who work with cartels, go as far as to alert them of danger and ignore them when they commit violence, they pretend as if nothing happened. Many migrants leaving Mexico coming to the U.S. for a better life have been killed by cartels on the journey. Many mass graves have been found which are associated with cartels. Some of which couldn't have been done without the help of the police.

Reflection

I think that to better understand the article, I need to do more research on how the cartels would track down these innocent people. Why would they choose some over others, and what they gain from killing civilians. This document tells me that the cartel don't care for others lives, they are ruthless. They are willing to kill hundreds of innocent people, students, teachers, etc. All they care about is their organization, they care about money and power. I think that this article helped me better understand the relationship between the police and the cartels. It tells me how the cartels are able to get away with such violence. It is because the police purposely ignore them when they do the dirty work, they just go on with their day as long as the money is coming in for them. That's what the police care about as well, some of them at least, they just want that check.

Quotation(s)

- “The students were abducted by local police linked to a drug cartel in the city of Iguala and handed over to the members of the Guerreros Unidos gang who after killing them are believed to have burned their bodies and dumped the remains into a river, according to Mexico's government.”
- “The case has generated angry protests in Mexico and abroad over the alleged involvement of police and corrupt officials. Reports have emerged of mayors and police forces in cities in parts of Mexico being on the payroll of cartels.”
- “In San Fernando, a city of 60,000 inhabitants in Tamaulipas state near the Texas border, local police worked as lookouts for the brutal Zetas drug cartel, as well as turning a blind eye to cartel activity, according to members of the Zetas cited in the memo.”

Citation #3

“Cartel Land - Confronting Mexican Cartel Hitmen.” *YouTube*, uploaded by Am Future, 30 September 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LZK2uMqTsI4>

Summary

In this video, we meet the leader of an autodefensas group who discusses how the cartel came to be and a bit of info on how they operate. We then see a woman being interviewed on her encounter with the cartel. We learn that she is a victim, her husband was part of the autodefensas, protecting his community, when he was kidnapped. He was then held for ransom which they paid for. However, he was not let go. They then kidnapped her or the victim, and they let the “fun” begin. They began torturing her husband, they started by blowtorching him in front of her. After this, he and others were chopped up. They then were put into big graves which were dug before they were killed. The victim then goes on to say that after that, she was put into the grave alive but nothing happened to her. Meanwhile, the cartel members were laughing while under the influence. She then has to live with that the rest of her life, seeing her husband tortured and then butchered to death, dismembered in front of her. After this, the video cuts to the autodefensas surrounding the two cartel members who were in charge of torturing the victim’s husband. They then close in on them and take them out. Meanwhile, it seems that the police made it to them and assisted in taking them down. While they are taken out while handcuffed, they are attacked by victims' families. They are probably feeling a million emotions when they see the men who killed their families. After this, we see the autodefensas leader talk to the community, reminding them that they need to stay united if they want change. It ends with him in a car driving away as many people take photos of him.

Reflection

I think that to better understand this video, I should do research on the cartel leaders that were captured, the ones who commit unspeakable acts of violence. I also think that I should search up how drugs and alcohol affect your mind in terms of emotion. Whether they can make you feel emotionless and make you able to do violent things. I also think that I should search up the cartel's background, I want to know what other things that specific cartel is responsible for. If I could say something to Mireles, El Alzado (the leader of the autodefensas), it would be if he is scared to die and be tortured extremely badly. I think him being a leader and an enemy to cartels would bring that if he was ever kidnapped and captured. I don't know if I could live sanely knowing that I could face death at any moment from rivals, or that I could get captured and be tortured to death. He's extremely brave for putting up with these cartels to protect the civilians, the townspeople. This document lets me know that the cartels try to tax the townspeople just for living in that area, and that they try to take control of businesses in order to bring in money. I think that is something that is really low for them to do. Being a cartel and fighting other cartels makes sense, but bringing innocent people into this is just wrong, they are just trying to get by and now they have to worry about paying taxes to cartel members who probably threaten them if they do not. I enjoyed the structure of this short documentary, they start off by introducing how the cartel came to be and a little bit of info. Then we meet a victim, and they share their story of how evil they are. We then see the autodefensas capture them and take them in. The order makes perfect sense with no confusion.

Quotation(s)

- “First they burned my husband with a blowtorch while he was alive. And After that they came in with four more people. And they killed them one by one. They cut their heads, their hands, their legs, everything into pieces.”
- “This is the guy who killed my uncles. Where are their bodies? What did you do to them...”
- “Article 39 in the constitution states that the power comes from the people. If you are not united, any idiot can govern you.”

In conclusion, after doing my research, I found out that the cartels have worked with police in the past to kill innocent people. I also found out that the demand for drugs in the U.S. is ridiculously high, 150 billion dollars worth. I learned the importance of the autodefensas in

Mexico, folks who come together to protect their communities against cartels. We see how their tactics work against these cartel leaders to bring the victims justice. One thing that surprised me and in a way scared me is the way that these evil folks look. In the video, we see the cartel leaders being brought out. If you did not know what they did, you would think nothing of them, they seem like ordinary people. That is the part that freaks me out, the realization that anybody is capable of evil acts, they can seem like a normal person, but on the inside they are evil. In the video, the lady also mentioned how the cartel members were drunk and drugged while committing the terrible acts. That is something that can help me understand how they are able to be so heartless, they are not in a good state of mind. Perhaps when they are drunk or on drugs, their emotions leave their bodies and the evil takes over. They only care about growing their empire, if you aren't with them, you're against them. Overall this is important for me to know because in case I ever go to Mexico, I need to always be aware of my surroundings. I believe that Americans need to know of the issues cartels bring in Mexico, whether that be North Americans, Central Americans or South Americans.