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Project Title: Civil War in Mexico: Re-examining the Mexican Drug War, Armed Conflict, and Criminal Insurgency

Synopsis: Mexico's drug war is re-interpreted to be a civil war, based on the ability of non-state groups to challenge the state through armed conflict.

Abstract: The Mexican drug war has resulted in an appallingly high death toll of 135,000 as of October 2013. The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration identifies the situation in Mexico as a problem with organized crime, thereby making it a criminal justice issue, despite the drug war's striking resemblance to an armed conflict. Most notable about the conflict is the combined ability of multiple heavily-armed drug trafficking organizations to wage and sustain armed resistance against the state. This study takes the position that the Mexican drug war is a civil war. In order to prove this position, the study will analyze multiple scholarly definitions of armed conflict and civil war to verify that the ongoing drug war satisfies the requirements for civil war. Next, brief case studies of six accepted civil wars will be compared with the Mexican drug war in order to highlight similarities. The wars incorporated into the case studies are the civil wars in Angola, Sierra Leone, Afghanistan, Iraq, Colombia, and the Mexican Revolution.