

# Mexican Drug Cartels

Sebastian Diaz-Tafel



# Introduction

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- Most headlines regarding Mexico have something to do with the Cartel war
  - Between 125,000-150,000 homicides were related to organized crime
  - Cartels receive between 19-29 billion dollars a year from the United States
  - To put an end to cartel violence it is crucial to understand they are different than their media portrayals.
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# The shared responsibility

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- Most of the cartel business comes from the United States
  - The creation of the Merida Initiative in 2008
  - American tourists demand for drugs beginning to effect Mexico's economy
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An aerial photograph of a coastal town, likely in Mexico. The image shows a sandy beach with numerous small boats anchored in the turquoise water. A prominent white lighthouse with a red roof stands on the shore. The town features several buildings with red-tiled roofs and palm trees. A road runs along the coast, and a pier extends into the sea. The overall scene is a mix of natural beauty and urban development.

## Tourists effect on Cartels

- Mexico has over 20 million tourists visiting every year
- Cartels understand that hurting tourism will hurt the countries economy, so they act accordingly
- In 2021 a shootout between two rival cartels happened in a Hyatt Ziva in Puerto Morelos
- More recently there has been more violence spilling into tourist areas beginning to hurt Mexico's GDP



# Media coverage and its effects

- Many tv series and movies have been made about cartels some notable ones being *Narcos Mexico* and *Sicario*
- Cartels are frequently depicted as violent organizations made up of uneducated men
- The Mexican army views Narcos with a very different uniform than theirs
- By emphasizing such a difference between the two the government can send many young men to their deaths



# The extent of the Cartels influence

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- Cartels have such a strong influence that in certain communities they are seen as the figures of authority
  - El Señor de Los Cielos had connections as high as the head of Mexico's anti drug agency
  - With so much corruption it makes it difficult for the Mexican people to pick a side in the ongoing war between cartels and the government
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## Corruption in the Americas



Source: Corruption Perception Index 2015

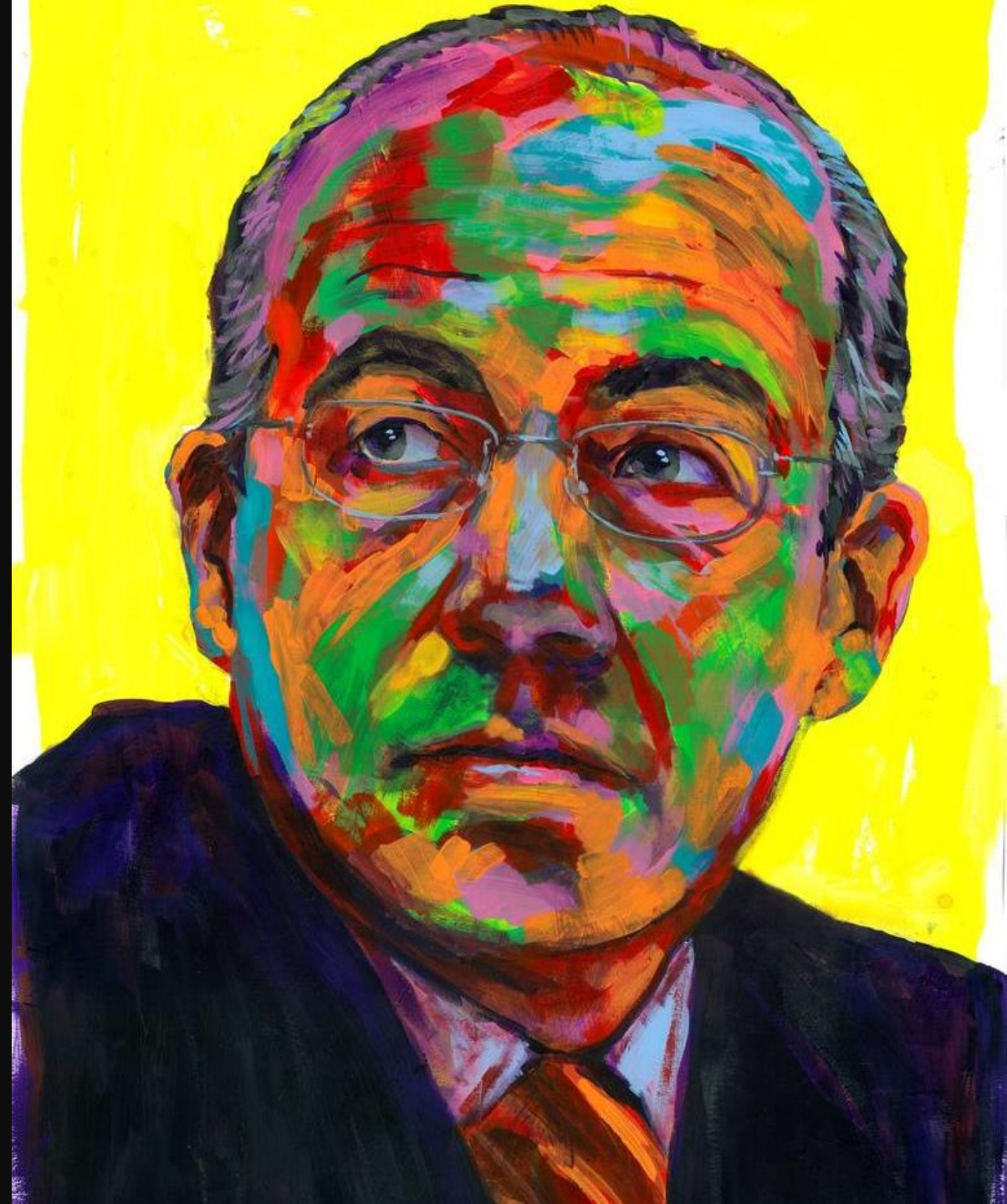
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# Mexico's fight against corruption

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- With the amount of corruption in the Mexican government it is incredibly difficult for politicians to fight it
  - The Michoacanazo was a landmark trial in Mexico's history in fighting corruption
  - President Felipe Calderón's efforts to fight corruption in Mexico
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## Are Mexican Cartels helpful to Mexico?

- “Mexico probably made more money in 2009 moving drugs than it did exporting oil...”
- Cartel cash propped up Mexican banks saving them from a financial crisis
- Cartels launder their money through legitimate businesses providing many a livable wage
- The Sinaloa cartel gave out care packages during the start of the Covid-19 outbreak in Mexico





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