



Drug War Mexico: Politics, Neoliberalism and Violence in the New Narcoeconomy

By Peter Watt, Roberto Zepeda

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Mexico is a country in crisis. Capitalizing on weakened public institutions, widespread unemployment, a state of lawlessness, and the strengthening of links between Mexican and Colombian drug cartels, narcotrafficking in the country has flourished during the post-1982 neoliberal era. In fact, it has become Mexico's biggest source of revenue, as well as its most violent, with an astonishing 9,000 drug-related executions in 2009 alone.

In response, Mexican president Felipe Calderón, armed with millions of dollars in military aid supplied by the US government, has attempted to launch a "crackdown," ostensibly to combat the power of organized crime. Despite this, human rights violations have increased, as has the murder rate, making Ciudad Juárez on the northern border the most dangerous city on the planet. Meanwhile, the supply of cocaine, heroin, marijuana, and methamphetamine has continued to increase. And yet, both the Mexican and US governments pour money into a drug war fought by an army with a track record of violating human rights and having close links to the drug cartels. In this insightful and controversial book, Watt and Zepeda throw new light on the situation, contending that the "drug war" in Mexico is in fact the pretext for a bi-national strategy to bolster unpopular neoliberal policies, a weak yet authoritarian government and a radically unfair status quo.

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Editorial Review

Review

'This is a superb, carefully documented analysis of how American drug and neoliberal policies have helped open up Mexico to crony capitalism, crony drug trafficking, increasing wealth disparity, impoverishment of the lower 50 percent, police and army corruption and domination, and now a murderous, fruitless, US-driven drug war. Concerned Americans should read this book, and get others to read it, as a step towards decriminalizing marijuana - the chief commodity of the Mexican cartels - to help end the nightmare.' Peter Dale Scott, author of American War Machine 'Peter Watt and Roberto Zepeda shed light on this dark moment in Mexican history, a drug war that has become one of the most brutal and misunderstood conflicts of the twenty first century.' Ioan Grillo, author of El Narco: The Bloody Rise of Mexican Drug Cartels 'By carefully linking together the economic, political and criminal histories of Mexico over the past decades, Watt and Zepeda roll back the curtain on the "war on drugs". Their book offers a comprehensive analysis, examining overlapping facts that others have assumed unrelated and documenting step by step the hypocrisy and corruption rampant in this war of contradictions. With its cast of shady characters and stranger-than-fiction events, the book leads logically to the conclusion that there is much more than meets the eye to the US and Mexican governments' efforts to "defeat organized crime". The information presented here will be an important tool in understanding the real interests behind the drug war-it will be up to a new generation to use that tool to end this deadly and unjust war before the death toll climbs even higher.' Laura Carlsen, Director, Americas Program

About the Author

Dr. Peter Watt is Lecturer in Hispanic Studies at the University of Sheffield.

Roberto Zepeda holds a PhD in Politics from the University of Sheffield and is currently working as a lecturer and academic researcher in Mexico.

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